

# Synod 2021 – 2023:

For a synodal Church:  
communion, participation and mission

# PARISH WORKBOOK

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.



For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

Pope Francis has called for a Synod for October, 2023 with the theme *For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission*. The Pope said clearly: “the Synod is not a parliament or an opinion poll; the Synod is an ecclesial event and its protagonist is the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is not present, there will be no Synod.” (Opening Address, October 9, 2021)

Pope Francis invited the whole world to share reflections on “journeying together.” How are we to do that?

Our Holy Father said we are to encounter, to listen, and to discern.

We are to become experts in the art of encounter. Meeting, talking, and sharing with those around us.

We are to listen. True encounter arises only from listening. We may need to ask ourselves: Are we good at listening? How good is the “hearing” of our heart? Do we allow people to express themselves, to walk in faith even though they have had difficulties in life, and to be part of the life of the community without being hindered, rejected or judged? (Homily at Opening Mass of the Synod, October 10, 2021)

And, finally, we are to discern. To encounter and to listen are not ends in themselves, leaving everything as it was before. “The Synod is a process of spiritual discernment, of ecclesial discernment, that unfolds in adoration, in prayer and in dialogue with the word of God.” (Homily at Opening Mass of the Synod, October 10, 2021)

Each parish is invited to involve parishioners:

- To listen to one another.
- To share their thoughts.
- To pray for the Synod.

Gather your parishioners to share reflections on the theme of journeying together under the banner of communion, participation, and mission. The goal is “not to produce documents ... but plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, and allow hope to flourish...”

**Let the dreaming begin!**

## Fundamental Question

**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”?**

As you respond....

**Recall our experiences:** What experiences of our local Church does this question call to mind?

**Re-read these experiences in greater depth:** What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds did they reveal? What insights have they elicited?

**Gather the fruits to share:** Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound? What is the Spirit asking of us? What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for change, the steps to be taken? Where do we register a consensus? What paths are opening up for our local Church?

## Communion

In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road. How are we called to grow as companions? Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, or bold and forthright speaking; that is, in freedom, truth and charity.

**Who are those in the margins in our local community? How do we encounter them and listen to their voices? How does what we hear inform how we journey together?**

## **Participation**

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Vatican II, 1963) called all the faithful to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations. What has that come to mean in our post-pandemic church? Can we maintain participation without people at Sunday worship?

**Synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church in which all members are called to participate.**

## Mission

Sunday worship is the most visible aspect of our religion. The church's mission also includes service, evangelization, healing, and teaching.

Does our faith steer us when making decisions and weighing values?

Does it bring consolation? Does it challenge you to sacrifice?

Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation and ongoing learning.

**Above all the Church works for justice, peace and respect for all human life.**

## Synod Reflections

Please forward digital reflections to:

**SynodWorkbook@archchicago.org**

Please send written reflections to:

Synod Workbook

Cardinal Meyer Center

3525 South Lake Park Avenue

Chicago, IL 60653-1402

Please forward all responses by **April 1, 2022**.

Thank you for sharing.