For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission

Synod Message from Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, CSsR
**Synodality**

*Journeying together*

Who Should Part of This?

Pope Francis wants to invite all people:

Listening to

- Pope, bishops, clergy, religious, laity
- People on the margins; poor, vulnerable, unchurched, former Catholics, other faiths, youth, young adults, everyone!
- Pope Francis has called for the people of God and clergy to **convene** and **work together** to **listen and discern** a vision for the future of the Church.

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**The Early Church**

The Acts of the Apostles tell that when the early Christian communities needed to resolve certain practical problems or pastoral questions, they held an assembly of believers, called on the Holy Spirit and discussed with those in authority.

**For Example: Council of Jerusalem**

Can we allow Gentiles?

**Later:**

How to take care of women and orphans with unequal food distribution?

Establishment of diaconal type ministry
Celebrating a Synod means walking on the same road, together

Let us look at Jesus:
+ First, he encounters the rich man on the road;
+ then, he listens to his questions,
+ and finally, he helps him discern what he must do to inherit eternal life.

**Encounter, listen and discern**

Pope Francis

The Synod on Synodality

*is intended to inspire people to dream about the church we are called to be,*
*to make people's hopes flourish,*
*to stimulate trust,*
*to bind up wounds,*
*to weave new and deeper relationships,*
*to learn from one another,*
*to build bridges,*
*to enlighten minds,*
*warm hearts,*
*and restore strength to our hands for our common mission.*

_Synod Handbook_
Pope Francis

Wants the whole Church to explore:
What does the Holy Spirit expect of the Church in the 21st Century?

We have been in a Synodal Process in our Archdiocese

Cardinal Tobin - Listening Sessions in Deaneries:
Forward in Faith Together Pillars:

1. Protection of the Faithful
2. Accountability, Transparency, and Communication
3. Parish Pastoral Planning
4. Life-Long Faith Formation and Education
5. Ongoing Formation and Support of Clergy
6. Active Engagement of the Laity.
Ongoing Synodal/Collaborative Processes

- Development and Training of Parish Pastoral Councils
- Development and Training of Finance Councils
- Council of Priests
- Council of Deans
- Archdiocesan Pastoral Council
- Deans meetings in regions
- Deanery meetings with priests and staffs
- Auxiliary Bishops with Cardinal
- Collaboration within the Pastoral Center Departments
- Parishes in collaboration
- Interfaith gatherings

Synod Fundamental Questions:

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”

- How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church?

- What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?
# Archdiocese of Newark Synod Process Timeline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January/February</th>
<th>March 1</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>June</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading and Preparation: Synod Docs</td>
<td>Information sessions and preparation of resources for parishes and other groups for Listening Sessions</td>
<td>Listening Sessions throughout the Archdiocese</td>
<td>Listening Sessions throughout the Archdiocese</td>
<td>All Listening Session Reports sent to RCAN Gather all information and synthesize</td>
<td>Diocesan Reports given to USCCB</td>
<td>Pre-Synodal Gathering Listening Session Mass of Thanksgiving <em>Dates to be determined</em></td>
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<td>Vatican Synod Mass Opening October 10</td>
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<td>Bishops meet in formal Synod in October 2023</td>
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<td>Newark Synod Mass Opening October 17</td>
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<td>Creating Synod Leadership Teams</td>
<td>Training PPCs and other group leaders and facilitators</td>
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## How the Synodal Process Can Work in RCAN

### Parishes

- The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) can be the convener and facilitator
- Hispanic Leadership (Encuentro) groups can be conveners and facilitators
- If a parish does not have a working PPC, we can provide a facilitator(s)
- Need contact person(s) from each parish
- We would need to know language needs
In Your Parish and Other Ministries - Examples

Religious Ed
• Listening sessions with catechists, parents, and children

Youth Ministry
• Listening sessions with youth, parents

Schools
Children, teachers, parents

Hispanic Ministry and other Cultural Groups
• Listening sessions including adults, youth, etc.

Disabilities
• Inclusion in Listening Sessions, prayer and other activities and ministries

How many sessions?
• Parishes can convene one session or several sessions with different groups.

• Listening session designed for
  ▪ 2.5-3 hour evening session
  ▪ 3 hour longer session such as on a Saturday morning
  ▪ 2 Sessions
  ▪ Deanery Sessions
  ▪ Specialty Sessions: schools, Parent meetings, campus ministry, etc.

• Other groups and ministries can determine best timings
• Persons outside of church framework may be interviewed
• A survey may also be available online
Webpage

- Webpage for: [https://www.rcan.org/synod2023](https://www.rcan.org/synod2023)
  - General information about the Synod
  - Message from Cardinal Tobin
  - Newark Opening Synod Mass and Cardinal Tobin’s Homily
  - INFO Session Sign Up Flyer
  - Training video for PPCs and other group leaders – how to run a listening session
  - Training video for Facilitators
  - Materials such as a Facilitator Guide to download for the listening sessions
  - Prayer card in English and Spanish
  - Others to come

Vatican Social Media

- [https://www.synod.va/en.html](https://www.synod.va/en.html)
- [https://www.instagram.com/synod.va/](https://www.instagram.com/synod.va/)
- [https://twitter.com/synod_va](https://twitter.com/synod_va)
- [https://www.facebook.com/synod.va](https://www.facebook.com/synod.va)
- [https://www.flickr.com/photos/synod_va/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/synod_va/)
Encounter with Christ and Each Other

Pope Francis:
Jesus knows that someone’s life can be changed by a single encounter
As we initiate this process of Synodality, we too are called to become experts in the art of encounter. Not so much by organizing events or theorizing about problems, but by taking time to encounter the Lord and one another – time to devote to prayer and adoration, listening to what the Spirit wants to say to the church.

Come Holy Spirit

Listening Session Process

1. Gathering Prayer and Faith Sharing
2. Video by Cardinal Tobin
   What is this synod on Synodality, and why it is important
3. Explanation of the process by the Main Facilitator(s)
   • Table Facilitator
   • Table Scribe
   • Table Discussion & Feedback Handouts
4. Explanation of the Questions
   • Discussion at Tables
   • Large Group Feedback
5. Sending Prayer
Opening Song
All Are Welcome or Other appropriate song

Gathering Prayer
Leader Come Holy Spirit
All fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Leader Send forth your Spirit
and they shall be re-created.
and You shall renew the face of the earth.
All O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Spirit
we may be truly wise
and ever rejoice in His consolation,
Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

The Word of God Acts 2: 1-11, 14-19

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled,
they were all in one place together.
And suddenly there came from the sky
a noise like a strong driving wind,
and it filled the entire house in which they were.
Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire,
which parted and came to rest on each one of them.
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in different tongues,
as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.
Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.”

They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another, “What does this mean?”

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, Let this be known to you, and listen to my words. this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:
‘It will come to pass in the last days,’ God says, ‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams… And I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below…

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God
Scripture Reflection Question
+
- How have I experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in my life?
- In what ways do I see the Holy Spirit working in my parish, campus ministry, religious congregation, etc.?

Prayer  Leading into reflection session
Leader  Come Holy Spirit, as we move into our reflection session.
All  be with us as a discerning guide to speak what is in our heart, our experience of Church, our joys and sorrows, hopes and dreams.
May we listen carefully to each other so that we may discern how you, Holy Spirit, are calling us be church at this time in our history.
Leader  We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
All  Amen

Global Question One
How is this “journeying together” happening today in your parish, campus ministry, university, religious congregation, other?

Table Discussion
• Share a few examples of ways that you have experienced this “walking together” in your parish and what is challenging about participating fully in your parish? For example, attending Mass, participating in service activities, planning for the future, other?
• What prevents us from “walking together”?
• What are the ways we reach out collectively or individually to those who are no longer participating in church? How do we reach out to include cultural or ethnic groups, women, disabled, those living in poverty or social exclusion, or others?
• What are three steps we can take in our parish to grow in “walking together”?
• Where in these shared experiences do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit?
Global Question TWO

How are we “walking together” as a Church, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

Table Discussion

- By our deep listening today, what actions do you hear the Holy Spirit asking our parish and the global Church to take?
- What practical steps are needed to include people in the area of leadership, governance, and inclusion in the global Church?

Local Questions  The Archdiocese of Newark

How are we “walking together” as the Archdiocese of Newark, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

- How can the Archdiocese of Newark support you in your local parish?
- What are three steps we can take in our Archdiocese to grow collaboratively for the future?

Evaluation of the Time Spent Together

- How has this discussion given you the opportunity to listen and express and share your own experience of Church?
- What are your hopes for the Church as we continue to grow and listen to the Holy Spirit?

Sending Prayer and Sign of Peace

Leader  Let us take a moment of quiet as we reflect on what we have done here today...

Reader  A reading from the Letter of St. James  Jas 1:22
Dearest brothers and sisters:
Humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you...
[and] Be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Leader  Come Holy Spirit,
we ask you, that by your inspiration,
may all of our prayer and actions always begin from you
and inspire others to know you more deeply.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All  Amen

Leader  Let us go forth sharing a sign of peace.
What you will need for a Listening Session

- Contact Person(s) for the RCAN Synod Team
- Preparation/Set-up team(s)
- Welcome Hosts: sign in, nametags, etc.
- Room arrangements, publicity, invitations
- Round tables *if possible* to seat 5-6 people
- Power Point Equipment; projector or TV, sound, computer, PPT presentation
- (download from RCAN webpage)
- Facilitators:
  - Main Facilitator(s)
  - Table Facilitators
  - Table Scribes
  - Pens
- Handouts of questions for discussion and discernment & reporting

Parish Pastoral Council can plan & convene

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Synod Prayer for the Archdiocese of Newark

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.