



Dialogue Groups



October 2021—March 2023

The Church of Jesus Christ is being called into Synod by Pope Francis. This journey, under the title “For a Synodal Church : Communion, Participation and Mission,” is a preparation for the celebration of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, in October 2023. Together, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will seek to cultivate attitudes that promote “walking together” in order to realize and manifest what the Church truly is as a pilgrim and missionary people of God.

This diocesan phase of the synod of bishops gives us the opportunity to deepen the fruits of the synodal process that we undertook in 2018 and which allowed us to identify concrete pastoral priorities: young immigrant families, the elderly, partnership among ourselves, structures of synodality to be cultivated.

The process of consultation that we are living in 2021 is a continuation of the exercise of synodality that we have experienced. Along the way, we have learned to listen to each other better in order to discern the will of Jesus Christ. The process that we are going through is intended to prepare us to set out as a Church “on the move” towards the world of our time.

A process that encourages listening, dialogue and discernment

The realizations are sometimes disturbing, but they invite us to listen to each other and to the Holy Spirit. If throughout our journey, we realize that we have difficulty listening to each other, to hear each other; if we realize that we have difficulty seeing the other, the excluded, the marginalized; if we become aware of the challenges of walking together with our poverty, we can hear the Holy Spirit whispering within us: “*The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor*”. Matthew, 11:5

We have simplified the approach proposed by the Secretariat of the Synod by focusing on one fundamental question: how do we walk together in our parish, in our movement, in our diocese, in our Church?

To answer this question, we have prepared five small group dialogues on the following themes:

- Listening
- Speaking out
- Celebrating
- Decision-making
- Co-responsibility in mission.

You only take up one theme per meeting, which will last about 75 minutes. We encourage you to multiply the number of dialogue groups in order to promote as many places as possible for listening and speaking in the Church. Groups are encouraged to meet more than once to study more than one theme. At the end of each workshop, a group secretary should write up a short synthesis and send it to the diocesan centre (see p. 28). From all the dialogue reports, a diocesan synthesis will be prepared.

*Prayer for the Beginning of
a Synodal Meeting*

Here we are before you, Holy Spirit;
in your name we are gathered.

You, our only counselor, come to us,
dwell with us, deign to dwell in our hearts.

Teach us where to go,
show us how we should walk together.

We who are weak and sinful,
do not allow ourselves to cause disorder.

Let us not be led astray by ignorance,
nor let partiality influence our actions.

May we find our unity in you,
without straying from the path of truth and justice,
advancing together towards eternal life.

We ask this of you, who act in all times and places,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

Dialogue I

How do we listen to each other in the Church?

Getting to know each other

- Each person briefly introduces themselves.
- Activity to put people at ease: each person is asked to describe their favourite food.
- Go around the table briefly to ask each participant how they feel and validate it.

Introduction

In this meeting, we want to reflect on our experience of listening in our Christian community, our movement, our diocese? It is precisely an exercise of listening that we will deepen this great theme. We will reflect and pray together, sharing our experiences of listening and not listening. Ask ourselves: what is my experience of listening in the Church? Am I being listened to and am I being heard?"

Prayer time

Let's take the time to arrive with who we are and centre ourselves on our breathing. Let's unite our spirit with our body, without judging ourselves; let's dispose ourselves to hear the breath of the Holy Spirit breathing in us and uniting us to one another. Let us be willing to enter into an attitude of listening and discernment.

Let us recite together the prayer to the Holy Spirit for the beginning of a synodal meeting (see p. 4).

Word of God

Mark 7:31-37

Jesus left the territory of Tiro, and returned by Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, crossing the land of the Decapolis. A deaf man was brought to him, who had difficulty speaking, and he was asked to lay his hands on him. He took him aside from the crowd, put his fingers in his ears, and touched his tongue with his own saliva; then, raising his eyes to heaven, he sighed, and said: Ephphatha, that is to say, open yourself. Immediately his ears were open, his tongue loosened, and he spoke very well. Jesus told them not to tell anyone about it; but the more he recommended it to them, the more they published it. They were in the greatest astonishment, and said: He does everything wonderfully; even he makes the deaf hear, and the dumb speak.

(Time of silence)

Song Be Not Afraid (John Michael Talbot)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oSiX1WKg4w>

You shall cross the barren desert, but you shall not die of thirst. You shall wander far in safety though you do not know the way. You shall speak your words in foreign lands and all will understand. You shall see the face of God and live.

Be not afraid, I go before you always.
Come follow me and I will give you rest.

Blessed are your poor, for the kingdom shall be theirs. Blessed are you that weep and mourn for one day you shall laugh. And if wicked men insult and hate you all because of me, blessed, blessed are you

First round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

You identify an experience where you felt listened to or not listened to in the Church.

(What happens to you when you let this experience of listening or not listening come up?)

Everyone has an equal time to speak. There is no discussion during this round: each participant listens deeply to what the other is expressing, in an attitude of listening to what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us in ourselves, through the person who is expressing himself or herself and in the group.

(Time of silence)

Second round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

As you listen to others, what does this bring out in you as joy and hope or as difficulty, obstacles or wound?

In a second round, the participants express what struck them most in what was shared, in the words expressed as well as in the silences (an attitude of attentive and spiritual listening is maintained, not confrontation or debate, but of respectful dialogue.)

(Time of silence)

Third round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

What does the Holy Spirit whisper in you, what does he teach you about yourself, your environment, your community, towards what growth does he direct your steps; towards what strength to develop, charisma to discover, to cultivate as an individual and also as the Church.

In this third round, the participants reflect on what seems to emerge, what resonated during the conversation and which touched them, moved them

and made sense to them, followed by a time of silence. We seek to discern what the spirit is saying to the Church through our dialogue.

Conclusion

Go around the table and ask participants to summarize in a few words what they will take with them from this dialogue on “How do we listen to each other in the Church” and how they found the process. A group secretary takes note of these comments and prepares a summary (see p. 28).

Prayer of thanksgiving

Let us recite together Psalm 99:

Praise the Lord, all the earth; serve the Lord with gladness; come to him with songs of joy!

Know that the Lord is God: he has made us, and we are his, his people, his flock.

Come to his house and give thanks to him, to his dwelling place and sing his praises; give thanks to him and bless his name!

Yes, the Lord is good, his love is eternal, his faithfulness remains from age to age.

A time of gratitude

As you return home and think about what you have heard in these dialogues, in the presence of the Risen One, ask yourself today and in the days to come: What is rising in me? What is the call that the Lord is placing upon me? Perhaps you might catch yourself saying, “Lord, what do you want me to do?”

Dialogue II

How do we express ourselves in the Church?

Introduction

In today's dialogue, we will reflect on speaking out in our Christian community, our movement, our diocese. Speaking out requires courage to express oneself freely and in charity. In an exercise of speaking out, we will discern together what allows or hinders it.

Time for Prayer

Let's take the time to arrive as we are, let's take the time to centre ourselves on our breathing, let's unite our spirit to our body, without judging ourselves; let's dispose ourselves to hear the breath of the Holy Spirit breathing in us and uniting us to each other. Let us be willing to enter into an attitude of listening and discernment.

Let us recite together the prayer to the Holy Spirit for the beginning of a synodal meeting (see p. 4).

Word of God

Colossians 3:13-17

Support one another, and if one has reason to complain about the other, forgive each other. As Christ forgave you, so forgive yourself. But above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection. And may the peace of Christ, to which you have been called to be one body, reign in your hearts. And be grateful. May the word of Christ dwell among you

abundantly; educate and exhort one another in all wisdom, in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual hymns, singing to God in your hearts under the inspiration of grace. And whatever you do, word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(Time of silence)

Song: On Eagles Wings (John Michael Talbot)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBQKmL7Gq4>

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
who abide in His shadow for life,
say to the Lord: “My refuge,
my rock in whom I trust!”

And He will raise you up on eagles’ wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun
and hold you in the palm of His hand.

The snare of the fowler will never capture you
and famine will bring you no fear.
Under His wings your refuge,
his faithfulness your shield.

You need not fear the terror of the night
nor the arrow that flies by day.
Though thousands fall about you,
near you, death shall not come.

First round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

You identify an experience where you were able to express yourself or not in the Church.

How do you express yourself in your parish, in the different teams, committees, movements, in your diocese. What moves in you when you remember this experience of speaking out?.

(Time of silence)

Everyone has an equal time to speak. There is no discussion in this round: each participant listens deeply to what the other is expressing, in an attitude of listening to what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us in ourselves, through the person who is expressing himself.

Second round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

Do you feel confident enough to express yourself freely in the Church? If so, how do you experience this? If not, what are the obstacles to speaking out?

(Time of silence)

In a second round, the participants express what struck them most in what was shared, in the words expressed as well as in the silences (an attitude of attentive and spiritual listening is kept in view, not confrontation or debate) but a respectful dialogue.

Third round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

Through what has just been shared, the Holy Spirit whispers to our hearts a direction, a conversion both in listening and in speaking. What is the spirit saying to our Church?

(Time of silence)

Finally, in the third round, the participants reflect on what seems to emerge, to surface, what resonated during the conversation and which touched them, moved them and made sense to them.

Conclusion

Go around the table and ask participants to summarize in a few words what they will take with them from this dialogue on “How do we express ourselves in Church” and how they found the process. A secretary records these comments and prepares a summary of the meeting’s conclusions (see p. 28).

Prayer of thanksgiving

Let us recite together Psalm 66

May God be gracious to us and bless us, and may his face shine upon us; and your way will be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

Let the peoples, God, give you thanks; let them give you thanks altogether!

Let the nations sing for joy, for you rule the world with justice; you rule the peoples with righteousness, on earth you lead the nations.

Let the peoples, God, give you thanks; let them give you thanks altogether!

The earth has yielded its fruit; God, our God, blesses us.

May God bless us, and may the whole earth adore him!

A time of gratitude

As you return home and think about what you have heard in these dialogues, in the presence of the Risen One, ask yourself today and in the days to come: What is rising in me? What is the call that the Lord is placing upon me? Perhaps you might catch yourself saying, “Lord, what do you want me to do?”

Dialogue Group III

How do we celebrate in Church?

Introduction

In this workshop, we will share our experiences of celebration in the Church. The strength to walk together in the truth of love comes from our listening to the Word and the Eucharist: the centre and summit of Christian life. We will seek together to answer this question: how do our liturgical celebrations inspire our missionary action?

Time of Prayer

Let us take the time to arrive with what we are, let us take the time to centre ourselves on our breathing, let us unite our spirit to our body, without judging ourselves; let us dispose ourselves to hear the breath of the Holy Spirit breathing in us and uniting us to each other. Let us be willing to enter into an attitude of listening and discernment.

Let us recite together the prayer to the Holy Spirit for the beginning of a synodal meeting (see p. 4).

Word of God

Acts 2:41-47

Those who accepted his word were baptized; and in that day the number of the disciples increased by about three thousand souls. They persevered in the teaching of the apostles, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Fear took hold of everyone, and many wonders and miracles were done by the apostles. Everyone who believed was in one place, and they had

everything in common. They sold their properties and their goods, and they divided the proceeds among all, according to the needs of each one. They were all together at the temple every day, they broke bread in the houses, and ate their food with joy and simplicity of heart, praising God, and finding favour with all the people. And the Lord added daily those who were being saved to the Church.

(Time of silence)

Song: I Just Want to Praise my Lord (Hillsong Worship)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9mR2wyyRlw>

I just want to praise the Lord
I just want to dance and celebrate yes
I just want to bless my God
Lift my hands and sing

Heaven and the earth proclaim
All the nations bow before You
All creation shouts Your praise
The majesty honour and glory of God

First round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

Can you identify an experience of celebration that has been inspiring for you and your community and that has guided you in your mission in the Church?

(Time of silence)

Everyone has an equal time to speak. There is no discussion in this round: each participant listens deeply to what the other is expressing, in an attitude of listening to what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us in us, through the person who is expressing himself.

Second round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

How does this type of celebration inspire you in your decisions?

(Time of silence)

In a second round, the participants express what struck them most in what was shared, in the words expressed as well as in the silences (an attitude of attentive and spiritual listening is kept in view, not confrontation or debate) but a respectful dialogue.

Third round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

Through what has just been shared, the Holy Spirit whispers to our hearts a direction, a conversion in our ways of celebrating the Word and the Eucharist. What is the spirit saying to our Church?

(Time of silence)

Finally, in the third round, participants reflect on what seems to emerge, to surface, what resonated during the conversation and touched them, moved them and made sense to them, followed by a time of silence.

Conclusion

Go around the table and ask participants to summarize in a few words what they will take with them from this dialogue on “How do we celebrate in Church” and how they found the process. A secretary records these comments and prepares a summary of the meeting’s conclusions (see p. 28).

Prayer of thanksgiving

Let us recite together Psalm 116

Praise the Lord, all peoples;

celebrate him, all nations!

His love for us is strongest;

the Lord's faithfulness is everlasting!

A time of gratitude

As you return home and think about what you have heard in this dialogue, in the presence of the Risen One, ask yourself today and in the days to come: What is rising in me? What is the call that the Lord is placing upon me? Perhaps you might catch yourself saying, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

Dialogue IV

How do we make decisions in the Church?

Introduction

In today's dialogue, we will reflect on the decision-making process in our Christian community, our movement, our diocese. In a synodal style, we make our decisions by being willing to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to us in what we are living or not yet living in our community

Time of Prayer

Let's take the time to arrive as we are, let's take the time to centre ourselves on our breathing, let's unite our spirit to our body, without judging ourselves; let's dispose ourselves to hear the breath of the Holy Spirit breathing in us and uniting us to each other. Let us be willing to enter into an attitude of listening and discernment.

Let us recite together the prayer to the Holy Spirit for the beginning of a synodal meeting (see p. 4)

Word of God

Acts 6:1-7

At that time, as the number of disciples increased, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. The twelve called together the multitude of the disciples, and said, It is not proper that we leave the word of God to serve at table. Therefore, brethren, choose from among you seven men, of whom we bear good witness, who are full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, and whom we will entrust to this office. And we will continue to apply ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. This proposal pleased the whole assembly. They elected Stephen, man full of faith and the Holy Spirit,

Philippe, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parménas, and Nicolas, proselyte of Antioch. They presented them to the apostles, who, after praying, laid their hands on them. The word of God spread more and more, the number of disciples greatly increased in Jerusalem, and a large crowd of priests obeyed the faith.

Song: Seek ye First The Kingdom Of God (Karen Lafferty)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3S1wfXmYPw&list=RDk3S1wfXmYPw&index=1>

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God
And His righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto you
Allelu! Alleluia!

Ask and it shall be given unto you
Seek and ye shall find
Knock and it shall be opened unto you
Allelu! Alleluia!

Alleluia!

First round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

You identify in your parish, movements, committees, your diocese, an experience of participating or being excluded from the discernment and decision-making process. Do you feel part of the decision-making process?

(Time for silence)

Everyone has an equal time to speak to the issues. There is no discussion in this round: each participant listens deeply to what the other is expressing, in an attitude of listening to what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us in ourselves, through the person who is expressing himself.

Second time of dialogue (twenty minutes)

How are decisions made in your Christian community, your movement, your parish committee?

(Time of silence)

In a second round, the participants express what struck them most in what was shared, in the words expressed as well as in the silences (an attitude of attentive and spiritual listening is kept in view, not confrontation or debate) but a respectful dialogue.

Third time of dialogue (twenty minutes)

Through what has just been shared about our experiences of discernment and decision-making, the Holy Spirit whispers to our hearts a direction, a conversion in our ways of making decisions. What is the spirit saying to our Church?

(Time of silence)

Finally, in the third round, participants reflect on what seemed to emerge, to surface, what resonated during the conversation that touched them, moved them and made sense to them.

Conclusion

Go around the table and ask participants to summarize in a few words what they will take with them from this dialogue on “How do we decide in the Church” and how they found the process. A secretary records these comments and prepares a summary of the meeting’s conclusions (see p. 28).

Prayer of thanksgiving

Let’s recite Psalm 137 together

With all my heart, O Lord, I give you thanks: you have heard the words of my mouth. I sing to you in the presence of angels, to your holy temple I bow down.

I give thanks to your name for your love and your truth, for you raise your name and your word above all else. The day you answered my call, you made my soul grow strong.

All the kings of the earth give you thanks when they hear the words of your mouth. They sing of the ways of the Lord: "How great is the glory of the Lord!

However high the Lord is, he sees the lowliest; from afar he recognizes the proud.

If I walk in the midst of anguish, you give me life; your hand falls on my enemies in anger. Your right hand makes me victorious.

The Lord does everything for me! Lord, your love is eternal: do not stop the work of your hands.

A time of gratitude

As you return home and think about what you have heard in this dialogue, in the presence of the Risen One, ask yourself today and in the days to come: What is rising in me? What is the call that the Lord is placing in me? Perhaps you might catch yourself saying, 'Lord, what do you want me to do?'

Dialogue V

How do we carry the Church's mission together?

Introduction

'Synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all its members are called to participate' (Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality). In today's dialogue, we will reflect on the missionary dimension of the whole Church. We will share our experience by answering the question: how do we carry out the mission of the Church in our Christian community, our movement, our diocese. Since we are all missionary as disciples, how is each baptized person called to participate in the mission of the Church?

Time of Prayer

Let us take the time to arrive with what we are, let us take the time to centre ourselves on our breathing, let us unite our spirit to our body, without judging ourselves; let us dispose ourselves to hear the breath of the Holy Spirit breathing in us and uniting us to each other. Let us be willing to enter into an attitude of listening and discernment.

Let us recite together the prayer to the Holy Spirit for the beginning of a synodal meeting (see p. 4).

Word of God

Luke 10:1-11

After this the Lord appointed seventy more disciples, and he sent them two by two before him to all the towns and places where he himself was to go. He said to them, The harvest is great, but there are few

workers. Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest. Go; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves. Do not carry purses, bags or shoes, and do not greet anyone on the way. In whatever house you enter, say first: Peace be upon this house! And if there is a child of peace there, your peace will rest on him; otherwise, it will come back to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking what you are given; because the worker deserves his salary. Do not go from house to house. In whatever city you enter, and where you will be received, eat whatever is presented to you, heal the sick who are there, and say to them, The kingdom of God is near to you. But in whatever city you enter, and where you will not be received, go into its streets, and say: We shake against you the very dust of your city which has clung to our feet; know, however, that the kingdom of God has drawn near.

Song: 'The Harvest' (Allison Huntley)

<https://youtu.be/y8wHsD5hdqU>

Jesus saw the multitudes and with compassion He was moved, for the people were like sheep without a shepherd. So Jesus had one prayer request that labourers would be sent into the fields to collect the harvest.

For the harvest is plenteous but the labourers are few.

God send me into your harvest, let me be used.

Lord You see the multitudes and Your compassion still moves, for the people are like sheep without a shepherd. So I pray Your one request that labourers would be sent into the fields to collect the harvest.

First round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

You identify an experience in your Christian community where you felt, as a baptized person, that you were participating in the mission of the Church. According to your experience, what facilitated or hindered your participation in the mission? How did you live it?

(Time of silence)

Everyone has an equal time to speak on the issues. There is no discussion during this round: each participant listens deeply to what the other is expressing, in an attitude of listening to what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us in ourselves, through the person who is expressing himself.

Second round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

How are lay ministries and the assumption of responsibility by the faithful encouraged in your community, your religious movement, in the diocese?

(Time of silence)

In a second round, the participants express what struck them most in what was shared, in the words expressed as well as in the silences (an attitude of attentive and spiritual listening is kept in view, not confrontation or debate) but a respectful dialogue.

Third round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

Through what has just been shared on the challenges of co-responsibility for the mission, the Holy Spirit whispers to our hearts a direction, a pastoral conversion; what is the Holy Spirit saying to each of us in the Church?

(Time of silence)

Finally, in the third round, the participants reflect on what seems to emerge, to surface, what resonated during the conversation and which touched them, moved them and made sense to them.

Conclusion

Go around the table and ask participants to summarize in a few words what they will take with them from this dialogue on 'How do we carry the mission of the Church together' and how they found the process. A secretary takes note of these comments and prepares a summary of the conclusions of the meeting (See p. 28).

Prayer of thanksgiving

Let us recite together Psalm 147

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from heaven, praise him on high.

You, all his angels, praise him, praise him, all the universe.

Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all the stars of light; you, heaven of heaven, praise him, and the waters of the heights of heaven.

Let them praise the name of the Lord: by his command they were created; He set them down for ever under a law that shall not pass away.

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters, all the depths; fire and hail, snow and fog, hurricane wind that fulfills his word; the trees of the orchards, all the cedars; the mountains and all the hills, the wild beasts and all the flocks, the reptile and the flying bird; the kings of the earth and all the peoples, the princes and all the judges of the earth; all the young men and women, old men and children.

Let them praise the name of the Lord, the only one above every name; in heaven and on earth his splendour: he increases the strength of his people.

*Praise to all his faithful, to the sons of Israel, the people of his kin!
Hallelujah!*

A time of gratitude

As you return home and think about what you have heard in these dialogues, in the presence of the Risen One, ask yourself today and in the days to come: What is rising in me? What is the call that the Lord is placing in me? Perhaps you might catch yourself saying, 'Lord, what do you want me to do?'

To write a report on the dialogue

This report should not exceed two printed pages.

1. Describe the group that met for this dialogue: level of involvement in the Church, membership (parishioners, religious, members of a committee, a service or a movement), young or old, homogeneous group or diversified, etc.
2. How did the process go: harmoniously? With difficulty? Why? If you have adapted it, in which way did you do so?
3. From the notes that will have been collected during the conclusion (after the third round of dialogue), present the main ideas articulated by the group: observations, sources of joy or sadness, realizations, proposals, hopes, etc.
4. Were the dialogue members satisfied with the experience? Why?

Please send your report to Mr. André Inkel.

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By postal delivery: 180 Mont-Bleu, Gatineau, J8Z 3J5

Your report will help prepare our diocesan synthesis. Many thanks!