



Embracing Synodality: Toward becoming a more synodal parish

Catholic Parish of St
Joseph's Port Melbourne &
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Middle Park.
Thursday, 1st August 2024.



COME HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit and fill my heart.
Come Holy Spirit set me apart.
Come Holy Spirit to you I pray.
Come Holy Spirit show me the way.

Come Holy Spirit and heal me now.
Come Holy Spirit and melt me now.
Come Holy Spirit and mould me now.
Come Holy Spirit and use me now.

CHORUS

POUR OUT YOUR GRACE UPON THIS PLACE.



Acknowledgement of Country





Towards becoming a synodal parish

- i. Synodality: What does it mean?
- ii. The characteristic signs of a synodal Church.
- iii. How do we put synodality into practice?
- iv. What are the greatest challenges to synodal practice?
- v. Closing

Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus – “We stand before You, Holy Spirit,”

**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**



“The path of synodality is the path that God expects of the Church of the third millennium.”

Address of Pope Francis at the ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops. 17th October 2015.

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html



Becoming A More Synodal Parish



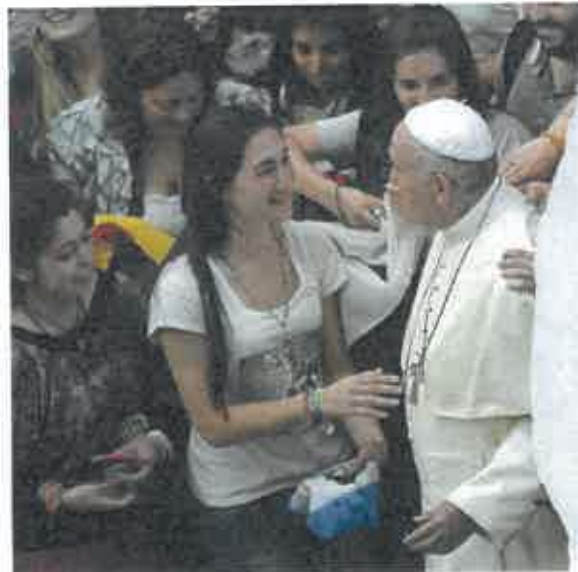
"Synodality is ingrained in the nature of the people of God. In the laity, I felt we are not bringing something new. To the contrary, we were harping a chord in their heart, and they were ready to sing and to dance to this music."

Cardinal Mario Grech: as reported in NCR Sept 23 2023
<https://www.ncronline.org/vatican/vatican-news/cardinal-mario-grech-central-figure-popes-plan-change-catholic-church>

"Christianity stands at the threshold of a new reformation. It will not be the first, nor the second, nor the last."

The reform of the Church must go much deeper than the reform of the Church's institutions. The fruitfulness of the reform and the future vitality of Christianity depend on the rediscovery of the relationship to the spiritual and existential dimensions of faith. A renewed and newly understood Christian spirituality can make a significant contribution to the spiritual culture of humanity today, even far beyond the churches."

Tomas Halik: Keynote speech at the 13th General Assembly of the Lutheran Federation Sept 14 2023
<https://catholicoutlook.org/keynote-speech-at-the-13-general-assembly-of-the-lutheran-world-federation-lwf/>



We recall that the purpose of the Synod, 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."

Pope Francis, Address at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops on Young People (3 October 2018)

Pope Francis:

"Today we are not living in an epoch of change so much as a change of epoch"

To participants in the meeting organized by the Coordination of Communication Associations 31 October 2022
<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2022/october/documents/20221031-incontro-copec.com.html>

"The whole Church is called to confront the weight of culture impregnated with clericalism, inherited from its history, and forms of exercising authority in which various types of abuse (of power, economic, conscience, sexual) are inserted. A conversion of ecclesiastical action is unthinkable without the active participation of all the members of the People of God."

Preparatory Document for the 2021-2024 Synod on Synodality 2021
<https://www.synod.va/en/news/the-preparatory-document.html>





"Synod" is an ancient and venerable word in the Tradition of the Church ... **Synodality** has its roots in the Catholic faith itself.

- it expresses how the disciples of Jesus were called together as an assembly
 - ...Christians were originally called 'followers of the Way'
- International Theological Commission, Synodality In The Life and Mission of the Church 2018



What do we mean by synodality?

"Syn": Together
"Hodos": Journey

Being on a journey together



Synodality is a fruit of the Second Vatican Council, grounded in its spirit and vision.



The mission of the Church requires the entire People of God to be on a journey together, with each member playing his or her crucial role, united with each other.



The church: The People of God

The church,
one big



It's not so much that the church
has a mission, it's that the
mission of God has a church.

Alan Hirsch

What defines the People of God?

It is a people that belongs to God goes beyond any nation,
continent, language, or race:



One is a member by baptism and
by living according to the
teachings of Jesus and his Church.



Its identity is to be children of God,
which gives freedom and grants
equal dignity to all.



Its law is the new
commandment of love. "You
shall love your neighbour as
yourself".



Its mission is to be the light of
the world by proclaiming
Jesus' Good News of love,
peace and fraternity



Its destiny is to live
and implement in
their local context a
society of justice, joy,
peace, love, and
mutual respect.

What does it mean to be a synodal church?

"Every baptized person is called to actively participate in the life and in the mission of the church, starting from the specifics of one's own vocation, in relationship with others and with the charisms given by the Spirit for the good of all. We need Christian communities in which the space is enlarged, where everyone can feel at home, where pastoral structures and means foster not the creation of small groups, but the joy of being and feeling co-responsible."

- Pope Francis May 25th 2023.



The theological foundations of synodality

1. The Holy Spirit
2. The Church: Together on a pilgrim journey
3. The Discernment of Spirits
4. The Bishops



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"Synodality is the way of being the Church today according to the will of God, in a dynamic of discerning and listening together to the voice of the Holy Spirit."

Pope Francis

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8 Major Marks of a Synodal Church

- Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, 28 March 2023

1. The People of God journeying together – **We are all in this together!!**
2. Authentic listening to and from everyone - **Requires courageous speaking and genuine listening to each other.**
3. Listening to the Word of God and celebrating the Eucharist. - **Prayerful & celebratory**
4. A humble and honest church - **Truth telling and humble listening**
5. Seeking inclusion - **All voices are to be listened to**
6. A participative Church where co-responsibility flourishes - **Promoting participatory & shared leadership**
7. A missionary Church - **Outward looking; to the margins, to those most in need, those seeking and thirsting for meaning**
8. A discerning Church - **Listening to the Holy Spirit and acting in faith, hope and love**



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Characteristic signs of a synodal Church



Synodality "is an easy concept to express in words but is not so easy to put into practice."

(Address by Pope Francis on 50th Anniversary of Synod of Bishops, Oct 2015)

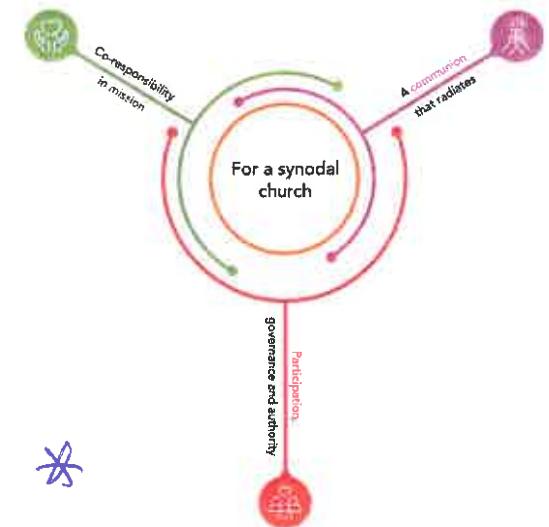


Three Priority Issues for a Synodal Church

COMMUNION

MISSION

PARTICIPATION






The Dignity and Vocation of every Christian

Every baptised person is called to be a protagonist of mission since we are all missionary disciples. The Church is called, in synodal synergy, to activate the ministries and charisms present in her life and to listen to the voice of the Spirit, in order to discern the ways of evangelisation. (ITC 53)


In all the baptised, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelisation. (ITC 56)

The Holy Spirit, "allotting its gifts to everyone according as it wills, it distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts it makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church. (*Lumen Gentium* 12)



How do we put synodality into practice?

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We are called to reach out to those who find themselves in the existential peripheries of our societies and to show particular solidarity with the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters: the poor, the disabled, the unborn and the sick, migrants and refugees, the elderly and the young who lack employment.

Pope Francis' Message to Cardinal Kurt Koch On The Occasion of The 10th General Assembly of The World Council Of Churches, w2.vatican.va, October 4, 2013

How do we become a more synodal parish?

1. Encourage participation – cultivate each person's gifts and charisms.
 2. Foster open communication.
 3. Promote collaborative leadership.
 4. Create inclusive spaces.
 5. Encourage ongoing formation.
 6. Engage in active listening
 7. Focus on mission & outreach.
 8. Celebrate diversity.
 9. Evaluate & adapt.
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Listening: A key disposition for synodal leadership

Everyone has the right to be heard, just as everyone has the right to speak. Synodal dialogue depends on courage both in speaking and in listening. It is not about engaging in a debate to convince others. Rather, it is welcoming what others say as a way by which the Holy Spirit can speak for the good of all (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality,
September 2021



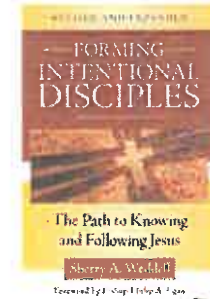
Formation

According to stages

- One approach does not fit all.

e.g. Stages of discipleship (Sherry Weddell)

1. Initial trust
2. Spiritual curiosity
3. Spiritual openness
4. Spiritual seeking
5. Intentional discipleship



Listen and dialogue

"A synodal Church is a Church which listens, which realizes that listening 'is more than simply hearing'. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the 'Spirit of truth' (Jn 14:17), in order to know what he 'says to the Churches' (Rev 2:7)."

(Pope Francis, Oct 2015)





The great enemy of the synodal process is fear.

Think about the apostles on the morning of Pentecost. Pentecost morning was even worse. It was worse. Total disorder. And who provoked that mess? The Holy Spirit. He's good at creating disorder to move people. But the same Spirit also provoked harmony.

Don't be afraid when there is disorder provoked by the Spirit," he said. One need fear "only when it is provoked by our selfishness or the spirit of evil."

Pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who opens people to listen to others, who makes dialogue fruitful, enlightens discernment and guides choices and decisions.

Pope Francis -Address to the participants in the National Meeting of Diocesan Representatives of the Italian Synod Path. 25 May 2023



- Challenging the organization/ community to **move forward** towards God's greater reign of love.
- Embracing the unknown

Four pieces of advice to people in the Church

1. Continue to walk
2. Be a Church together
3. Be an open Church
4. Continue this journey with great confidence in the work that the Holy Spirit is performing

Pope Francis -Address to the participants in the National Meeting of Diocesan Representatives of the Italian Synod Path. 25 May 2023



What are the greatest challenges to synodal practice?

1. Resistance to change.
2. Communication barriers
3. Engaging people who feel disconnected or unaccustomed to being involved in decision-making processes.
4. Balancing authority and participation.
5. Managing conflicts and disagreements.
6. Resources limitations
7. Ensuring inclusivity.
8. Cultural differences.
9. Sustaining momentum.
10. Training and formation.



Come, Spirit of love, open our hearts to hear your voice!

Come, Holy Spirit of holiness, renew the holy and faithful people of God.

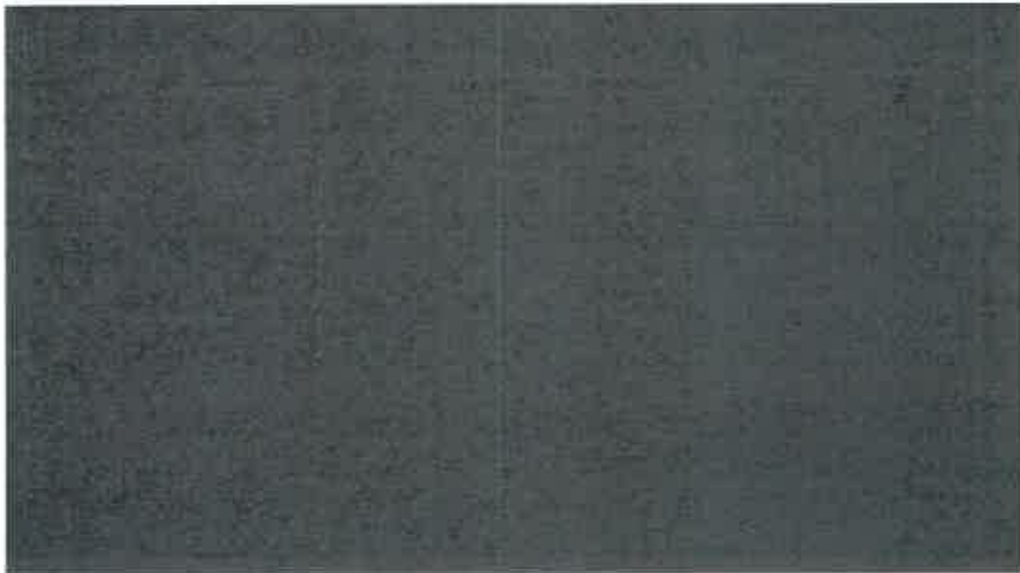
Come, Creator Spirit, renew the face of the earth!

Amen.



Part of the goal of synodality is to "let God's heart shine through -- a heart open to all and for all."

Pope Francis May 25th 2023



Come Holy Spirit!
You inspire new tongues and place words of life on our lips: Keep us from becoming a "museum church", beautiful but mute, with much past and little future.

Come among us so that in this synodal experience we will not lose our enthusiasm, dilute the power of prophecy or descend into useless and unproductive discussions.