



ARCHDIOCESE  
*of* MILWAUKEE

Facilitator Training – 2021-23 Synod on Synodality  
Archdiocese of Milwaukee



## Prayer

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.



## Synod on Synodality 2021-2023

### Overview:

- The Synod on Synodality is a two-year process of listening and dialogue.
- Began with a solemn opening by Pope Francis in Rome on October 9 and 10, 2021.
- Each individual diocese and church celebrated the opening the following weekend on October 17, 2021.
- The Synodal process will conclude in Rome in 2023.
- The theme for this synod is **“For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission.”**
- This international synod is about a journey of sharing, reflecting and listening on all levels across the Church.



## What's a Synod?

A Synod is a gathering, traditionally of bishops, that helps the Church 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 Christianity, giving bishops opportunities to meet and discuss issues of importance for the life of the Church.

In 1965, Pope Paul VI instituted the Synod of Bishops on the universal level of the Church. He wanted a way of continuing the fraternal, collegial exchange that happened at the Second Vatican Council, when bishops across the globe gathered between 1962 and 1965.

Ever since then, synods have been organized every two to three years, bringing together bishops, experts and various delegates to talk about topics like the Eucharist, the new evangelization, family, young people, and the Amazon.



## What happens at a Synod?

Synod gatherings begin with a prayer to the Holy Spirit, asking for guidance.

Synods involve a process of listening, discussing and consulting.

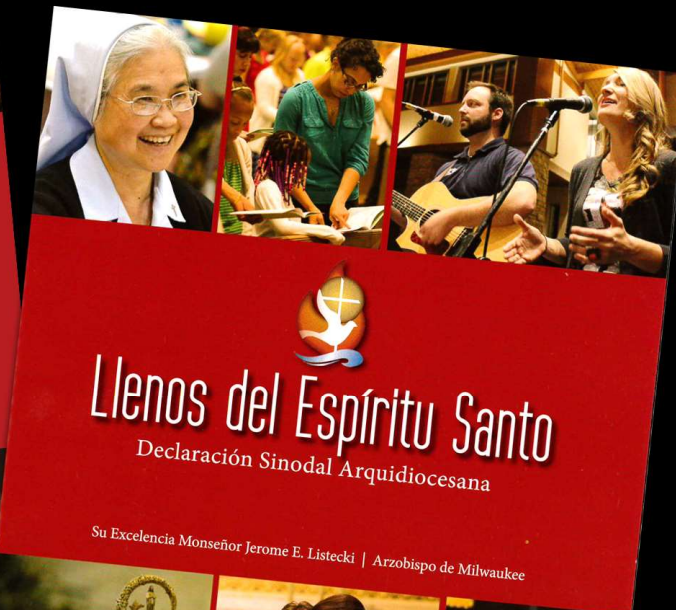
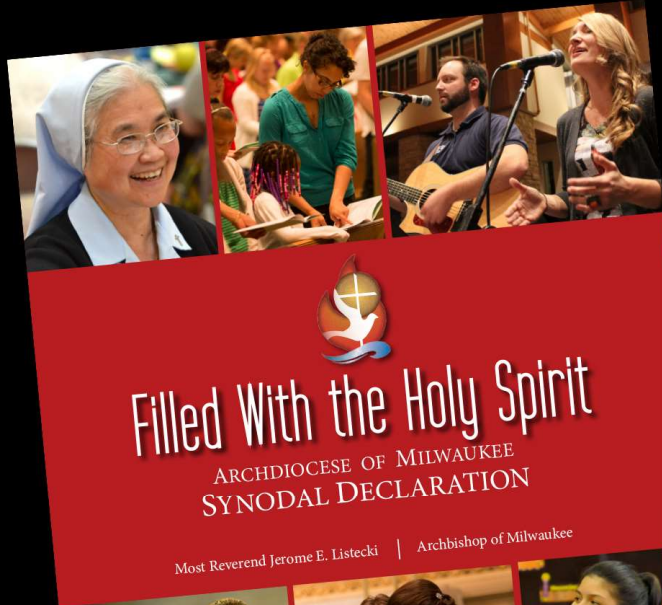
A document, often called the *instrumentum laboris* is drawn together to assist in the discussion.

Bishops vote on a final document.

The Holy Father then writes his own text, called an “apostolic exhortation” to open up and shed new light on what was discussed at the Synod, so that it can radiate across the entire Church.



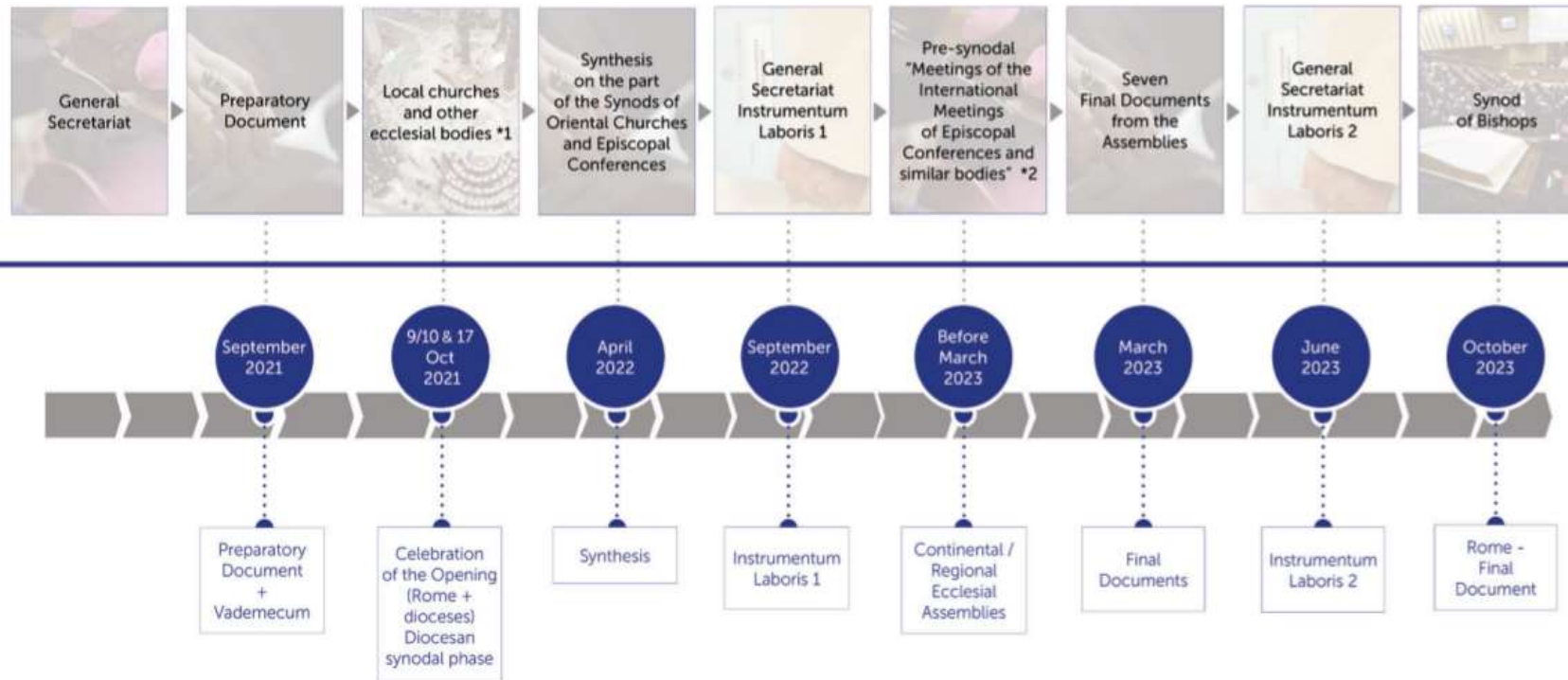
In Milwaukee, we know about Synods!





# Timeline and Process for the Worldwide Synod

## FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS



\*1 Dicastries, Consecrated Life (UISG-USG, UNIONS & FEDERATIONS), Associations of the Faithful, Institutions of Higher Education  
\*2 Africa (SECAM), Oceania (FCBCO), Asia (FABC), Middle East (CPCO), Europa (CCEE), Latin America (CELAM), North America (USCCB+CCCCB)



## Timeline and Process for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Beginning in January 2022, a process of consultation will begin.

There will be a mixture of:

- consultative gatherings with various groups
- discussions by various groups
- opportunities for individuals to submit feedback online

Consultation will take place between January 2022 – June 2022.

Feedback will be compiled in June of 2022.

A report, of no more than 10 pages, will be written and then submitted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by June 30, 2022. The USCCB will then compile a synthesis of the responses to the Vatican's General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops.





## What does “synodality” mean?

The 2021-2023 Synod is a “Synod on Synodality.”

**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.**

“Walking together” is at the heart of the Church.

Being “synodal” is a way of being and working together that begins at the roots in a collaborative approach, taking time to discern the path forward together, and recognizing that we all have something to contribute to the Body of Christ.

In this way, a “synodal Church” is a Church that listens.



## Synod on Synodality

So a “Synod on Synodality” is a time for us to discern how we walk together, and where and when the Holy Spirit is calling us to better walk together.

We will be praying about, listening to one another, discussing and discerning such questions as:

- *How is journeying together happening today in our parishes and diocese?*
- *What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?*
- *What experiences of our local Church does this question call to mind? What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds did they reveal? What insights have they revealed? Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound?*
- *What is the Spirit asking of us?*



# Synod on Synodality

Three overarching themes:

- Communion
- Participation
- Mission

Ten Specific themes:

- Companions on the Journey
- Listening
- Speaking Out
- Celebration
- Sharing Responsibility for our Common Mission
- Dialogue in Church and Society
- Ecumenism
- Authority and Participation
- Discerning and Deciding
- Forming Ourselves in Synodality



## Listening and Consultation in Parishes and Other Groups

We recognize that every parish and group is different and unique, with its own joys, strengths and limitations.

We warmly invite parishes and groups to engage in consultation, and then to submit their feedback to Susan McNeil for inclusion in the final report.

That consultation may take a number of forms, which could include:

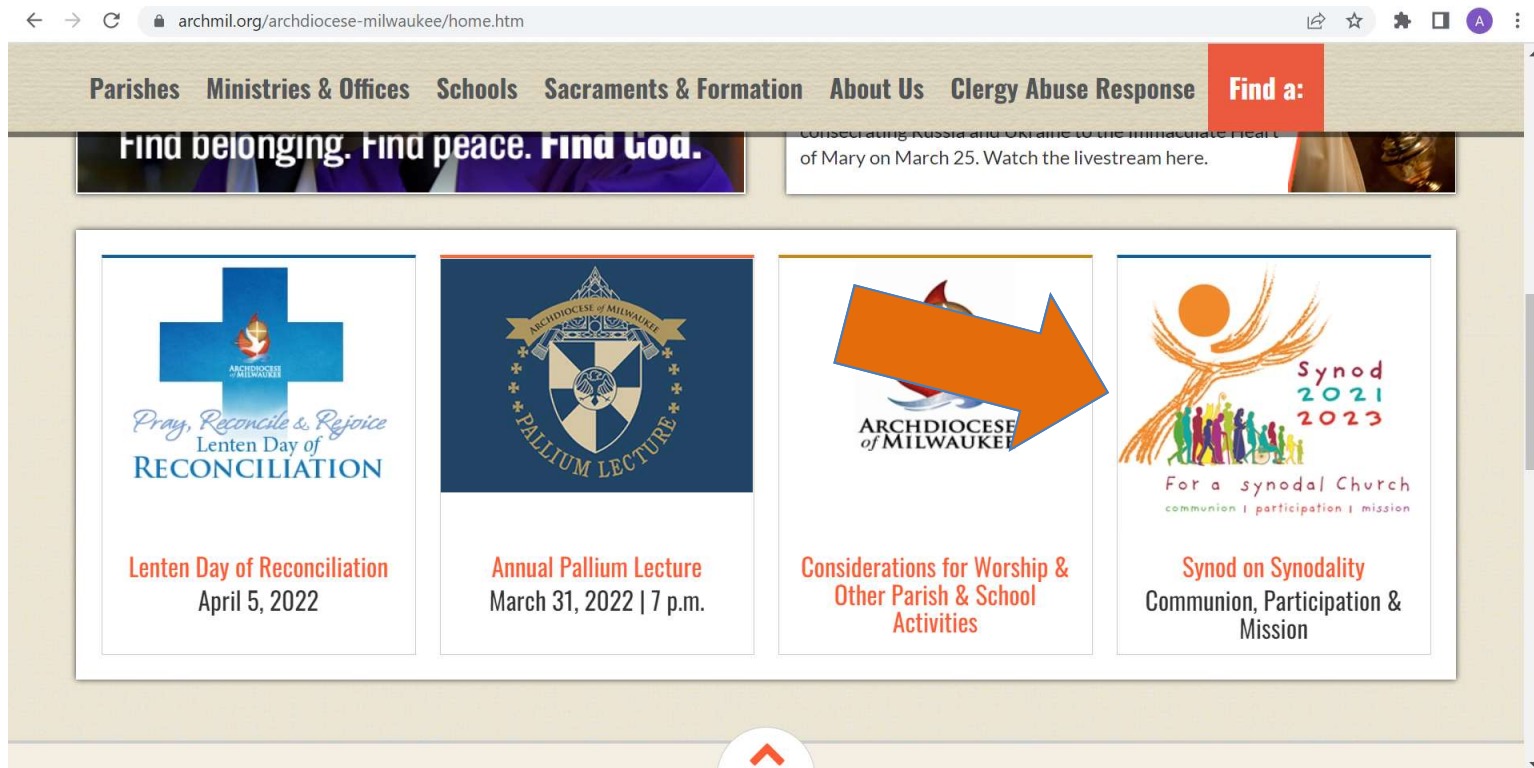
- Promoting participation through the online tools available on the archdiocesan website, and making paper copies of the instrument available for those who might not have access, or might not feel comfortable with an online tool
- Some parishes may wish to have large listening sessions
- Some parishes might wish to have small-group listening sessions, with either existing groups or groups formed for this specific purpose
- Some parishes might wish to reach out beyond their walls to others who are away from the Church, who are not Catholic, or who feel marginalized
- You are limited only by your creativity and resources



# Individual Participation

The online survey is available on the archdiocesan website:

[www.archmil.org](http://www.archmil.org)





## Individual Participation

### Brief Introduction to the Synod on Synodality

A description of what a Synod is, and what happens at a Synod.

A discussion of how consultation is taking place in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

A link to how an individual might participate in the Synodal process:

- As an individual
- In a parish consultation process
- In special group consultations, called for by Pope Francis in the Synodal documents



## Individual Participation

<https://www.archmil.org/About-us/Synod/Synodality/Participation.htm>

The link will then take them to the individual participation, which includes:

1. A message from Archbishop ListECKi
2. A request that they reach the Church's preparatory document, which is available in multiple languages
3. An invitation to pray the Synodal prayer
4. A survey, which asks:
  - Tell us about yourself
  - Tell us about your faith
  - Share your thoughts and ideas





## FAQ – Individual Participation

### **Do people have to give their names, email addresses and demographic information?**

No, but we appreciate any information that they provide.

### **Why are you asking those questions?**

We ask for the contact information so that we might follow up and share a link to the final report. We ask for demographic information so that the Holy Father and the bishops will have a deeper understanding of the needs and desires of groups of people. For example, it would be helpful for them to know the desires and concerns of young people, or people of color.

### **Does an individual have to answer every question?**

No. The more an individual is willing to share, the more information the Holy Father and the bishops will have. The more information they have, the better they can hear the voices of the People of God, and better discern the movement of the Holy Spirit.



## FAQ – Individual Participation

### **What happens to all of the feedback?**

All of the feedback will be compiled. The main report is limited to ten (10) pages, and will highlight themes from the feedback. We will attach an accompanying document which will include all of the responses we receive.

### **Will you share the feedback?**

Yes. A copy of the report will be made available on the archdiocesan website.



## Listening sessions and Group Consultation

Parishes and groups are welcome and warmly invited to participate in the Synod on Synodality. Every parish and group can structure this around what makes most sense for those they serve. You know your communities best.

Ideas for your parish or group:

- Promote the individual participation process, and encourage people to participate
- Reach out beyond those who are ordinarily in the pews:
  - Inactive Catholics
  - Non-Catholics
  - Those on the margins, who suffer, whose voices may not be heard
- Large group listening session
- Small group discussions



## Listening sessions and Group Consultation

Small or large group consultation process:

- Again, you know your communities best. Determine what method(s) of consultation best for your community
- Format:
  - If possible, have participants study the *Preparatory Document* ahead of the gathering
  - Begin with prayer
  - Give some context:
    - What is a Synod?
    - What is this Synod about? What's the focus?
    - Set some ground rules for discussion, so one voice doesn't dominate
    - The focus is on **listening**. This is not a time for debate, discussion, apologetics or argument. We are simply listening to the hearts of those gathered to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit



## Listening sessions and Group Consultation

### Ground Rules: Dialogue, Not Debate

Dialogue	Debate
Collaborative	Adversarial
Based on personal experiences	Based on issues and agendas
Seeks to listen and share	Seeks to correct, convince or win
Learns about and understands other perspectives	Looks for flaws in other perspectives

Use empathetic listening to words  
Be sensitive to differences in communication styles  
Ponder what you hear before you speak  
Examine your own assumptions and perceptions



## Listening sessions and Group Consultation

- Choose from the survey what questions you would like to ask, again, depending on what would best serve those you are listening to. You are free to adapt the questions, keeping in mind the fundamental question of the Synod on Synodality: How are we walking together?
- Have a note-taker at every table who compiles the comments in a “bullet point” format. The note-taker does not need to write down every word that is said, but should capture the essence of what was shared. This might be specific comments, or themes that emerge
- After the session, compile a synthesis of what was discussed at the session
- Please send all of the feedback to Susan McNeil at the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, [mcneils@archmil.org](mailto:mcneils@archmil.org) by **JUNE 1, 2022**



# Listening Sessions and Group Consultation

## Synthesis

The synthesis should “reflect the diversity of views and opinions expressed, and pay particular attention to the lived experiences of the participants, both positive and negative. The synthesis should be faithful to the people’s voices and to whatever emerged from their discernment and dialogue, rather than a series of generalized or doctrinally correct statements. Points of view that are contrary to one another need not be omitted, but can simply be acknowledged and stated as such. Views should not be excluded simply because they were expressed by a small minority of participants. Indeed, sometimes the perspective of what we could call the ‘minority report can be a prophetic witness to what God wants to say to the Church.” (Official Handbook, Appendix D)





## Listening sessions and Group Consultation

Pay attention to key words phrases, ideas and insights throughout the session. Look for repetition.

Include points that represent the experiences of non-dominant cultures.

Include and acknowledge view points and experiences that might be contrary.



# Listening sessions and Group Consultation

## Questions

- Fundamental Questions:
  - What does it mean for the Church to “journey together” in announcing the Gospel?
  - How does “journeying together” happen today in your community
  - What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in journeying together?
- Core Questions
  - Listening
  - Speaking Out
  - Shared Responsibility for Our Common Mission and Sharing Authority and Participation
  - Discerning and Deciding
  - Celebration
  - The Holy Spirit



## Listening Sessions and Group Consultation

Specific groups you are encouraged to listen to:

- Children
- Youth
- Elderly and Homebound
- Those imprisoned, or returning from incarceration
- The poor
- People and families with special needs
- The grieving
- The separated and divorced
- Those who have experienced trauma
- Persons of other religious traditions
- Those who are away from the Church
- Those in your Zip Code, your parish boundaries, your “mission territory,” or your sphere of influence who might not be in your pews or your programs



## What is expected of the Parish Facilitator?

The Parish Facilitator is the primary person who will run, or help to run, the listening process in the parish.

Parish Facilitators are asked to:

- View the parish facilitator training video
- Pray
- Read the *Vadamecum* and the Preparatory Document for the Synod
- Talk with the pastor or parish director to determine the best listening methods for the community
- Set up the listening encounters, in whatever format you choose. Some duties may include:
  - Scheduling space
  - Promoting and inviting
  - Arranging for coffee and water
  - Copying materials
- Facilitating any gatherings
- Compiling a synthesis of the responses
- Sending the synthesis, and any other feedback, to the archdiocesan Director of Synod Implementation, Susan McNeil by June 30, 2022.



## Trouble-Shooting

If someone dominates the discussion, learn the art of interruption:

- *That's a really good point. Let's hear from others.*
- *We haven't heard from everyone at the table. Let's hear from someone else.*
- *Dave, the time is short. Let me summarize what I'm hearing from you.*

If someone strays off topic:

- *That is an important topic, but our focus today is about how we are journeying together.*
- *I think we've gotten off track. Let's get back to the question.*
- *That's interesting. How does that relate to our question?*

If the discussion becomes too heated:

- Remind the participants of the purpose of the Synod. We are not here to debate but to listen.
- Be positive and constructive.



## Contact for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Susan McNeil

Director, Office for Synod Implementation

[mcneils@archmil.org](mailto:mcneils@archmil.org)

414-758-2214

*Many Hands. One Vision.*



# Catholic Stewardship Appeal

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

*This ministry is funded by the  
Catholic Stewardship Appeal.*