



Synod: Questions & Answers

1. What is a Synod?

A Synod is a moment when the Church deliberately pauses to listen, pray, and discern together. It is not simply a meeting or a conference, but a spiritual process rooted in faith that the Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church today. In a Synod, we ask not only “What do we think?” but more importantly, “What is God asking of us at this moment in our mission?”

2. Where does the word “Synod” come from?

The word *Synod* comes from the Greek *syn-hodos*, meaning “walking together on the road.” This reminds us that the Christian life is never meant to be lived alone. Faith is a shared journey, where we support one another, listen to one another, and discern together how best to follow Christ.

3. Synodality is not new

Synodality is not a modern invention. From the earliest days of the Church, Christians gathered to pray, listen, and discern together. In the Acts of the Apostles, the Church faced difficult questions and resolved them not through power struggles, but through prayer, dialogue, and trust in the Holy Spirit.

4. A Synod is not a parliament

The Church is not a democracy where truth is decided by majority vote. A Synod is not about winning arguments or pushing agendas. Instead, it is a spiritual process of listening deeply—to God, to Scripture, to tradition, and to one another—so that decisions are shaped by faith and mission, not ideology.

5. Why listening matters in the Church

Listening is not a sign of weakness. In the Christian tradition, listening is an act of humility and faith. We believe that God can speak through the experiences, joys, and struggles of His people. Synodality reminds us that listening is a form of love and a path to wisdom.

6. Who participates in a Synod?

A Synod involves the whole People of God: bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and lay faithful. Each has a distinct role, but all share responsibility for the Church's mission. Synodality does not blur roles—it helps each vocation flourish in service of the Gospel.

7. Synodality and bishops

Bishops remain shepherds and teachers of the faith. Synodality does not weaken their authority; rather, it enriches their ministry by grounding leadership in prayerful listening and communal discernment. A bishop who listens walks more closely with his people, as Christ the Good Shepherd does.

8. Synodality and priests

For priests, synodality is not an added burden but a way of exercising ministry in communion. When priests foster listening and participation, parishes become more alive, missionary, and joyful. The priest presides at the Eucharist, but the whole community contributes to the Church's mission.

9. Synodality and the laity

Synodality affirms that the Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of all the baptised. Lay people are not simply helpers of clergy; they are active disciples called to witness to Christ in families, workplaces, and society. A synodal Church takes this vocation seriously.

10. Synodality is about mission

The purpose of synodality is not internal reform for its own sake. Its goal is evangelisation—helping the Church become more faithful, more welcoming, and more effective in proclaiming the Gospel to today's world.

11. What synodality is NOT

Synodality is not about changing doctrine according to popular opinion. The faith handed down through the centuries is not negotiable. What synodality seeks to renew is how we live, communicate, and embody that faith in changing times.

12. Synodality and unity

Walking together does not mean everyone thinks the same way. The Church has always held unity alongside diversity. Synodality helps us learn how to disagree respectfully, discern patiently, and remain united in Christ even amid differences.

13. Why discernment is essential

Discernment is more than discussion. It is a prayerful process of seeking God's will. In a Synod, time is given to silence, prayer, and reflection so that decisions emerge from faith, not haste.

14. Synodality begins locally

Synodality is lived first in parishes, schools, families, and communities. When people feel heard and valued locally, the Church becomes more credible and more missionary.

15. A listening Church is a credible Church

In a world where many feel ignored or dismissed, a Church that listens becomes a sign of hope. Synodality teaches us that listening can heal wounds and rebuild trust.

16. Synodality and the margins

A synodal Church pays attention to voices often overlooked: the poor, the wounded, the disaffected, and those who feel distant from the Church. Their experiences matter, and their stories can teach us where renewal is most needed.

17. Synodality requires humility

Walking together means recognising that no one has all the answers. Synodality invites humility—from leaders and from communities—so that the Spirit can guide us beyond our limitations.

18. Is synodality slow?

Synodality may seem slower than top-down decision-making, but it often leads to deeper, more lasting renewal. What is discerned together is more likely to be embraced together.

19. Synodality and joy

When people are invited to participate meaningfully, joy increases. A synodal Church is not weighed down by bureaucracy but energised by shared mission.

20. Synodality and the Eucharist

The Eucharist is the heart of synodality. Around one table, many are gathered as one Body. What we celebrate sacramentally must shape how we live communally.

21. Why the Church is embracing synodality now

The call to synodality is a response to the signs of the times. In a fragmented world, God calls the Church to witness communion, dialogue, and hope.

22. Synodality is a conversion

True synodality requires conversion of hearts, attitudes, and sometimes structures. It asks us to let go of habits that no longer serve the mission.

23. Synodality and leadership

Leadership in a synodal Church is not about control but about service. Leaders create spaces where gifts can emerge and flourish.

24. Synodality and trust

Trust grows when people know their voices matter. Synodality helps rebuild trust within the Church and between the Church and society.

25. Synodality is demanding

Walking together takes patience, time, and effort. But the Gospel has never promised an easy path—only a fruitful one.

26. Synodality and the Holy Spirit

At the heart of synodality is trust in the Holy Spirit. Without prayer, synodality becomes mere strategy. With prayer, it becomes a path of grace.

27. Synodality and Scripture

From Abraham's journey to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Scripture is full of stories of God walking with His people. Synodality places us within that biblical story.

28. Why participation matters

Participation helps people move from being passive recipients to active disciples. This deepens faith and strengthens mission.

29. Synodality is not uniformity

Different cultures, communities, and parishes will live synodality in different ways. Unity does not require sameness.

30. Synodality and hope

A synodal Church believes that renewal is possible, even in difficult times. Hope is not naïve optimism—it is trust in God's faithfulness.

31. Synodality and young people

Young people long to be heard and taken seriously. Synodality invites the Church to listen attentively to their questions and hopes.

32. Synodality and families

Families are schools of synodality, where listening, patience, and forgiveness are lived daily. The Church learns synodality from family life.

33. Synodality and mission beyond the Church

A synodal Church listens not only inwardly but outwardly, engaging respectfully with society and culture.

34. Synodality prevents isolation

When leaders and communities walk together, no one carries the burden alone. Synodality builds shared responsibility.

35. Synodality and courage

Listening honestly may reveal uncomfortable truths. Synodality requires courage to face them with faith.

36. Synodality is a long journey

A Synod is not a one-time event. Synodality is a way of life that unfolds over time.

37. Synodality and renewal

Renewal does not come from programs alone but from transformed relationships. Synodality nurtures those relationships.

38. Synodality and mercy

Listening with compassion reflects the mercy of Christ, who always began with encounter.

39. Synodality invites responsibility

Being heard also means being responsible for the Church's mission.

40. Synodality and prayer

Without prayer, synodality loses its soul. Every step must be rooted in prayer.

41. Synodality helps the Church grow

Growth in faith often comes through dialogue and shared discernment.

42. Synodality is a gift

It is not an obligation imposed from above, but a gift for the Church's renewal.

43. Synodality and faithfulness

True synodality deepens fidelity to Christ and His Gospel.

44. Synodality is about relationship

At its heart, synodality is relational—walking with God and with one another.

45. Synodality and witness

A Church that walks together gives a powerful witness to the world.

46. Synodality and patience

God's timing is often slower than ours, but always wiser.

47. Synodality calls us forward

We are invited not to cling to the past, but to move forward in faith.

48. Synodality strengthens communion

Communion grows when voices are respected and discernment is shared.

49. Synodality and trust in God

Ultimately, synodality is an act of trust that God is still guiding His Church.

50. Walking together with Christ

We walk together because Christ walks with us. That is the deepest meaning of synodality.
