

Ten Possible Themes

To help us explore the **Reflection Sheet Questions** more fully, the Vatican has provided the following ten themes for consideration. The questions accompanying each of them are not necessarily to be answered individually, but can be used as a guide for your discussions.

1. COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

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*”? Who are those who seem further apart? How are we called to grow as companions? What groups or individuals remain on the margins and what can we do to include them?

2. LISTENING

Listening requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore? What facilitates or inhibits our listening? Do we listen to those who have views different from our own? What space is there for the voice of those who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?

3. SPEAKING OUT

All are invited to speak with courage, freedom, truth, and charity. What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and in society? When and how do we manage to say what is important to us? Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?

4. CELEBRATION

“*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 actually inspire and guide our common life and mission in our community? How do they inspire the most important decisions? How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?

5. SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION

Synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all members are called to participate. Since we are all missionary disciples, how is every baptized person called to participate in the mission of the Church? What hinders the baptized from being active in mission? What areas of mission are we neglecting?

6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding. What are the places and means of dialogue within our local Church? How are divergences of vision, or conflicts and difficulties addressed? What particular 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 affiliation? How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society: the spheres of politics, economics, culture, civil society, and people who live in poverty?

7. ECUMENISM

The dialogue between Christians of different denominations, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey. What relationships 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?

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 put into practice? How are evaluations conducted and by whom? How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted? How do synodal bodies function at the level of the local Church (Pastoral Councils in parishes and dioceses, Presbyteral Council, etc.)? How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?

9. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

Synodality is exercised in making 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 hierarchical structures? 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?

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 a synodal way?

Discuss Two of the Ten Themes

This section is ***optional*** and should not substitute the main ***Reflection Sheet Questions***.

Theme # _____



Theme # _____
