

The **Synod on Synodality** aims at inviting the church, all the People of God, the Church Family of God, to see themselves as a people whose identity and life is rooted in **communion, participation, and mission**. These are the three core themes of this Synod on Synodality. Synod by itself signifies “together” along “the way”, along the same way, with the same intention, purpose, and destination. It is formed from two Greek words: syn (together) and hodos (way). When we add “Synodality” to it, it can signify “walking together in togetherness”. So, this is a Synod that invites us, all God’s people, to become conscious of our identity and call to live and exercise together: communion, participation, and mission as the People and of God. The Synod Theme is a follow up *Lumen Gentium (Light of the Nations)*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council.

It follows that everybody who is a constitutive child of God by baptism and member of the church (John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:1-3; Gal 4:25-28), and even by creation in “the image and likeness of God” (Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-2), is called upon to actively participate in this Synod on Synodality. This is how the church of the New Testament saw itself: the way believers in Christ lived, related to one another, “They held all things in common” and did everything in common (cf. Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37); they carried out in different ways the one mission Jesus entrusted to them: to proclaim God’s gospel of salvation in and through Christ (Rom 1:3-6,16-17) “to all the nations”, all humanity (Matt 28:16-20) and “to the whole world, to all creation” (Mark 16:15). A saving mission motivated by and anchored in God’s incomprehensible and overwhelming love for “the world” (John 3:16). Because they faithfully carried out their mission, even to the point of martyrdom for many of them, we Christians today and through the ages enjoy this good news of God.

Today the same Holy Spirit who was their principal agent of mission (cf. John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:5-16; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-36) is inviting us, all Christians, through this Synod on Synodality, to return to our New Testament roots and way of being church. This invitation of the Holy Spirit started at the Second Vatican Council and had grown progressively in different ways in the ministries of the different Popes since the Council. It can be said to have reached its current climax in the papacy of Pope Francis which started with his inauguration on 19th March 2013. At this inauguration he asked all to pray with and for him that the Holy Spirit may accompany him in his ministry. The Holy Spirit has answered this prayer and is still answering it.

His first encyclical, *Evangelii Gaudium* stressed the need for all the baptized to assume their baptismal mandate to proclaim the gospel. In his universally acclaimed encyclical *Laudato Si’ On the Earth Our Common Home* (2015), he calls on all human beings to recognize that we belong to one and the same mother, the earth, and have a common responsibility to care for it and for the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters, if we are not to exploit to extinction our God-given resource of livelihood. His 2020 encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* Brothers and Sisters All (2020, the year George Floyd was killed) proclaims the same message of living, “walking together in togetherness”, in oneness, as siblings of one human family, and with all God’s creatures, along the way of being truly human “in God’s image and likeness” as God intended it at creation.

Against this progressive background, and taking into consideration the incredible moves that Pope Francis has made to reach out to all and sundry since he assumed office: his efforts to decentralize and diversify the different portfolios of the Vatican, to appoint lay men and women to key positions in the Vatican City State (position previously held only by the clergy), to reach out to peoples of other faith, we can see that the Synod on Synodality is a

logical outcome of the consistent movement of the Spirit in the Church, and in and through Pope Francis' ministry as the leader of the Catholic (and catholic, universal) Church. We can see that the Holy Spirit is leading all God's people as one family along the way towards God. No one can afford to be a silent or indifferent spectator of this new energizing movement by which the Holy Spirit, who delights to "make all things new" (Rev 21:7), is blowing and powerfully moving the Church and the world towards its God-given destiny and goal. **The Synod on Synodality emphasizes listening: listening to everyone voice, particularly the voice of the laity. Most especially the voice of the Holy Spirit.**

The Purpose of These Assembled Documents

To facilitate individual and groups participation in this world-shaking new movement of the Spirit, the primary and select secondary documents of the Synod on Synodality have been assembled on this CABAN website. The aim is to offer free and easy access to those who may find it difficult to navigate through the relevant Vatican websites. Also attached is the link to the Secretariat of the Synod in Rome. Through this link, individuals and groups can get daily updates on the process and progress of the Synod. Individuals and groups are also urged to submit directly to the Synod Secretariat in Rome (synodus@synod.va), their views on what it means and has meant for them to be members of one church living and working in Synodality: in communion, participation, and mission.

May we, each, and all, listen with keenness, attentiveness, excitement, and joy to the Holy Spirit who leads us to participate wholeheartedly and with renewed zeal in this Synod on Synodality. May we at the end eagerly do as the Spirit moves us to do through the outcome of this Synod on Synodality. Amen.

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