



Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission



# Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus

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.

A large, stylized tree with a thick trunk and several branches is rendered in a light orange color. To the left of the tree, a solid orange circle represents the sun or moon. The background is white.

# **For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission**

*General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops*





## The Synod of Bishops – for a Synodal Church will take place in Fall 2023

- There is a two-year consultative preparatory phase involving Catholic dioceses worldwide
  - - Phase 1: Diocesan (October 2021 – April 2022)
  - Phase 2: Continental Phase (September 2022 – March 2023)





**“Synodality is the way of being the Church today according to the will of God, in a dynamic of discerning and listening together to the voice of the Holy Spirit.”**

Pope Francis

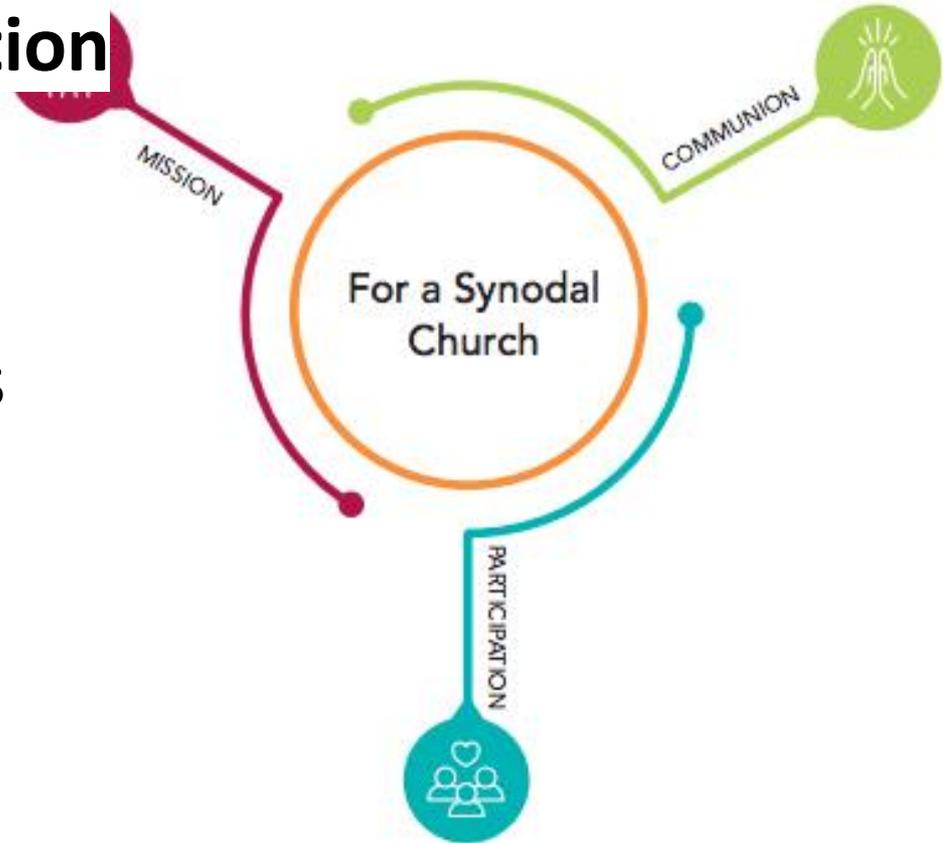
# The Challenge of Synodality

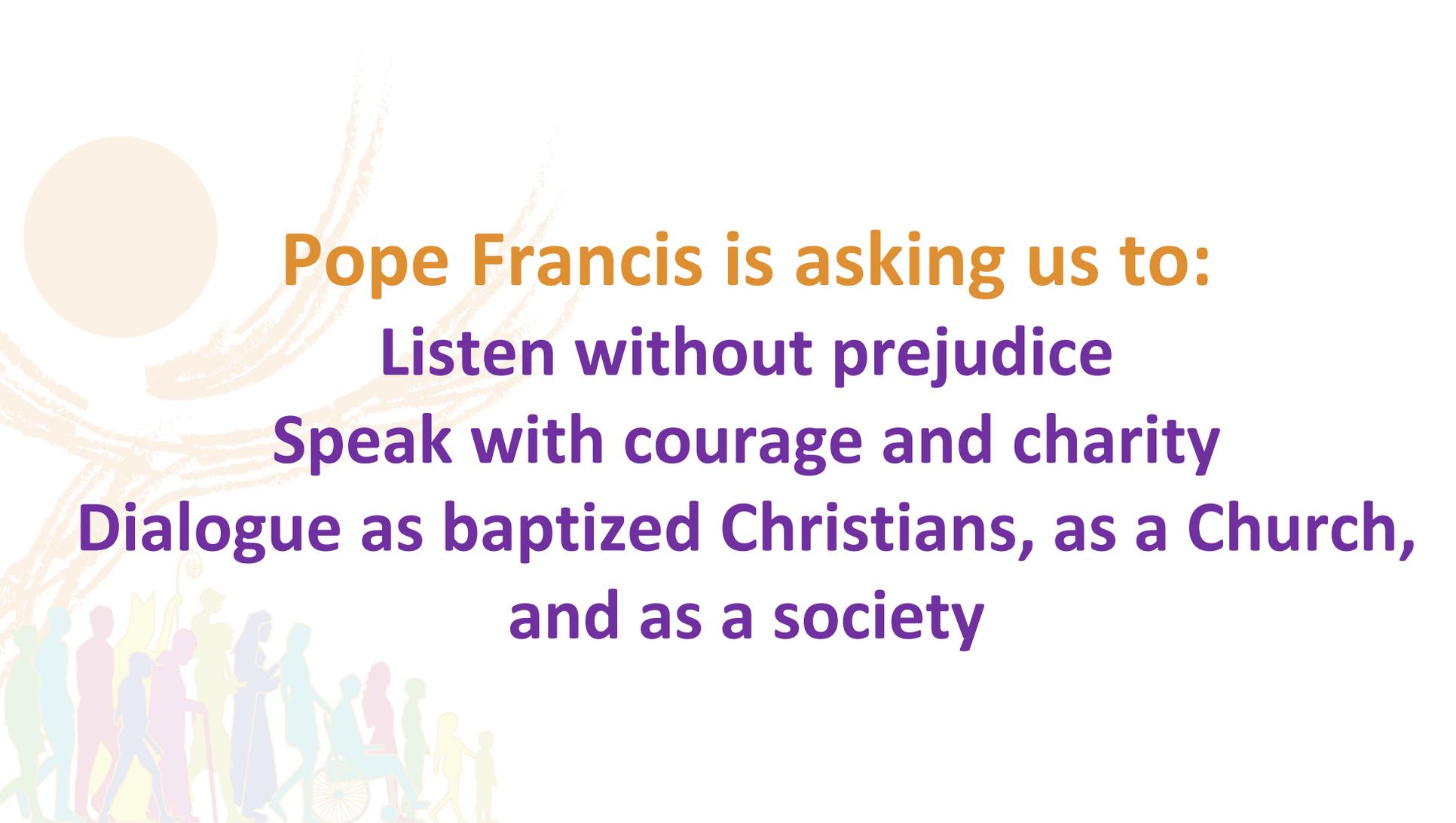
“What the Lord is asking of us is already in some sense present in the very word **“Synod.”** **Journeying together** – laity, pastors, the Bishop of Rome – is an **easy concept to put into words, but not so easy to put into practice.**”

Pope Francis, *Address at the Ceremony Commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops,  
October 17 2015*

# Communion, Participation and Mission

3 indispensable keys  
at the heart  
of a Synodal Church





**Pope Francis is asking us to:**

**Listen without prejudice**

**Speak with courage and charity**

**Dialogue as baptized Christians, as a Church,  
and as a society**

# ***Episcopalis Communio* emphasizes the local phase**

- ***Consultation of the People of God***

The consultation of the People of God takes place in the particular Churches

[...]

In each particular Church, the Bishops carry out the consultation of the People of God by recourse to the participatory bodies provided for by the law, without excluding other methods that they deem appropriate.

# The Diocesan Phase of the Synod

- **Dates:** From 7 October 2021 to 30 April 2022
- **Objectives:** Consultation of the People of God: to listen, participate, discern
- **How the consultation should be carried out:**
  - **Honestly:** the People of God are *truly* consulted
  - **As broadly as possible:** everyone participates, including those on the margins
  - **Practical:** provides concrete help for the mission to evangelize
- **Aids for the Diocesan Phase:**
  - Synodal Team coordinating this consultation (Training Coordinators Dec. 2 & 4)
  - Diocesan Assembly at the end of the consultation for communal discernment (March 2022)

# FOSTERING WIDE PARTICIPATION IN THE SYNODAL PROCESS

The goal is to ensure the participation of the greatest number possible, in order to listen to the *living voice of the entire People of God*.

- This is not possible unless we make special efforts to **actively reach out to people where they're at**, especially those who are often excluded or who are not involved in the life of the Church.
- There must be a clear focus on the **participation of the poor, marginalized, vulnerable, and excluded**, in order to listen to their voices and experiences.
- The Synodal Process must be **simple, accessible, and welcoming** for all.





## Unfolding of the Diocesan Phase

- **Those Responsible:**
  - *The People of God*, called to participate
  - *The Diocesan Bishop*, responsible for the discernment process
  - *The Synodal Team*, coordinates and animates
  - *Pastors*, responsible for enabling the participation from the parish level
- **Materials:**
  - The 5 Core Questions for the Diocese of Covington
  - Process for Facilitating Synod Consultations Manual
  - Online Survey at [www.covdio.org/synod](http://www.covdio.org/synod)
- **To Keep in Mind:**
  - This is not about responding to a questionnaire or random list of questions
  - All materials must foster dialogue and discernment

## Basic Question of the Synodal Process

A basic question prompts and guides us: How does this “journeying together,” which takes place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?

(PD, 2)

## The fundamental question for the consultation of the People of God

*A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together:” How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?*

(PD, 26)



## Core Questions for the Consultation Process in the Diocese of Covington

Read and think about the questions below. Please answer the questions honestly and know your comments will be received with an open heart and mind.

1. Who in the Catholic Church has walked with you on your faith journey? How?
2. How do the Mass, Church's ministries and activities inspire you in your daily life?
3. What do you think is the role of a Catholic Church member? How does the Church support members in carrying out their role?
4. In what ways does the Catholic Church listen to its members? Are there ways for people to be included and share their voices?
5. In what ways does the Catholic Church communicate with groups within our church, other faith communities, and our neighbors?



## Key convictions for a Synodal Church

- Listen to one another in order to listen to the Holy Spirit
- In a spirit of prayer, grounded in the liturgy and the Word of God
- An experience shared with one another, not just filling out a questionnaire
- A process, not a one-time event
- Discerning together so that the decisions made are for the good of all



# RESOURCES: Principal documents available at [www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va)

## Preparatory Document

- I. The Call to Journey Together
- II. A Constitutively Synodal Church
- III. Listening to the Scriptures
  - A. Jesus, the Crowd, the Apostles
  - B. A Double Dynamic of Conversion: Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10)
- IV. Synodality in Action: Pathways for Consulting the People of God

## Vademecum

- I. Introduction
- II. Principles of a Synodal Process
- III. The Process of the Synod
- IV. Travelling the Synodal Path in Dioceses
- V. Resources for organizing the Synodal Process

**+ Appendices, materials, and tools (biblical, liturgical, methodological, and practical resources, etc.)**

# Contact

---

**David Cooley**

Co-director/Office Manager, Catechesis and  
Evangelization

Phone: (859) 392-1592

dcooley@covdio.org

[www.covdio.org/synod/](http://www.covdio.org/synod/)





Thank you!