



The Synod on Synodality to discern

# Where is the Holy Spirit leading the church today?

Listening to the Spirit speaking to and through all God's people.

You are invited to

1. Consider the information below, especially the **Ten Themes**
2. Speak what the Spirit puts on your heart regarding these either by
  - A. Attending a listening session
  - OR
  - Offering your input online→



## Q&A

### WHAT IS A SYNOD?

Synod is an ancient and venerable word that indicates the path along which the People of God walk together. Synodality denotes the particular style that qualifies the life and mission of the Church, expressing her nature as the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel.

### WHO HAS CALLED US TOGETHER?

By convening this Synod, Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: "It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium."

### WHY NOW?

A global pandemic, local and international conflicts, growing impact of climate change, migration, various forms of injustice, racism, violence, persecution, and increasing inequalities across humanity.

### WHAT IS THE END GOAL?

To listen, as the entire People of God, to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church.

## Listening Sessions at St. Thomas More

St. Thomas More will be hosting several Listening Sessions, each lasting approximately 1 ½ hours.

Participants will choose three themes to reflect on and discuss. To help prepare, we invite you to familiarize yourself with the ten themes listed below.

## Zoom session

Wednesday, February 9, 7-8:30p.m. RSVP David at [dbutel@stmkc.com](mailto:dbutel@stmkc.com)

**In person** Sunday, February 20, 10:15 - 11:45a.m. in More Hall.

## 10 THEMES

*To prepare yourself to participate, please listen for the Spirit as you pray over the following..*

### 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 are left on the margins?

### 2 LISTENING

Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore? How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people? What facilitates or inhibits our listening? How well do we listen to those on the peripheries? How is the contribution of consecrated men and women integrated? What are some limitations in our ability to listen, especially to those who have different views than our own? What space is there for the voice of

minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?

### 3 SPEAKING OUT

All are invited to speak with courage and in 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? How does the relationship with the local media work in our community (not only Catholic media)? 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

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decisions? How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy? What space is given to participating in the ministries of lector and sacristan?

## 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? How does the community support its members who serve society in various ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, education, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, caring for the environment, etc.)? How does the Church help these members to live out their service to society in a missionary way? How is discernment about missionary choices made and by whom?

## 6 DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding. To what extent do diverse peoples in our community come together for dialogue? What are the places and means of dialogue within our local Church? How do we promote collaboration with neighboring dioceses, religious communities in the area, lay associations and movements, etc.? 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, civic society and people who live in poverty?

## 7 ECUMENISM

The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, 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 coresponsibility put into practice? How are evaluations conducted and by whom? How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted? Have we had fruitful experiences of synodality on a local level? 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

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 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? What tools and procedures do we use to promote transparency and accountability? How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?

## 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?

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### *Prayer to the Holy Spirit*

*Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus*

*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.*

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