



Participating in the Synod in the Diocese of Rochester

Frequently Asked Questions

How will we be able to participate in the Synod?

Ideally participation will occur by gathering in groups, either in person or in Zoom type online forums, as listening and journeying together are primary goals of the Synod. However, we recognize that some people may not be comfortable with either of those options, so we will also accept individual responses to the Synod questions. Since dialogue and consultation is the preferred synodal experience, individuals who are uncomfortable with online forums could reach out to friends by phone and talk through the questions. Please consider ways to safely include people in your reflections!

When will we need to gather?

Gatherings can occur anytime from mid-November 2021 until March 31, 2022. March 31st is the final day input can be submitted to the diocese.

There are already so many things to do in our parish, how can we add one more thing?

Synod conversations do not have to be held separately from other events occurring in your parish! You can use existing groups or programs, incorporate the questions into Advent/Lenten season events, use the questions as a part of pastoral or finance council meetings, incorporate discussions into youth group gatherings, or invite parents to stay and dialogue while their children are in faith formation. Be creative and practical. If you would like more ideas, contact the Department of Pastoral Services Synod Representatives Bernard Grizard at Bernard.grizard@dor.org or Dr. Shannon Kilbridge at Shannon.kilbridge@dor.org or Elizabeth Johnston, Synod Project Coordinator at Elizabeth.johnston@dor.org.

Does this mean there will be changes in Church teaching when the Synod is all done?

The goal of the Synod is to become a listening Church; this is about learning how to be missionary disciples who journey together. It is more pastoral and formative, rather than directed at changing Church teaching, but rather to see how and what the Church professes and believes comes alive in our own lives. The experience is about cultivating an attitude and approach that helps us as the Church to discern how to move forward together in a co-responsible way, welcoming God's fruits and doing God's will. (Vademecum, 2.4, #6)

There are so many questions! Do we need to answer them all?

No! Pick the ones that speak to you and your gathered people. It could be one theme, two themes, or all ten. It's not meant to be a technical process that groups check off each question

or theme as it's completed. This is a spiritual journey with others. The Diocesan Synod Team will monitor which questions need more responses and invite groups to focus on them if there are gaps. We are also requesting demographic information from individuals and groups to ensure that we have reached a diverse audience. Remember that Pope Francis has asked that these gatherings not only be with Catholics, but also include former Catholics, people of other faiths, those who are not of any particular faith tradition, young people, and people on the peripheries. Some themes and questions may be more relevant to your group than others depending on the people included in the conversations.

How do we turn in our notes?

After the gathering, the group facilitator can use the online Synodal Input Form to submit responses summarized by the notetaker for the group. Only those themes and questions discussed need to be included, all others can be skipped. Individuals can also use this form to submit their responses.

Who can facilitate a group?

Anyone residing in the Diocese of Rochester who wishes to cultivate our unity in faith can facilitate a group and submit responses. Parishes may wish to identify interested members to facilitate within the community. Please see the Group Facilitators information sheet for more details.

We have friends and family who aren't Catholic, can we ask them to participate?

Yes! Anyone in the DOR, active Catholics, non-practicing Catholics, and non-Catholics are encouraged to participate!

The USCCB called for a National Eucharistic Revival, is this the same thing as the Synod?

The National Eucharistic Revival is part of the USCCB's strategic plan for the next three years. The Synod is called from Pope Francis, in preparation for the 2023 Synod of Bishops. The local input for the Synod can help inform how we can best live the Eucharistic Revival in our diocese and will provide a foundation for those further conversations.

Any other questions?

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