

Questions for the Synodal Process in the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie

We urge all participants to keep in mind the spirit of the Synodal Process. As indicated in the *Vademecum*, “The Synodal Process is first and foremost a spiritual process. It is not a mechanical data gathering exercise or a series of meetings and debates. Synodal listening is oriented towards discernment.” (*Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality*, 2.2)

In addition, we suggest that you read through the Synodal Process for the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, in particular the section “Attitudes for Participating in the Synodal Process” prior to responding to the following questions.

“In responding to these questions, it is helpful to remember that “journeying together” occurs in two deeply interconnected ways. First, we journey together with one another as the People of God. Next, we journey together as the People of God with the entire human family. These two perspectives enrich one another and are helpful for our common discernment towards deeper communion and more fruitful mission.” (*Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality*, 5.3)

The questions accompanying each of the following ten themes can be used as a starting point or helpful guideline.

1. LISTENING

Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people? 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?

2. 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?

3. 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?

4. SPEAKING OUT

All are invited to speak with courage that is, in freedom, truth, and charity. Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?

5. CELEBRATION

“Walking together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist. How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?

6. 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. How is every baptised person called to participate in the mission of the Church? What hinders the baptised from being active in mission? What areas of mission are we neglecting?

7. 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?

8. ECUMENISM

The dialogue between Christians has a special place in the synodal journey. What relationships does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions and denominations?

9. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

A synodal church is a co-responsible Church. How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church? How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted?

10. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

In a synodal style we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community. What tools and procedures do we use to promote transparency and accountability? How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?

(Cf. *Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality*, 5.3)

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1. Responses **must be submitted by January 31st, 2022.**
 2. Groups submit one response for the group.
 3. Your responses may be submitted online using the form available on the Synod page of the diocesan website: <https://dioceseofsaultstemarie.org/synod>, and then sent in by email to synod@ssmd.ca, or by regular mail to the *Attention of Father Roch Martin*, at the Diocesan Centre, 30, Ste-Anne Rd., Sudbury ON P3C 5E1.