



For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

## **'For a Synodal Church' – Facilitator's Guide**

To be used conjunction with the listening Tool kit and the Participants guide.



For A Synodal Church - Facilitator’s Guide

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## Facilitators' Detailed Listening Session

### Saturday Half-Day Option

What follows is a detailed outline for the parish listening session. Words in italics provide a script for the facilitator to follow.

The role of the facilitator is to track the time devoted to each section, provide time updates, and move the group through the conversations in the allotted time.

#### **Hospitality (10-15 minutes)**

**Opening Prayer** – if possible, move to the church for this time of silent prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Ensure that participants have a copy of the prayer card.

*Our Synod journey takes place in the midst of where the Church ordinarily lives and works in the day to day lives of the faithful. The Synodal process invites each one of us - the People of God to recall that we journey together. Moreover, in that journey of faith, we are called to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Following our reading we will spend 15 minutes in silent prayer. This will come to and end by saying the Synod prayer.*

A parishioner reads:

#### **A Reading from Acts 2: 14-21**

Then Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them ...  
“These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

*‘It will come to pass in the last days,’ God says ‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams’ Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And, I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord, and it shall be that everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord.’*

The Word of the Lord  
R: Thanks be to God.

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**Silence for 15 minutes. Conclude with the Synod Prayer or the community prayer to be found at the end of this booklet. Return silently to the room for the meeting.**

**Welcome and introduction (2 minutes)** Introducing the session, welcoming participants; introduce yourself and invite participants to introduce themselves to their fellow group members. Ensure that the clergy also introduce themselves.

### **Participant Ground Rules (3 minutes)**

*The synod involves active listening. Listening is at the heart of our conversation today. In your participants' guide on page 6 you will find some 'ground rules' for participating. Remember to give your full attention to each other and listen to the voice of God in your hearts. Listen for understanding by taking to heart what other people share. As we share, individuals will speak, one at a time, without interruption, while others listen. Everyone will have a chance to speak but no one must feel that they are obliged to say anything.*

*Every small group will have a note taker. Take a moment to select a member of the group to take notes for your group discussion.*

Give the groups a few minutes to name their note taker and then invite assigned people to take the recorder sheets and pen.

**Overview of Synodal Process** – *Before we begin our reflections, it is possible that some of you were unable to attend any of the information sessions on the synodal process. Here we have a moment here to familiarise ourselves about the purpose of our gathering. If you turn to page 7 in your booklets, we can read about this together.*

*The entire Catholic Church is called to participate in the upcoming Synod of Bishops! The upcoming Synod is entitled: "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission." Synod is a Greek word (synodos) meaning a meeting or assembly. The two Greek words that make up Synod are syn meaning together and hodos meaning way or journey.*

*Pope Francis has called the entire People of God to journey together! This Synod is not just another meeting with oral presentations and written reports. This Synod is a process of journeying together. As the Church, we will listen to each other, dialogue with each other, pray together, discern together and make decisions together for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world!*

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*Pope Francis is asking each local diocese to gather together- clergy, religious and laity- to first listen to each other's joys and hopes, and griefs and anxieties (c.f. Gaudium et Spes no. 1). After we listen to each other, we are called to dialogue together on ways we can accompany each other as we seek to grow in holiness. Listening and speaking within the Church always involves prayer. We are listening, dialoguing and praying together so that we can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. The "goal" of this journeying together is not to create a new vision or pastoral plan with objectives. Rather, the goal of our journeying together is to be present with one another, to listen and learn with each other, and to grow closer to the Lord and His Church.*

### **Small Group: The Fundamental Question (60 minutes)**

(c.f. Preparatory Document no. 37)

Instruct the small groups to turn to **page 8** to find the Fundamental Question.

*Before we begin sharing with one another, I want to remind everyone that group members will take turns sharing their reflections, one at a time, without interruption, while other group members listen. The note taker will record reflections. Please keep your answers to 1-2 minutes per person.*

Read aloud:

*A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together." In your participant booklet, reflect on the following questions:*

- *How is this "journeying together" happening today in your parish?*
- *How is the Holy Spirit inviting your parish community to grow in "journeying together"? (Preparatory Document no. 26)*

*Take a moment to write down your personal thoughts and reflection in your booklet. In your reflection on "journeying together," think about:*

- *What experiences, in your local parish does this question bring to mind?*
- *What are the joys of your parish life?*
- *What are the difficulties and obstacles to active parish life that you have encountered?*

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After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that:

*One member speaks at a time, without interruption, as other members listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

Allow 10 minutes for small group sharing. At the end of 10 minutes, pose the following question:

- *Where in these experiences do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit?*

**After 10 minutes, invite participants to take a 20 -minute break.**

**Break (20 minutes)**

**Small Group Process: Core Questions - Sharing on Listening (10 minutes)**

“Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.” (Preparatory Document no. 30) “The meaning of the journey to which we are all called is above all that of discovering the face and form of a Synodal Church, in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit.” (Preparatory Document no. 15)

- How is God speaking to us through the voices that are in our midst?
- How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore, including those on the peripheries?
- What space is there to listen to the voices on the peripheries, especially cultural groups, women, the disabled, those who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?

*We now move to the next Core Question when we share on the theme of speaking out.*

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### Small Group Process: Core Questions - Sharing on Speaking Out

*All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity. (Preparatory Document no. 30)*

*"The Pastors, established by God as 'authentic guardians, interpreters and witnesses of the faith of the whole Church' should not be afraid to listen to the flock entrusted to them. The consultation of the People of God does not imply the assumption within the Church of the dynamics of democracy based on the principle of majority because there is, at the basis of participation in every Synodal process, a shared passion for the common mission of evangelization and not the representation of conflicting interests." (Preparatory Document no. 14)*

- What enables or hinders you from speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in your parish and society?
- What space is there in your parish for the voice of people, including active and inactive members of our faith.

### Sharing Responsibility for our Common Mission and Sharing Authority and Participation

*Say: We now move onto our next core question: Sharing Responsibility for Our Common Mission and Sharing Authority and Participation.*

*"Synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all members are called to participate. A Synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church." (Preparatory Document no. 30)*

*The members of the People of God are united by Baptism, and "if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispenser of mysteries on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to dignity and to the activity common to all the Faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ." (Lumen Gentium, no. 32)*

*The questions we will consider under this core question are:*

- How are the baptized members of your parish able to participate in the mission of the Church to proclaim the Gospel?
- What hinders people from being active in your parish?
- How is authority or governance exercised in your local parish?

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- How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice in your local parish?

After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that:

*One member speaks at a time, without interruption, as other members listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person, summarizing your reflections on the four questions. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

Each time the groups start you may need to remind them of the above guidelines.

Allow 10 minutes total for this section.

### **Discerning And Deciding (10 minutes)**

*Let's move onto our next core question: **Discerning and Deciding.***

*In a Synodal style, we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community. Synodal style of decision-making is to listen first, dialogue, pray, discern, and then the pastor makes a decision on behalf of community. A Synodal Church does not make decisions to accomplish pre-identified priorities. "In a Synodal Church, the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God's will." (Vademecum no. 1.4)*

The questions we will consider for Discerning and Deciding are:

- *How does your parish use the methods of listening and speaking (consultation) to make decisions?*
- *Do the decision-making methods of your parish help you to listen to all members of the community including those who are on the peripheries of parish life?*

Allow 10 minutes total for this section.

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### **Celebrating: (10 minutes)**

*Let's move onto our next core question: Celebration. "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles." (Acts 2:42-43)*

*"Journeying together" is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist. (Preparatory Document no. 30)*

*The questions we will consider for Celebration are:*

- How do prayer and liturgical celebrations, especially Sunday Mass, inspire and guide your parish?
- How does your prayer life and celebration of the Mass inspire and inform your personal decisions and decisions in the parish community?
- How does the parish invite all baptized Catholics, including our ethnic communities, youth, families, and persons with disabilities and their families, into the active life of the parish, especially Sunday Mass?

After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that:

*One person speaks at a time, without interruption, as others listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person, summarizing your reflections on the three questions. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

Allow 10 minutes total for this section.

## Final Question: The Holy Spirit (10 minutes)

*We hear in Paul's Letter to the Romans: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)*

*Here is our final question:*

- *From your small group sharing, name one insight where you heard the voice of the Holy Spirit today?*

*Please keep your responses to 1 minute per person.*

Allow 10 minutes total for this section.

### **Closing:**

Thank people for their listening and sharing.

Finish with the **Prayer for the Synod**

At the conclusion of prayer ask the note takers to hand in their documentation and again thank people for participating. Let people know that the recorded comments from the groups will be compiled into a parish report and the delegates from the parish will feed these into the final diocesan report which will go to the Bishops' Conference.

## Facilitator's Detailed Listening Session

### Three Week Evening Option

### Week One

#### Hospitality (10-15 minutes)

**Opening Prayer** – if possible, move to the church for this time of silent prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Ensure that participants have a copy of the prayer card.

Our Synod journey takes place in the midst of where the Church ordinarily lives and works in the day to day lives of the faithful. The Synodal process invites each one of us - the People of God to recall that we journey together. Moreover, in that journey of faith, we are called to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Following our reading we will spend 15 minutes in silent prayer. This will come to and end by saying the Synod prayer.

A parishioner reads:

#### A Reading from Acts 2: 14-21

Then Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them ...  
“These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

‘It will come to pass in the last days,’ God says ‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams’ Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And, I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord, and it shall be that everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord.’

The Word of the Lord

R: Thanks be to God.

Silence for 15 minutes. Conclude with the Synod Prayer or the community prayer to be found at the end of this booklet. Return silently to the room for the meeting.

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**Welcome and introduction (2 minutes)** Begin by introducing the session, welcoming participants; introduce yourself and invite participants to introduce themselves to their fellow group members. Ensure that the clergy also introduce themselves.

### Participant Ground Rules

The synod involves active listening. Listening is at the heart of our conversation today. In your participants' guide you will find some 'ground rules' for participating. Remember to give your full attention to each other and listen to the voice of God in your hearts. Listen for understanding by taking to heart what other people share. As we share, individuals will speak, one at a time, without interruption, while others listen. Everyone will have a chance to speak but no one must feel that they are obliged to say anything.

Every small group will have a note taker. Take a moment to select a member of the group to take notes for your group discussion.

Give the groups a few minutes to name their note taker and then invite assigned people to take the recorder sheets and pen.

### The Synodal Process

*Before we begin our reflections, it is possible that some of you were unable to attend any of the information sessions on the synodal process. Here we have a moment here to familiarise ourselves about the purpose of our gathering. If you turn to page 7 in your booklets you can follow as I read what it has to say.*

*The entire Catholic Church is called to participate in the upcoming Synod of Bishops! The upcoming Synod is entitled: "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission." Synod is a Greek word (synodos) meaning a meeting or assembly. The two Greek words that make up Synod are syn meaning together and hodos meaning way or journey.*

*Pope Francis has called the entire People of God to journey together! This Synod is not just another meeting with oral presentations and written reports. This Synod is a process of journeying together. As the Church, we will listen to each other, dialogue with each other, pray together, discern together and make decisions together for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world!*

*Pope Francis is asking each local diocese to gather together - clergy, religious and laity- to first listen to each other's joys and hopes, and griefs and anxieties (c.f. Gaudium et*

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*Spes no. 1). After we listen to each other, we are called to dialogue together on ways we can accompany each other as we seek to grow in holiness. Listening and speaking within the Church always involves prayer. We are listening, dialoguing and praying together so that we can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. The “goal” of this journeying together is not to create a new vision or pastoral plan with objectives. Rather, the goal of our journeying together is to be present with one another, to listen and learn with each other, and to grow closer to the Lord and His Church.*

### **Small Group: The Fundamental Question (40 minutes)**

*As we begin our listening session, remember: Our Synod journey takes place in the midst of where the Church ordinarily lives and works in the day to day lives of the faithful. The Synodal process invites each one of us - the People of God to recall that we journey together. Moreover, in that journey of faith we are called to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. (c.f. Preparatory Document no. 27)*

Instruct the small groups:

*Before we begin sharing with one another, please be aware that we are being invited to listen to one another. Group members will take turns sharing their reflections, one at a time, without interruption, while others in the group listen. The note taker will record reflections. Please keep your answers to 1-2 minutes per person. No one has to share.*

Read aloud:

*A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”  
In your participant booklet, reflect on the following questions:*

- *How is this “journeying together” happening today in your parish?*
- *How is the Holy Spirit inviting your parish community to grow in “journeying together”? (Preparatory Document no. 26)*

*Take a moment to write down your personal thoughts and reflection in your booklet. In your reflection on “journeying together,” think about:*

- *What experiences, in your local parish, does this question bring to mind?*
- *What are the joys of your parish life?*
- *What are the difficulties and obstacles to active parish life that you have encountered?*

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After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that:

*One person speaks at a time, without interruption, as others listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

Allow 10 minutes for small group sharing.

At the end of 10 minutes, pose the following question:

- *Where in these experiences do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit?*

Invite each person in the group to share their response if they wish.

*Please keep your responses to 1 minute per person. Allow 20 minutes total for this section.*

### **Closing:**

Thank everyone for coming, for sharing and listening. Finish the evening with the Prayer for the Synod.

At the conclusion of prayer ask the note takers to hand in their documentation and again thank people for participating. Let people know that the recorded comments from the groups will be compiled into a parish report and the delegates from the parish will feed these into the final diocesan report which will go to the Bishops' Conference.

## Week Two

Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes) Offer light hospitality and greet people as they arrive.

**Opening Prayer** – if possible, move to the church for this time of silent prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Ensure that participants have a copy of the prayer card.

Our Synod journey takes place in the midst of where the Church ordinarily lives and works in the day to day lives of the faithful. The Synodal process invites each one of us - the People of God to recall that we journey together. Moreover, in that journey of faith, we are called to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Following our reading we will spend 15 minutes in silent prayer. This will come to an end by saying the Synod prayer.

**A parishioner reads:**

### **A Reading from Acts 2: 14-21**

Then Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them ...  
“These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

‘It will come to pass in the last days,’ God says ‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams’ Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And, I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord, and it shall be that everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord.’

The Word of the Lord

R: Thanks be to God.

**Silence for 15 minutes.** Conclude with the Synod Prayer or the community prayer to be found at the end of this booklet. Return silently to the room for the meeting.

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### **Start of listening conversation**

*Again, thank you all of you who are returning for our second of three listening sessions and thank you for any people who are joining us for the first time tonight. So that we know one another introduce yourself to the rest of the people on your table.*

*Before we begin, I am going to review some items.*

*The synod involves active listening. Listening is at the heart of our conversation today. In your participants' guide you will find some 'ground rules' for participating. Remember to give your full attention to each other and listen to the voice of God in your hearts. Listen for understanding by taking to heart what other people share. As we share, individuals will speak, one at a time, without interruption, while others listen. Everyone will have a chance to speak but no one must feel that they are obliged to say anything.*

*Every small group will have a note taker. Take a moment to select a member of the group to take notes for your group discussion.*

Give the groups a few minutes to name their note taker and then invite assigned people to take the recorder sheets and pen.

### **Small Group: Listening (15 minutes)**

*This week, we will be reflecting, listening and sharing on the Synod's Core Questions.*

### **Open to page 9 on the Core Questions.**

*Keep in mind our fundamental conversation from last week as we explore areas that are at the heart of our community. As a reminder, the note takers will continue to record group sharing, one member speaks at a time, without interruption, as other members listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

*Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart without prejudice. The meaning of the journey to which we are all called is above all that of discovering the face and form of a Synodal Church, in which "everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit. (Preparatory Document no. 15 and 30)*

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*The questions we will consider under Listening are:*

- *How is God speaking to us through the voices that are in our midst?*
- *How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore, including those on the peripheries?*
- *What space is there to listen to the voices on the peripheries, especially cultural groups, women, the disabled, those who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?*

*Take a moment to write down your personal thoughts and reflection in your booklet.*

After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that:

*One person speaks at a time, without interruption, as others listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person, summarizing your reflections on the three questions. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

Allow 15 minutes.

### **Small Group: Speaking Out (20 minutes)**

*“Let’s move onto our next core question: Speaking Out. All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity.” (Preparatory Document no. 30)*

*“The Pastors, established by God as ‘authentic guardians, interpreters and witnesses of the faith of the whole Church’ should not be afraid to listen to the flock entrusted to them. The consultation of the People of God does not imply the assumption within the Church of the dynamics of democracy based on the principle of majority because there is, at the basis of participation in every Synodal process, a shared passion for the common mission of evangelization and not the representation of conflicting interests.” (Preparatory Document no. 14)*

*The questions we will consider under Speaking Out are:*

- *What enables or hinders you from speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and in society?*

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- What space is there in our parishes for the voice of people including active and inactive members of our faith?

*Take a moment to write down your personal thoughts and reflection in your booklet.*

After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that:

*One person speaks at a time, without interruption, as others listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person, summarizing your reflections on the two questions. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

Allow 20 minutes total for this section.

After you call time for this section, announce a short break.

*Let us take a short break and then we will begin the next core question to reflect on.*

### **Break (5 minutes)**

#### **Small Group: Sharing Responsibility For Our Common Mission and Sharing Authority And Participation (25 minutes)**

*Let's move onto our next core question: Sharing Responsibility for Our Common Mission and Authority and Participation. Synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all members are called to participate. A Synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church. (Preparatory Document no. 30)*

*The members of the People of God are united by Baptism, and "if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispenser of mysteries on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to dignity and to the activity common to all the Faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ." (Lumen Gentium, no. 32)*

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The questions we will consider under this core question are:

- How are the baptized members of your parish able to participate in the mission of the Church to proclaim the Gospel?
- What hinders people from being active in your parish?
- How is authority or governance exercised in your local parish?
- How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice in your local parish?

After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that:

*One person speaks at a time, without interruption, as others listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person, summarizing your reflections on the four questions. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

Allow 25 minutes total for this section.

### **Closing:**

Thank everyone for coming, for sharing and listening. Finish the evening with the Prayer for the Synod.

At the conclusion of prayer ask the note takers to hand in their documentation and again thank people for participating. Let people know that the recorded comments from the groups will be compiled into a parish report and the delegates from the parish will feed these into the final diocesan report which will go to the Bishops' Conference.

## Week Three

Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes) Offer light hospitality and greet people as they arrive.

**Opening Prayer** – if possible, move to the church for this time of silent prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Ensure that participants have a copy of the prayer card.

*Our Synod journey takes place in the midst of where the Church ordinarily lives and works in the day to day lives of the faithful. The Synodal process invites each one of us - the People of God to recall that we journey together. Moreover, in that journey of faith, we are called to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Following our reading we will spend 15 minutes in silent prayer. This will come to and end by saying the Synod prayer.*

A parishioner reads:

### **A Reading from Acts 2: 14-21**

Then Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them ...  
“These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

‘It will come to pass in the last days,’ God says ‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams’ Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And, I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord, and it shall be that everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord.’ The Word of the Lord.  
**R/Thanks be to God.**

Silence for 15 minutes. Conclude with the Synod Prayer or the community prayer to be found at the end of this booklet. Return silently to the room for the meeting.

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### Start of listening conversation

*Again, thank you all of you who are returning for our second of three listening sessions and thank you for any people who are joining us for the first time tonight. So that we know one another introduce yourself to the rest of the people on your table.*

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*The synod involves active listening. Listening is at the heart of our conversation today. In your participants' guide you will find some 'ground rules' for participating. Remember to give your full attention to each other and listen to the voice of God in your hearts. Listen for understanding by taking to heart what other people share. As we share, individuals will speak, one at a time, without interruption, while others listen. Everyone will have a chance to speak but no one must feel that they are obliged to say anything.*

Every small group will have a note taker. Take a moment to select a member of the group to take notes for your group discussion.

Give the groups a few minutes to name their note taker and then invite assigned people to take the recorder sheets and pen.

### Small Group: Discerning And Deciding (20 minutes)

*Let's move onto our next core question: Discerning and Deciding. In a Synodal style, we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community. Synodal style of decision-making is to listen first, dialogue, pray, discern, and then the pastor makes a decision on behalf of community. A Synodal Church does not make decisions to accomplish pre-identified priorities. "In a Synodal Church, the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God's will." (Vademecum no. 1.4)*

*The questions we will consider for Discerning and Deciding are:*

- How does your parish use the methods of listening and speaking (consultation) to make decisions?

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- Do the decision-making methods of your parish help you to listen to all members of the community, including those who are on the peripheries of parish life?

After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that: *One person speaks at a time, without interruption, as others listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person, summarizing your reflections on the three questions. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

Allow 20 minutes total for this section.

After you call time for this section, announce a short break.

Break (5 minutes)

### **Small Group: Celebration (20 minutes)**

*Let's move onto our next core question: Celebration.*

*"They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles" (Acts 2:42-43). "Journeying together" is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist. (Preparatory Document no. 30)*

*The questions we will consider for Celebration are:*

- How does prayer and liturgical celebrations, especially Sunday Mass, inspire and guide your parish?
- How does your prayer life and celebration of the Mass inspire and inform your personal decisions and decisions in the parish community?
- How does the parish invite all baptized Catholics, including our ethnic communities, youth, families and persons with disabilities and their families, into the active life of the parish, especially Sunday Mass?

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After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that:

*One member speaks at a time, without interruption, as other members listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person, summarizing your reflections on the three questions. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.*

Allow 20 minutes total for this section.

### **Small Group Final Question: The Holy Spirit (20 minutes)**

*We hear in Paul's Letter to the Romans: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)*

Here is our final question:

- From your small group sharing, name one insight where you heard the voice of the Holy Spirit today?

Please keep your responses to 1 minute per person. Allow 20 minutes total for this section.

### **Closing:**

Thank everyone for coming, for sharing and listening. Finish the evening with the Prayer for the Synod.

At the conclusion of prayer ask the note takers to hand in their documentation and again thank people for participating. Let people know that the recorded comments from the groups will be compiled into a parish report and the delegates from the parish will feed these into the final diocesan report which will go to the Bishops' Conference.

## Prayer for the Synod

*The Adsumus prayer calls upon the Holy Spirit to guide a Church gathering. Every session of the Second Vatican Council began with the bishops and Holy Father praying this prayer. This prayer is attributed to St. Isidore of Seville (c.560- April 4, 636).*

For the 2021-2023 Synod, the Holy Father is proposing that the entire People of God pray this simplified version of the Adsumus.

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.  
With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go  
and how we are to pursue it.  
We are weak and sinful;  
do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.  
Let us find in You our unity  
so that we may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of truth  
and what is right.  
All this we ask of You,  
who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son,  
forever and ever.  
Amen.

Learn more about this prayer at:

<https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/document/common/adsumus/EN-ADSUMUS.pdf>

## **Additional Scripture Passages**

Additional Scripture Passages which may be used for personal or group reflection time:

### **Journeying**

The Journey to Emmaus : Luke 24:13-35

### **Listening:**

The Story of Bartimaeus : Mark 10:46-52

Hearing Gods call: John 1:35-39

### **Discernment**

Discerning Christ's Call : Mark 1:21-39

### **Communion**

Living as one : Acts 2:42-47

Community synodal Journey : Ephesians 4:1-16, 5:2

The First Council : Acts 15:1-35

### **Mission**

Gifts at the service of the Community: 1 Corinthians 12:1-15,22,25-31)

Go out to the Whole World Mark 16:13-19

Feed and Tend others John 21:1-19

