

Approaches that Enable Genuine Listening and Dialogue as We Participate in the Synodal Process

- We are invited to speak with authenticity and honesty. Everyone can grow in understanding through dialogue.
- We can often be resistant to what the Holy Spirit is inspiring us to consider. We are called to set aside attitudes of complacency and comfort.
- Move forward with the conviction of faith. We are called to be beacons of hope, not prophets of doom.
- Keep in mind that Synodality is a spiritual process led by the Holy Spirit. We are pilgrims & servants on the path marked out for us by God.
- Avoid the temptation to focus solely on personal concerns. The Synodal Process is an opportunity to look beyond ourselves and see the needs and concerns of others.
- Avoid the temptation to only see "problems." The challenges, difficulties, and hardships facing our world and our Church are many. We can miss the light if we focus only on the darkness.
- Don't take any comment personally. Everyone is doing their best given the circumstances.
- As we proceed along the journey of the Synod, keep in mind that the goal is to discern how God calls us to walk forward together. No one Synodal Process will resolve all our concerns and problems.
- Remember that Synodality is an attitude and an approach of moving forward in a co-responsible way that is open to welcoming God's inspiration over time.

AT LEAST TWO FRUITS WILL RESULT FROM THIS SYNODAL PROCESS:

First, our pastors and bishops will have the opportunity to listen carefully to what the People of God have to say about our local Church, which will allow them, in turn, to discern what the Holy Spirit wants from all of us here and now. Pope Francis will do the same in 2023 when the Synod on Synodality takes place in Rome.

Second, we will all have the opportunity to experience the joy that comes from meeting with our brothers and sisters in Christ, learn more about each other, and discover through such an encounter what God wants from each one of us, our parishes, and organizations here and now.

TO BEGIN THE PROCESS, WE ARE INVITED TO REFLECT ON TWO QUESTIONS THAT THE VATICAN HAS PROPOSED:

1. A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "*journeys together*." How is this "*journeying together*" happening today in your local Church?
2. What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "*journeying together*"?

Before we begin our dialogue, you will notice that both questions are centered on the idea of "*journeying together*", which for this process can be summarized in three steps:

1. Listening & sharing
2. Understanding what God wants—What is meant when we talk about "*discernment*"
3. Acting as Missionary Disciples as we serve one another in the name of Christ

As you move forth in your conversation with others, remember that if we open ourselves up to the action of the Spirit, this listening and sharing exercise will have a transformative effect in our lives and the life of our Church.

After your dialogue on the first two questions, your table group will have the opportunity to choose two of the ten possible themes the Vatican has proposed to help explore the previous questions more fully. Make your choices by group consensus.

You may wish to write down your own personal and common discoveries, so that you can benefit from all the discussions that will be taking place throughout our Archdiocese in the coming months. You may be asked to participate in more than one Synodality dialogue.

Please begin your discussions. You will have 15 minutes for each question.