

ARCHDIOCESE OF NAIROBI



FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH
Communion, Participation, and Mission.



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

*Synodal Invitation to the
people of God:*

- ◆ To pray
- ◆ To listen
- ◆ To analyse
- ◆ To dialogue
- ◆ To discern
- ◆ To offer advice

Diocesan Synodal Phase:
October 2021 to April 2022

INTRODUCTION

The Church of God is convoked in Synod. The path entitled, **“FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION, AND MISSION”** which was officially opened on the 9th and 10th of October 2021 in Rome and on 17th of October in each particular Church. This will lead to the fundamental stage of the celebration of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023.

With this convocation, Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission. His Holiness is convinced that it is precisely this path of Synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.

This journey which follows in the wake of the Church’s “renewal” proposed by the Second Vatican Council, is both a gift and a task: by journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through Her experience which processes can help Her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open Herself to mission. Our “journeying together” is in fact what most effectively enacts and manifests the nature of the Church as the pilgrim and missionary People of God (Cf. PD. p.2).

A basic question which prompts and guides us is: 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 (Cf. PD. p. 3)?

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- 1. *Vademecum* for the Synod on Synodality**
- 2. Preparatory Document for the Synod of Bishops 2021-2023.**
- 3. Const. *Episcopalis Communio* (15 September 2018)**
- 4. Website: (www.synod.va).**

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1. Title: Synod of Bishops “Synodus Episcoporum”

2. Theme: - For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission

The theme of the Synod is “**For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.**” The three dimensions of the theme are *communion, participation, and mission*. These three dimensions are profoundly interrelated. They are the vital pillars of a Synodal Church. There is no hierarchy between them. Rather, each one enriches and orients the other two. There is a dynamic relationship between the three that must be articulated with all three in mind.

2.1. Key Words for the Synodal Process

- a) **Communion:** By his gracious will, God gathers us together as diverse peoples of one faith, through the covenant that he offers to his people. Communion finds its deepest roots in the love and unity of the Trinity.

- b) **Participation:** A call for the involvement of all who belong to the People of God – laity, consecrated and ordained – to engage in the exercise of deep and respectful

listening to one another. In a Synodal Church the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to *pray, listen, analyze, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions* which correspond as closely as possible to God's will.

- c) **Mission:** To witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. This Synodal Process has a deeply missionary dimension to it. It is intended to enable the Church to better witness to the Gospel, especially with those who live on the spiritual, social, economic, political, geographical, and existential peripheries of our world.

3. The Official Logo of the Synodal Path



A large, majestic tree, full of wisdom and light, reaches for the sky. A sign of deep vitality and hope which expresses the cross of Christ. It carries the Eucharist, which shines like the sun. The horizontal branches, opened like hands or wings, suggest, at the same time, the Holy Spirit.

The people of God are not static: they are on the move, in direct reference to the etymology of the word synod, which means "walking together." The people are united by the same common dynamic

that this Tree of Life breathes into them, from which they begin their walk.

These 15 silhouettes sum up our entire humanity in its diversity of life situations of generations and origins. This aspect is reinforced by the multiplicity of bright colors which are themselves signs of joy. There is no hierarchy between these people who are all on the same footing: young, old, men, women, teenagers, children, lay people, religious, parents, couples, singles; the bishop and the nun are not in front of them, but among them.

Quite naturally, children and the adolescents open their walk, in reference to these words of Jesus in the Gospel: "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children" (Mt 11:25).

The horizontal baseline: "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission" runs from left to right in the direction of this march, underlining and strengthening it, to end with the title "Synod 2021 – 2023," the high point that synthesizes the whole Logo.

4. Brief summary of the Synodal Process

4.1. Definition of terms

Synod - is an ancient and venerable word in the Tradition of the Church, whose meaning draws on the deepest themes of Revelation. It indicates the path along which the People of God walk together.

Equally, it refers to the Lord Jesus, who presents Himself as ‘the way, the truth and the life’ (Jn 14,6), and to the fact that Christians, His followers, were originally called ‘followers of the Way’ (cf. Acts 9,2; 19,9.23; 22,4; 24,14.22).

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.

4.2. Aim of the Synod

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.

4.3. Purpose of the Synod

The purpose of the Synodal process is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be, to make people’s hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength to our hands for our common mission.

4.4. Objectives of the Synod

1. To provide an opportunity for the entire People of God to discern together how to move forward on the path towards being a more Synodal Church in the long-term
2. To listen, as the entire People of God, to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church. We do so by listening together to the Word of God in Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church, and then by listening to one another, and especially to those at the margins, discerning the signs of the times.
3. To make pastoral decisions that reflect the will of God as closely as possible, grounding them in the living voice of the People of God.

4.5. Expectation from the People of God

The Synodal Process calls us all to renew our mentalities and our ecclesial structures in order to live out God's call for the Church amid the present signs of the times. This process can be achieved by journeying together through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

5. Program of activities (October 2021 to April 2022)

5.1. Metropolitan Induction - The Metropolitan Induction meeting was held on 7th and 8th October. The Contact Persons from the six Dioceses of the Metropolitan of Nairobi were enlightened about the forthcoming event of the Synod of Bishops. His Lordship Rt. Rev. Maurice Muhatia the Bishop of Nakuru Diocese and Fr. Josiah Muthee facilitated the sessions. The team from the Archdiocese of Nairobi was present in large number and they were satisfied with the inputs. They got to know what is their duty in this Synodal Process and they are ready to accomplish it with much enthusiasm.

5.2. Launch of the Diocesan Phase in Nairobi – The Diocesan Synodal Phase officially launched on **16th October 2021 at St. Stephen Parish Kairi** in Mang’u during the deanery family day with Eucharistic celebration presided by the Apostolic Administrator His Lordship David Kamau. He presented a brief speech on the Synod rolling up the banner to accompany the process of the Synodal journey in the Archdiocese of Nairobi.

The Pastoral Co-ordinator Fr. Wallace Ng’ang’a gave a road map of activities during the diocesan Synodal phase.

His Lordship commissioned the Diocesan Contact Team to spearhead the process.

5.3. Groups for induction - The induction process to the pastoral leaders will be done by the Diocesan Contact Teams in the four zones of the Archdiocese of Nairobi, namely: -

Zone A: (Ruiru deanery, Thika Deanery, Gatundu Deanery and Mang`u Deanery)

Zone B: (Central deanery, Makadara Deanery and Western Deanery)

Zone C: (Kikuyu deanery, Limuru Deanery, Kiambu deanery and Githunguri deanery)

Zone D: (Eastern deanery, Outering deanery and Ruaraka deanery).

The groups to be inducted are as follows: -

- a) Presbyteral Council/Senate
- b) Clergy
- c) Religious men and women
- d) Archdiocesan Pastoral Council
- e) Pastoral Council leaders
- f) Ecclesial Groups (Associations and Devotional leaders)
- g) Secretariat
- h) Catechists
- i) Schools and Colleges
- j) Other denominations and sects
- k) Charitable homes
- l) Migrants and refugees
- m) Chaplaincies

- 6. Questionnaire** – The Diocesan Contact Team will hold meetings and moments of sensitization to the leaders of the various categories of the people of God. Once they create the awareness through moments of prayer, dialogue, discernment and listening, they will issue the questionnaires and together agree on a date when to collect the responses. Tools like social media, virtual platforms and interactive technology could be used to reach out more people. The feedback should be given in writing. Other materials such as images, videos, stories, artistic expressions and personal testimonies can be submitted as attachments. This procedure will run from October 2021 up to February 2022. In March, all the data collected will be compiled into the Diocesan synthesis which will be sent to the Episcopal Conference.

- 7. Plenary Assembly and the closing of the Diocesan Synodal Phase** – After the Diocesan phase of Synodal consultations, there will be the Diocesan Pre-Synodal Meeting to celebrate and reflect on the emerging realities and experience of the Diocesan journey of travelling together the Synodal path. The objective of this gathering is to listen to what God has been saying through the people of God in the Archdiocese of Nairobi. It will also discern God’s will for our Local Church and the pathways that He is inviting us to follow towards the path of deeper communion, fuller participation and a more fruitful mission. Its deliberations will also be included in the Diocesan synthesis.

CONCLUSION

We recall that the purpose of the synod and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents. Rather, it is intended to plant and actualize dreams, draw forth prophesies and visions that enhance a journey of growing authentically towards the communion and mission that God calls the Church to live out in third millennium.

**PRAYER FOR THE SYNOD: “*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
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.

SALA KWA AJILI YA SINODI

Ewe Roho Mtakatifu,
tunasimama mbele yako
tunapojumuika pamoja katika jina lako.

Tukiongozwa nawe peke yako,
tunakukaribisha mioyoni mwetu;
Tufundishe njia tunayopaswa kwenda
na jinsi tunavyopaswa kuifuata.

Sisi ni dhaifu na wenye dhambi;
usituache kamwe tulete machafuko.
Usiruhusu kamwe ujinga utuongoze katika njia
mbaya,
au ushawishi matendo yetu.

Tunakuomba utuunganishe ndani yako,
ili tupate kusafiri pamoja tukiundeza uzima wa
milele,
na utusaidie tusipotee kutoka katika njia ya ukweli
na haki.

Tunakuomba haya yote,
wewe ambaye unafanya kazi kila mahali na kila
wakati,
katika umoja wa Baba na Mwana, milele na milele.
Amina.