

The Synod on Synodality: What Every Catholic Should Know

With listening sessions occurring throughout the country, U.S. dioceses that have embraced the synodal process hope to see a revival of engagement with their flock after pandemic-era restrictions.

Pope Francis' Synod of Bishops focuses on the meaning and purpose of synodality itself. Launched in October 2021, it was designed to draw local Catholics and national bishops' conferences, religious orders and curial officials into an extended period of consultation and discernment that will culminate with an October 2023 assembly in Rome.

"The fullness of the synodal process can only truly exist if the local churches are involved [in] that process," stated a [communiqué](#), approved by Pope Francis and issued by the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, that outlined the new synodal itinerary underpinning the topic: "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission."

"It is not just an event, but also a process that involves in synergy the People of God, the College of Bishops and the Bishop of Rome, each according to their proper function," the communiqué stated.

The first stage of the two-year process began with ceremonies in Rome on Oct. 9-10. Then the focus shifted to local Churches based in the globe's five continents, and U.S. dioceses began their own [synodal journey](#) under the direction of the local bishop.

"Without real participation by the People of God, talk about communion risks remaining a devout wish," said **Pope Francis**, when he [launched](#) the synodal process last year. **"[W]e must acknowledge the frustration and impatience felt by many pastoral workers, members of diocesan and parish consultative bodies and women, who frequently remain on the fringes."**

Preparatory documents provided by the Secretariat of the Synod, including a questionnaire and practical guidance, have been adapted for Catholics in the United States. **The questionnaire asks respondents to register their position on fundamental Catholic beliefs, note their religious practices and assess the quality and scope of the programs and services provided by their parish.** Public consultations or listening sessions at local parishes have also begun and will continue through the spring.

Pope Francis has encouraged local dioceses to be inclusive and reach out to those on the peripheries. Invitees should include practicing Catholics, those who no longer attend church, non-Catholics as well as the poor, disabled and elderly.

LISTENING AND DISCERNMENT SESSIONS IN THE DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY-ST. JOSEPH

March 15 | St. Mary's Catholic Church
5:30 p.m. in the Church (2017 Main St., Higginsville)
More info: 660-584-3038

March 19 | Holy Family
9:30 a.m. – Noon in the Parish Hall (919 NE 96th St., Kansas City)
Virtual option also available
More info: Christen Cota, Pastoral Associate, for Zoom link or with any questions-
christen@holyfamily.com or 816-436-9200, ext. 304

March 29 | Our Lady of the Presentation
6:30 p.m. in the Church (130 NW Murray Rd., Lee's Summit)
More info: mstorms@olpls.org