

FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH

Communion – Participation – Mission

THANK YOU for choosing to be part of this global synodal journey. Whether you are responding by yourself or as part of a group, we appreciate hearing from you.

Before you respond to the Synod questions, please refer to the Synod Booklet. This will help you understand the background for this Synod, as well as the suggested process for reflecting and responding.

The Synod poses **one fundamental question**, followed by ten themes which highlight significant aspects of our 'lived synodality' (PD, 30). In responding to these questions, it is helpful to remember that "journeying together" occurs in two deeply interconnected ways. First, we journey together with one another as the People of God. Next, we journey together as the People of God with the entire human family. These two perspectives enrich one another and are helpful for our common discernment towards deeper communion and more fruitful mission.

Your response can cover all the themes, just one theme or a selection of them. The questions accompanying each of the following ten themes can be used as a starting point or helpful guideline as you reflect on the fundamental question. Your response to the theme should not be limited by the questions.

Refer to the back page to see how you can submit your response.

Thank you for your participation!

While the following questions are not mandatory, they would provide us with helpful information. Please tick what is applicable to you:

Age Group Under 18 18-30 30-50 50-65 Over 65

Ethnicity Māori NZ European Pacific Asian

Middle Eastern/African Latin American Other European

How would you describe your involvement in the Church?

Very Involved

Involved

No longer involved

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION



The Synod poses the following 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”?

In order to respond, we are invited to

a) **RECALL OUR EXPERIENCES:**

Ask ourselves, what experiences in our local Church come to mind when we talk about journeying together?

b) **REREAD THESE EXPERIENCES MORE DEEPLY:**

What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they involved? What hurts has the journey involved? What insights have emerged?

c) **GATHER THE FRUITS TO SHARE:**

Where, in these experiences, can the Spirit be heard or seen? What is the Spirit asking of us? What are we doing well? What needs to change? What steps do we need to take? Where do we agree? What paths are opening up for us?

[Click here to respond](#)

TEN THEMES OF LIVED SYNODALITY

Questions to guide your reflection

1. THE JOURNEYING COMPANIONS

In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road. In our local Church, who are those who “walk together”? When we say, ‘our Church,’ who is part of that? Who wants to journey with us? What groups or individuals are being left behind or lost from view?

[Click here to respond](#)

2. LISTENING

Listening is the first step - it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. Who do we need to hear from? How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore? How are lay people heard, especially women and young people? What helps or prevents our listening? How well do we listen to those on the peripheries and those with whom we disagree? What space is there for the voice of minorities, the discarded, and the excluded? What prejudices and stereotypes prevent our listening? How do we listen to the social and cultural context in which we live?

[Click here to respond](#)

3. SPEAKING OUT

Everyone is invited to speak boldly and courageously in freedom, truth, and love.

What helps or hinders us to speak out responsibly in our local Church and in society? When and how do we manage to say what is important to us? How are our relationships with the media? Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community and how are they chosen?

[Click here to respond](#)

4. CELEBRATING

“Walking 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 celebrations inspire and guide our common life and mission? How might liturgical celebrations fail to do this? How do they inspire the most important decisions? How do we promote the active participation of everyone in the liturgy?

[Click here to respond](#)

5. SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MISSION

Synodality (“walking together”) serves the mission of the Church, in which we are all called to participate. As missionary disciples, how is every baptised person called to participate in that mission? What stops us from being active in mission? How does our community support those of us who serve society in so many ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, education, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, caring for the environment, etc.)? How could we better support each other to live out our service to society in a missionary way?

[Click here to respond](#)

6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it enables mutual understanding. How do diverse peoples in our community gather for dialogue? What are the places and means of dialogue within our local Church? How do neighbouring parishes, communities and dioceses work with each other? What issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to? What experiences of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other religions and with those who have no religious connection? How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society: politics, economics, culture, civil society, and those who live in poverty?

[Click here to respond](#)

7. 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 relationship does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions and denominations? What do we share and how do we journey together? What fruits have we drawn from walking together? What are the difficulties? How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?

[Click here to respond](#)

8. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

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

How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to reach them, and the steps to be taken? How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church? How are teamwork and co-responsibility practiced? How are things evaluated and who does this? How do we promote lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people? Are 'synodal bodies' effective at the level of the local Church (Parish and Archdiocesan Pastoral Councils, etc.)? How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?

[Click here to respond](#)

9. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

In a synodal style we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community. What methods and processes do we use in decision-making? How can they be improved? How do we promote participation in decision-making within the Church's hierarchical structure? Do our decision-making methods help us to listen to the whole People of God? What is the relationship between consultation and decision-making, and how do we put these into practice? What tools and procedures do we use to promote transparency and accountability? How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?

[Click here to respond](#)

10. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and on-going learning. How does our church community form people to be more capable of “walking together,” listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue? What formation is offered to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in this synodal way?

[Click here to respond](#)

TO SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE:

Please submit your response by **SUNDAY 12th DECEMBER 2021**.

This can be done by:

Emailing it to synod@wn.catholic.org.nz

Posting it to: Office of the Archbishop, Archdiocese of Wellington
Catholic Centre, PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140

Dropping it in to reception at the Catholic Centre, 22 Hill Street, Thorndon.

We thank you for your participation!

“What characterizes a synodal path is the role of the Holy Spirit. We listen, we discuss in groups, but above all we pay attention to what the Spirit has to say to us. That is why I ask everyone to speak frankly and to listen carefully to others because there, too, the Spirit is speaking. Open to changes and new possibilities, the Synod is for everyone an experience of conversion.”

Pope Francis, “Let Us Dream”, 2020

