**Synod 2021-2023 A Synodal Church**

Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on the theme of synodality that is decisive for its life and mission: “It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” This journey is both a gift and a task: by journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through Her experience which processes can help Her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open Herself to mission. Our “journeying together” is, in fact, what most effectively enacts and manifests the nature of the Church as the pilgrim and missionary People of God.

Cardinal DiNardo asks that every faithful participates in this synodal process by offering his/her experience of life in the church. The follow questions provide some concrete points. You are invited to answer one, a few or all of the questions. We suggest that you (1) pray to the Holy Spirit to be inspired and (2) share your experiences and thoughts.

**The Fundamental Question:**

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

**Part I: Communion**

**I. THE JOURNEYING COMPANIONS**

In the Church and in society, we are side by side on the same road. In your local Church, who are the ones “journeying together”?

 When we say: “our Church,” who are the members with whom we share Faith?

 Who are the road companions, including those outside the parish community?

 What persons or groups do we not consider part of our worshipping community?

**II. LISTENING**

Listening is the first step, but it requires having an

Open mind and heart, without prejudice.

 How are the Laity, especially young people and women, listened to?

 How do we integrate the contribution of Consecrated Men and Women?

 What difficulties and obstacles have you encountered in your parish journey??

 Do we identify prejudices and stereotypes that hinder our listening?

 How do we listen to the social and cultural context in which we live?

**III. SPEAKING OUT**

All are invited to speak with courage and parhesia, that is, integrating freedom, truth, and charity.

 How do we promote a free and authentic style of communication with the community and its organizations?

 How do we use the media system (not only Catholic media) work?

 Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?

**IV. CELEBRATING**

“Journeying together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.

 How do prayer and liturgical celebration inspire and direct our “journeying together”?

 How do we promote the active participation of all the Faithful in the liturgy and promote holiness?

 How do we inspire the faithful to participate in the ministries of reader and acolyte? The new ministry of the Catechist?

**Part II: Mission**

**V. CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION**

Synodality is at the service of the Church’s mission, in which all her members are called to participate.

 Since we are all missionary disciples, how is each Baptized person called to serve in the mission?

 What kind of change can build up the Church for today’s social and cultural context?

 How does the community support its members committed to service in society (social and political commitment, in scientific research and teaching, in the promotion of social justice, in the protection of human rights, and in caring for the Common home, etc.)?

 How is discernment about mission-related choices made, and who participates in it?

 How does collaboration work in parts of the Diocese that have very different ethnic and cultural customs and traditions?

 How can we discern together these “mission related” choices for the life of the church?

**VI. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

Dialogue is a path of perseverance that also includes silences and sufferings, but which is capable of gathering the experience of persons and peoples.

 What are the places and ways of speaking with each other within our parish community?

 What are the divisions, lack of vision, or conflicts, that make it difficult to share?

 How do we promote collaboration with neighboring parishes, with and among religious communities in the area, with and among lay associations and ecclesial movements, etc.?

 What experiences of dialogue and shared commitment do we have with believers of other religions and with non-believers?

 How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other areas of society: the world of politics, economics, culture, civil society, the poor…?

**VII. WITH THE OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS**

The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one Baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey.

 What relations do we have with the brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations?

 What areas do they concern?

 What are the difficulties?

**Part III: Participation**

**VIII. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION**

A synodal Church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.

 How do we identify the goals to be pursued, the way to achieve them, and the steps to be taken?

 How is authority exercised within our parish Church?

 What are the practices of teamwork and co-responsibility?

**IX. DISCERNING AND DECIDING**

In a synodal style, decisions are made through discernment, based on a consensus that flows from the common obedience to the Spirit.

 By what procedures and methods do we discern together and make decisions?

 How can they be improved?

 How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchically structured communities?

 How do we articulate the consultative phase in which the people of God express themselves with the deliberative one in which the Bishops, guided by the Holy Spirit, discern a decision?

 How and with what tools do we promote transparency and accountability?

 How are we all involved in decision making?

**X. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY**

The spirituality of journeying together is called to become an educational principle for the formation of the human person and of the Christian, of the families, and of the communities.

 What formation does the Church offer for discernment and commitment to our Baptizimal call?

 How do we form people, especially those who hold roles of responsibility within the Christian community, to make them more capable of “journeying together,” listening to one another and engaging in dialogue?

 What formation do we offer for discernment and the exercise of authority?

 What tools help us to read the dynamics of the culture in which we are immersed and their impact on our style of Church?