

SYNOD 2021—2023

Coming Soon: Listening Sessions at STM
Synod on Synodality: *Your place at the table*
Email your interest in participating: Listening@stmga.org



YOU ARE BEING CALLED

Pope Francis wants to hear from you about what is happening in our parishes and in the universal Church, and what you think we should all be doing to make them better. To get everyone's input, he is calling the entire Church to participate in a "synod" ('si-nəd), a process of consultation and listening rooted in the ancient Tradition of the Church. This is a big deal—a historic undertaking—and we don't want to let this opportunity pass us by. ***Our parish is conducting listening sessions (in person and virtual) as the first phase of this synod process. There is a place at this "table" waiting for you. We want to hear from you.***

OUR BASIC QUESTION IS: WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO OUR CHURCH TODAY?

This synod is a defining moment in the life and mission of the Church because its theme is not a particular issue or a certain group, as in previous synods. Instead, it is focused on the Church's specific way of living and operating together as Church. This way of being Church together—walking together on our common faith journey—is referred to as "synodality." When walking together, travelers see each other, listen to each other, and help each other along the way. The early Church learned to listen to the voices of the faithful—their fellow travelers on the Way of Christ—as it made decisions about which way the Church should go. The Church hasn't been very good at doing this kind of listening in recent centuries, so Pope Francis is calling it back to its roots with this question and this listening process. You are invited to participate in this process by sharing your experiences, listening to others, and listening for the Holy Spirit. ***Your prayerful participation in this process will help show the way forward for the Church.***

INPUT FROM THOSE ON THE MARGINS

Pope Francis has especially charged the Church with reaching out to those on the margins of the Church or society to invite them to share their experiences of our Church during the synod process. Their voices need to be heard by the Church, which may not have been listening to them before. Now it is listening, so ***please consider inviting friends or family members who have left the Church or have felt alienated or marginalized by the Church or society to share their experiences in listening sessions.***

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Input from all parishes and groups all over the world will be synthesized at the diocesan level, then at the country/regional level, and ultimately by the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October 2023. An implementation phase will follow.

THE JOURNEY IS ALSO THE DESTINATION

Throughout the process of the synod, the role of the Church is to listen and learn. As we reflect together upon our past and current experiences in our parishes and how God is calling us to be Church going forward, we will be participating in building not only the roadmap for the Church of the future, but the foundation of the road itself. The hope of Pope Francis is that the connections, relationships, understanding and new insights produced by the synod process itself will generate hope, inspiration, and renewed faith and energy for our common mission.

YOU ARE NEEDED

We can't do this without you. Pope Francis has invited everyone to participate in finding the way forward for the Church in the third millennium. We need your participation—and your invitations to others—in this effort. Please come, invite others, share bravely, and listen with an open heart. We pray the Spirit will lead the way. ***Please email your interest in participating to Listening@stmga.org.*** We will be in touch with more details.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

Visit www.stmgaparrish.org/synod to view all the online resources listed below.

The 2021-2023 Synod on Synodality: Key Documents

- **Preparatory Document:**
Outlines the meaning of synodality, theological resources for understanding and practicing synodality in Scripture and Tradition, and central themes to explore in “journeying together” through the synodal process.
- **Vademecum/Handbook:**
Guide to support the process of consultation, including methodological suggestions and examples from recent synodal processes, as well as liturgical, biblical, and prayer resources.
- **Synod Website:** www.synod.va/en.html
- **Archdiocese of Atlanta Resources:** archatl.com/synod/

Presentations/Podcast Resources:

- **La Civiltà Cattolica English Synodality Series**
You can find this free podcast on Google, Apple, Spotify, etc. The Synodality Series offers short, 20-minute conversations with theological and practical information about synodality.
- **The Tablet Webinar with Sr. Nathalie Becquart**
Sr. Natalie, who serves as the undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops, offers a brief, 14-minute explanation of synodality in light of the vision of Pope Francis.
- **“From Episcopal Collegiality to Ecclesial Synodality,” Dr. Massimo Faggioli**
Dr. Faggioli, a leading Church historian, offers a more in-depth 30-minute presentation on the historical development from Vatican II to our current moment of synodality. The presentation is followed by a longer Q&A.
- **“Walking Together: Pope Francis’ Vision for a Synodal Church,” Dr. Amanda Osheim:**
Dr. Osheim, a professor of practical theology, offers an hour-long, accessible introduction to synodality and Pope Francis’ desire to hear the Spirit at work among the People of God. The presentation is followed by a longer Q&A.

Articles: Brief explorations of key aspects of synodality

- **Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, explains the importance of the first diocesan phase**
- **Pope Francis’ Vision of Synodality**
Explains Pope Francis’ vision for the synod and the importance of listening to the Spirit.
- **A Closer Look at Synodality**
Dr. Hosffman Ospino interviews Dr. Rafael Luciani, one of the world’s leading experts on synodality.
- **Synodality: The Long Game**
Cardinal Joseph Tobin explores synodality as the mode for the Church’s conversion to truly walking with the People of God.

Key Theological Background: A deeper exploration of the theology of synodality.

- **Address of Pope Francis commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops (2015)**
In this five-page address, Pope Francis briefly explains the integral relationship between synodality and the *sensus fidei*, or the sense of the faith. He calls for a Church that listens and envisions the structure of the Church as an “inverted pyramid,” in which clerics serve and support the people of God.
- **International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” (2018)**
This twenty-five-page document provides a deeper theological engagement with synodality and its significance for the mission of the Church. The four chapters cover: 1) Synodality in Scripture, Tradition, and Church history; 2) The theology of synodality in light of Vatican II; 3) The structure of synodality at all levels in the Church; 4) The spiritual and pastoral conversion to listening and discernment necessary for synodality to characterize the Church.