

— THE ROMAN CATHOLIC —  
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA



# The Synod on Synodality: *How It Can Strengthen Prayer, Eucharistic Revival, and Evangelization*

St. Luke the Evangelist – Dinner & Doctrine  

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February 2, 2022

# Let us pray...



## *Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus* *We stand before You, Holy Spirit*

Prayer of invocation to the Holy Spirit for an ecclesial assembly  
of governance or discernment (thus synodal)

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.



SYNOD OF BISHOPS

# Plan for this evening

- The Global Synod: Background and Purpose
- What's It Mean for Us?
  - Why is it important?
- Q/A & Discussion

# What is a Synod?\*

- The term 'synod' is derived from the Greek *syn/συν* (together) and *hodos/ὁδός* (way).
- It means 'journey[ing] together' or 'on the way together.'
- Notice that 'the Way' was the earliest name for Christianity recorded in Sacred Scripture (e.g., see Acts 9:2).
- Therefore, Christians have always seen themselves as journeying together.
- The term 'synod' has been used particularly in the history of the Church to refer to those times and moments where Bishops and other leaders have gathered together to discern the direction the Holy Spirit intends for the Church.

*\*This and next five slides adapted from a presentation by Dr. Michael Martocchio, Diocese of Charleston*



# Synods in the Life of the Church

- The first millennium especially is full of synods
- These include what we would call ecumenical councils and local synods (diocesan, regional)
- In the last 2000 years, we have had 21 Ecumenical Councils (not including the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15)
- Synodal meetings have a well-established history in the Church





- Because of the experience of the Second Vatican Council, Paul VI established the universal Synod of Bishops in 1965 with the motu proprio *Apostolica Sollicitudo*
- The norms for synods were published in 1966 (and updated in 1969 and 1971 by Paul VI and in 2006 by Benedict XVI)
- The First Ordinary Synod of Bishops took place in 1967 on Preserving and Strengthening the Catholic Faith
- In 2018, Pope Francis released the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Communio*, which included a phase of consultation of the faithful as part of the synodal process
- This upcoming synod is the 16<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (we have also had 3 extraordinary synods and 10 special assemblies)

# Synods in Recent History



# What is Synodality?

- The theme of 'synodality' itself highlights something important for our understanding of the Church and how the Church operates and lives her mission
- The Church cannot simply be reduced to her leadership or even just to the clergy
- The Church, as the people of God, includes all of her members
- This means that it is essential for the Church to regularly have conversations that cross different groups and segments of the one family of God

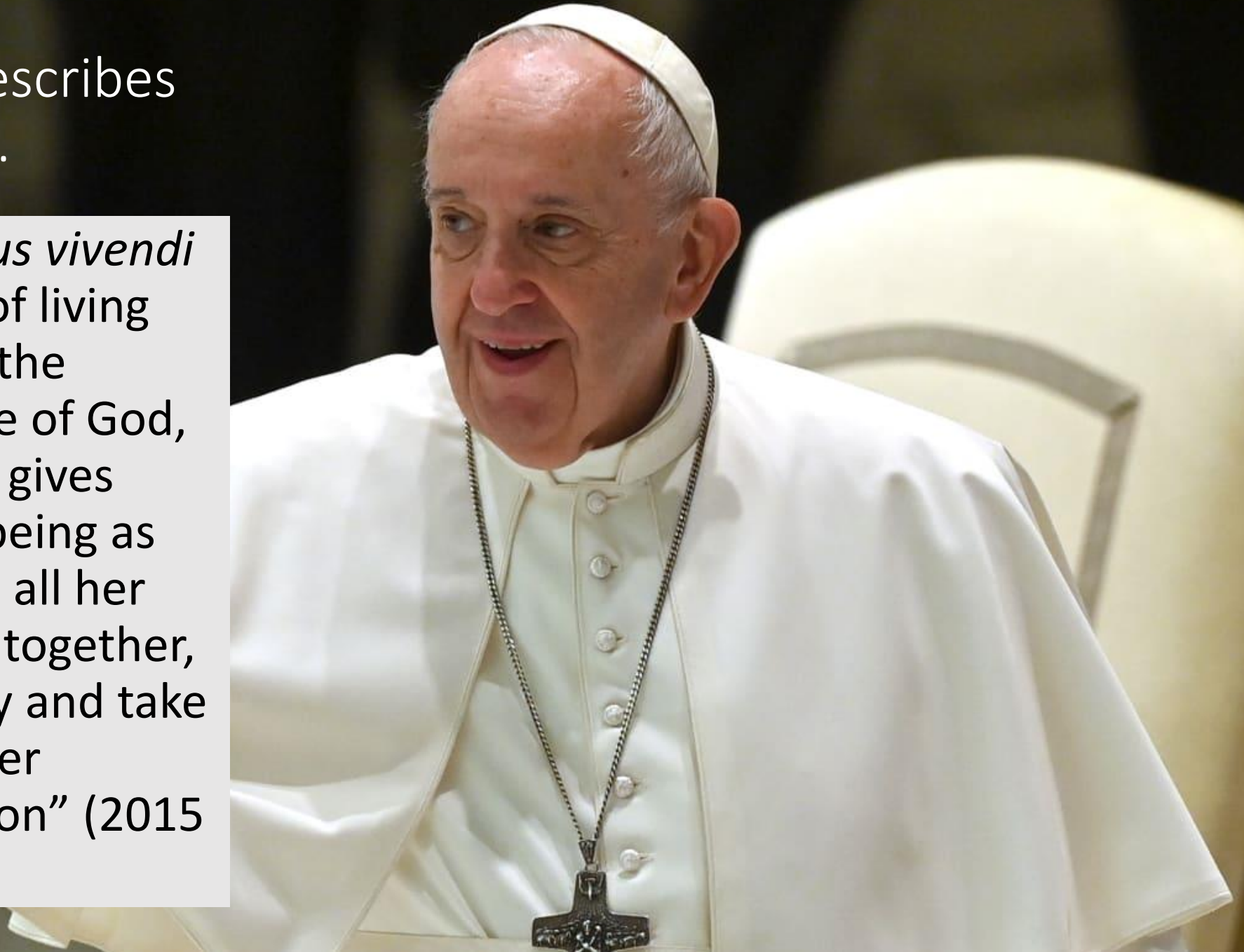
# What is Synodality?

- A new word, but expressing a fundamental aspect of the Church ...
  - “To walk together is *the constitutive way* of the Church” (Pope Francis)



Pope Francis describes  
'synodality' as...

“the specific *modus vivendi et operandi* [way of living and operating] of the Church, the People of God, which reveals and gives substance to her being as communion when all her members journey together, gather in assembly and take an active part in her evangelizing mission” (2015 Address).



# What is Synodality?

- International Theological Commission (2018)

... The concept of synodality refers to the **involvement and participation of the whole People of God** in the life and mission of the Church...

# What is Synodality?

- International Theological Commission (2018)

Synodality means that the whole Church is a subject and that **everyone in the Church is a subject** [i.e., agent of evangelization, co-responsible for the mission of the Church].



# Why a Synod on Synodality?

- **Pope Francis's Address in 2015:**

The world in which we live ... demands that the Church **strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission**. It is precisely this path of *synodality* which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.

# Why a Synod on Synodality?

- **International Theological Commission (2018)**

**... Synodality is at the heart of the work of renewal the [Second Vatican] Council was encouraging.**

# Why a Synod on Synodality?

- Synodality as essential to the renewal of the Church's mission of evangelization today
  - "...only in this way can we truly renew our pastoral ministry and adapt it to the mission of the Church in today's world" (Pope Francis)



# Why a Synod on Synodality?

- ***For the sake of mission***

*Has the Church at large lost an understanding of her mission, its urgency, and her utterly unique role in the world?*

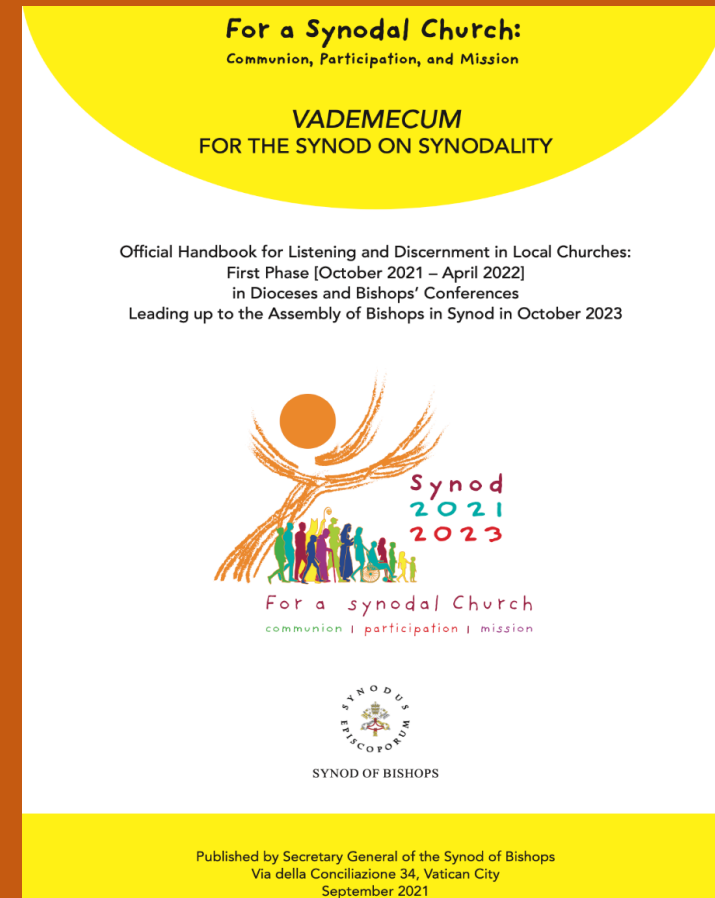
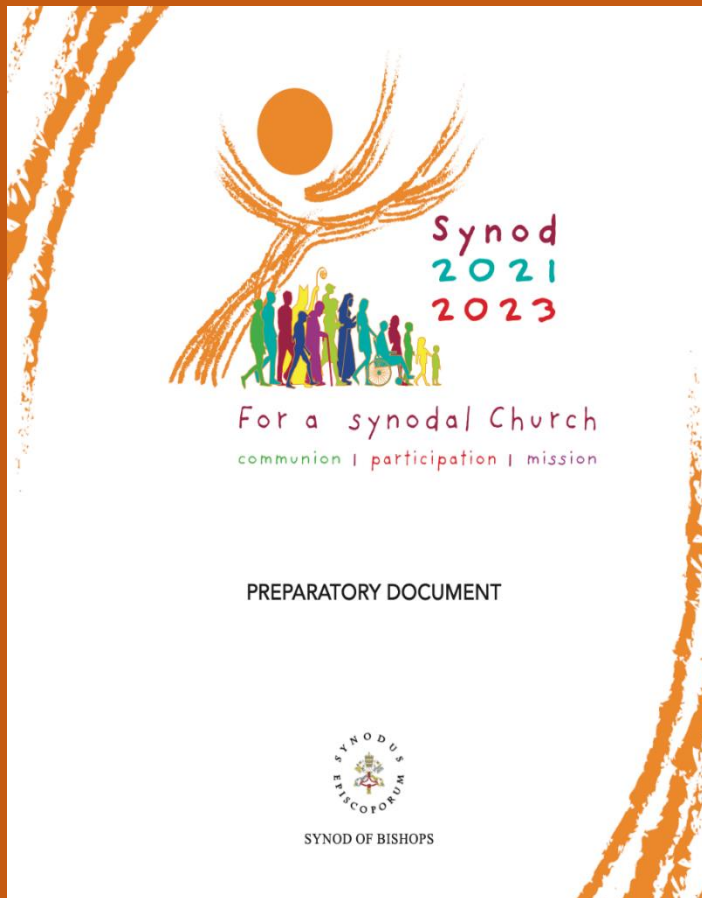
(Fr. John Riccardo commenting on the rationale for the Synod)



Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

# For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission – *together*



<https://www.synod.va>





- **Preparatory Document (2021)**

A basic question prompts and guides us: 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?**



- **Vademecum (2021)**

.... The objective of the current Synod is **to listen, as the entire People of God, to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church.**



- **Vademecum (2021)**

... In fact, the whole Synodal Process aims at fostering a **lived experience of discernment, participation, and co-responsibility**, where a diversity of gifts is brought together **for the Church's mission in the world.**



*... The purpose of this Synod, and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents, but to ‘plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.’*



# What is different about this Synod?

The Holy Father is asking that the entire Church participate in this Synod.

The laity, clergy and religious are invited to ***pray, listen, and talk*** together with the bishops before the 2023 gathering of bishops in Rome.

In our archdiocese, we will ***pray, listen, and talk*** with one another through prayer-centered listening sessions (parish/group and regional).



## ***Be quick to hear...***

Listening to each other is the basis of dialogue, friendship and community life.

This Synod is **not about changing doctrine or fundamental (divinely instituted) church structures**, but rather about encountering each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.





- Our Holy Father is asking all of us to grow in the art of Encountering, Listening, and Discerning.
- The Synod is first and foremost a call to **pray, to listen and discern together what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church today**, all for the good of her evangelizing mission.
- For Pope Francis, this is *the way* to move forward the new chapter of evangelization he encouraged in his 2013 *The Joy of the Gospel*.





*What does it mean for us?*

# Archdiocese of Atlanta: Prayer & Listening

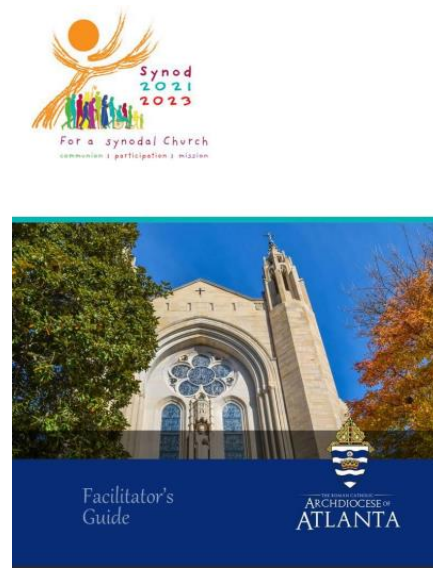
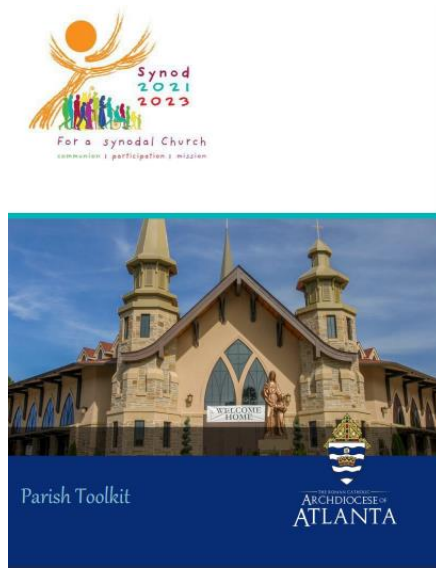
- Prayer & Listening (Consultation Phase) through end of April
  - Prayer-Centered Listening Sessions: parishes & other groups
  - Regional Prayer-Centered Listening Sessions
  - Online Survey

Synod



# Archdiocese of Atlanta: Prayer & Listening

- More info & resources available at <https://archatl.com/synod>



# Prayer

- *Without Me you can do nothing.*
- *Shema' Israel!*
- The Synod is a call to deeper communal and individual prayer
- The encountering, listening, and discerning all depend on prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit



# Prayer

- *The Synod is a process of spiritual discernment, of ecclesial discernment, that unfolds in adoration, in prayer and in dialogue with the word of God. (Pope Francis)*





# Prayer

- AoA: Prayer-centered listening sessions
- Prayerful listening of the word of God, listening to the Holy Spirit, listening to each other
- *What we can do now: Family, couple, individual prayer*









# National Eucharistic Revival

*MY FLESH FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD*

**2022-2025**

<https://eucharisticrevival.org/>

# Eucharistic Revival



COME TO ME  
Matthew 11:28  
EUCCHARISTIC RENEWAL

- The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Church's life, and therefore of every synodal path, of synodality itself
- The Eucharistic assembly at Mass – expression of synodality

# Eucharistic Revival



COME TO ME  
Matthew 11:28  
EUCCHARISTIC RENEWAL

- The Synod is a call to recognize the Eucharist at the center, and to be shaped by the Eucharist (Mass as paradigmatic)
- If Eucharistically centered and devoted, the Synod can be a tilling of the soil for the Revival



# Eucharistic Revival



COME TO ME  
Matthew 11:28  
EUCCHARISTIC RENEWAL

- 2022-2025: Diocesan Revival, Parish Revival, National Congress & Eucharistic Missionaries
- Launch at Eucharistic Congress: June 17-18, 2022
- *What we can do now: Ground prayer-centered listening sessions in the Eucharist (Mass, adoration, intercessors) and commit our families to the Eucharist*

# Evangelization

- Encountering, listening, discerning
- Building trust and relationships
- The importance of listening ... to the Holy Spirit and to one another
- Listening is the prerequisite to proclaiming the kerygma



# Evangelization

- An evangelization/outreach opportunity: to reconnect, to invite, to listen, to pray together
- Synodal conversion to advance missionary and pastoral conversion
- *What we can do now: Parishes & families, to whom can you reach out, in fellowship and witness?*



To conclude:  
*Listening with the ear of the heart*

- Listening is at the foundation of proclaiming & teaching, vocation & mission
- Listening is basic to Christian prayer
- Listening is basic to human relationships & friendships
- “Take heed then *how* you hear” (Lk 8:18)
- A listening heart (1 Kings 3:9; see St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Francis, etc.)

To conclude:  
*Listening with the ear of the heart*

- *We are losing the ability to listen to those in front of us*  
(Pope Francis)
- How can we cultivate (e.g., Lent):
  - More silence in our lives, adoration
  - Attentive listening to the Word and to others (our families)
  - Wonder at creation
  - Asceticism in the face of distractions, noise, and comforts, to encourage more room for grace and self-control





# OFFICE OF **EVANGELIZATION** & **DISCIPLESHIP**

ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

<https://archatl.com/oed>

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