



Archdiocese of Boston

Synod on Synodality Parish Implementation

The Holy Father is asking the Church to participate in a world-wide conversation culminating in the Synod of Bishops in 2023. The topic of the Synod is synodality.

The Synod document describes synodality this way:

“First and foremost, synodality denotes the particular style that qualifies the life and mission of the Church, expressing her nature as the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel. Synodality ought to be expressed in the Church’s ordinary way of living and working.”

And again:

“In this sense, synodality enables the entire People of God to walk forward together, listening to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, to participate in the mission of the Church in the communion that Christ establishes between us.”

For the next several months, the Archdiocese of Boston will be engaging the questions of the Synod on our local level. The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, the Presbyteral Council, the Central Ministries staff, various religious communities, and many other groups will be participating in small group gatherings to discuss the questions. There will also be several regional meetings. The core of the discussions, though, will take place on the parish level.

As a general guideline, it should be noted that this synod is about synodality itself. Its goal is not to discuss all the issues in the Church, but rather to discuss how the Church listens to, and can listen better to, all her people and draws the voices of all into her prayer, her mission, and her decision-making process on every level. In other words, while discussion on various issues in the Church may be appropriate at times, this is not that discussion. This discussion is about *how* voices are heard.

We recommend the following for parish discussions.

- Send the included Synod Questions document to your parish email list.
- Meet with your parish council and finance council (together perhaps) in a meeting dedicated to discussing the questions. They need not answer all of the questions – if there are one or two that particularly interest them, they can focus on those.
- Have an open meeting in your parish in which people break up into small groups to discuss one or two of the questions, and then report back to the larger group on their discussion.
- It is the hope that all of the discussions will happen in a context of prayer and be guided by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, whenever possible, begin the discussion sessions with a significant time of prayer, perhaps in front of the Blessed Sacrament.
- You could use the opening prayer found on the third page of the Vademecum document (bit.ly/vademecumhandbook) in your sessions.
- When all of your discussions are completed, choose someone to write a summary, and send it to psoper@rcab.org. The summary should be no more than 20 pages. The summary should not be

just a pasting together of various notes of group discussions, but rather a real synthesis that highlights important points, and filters out both repetitions and comments that are not directed toward questions of synodality. Therefore, the person preparing the summary should be chosen carefully.

There will be sessions held in each region in January two which we will invite a couple of leaders from each parish to come and discuss how to hold the discussions on the parish level.

Later in the winter and early spring there will also be discussions in each region for a few people from each parish who are also attending parish sessions to join in an inter-parish discussion.

Registration links for both of these sessions will be sent to the pastors as soon as the dates are solidified.

Please note that while all of the feedback received from the parishes will become a part of the Archdiocesan record of the synod process, and will be discussed with the bishops, we only get to send on a total of 10 pages to the next step in the synod process, that is the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

We will not be soliciting individual responses to the Synod questions. All responses will need to be sent in from parish leaders. We ask that the person identified as the one sending in the response clearly indicate the parish or parishes from which the response is coming and give some sense of how many people participated in the process.

We ask that all responses be submitted by July 15, 2022.

Preparing for the Synod's opening, we encouraged parish leaders to send a brief survey to their parishioners. To date we have received some 1900 responses to that survey, and those responses will be drawn into our Archdiocesan record of the synod as well. That survey is still open, and the link is here: <https://forms.office.com/r/aPadVsPFt9>

Thank you.

Any questions from parish leaders can be directed to psoper@rcab.org.