

Synod Questionnaire

The theme of the 2023 World Synod of Bishops (known as Synod) is to reflect on whether it was a Church that journeys together. This is the original meaning of the word “synod.” What is your experience of the Catholic Church? Is it a church that journeys with you? Please tell us what you think about it. If you have not received the materials yet, please do so.

For a Church that Journeys Together: Fellowship, Participation, and Mission About the 16th Synod

Pope Francis has announced that the 16th Synod of Bishops will be held in Rome in October 2023. The theme is "For a Church Journeying Together: Fellowship, Participation, and Mission.

"Synod" is a Greek word meaning "to journey together" and refers to a gathering of bishops who meet at certain times. It was established by Pope Paul VI in 1965 to maintain the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, in which the bishops of the world were to journey with the Pope.

Previous Synods have dealt with themes such as the New Evangelization, the family, youth, and the Amazon, but this time the theme is truly "Synodality" as a way of the Church journeying together. It is a process of exploring how to be in communion as a "church that walks journey," how to participate together in the diversity of community, and how to better serve the mission of mission.

By Pope Francis' intention, the journey of this Synod is a shared journey, and the sharing and reflection that begins at the diocesan level is an important part of the Synod, a journey toward the future.

The work we are about to begin is the first step in this process, sharing the ten themes prepared by the Vatican and summarizing them for the Diocese of Osaka by January 2022. We will share the 10 themes prepared by the Vatican and finalize them by April 2022. The second phase will begin in the fall of 2022 with work at the regional and continental levels, and the final phase will be held in Rome in October 2023. The final step will be the Synod Assembly in Rome in October 2023. The Pope's Apostolic Exhortation, based on the results of the Synod, will be issued about one year after this General Assembly.

At the same time, we would like to make use of the synodal process for the Osaka Diocese in the future.

We pray that through the sharing of preparations, we will be able to build on the Synodal experience of the Church and become a Church that is moving toward the evangelization of the 21st century.

Osaka Diocesan Synod Team

October 27, 2021

Prayer for the Synod: Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

Every session of the Second Vatican Council began with the prayer *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*, the first word of the original Latin, meaning, “We stand before You, Holy Spirit,” which has been historically used at Councils, Synods and other Church gatherings for hundreds of years, and is attributed to Saint Isidore of Seville (c. 560 - 4 April 636). As we embrace this Synodal Process, this prayer invites the Holy Spirit to be at work in us so that we may be a community and a people of grace. For the Synodal journey from 2021 to 2023, we propose to the following simplified version,¹ so that any group or liturgical assembly can pray it more easily.

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.

¹ The original version of the *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus* can be found on the Synod website. (www.synod.va)



The large tree in the background of this logo stretches toward the sky, full of wisdom and light. It is a sign of deep vitality and hope, representing the cross of Christ.

This "tree of life" carries the Eucharist, which shines like the sun. The horizontal branches, open like hands and wings, simultaneously suggest the Holy Spirit.

The people continue to walk, as the etymology of the word synod, meaning "to walk together," suggests. God's people are not standing still. They begin to walk together, united by the power that comes from this Tree of Life. This silhouette represents the diversity of all humanity. Children, youth, elderly, men, women, believers, laity, families, singles, healthy people, and people with disabilities. It is further emphasized by the bright colors, a sign of joy. Bishops and religious are not at the front, but among the people. Quite naturally, it is the children and youth who are in the forefront. It is the children and young people who naturally take the lead, saying, "Father, Lord of heaven and earth, we praise you. "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, but have shown them to those who are like little children. I am reminded of the words of Jesus.

An introduction to the significance and objectives of Synod

The Secretariat of the Pontifical Council for Synod has issued preparatory documents and a guide for this purpose. The full text can be found on the website of the Central Council, but here are some excerpts to introduce the significance and aims of the Synod.

It reminds us of the context in which the Synod is being held. Some examples are pandemics, regional and international conflicts, the increasing impact of climate change, migrants, various forms of injustice, racism, violence, persecution, and growing inequality across humanity. In the Church, too, there is a background of suffering experienced by minors and vulnerable groups 'due to sexual abuse, power harassment and moral harassment by too many clergy and consecrated persons. ...In this context, the Synodality shows the way for the Church to be renewed by the work of the Holy Spirit and to listen together to what God has to say to his people. But as we journey together, we are not only bound more deeply to one another as God's people, but we are also sent to pursue our mission as a prophetic witness that encompasses the

entire human family, along with our fellow Christians and other faith traditions.

How is this "journeying together" taking place today at various levels (from the local to the global) so that the Church can proclaim the Gospel? And what steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to grow as a Synodal Church?"

The purpose of this Synod is for the people of God as a whole to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church. "The purpose of this Synod is for the people of God as a whole to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church, to listen together to the Word of God in the Bible and the living biography of the Church, and also to listen to one another, especially those on the margins, to discern the signs of the times.

The Synodal Church moves forward in fellowship to pursue a common mission through the participation of each of its members."

It is about providing an opportunity for the whole people of God to discern together how to move forward on the path to becoming a more synodical church in the long term."

The ten questions for reflection and sharing "are to facilitate a broad listening process to gather the treasure of the Synodality experience." In doing so, "it becomes fundamentally important to find a space not only for the voices of those who have some role or responsibility in the Church, but also for those who are poor and excluded."

The purpose of the preparatory phase experience, the guide says, is to have a significant impact on the way parishes are organized. The diocesan phase is an opportunity for parishes and dioceses to encounter, experience and live the Synod journey together, thus discovering and developing the Synodal methods and paths that are most appropriate to their local circumstances, and which will ultimately become the new way of life of the local Church on the Synodal path. It will ultimately become a new way of life for the local church on the Synodal path. ...I hope that in the course of the process and for the future, the practice and experience of 'becoming synodical' will be promoted and developed."

As this Synod aims to promote a new way of life, living the fellowship, participation and mission of the Church, the implementation phase is important in order to move forward together on the path of Synodality. This implementation is intended to reach all the local churches of the world, and the process of this Synod has the entire People of God as its point of departure and destination."

<https://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/wp->

[content/uploads/2021/10/16synod_vademecum_jp20211012.pdf](#)) In Japanese

The Catholic Church in Japan is also seeking renewal as a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). As a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Catholic Church in Japan began to seek renewal. In particular, Pope John Paul II's visit to Japan in 1981 led to the publication of the 1983 In 1987, the First National Conference for the Promotion of Evangelical Mission (NICE-1) was held in Kyoto, where 14 proposals in many areas were adopted. Fourteen proposals were adopted. Later, in 1993, the Second National Conference for the Advancement of Gospel Mission (NICE-2) was held in Nagasaki with the theme of "Family", and various concrete moves toward renewal began. The word "together" was used here and there to indicate the direction of the Church in Japan. In response to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995, the Osaka Diocese also started a movement for church renewal called the "Renewal Plan. Fellowship" and "witness" were the mottoes of this renewal plan. I would like to confirm that the Synod's goal of a church that "journeys together" overlaps with the progress we have made in recent decades.