



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

PREPARATORY DOCUMENT



SYNOD OF BISHOPS

The Synod on Synodality, initiated by Pope Francis in October 2021, is a two-year, worldwide undertaking during which Catholics will be encouraged to submit feedback to their local dioceses. A synod is a meeting of bishops gathered to discuss a topic of theological or pastoral significance, to prepare a document of advice or counsel to the pope.

What is the Synod 2021 about?

The Catholic Church community's eyes are on the Synod 2021, which recently opened. The Synod is **a convention of bishops to discuss matters of the church and seek advice from the Pope**. Pope Francis formally opened the Synod of Bishops on Oct. 10, 2021, with a solemn Mass in St Peter's Basilica.

Pope Francis formally opened a two-year process called "a synod on synodality," officially known as "Synod 2021-2023: For a Synodal Church." In brief, the process involves **an expansion of an established institution, called the "Synod of Bishops."** This means that bishops around the world will consult with everyone from parishioners to religious laity and Catholic universities before coming together for a discussion in 2023.

What is the purpose of Synod of Bishops?

The Synod can be defined as an assembly of bishops representing the Catholic episcopate, having the task of **helping the Pope in the governing of the universal Church by rendering their counsel**.

What is the timeline of the process?

First Phase [October 2021 – June 2022]

Preparatory Phase -- October 17 – November 28, 2021

All are invited to prepare using prayer, preaching, and study.

Preparatory Document: <https://www.synod.va/en/news/preparatory-document.html>

Consultation Phase November 28, 2021 – March 31, 2022

Parish and Group Listening Sessions

Online Survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ATLSynodSurvey>

Regional Listening Sessions

Report Phase -- April 1 – June 30

Parish and Group Single Report due by March 31

Pre-Synod Meeting TBD

Archdiocesan Report due to USCCB by June 30

The Holy Father seeks input on the following themes:

- 1. Listening** – How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore?
- 2. Speaking out** – What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly and responsibly in our local Church and society?
- 3. Celebration** – How do prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and guide our common life and mission in our community?
- 4. Sharing Responsibility** – How is every baptized person called to participate in the Mission of the Church?
- 5. Dialogue** – To what extent do diverse peoples in our community come together for dialogue?
- 6. Ecumenism** – What relationship does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions?
- 7. Authority** – How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued?
- 8. Discerning** – What methods and processes do we use in the Church in decision making?
- 9. Forming Ourselves** – How does our Church community form people to be more capable of “walking together”?

**Join Us on
Friday, February 11th
at 7:30 pm
for a Townhall Listening
Event where we will
discuss the objectives of
Synod**

