

A large, stylized graphic in the background features a sun in the upper left and a tree with thick, textured branches extending across the top and left. The sun and tree are rendered in a light orange or tan color. The main title is centered over this graphic.

# For a Synodal Church:

Communion, Participation, & Mission

A row of colorful silhouettes representing a diverse group of people, including a person with a cane, a person in a wheelchair, and a child, walking towards the right.

Diocesan Planners Network  
July 22, 2025



United States  
Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

# Opening 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

Homily from Opening of the Synodal Path  
10 October 2021



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## Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

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.

uscgb.org/synod  
www.synod.va

# Agenda

## Part I

Synod  
Overview

Implementation  
Stage

## Part II

Reflection

## Part III

Questions &  
Comments



# Spiritual Formation Exercise



Synod  
2021  
2024

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[usccb.org/synod](https://usccb.org/synod)  
[www.synod.va](https://www.synod.va)

# Diocesan Synod Leaders

- Meeting since December 2021
- Purpose
  - Information
  - Formation
  - Building Inter-Diocesan Community
  - Shaping the Work of Synodality in US

ALL ARE WELCOME!



# Documents in Dialogue



# Documents in Dialogue



"The synodal Church  
for mission now  
needs the words we  
have shared to be  
backed up by deeds.  
And that is the path."

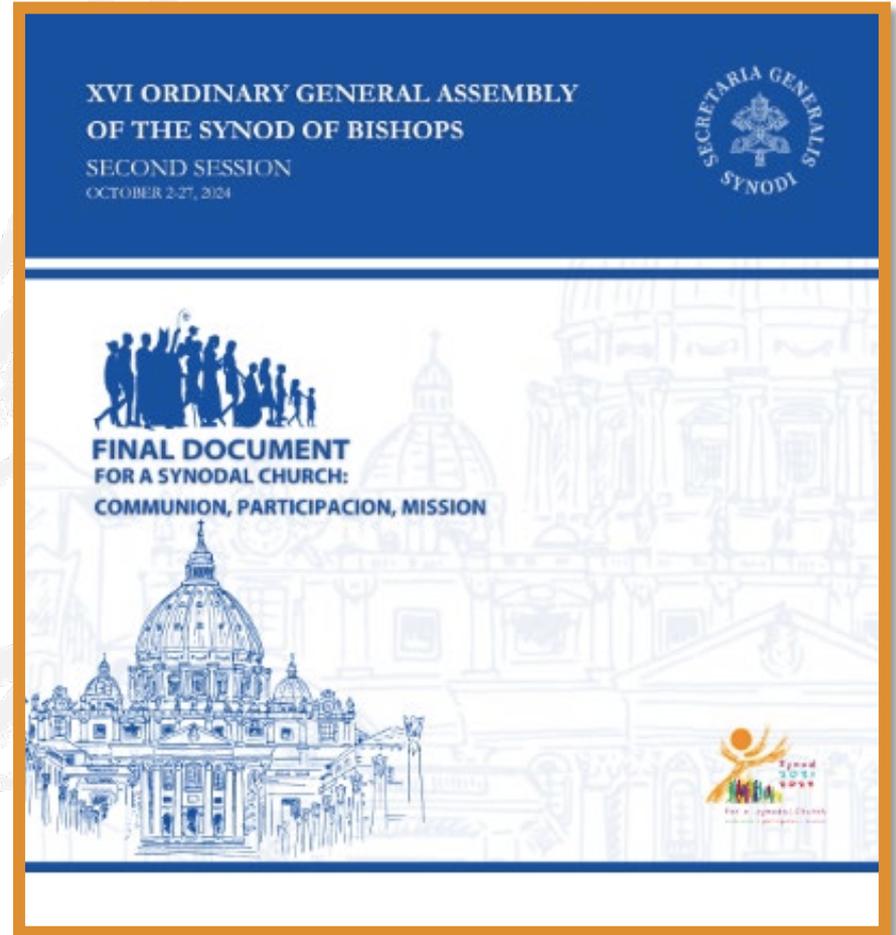
Pope Francis

17th General Congregation Final Greeting

October 26, 2024



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# *Pathways for the Implementation Stage of the Synod 2025-2028*

July 2025



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GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE SYNOD

## **PATHWAYS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF THE SYNOD**

2025 - 2028



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# The Synodal Process towards 2028

PROCESS OF LISTENING |  
ENCOUNTERING, DIALOGUING, DISCERNING



**9-10 OCTOBER 2021**

Worldwide Opening of the Synodal Process



**17 OCTOBER 2021**

Local Opening of the Synodal Process



## PHASE 1 - The Consultation of the people of God

LOCAL - NATIONAL  
CONSULTATION



CONTINENTAL STAGE  
DIALOGUE AMONG THE CHURCHES OF A SPECIFIC REGION



## PHASE 2 - The discernment of the Pastors

**4-29 OCTOBER 2023**

**1ST SESSION XVI** General Ordinary  
Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

**2-27 OCTOBER 2024**

**2ND SESSION XVI** General Ordinary  
Assembly of the Synod of Bishops



## PHASE 3 - The Implementation For a Synodal Church

**2025**

**MARCH** Announcement of the accompaniment and evaluation process

**JULY** Publication of the *Pathways for the implementation phase*

**24-26 OCTOBER** Jubilee of Synodal Teams and  
participatory bodies

**2025 JUNE - 2026 DECEMBER**  
Implementation paths in local Churches and  
their groupings

**2027**

**FIRST HALF**

Evaluation Assemblies in Dioceses and Eparchies

**SECOND HALF**

Evaluation Assemblies in National and  
International Episcopal Conferences, Eastern  
hierarchical structures, and other groupings of  
Churches.

**2028**

**FIRST QUARTER**

Continental Evaluation Assemblies

**OCTOBER**

Celebration of the Ecclesial  
Assembly in the Vatican



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# Implementation Phase

- **June 2025 – December 2026:** Implementation Activities in Local Churches
- **January - June 2027:** Evaluation Assemblies in Dioceses and Eparchies
- **July – December 2027:** National Evaluation Assemblies
- **January – April 2028:** Continental Evaluation Assemblies
- **October 2028:** Ecclesial Assembly in the Vatican.



# Implementation Phase

- **STUDY!**
  - Final Document of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops
- "It is therefore the Final Document, in its totality, that is the point of reference for the Implementation Phase."  
(Section 1)
- "Reading of the Final Document should be supported and sustained by communal and personal prayer, centered on Christ...and open to the action of the Spirit."  
(Section 3)



# "Pathways"

- Section 1 – Implementation Phase & Objectives
- Section 2 - Tasks & Responsibilities of Participants
- Section 3 – Engaging with the Final Document
- Section 4 – Methods & Tools for Implementation Phase



# Section 1 – Implementation Phase & Objectives

- Examine new practices and structures that will make the life of the Church more synodal.
- "Every local Church, every parish community will be able to practice synodality within its ordinary pastoral ministry."
- "Growing as a synodal Church requires knowledge that can only be gained through experience and it introduces us to an encounter with the Lord."



# Section 2 – Participants & Responsibilities

- 2.1 - Diocesan Bishop
- 2.2 - Synodal Teams & Participatory Bodies
- 2.3 - Episcopal Conferences
- 2.4 - General Secretariat of the Synod



# Section 2.2 - Synodal Teams

- Renewed
- Reactivated
- Formed



# Section 2.2 - Synodal Teams

"The mandate of the synodal teams does not duplicate that of the participatory bodies, but is instead coordinated with it, in a spirit of seeking synergies. The **synodal teams are established to serve the synodal animation and formation** of the Diocese or Eparchy. Participatory bodies are called to carry out the proactive and consultative tasks assigned to them by Canon Law. It is therefore their task to contribute to the elaboration of the decisions required for the implementation of the Synod, with discernment of pastoral priorities or the renewal of structures and decision-making processes. Regular coordination and timely circulation of information will make everyone's work more fluid."



# Section 2.3 - Episcopal Conferences

- USCCB Approach
  - Accompany Bishops in their questions as initiators, animators, and leaders of synodality in their dioceses
  - Assist in an increased understanding of synodality without dictating action



# Section 3 – How to Engage with the Final Document

- 3.2 - Investing in Concrete Practices
  - Promotion of synodal spirituality
  - Access to positions of responsibility and leadership that do not require Holy Orders
  - Developing responsive forms of service and ministry
  - Ecclesial discernment
  - Synodal decision making processes
  - Transparency, accountability, and evaluation
  - Participatory bodies in dioceses and parishes
  - Local and regional ecclesial assemblies
  - Diocesan synods
  - Parish renewal
  - Christian Initiation and formation programs



## Section 4 – Methods & Tools

- 4.2 - Synodal Approach to Designing & Accompanying Processes
  - Ecclesial Discernment
  - Training Courses on Synodality
  - Listening & Dialogue in Communities
  - Celebrations, Encounters, & Exchanges of Experiences
  - Communication Processes & Activities
  - Renewing Pastoral action
  - Theological, Pastoral, & Canonical Research



# Reflection

- When you think about the study and implementation of the Final Document:
  - what kind of support will your bishop need?
  - what is the first step in your local Church?



# Thank you!

[www.usccb.org/synod](http://www.usccb.org/synod)

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[www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va)

[www.synodresources.org](http://www.synodresources.org)



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