



This October, the entire Church will enter into a **synod** unlike any other!! From 2021 to 2023, it will be a **journey of sharing, reflecting, and listening** at all levels across the entire Church!

The Holy Father will be meeting with Bishops from across the globe in 2023 to discuss ways of improving the process by which the church on all levels is open to hearing the voices of people from all walks of life.

What can I do to participate in the synod?

Please take a simple survey. The link to the survey can be found [here](https://forms.office.com/r/aPadVsPFt9):
<https://forms.office.com/r/aPadVsPFt9>

Hold on, what exactly is a synod?

A synod is a gathering, traditionally of bishops, that helps the Church to walk forward together in the same direction. The word “synod” comes from the Greek *syn-hodos*, meaning “the same way” or “**the same path.**” Synods were common in the first centuries of the Christianity, giving bishops the opportunities to meet and discuss issues of importance for the life of the Church.

In 1965, Pope Paul VI instituted the Synod of Bishops at the universal level of the Church. He wanted a way of continuing the **fraternal, collegial exchange** that had been **experienced at the Second Vatican Council**, where bishops from across the globe had gathered together between 1962 and 1965. Since then, synods have been organized every two or three years, bringing together bishops, experts, and various delegates to discuss topics like the Eucharist, the Word of God, the Middle East, the new evangelization, the family, young people, and the Amazon. In each case, bishops vote on a Final Document, then the pope writes his own text – called an “apostolic exhortation” – to **open new pathways and shed new light** on what was discussed at the synod, so that it can **radiate across the entire Church.**

What’s unique about this synod on synodality?

Unlike past synods, this one isn't about addressing a particular issue but about becoming who God calls us to be as a Church, all of us together, amidst the reality of today's world! The Synod starting in October 2021 is totally **unprecedented**, for at least three reasons.

1. It is no longer only a **one-month Synod of Bishops** but a **two-year synodal process for the entire People of God, all the baptized!** All are invited and no one is to be left behind or excluded!
2. It is a synod that aims on giving the entire Church a ***lived experience*** of synodality. It's not just about filling in a questionnaire, but gathering the fruits of what the Holy Spirit is saying to us here and now.
3. The aim of the synod is not just to talk *about* synodality, but to **put synodality into practice from now onwards**, in every diocese, parish, and country across the whole world. This calls all of us, at every level of the Church, to renew our way of being and working together moving forward.

So what is synodality anyways?

Fundamentally, synodality is about **journeying together**. This happens through listening to one another in order to hear what God is saying to all of us. It is realizing that the Holy Spirit can speak through anyone to help us walk forward together on our journey as the People of God.

The point is not that we take two years to understand some new buzzword that will soon fade. Synodality is no passing phase! Rather, "walking together" is at the heart of what the Church is all about, as the **People of God on pilgrimage** in the midst of the world. In the days of the early Church, Saint John Chrysostom said that for him "Church" and "synod" were synonyms, since the Church is all about walking together. In this sense, synodality is a way of renewing the Church from her deepest roots, in order to be more united with one another and better carry out our mission in the world. Concretely, being "synodal" is a way of being and a way of working that takes a more grassroots, collaborative approach, taking time to discern the path forward together. It highlights the fact that we all have something precious to contribute to the Body of Christ. In this way, a "synodal Church" is a Church that listens: "It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The lay faithful, the bishops, the pope: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:17), in order to know what He is saying to the Church" (Pope Francis, Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, October 17, 2015).

This will naturally call us to change our ways of doing things, in order **to become more and more who we truly are as a Church: walking together, amidst the entire human family humanity, guided by the Holy Spirit.**

So why a synod on synodality?

Yes, a "synod on synodality" may seem kind of like having a movie about movies or a book about books (or a dream within a dream for those who have seen the movie Inception). But don't worry, this isn't just some complicated mind trick. Rather, **it's an invitation for the whole Church to have our voices heard.**

We can only move forward if we work and walk together. **No Christian is an island!** Every limb and appendage is necessary in the Body of Christ!

Through this synod, the Church is saying: the voice of **EVERYONE** matters because God can talk though **ANYONE** -- not only bishops, priests, deacons, brothers, or sisters but **ALL OF US!** Pope Francis has stated that this collaborative, inclusive approach of synodality is precisely the **"the path that God expects of the Church in the third millennium."** This is truly a revolution of the Holy Spirit towards the Church that God is calling us to be for tomorrow, starting today!

Find out what's going on in your **diocese** and your **parish** to experience the Synod at a local level. Each diocese is called to facilitate local synodal meetings to involve all the faithful in this journey undertaken by the entire Church.

Of course, *synodality* is complicated to spell but it is even more challenging to put it into practice. This is the whole point of the two-year synod that the Church begins this October: helping the whole Church to walk forward together, united in the mission we share. This begins by paying attention to those who are often forgotten, excluded, or not listened to – hearing what God has to say to us through those we may ignore. ***The path to a Church that listens and walks together starts with you and me. Let's walk forward together!***

What can I do to participate in the synod?

Please take a simple survey. The link to the survey can be found [here](https://forms.office.com/r/aPadVsPFt9):
<https://forms.office.com/r/aPadVsPFt9>

Holy Spirit of God, lead the Church on our pilgrim path as we listen to You speaking through one another. Enkindle Your love in our hearts to walk forward together as a Church that accompanies all of humanity on our common journey to You.

Thank you for your participation!