



Dear Monsignors and Fathers,

On October 17, 2021, the Archdiocese of Baltimore will join the Holy Father and the Universal Church in convoking the Synod on Synodality, *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission*. By convoking this Synod, Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is “decisive for its life and mission: ‘It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.’”

The aim of the Synod is two-fold: to “learn synodality” and “the Synodal conversion of the Church (putting into practice the synodal nature of the entire Church).” Synodality represents the path by which the Church can be renewed by the action of the Holy Spirit, by listening together afresh to what God has revealed to us in Christ Jesus.

The theme of this Synod involves three inseparable keys: Communion (our union with one another based on and rooted in the unity of the Persons of the Trinity), Participation (our sharing in the death and resurrection of Christ and in the life of the Church) and Mission (our co-responsibility for the Church’s mission of evangelization rooted in Baptism). These themes are to guide and shape the discussions that will occur over the course of the next several months amongst the clergy, those in consecrated life, and the lay faithful of the Archdiocese a Baltimore.

The Synod, which builds upon the work envisioned in *A Light Brightly Visible* (1 and 2.0), will unfold in three phases (preparatory phase, discussion phase, and implementation phase). The consultation of the People of God is at the heart of the Synodal Process, thus every effort must be made to engage active parishioners, as well as those who have been marginalized or separated from the Church. Thus, I ask you to do the following between now and Advent:

- Convene a small team to organize and help execute consultations/listening sessions in your parish;
- Set date(s) & time(s) of consultations and report them to the Archdiocese ([synod@archbalt.org](mailto:synod@archbalt.org)) for posting on the synod website;
- Create a process for allowing people to participate in these consultations (samples are included in the parish resources);
- Hold the listening sessions, using facilitators and note-takers (it is recommended that multiple smaller groups meet for more productive conversations), and
- Submit a document (see the website for submission instructions) that summarizes the feedback and input of your parishioners.

Such engagement is not new to the Archdiocese and we have, in the past, made similar efforts to consult God's People on a range of issues, including those related to racial injustice, as well as our ongoing evangelization-based parish planning initiative.

This synodal consultation seeks a response to one fundamental question: *"A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, journeys together. How does this 'journeying together,' which takes place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church."*

Information and resources aimed at assisting you in communicating about the Synod and, most importantly, in facilitating parish-level conversations to capture responses to this central question can be found on the Archdiocese's Synod webpage, [ww.archbalt.org/synod](http://ww.archbalt.org/synod).

We enter this process with open hearts and minds, purified by prayer, hearts that are open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to the voice of Christ in the Church. Only in this way are we able to listen to one another and thus to prepare ourselves to engage with one another in accomplishing the Church's mission of evangelization more vigorously and effectively. If we are to become closer as a family of faith and better equipped to carry forward the mission that became ours at Baptism, we can only do so by listening and journeying together.

Bishop Bruce Lewandowski and Ms. Jenny Kraska of the Maryland Catholic Conference will serve as co-chairs of the Archdiocesan Synodal Process. In addition, members of the Catholic Center staff and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council will play key roles in the Process and will be providing periodic updates.

Thank you for accompanying your people on this journey, one we will take together with open minds and hearts centered on Jesus Christ, in humility and obedience to the will of the Holy Spirit.

Faithfully in Christ,



Most Reverend William E. Lori  
Archbishop of Baltimore

## *Timeline*

October 17	A minimum of two parish/pastorate representatives attend the Opening Liturgy, 11 a.m. Cathedral of Mary Our Queen
November	Facilitated conversations at all parishes/pastorates of the Archdiocese, using resources provided by the Archdiocese and with feedback reported by the parish/pastorate using online submission form
Jan/Feb '22	Facilitated conversations with representatives of parishes/pastorates from the region and moderated by a representative of the Archdiocese
March '22	Archdiocesan gathering
April .22	Synthesis of submissions sent to Holy See by the Archdiocese
Oct. '23	XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, followed by the implementation phase in each diocese

*Resources (found at [www.archbalt.org/synod](http://www.archbalt.org/synod))*

Synod introductory video message  
Preparatory Document  
Vademecum  
PowerPoint on the Synod  
Synod prayer card  
Universal prayer  
Official Synod logo  
Instructions for conducting consultations  
Template for consultation/gathering  
Focus questions for consultation/gathering