

FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH

Communion – Participation – Mission



THANK YOU for choosing to be part of this global synodal journey. Whether you are responding by yourself or as part of a group, we appreciate hearing from you.

Before you respond to the Synod questions, please refer to the Synod Booklet. This will help you understand the background for this Synod, as well as the suggested process for reflecting and responding.

The Synod poses **one fundamental question**, followed by ten themes which highlight significant aspects of our 'lived synodality' (PD, 30). In responding to these questions, it is helpful to remember that "journeying together" occurs in two deeply interconnected ways. First, we journey together with one another as the People of God. Next, we journey together as the People of God with the entire human family. These two perspectives enrich one another and are helpful for our common discernment towards deeper communion and more fruitful mission.

Your response can cover all the themes, just one theme or a selection of them. The questions accompanying each of the following ten themes can be used as a starting point or helpful guideline as you reflect on the fundamental question. Your response to the theme should not be limited by the questions.

Refer to the back page to see how you can submit your response.

Thank you for your participation!

While the following questions are not mandatory, they would provide us with helpful information. Please tick what is applicable to you:

Age Group Under 18 18-30 30-50 50-65 Over 65

Ethnicity Māori NZ European Pacific Asian
Middle Eastern/African Latin American Other European

How would you describe your involvement in the Church?

Very Involved Involved No longer involved

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION



The Synod poses the following fundamental question:

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together:” How is this “journeying together” happening today in your particular Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?

In order to respond, we are invited to

a) **RECALL OUR EXPERIENCES:**

Ask ourselves, what experiences in our local Church come to mind when we talk about journeying together?

b) **REREAD THESE EXPERIENCES MORE DEEPLY:**

What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they involved? What hurts has the journey involved? What insights have emerged?

c) **GATHER THE FRUITS TO SHARE:**

Where, in these experiences, can the Spirit be heard or seen? What is the Spirit asking of us? What are we doing well? What needs to change? What steps do we need to take? Where do we agree? What paths are opening up for us?

[Click here to respond](#)

TEN THEMES OF LIVED SYNODALITY

Questions to guide your reflection

1. OUR JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Jesus wants us to walk together, side by side.

- How do you feel we as Catholics are doing at walking side-by-side?
 - Who do you feel is included / welcome on the church's local journey?
 - Who is not included or welcomed?
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[Click here to respond](#)

2. OUR LISTENING

Listening is the first step - it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.

- How good are we Catholics at listening?
 - Who do we need to listen to more? (Consider – women, young people, lay people, those on the margins of society, minority groups, the socially discarded and excluded.)
 - What stops us from listening more carefully?
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[Click here to respond](#)

3. OUR SPEAKING UP

Everyone is invited to speak boldly and courageously in freedom, truth, and love.

- How good are we as Catholics at speaking out in public?
- How do we say what is important to us as Catholics?
- What helps or hinders our public visibility?

[Click here to respond](#)

4. GATHERING

For Catholics, 'togetherness' is based on gathering to explore the Gospels (Word) and to break bread (Eucharist).

- Are our Catholic gatherings achieving their purpose for our people?
- How does our gathering for prayer (including Mass) meet people's needs?
- How do they fail to meet people's needs?

[Click here to respond](#)

5. OUR MISSION

Walking together enables us all to accept our mission to share the Good News.

- *Do we as Catholics take this mission seriously?*
 - *How exactly do we as Church members spread the Good News of Jesus Christ?*
 - *What stops us from being active in mission?*
-

[Click here to respond](#)

6. OUR CONVERSATION

Genuine conversation requires perseverance and patience but leads to understanding.

- *As Catholics, how good are we at conversation – both listening and sharing?*
 - *Good conversation (dialogue) leads to collaboration – how, and how well, do we collaborate as Catholics in our local community?*
 - *In what ways could we dialogue and collaborate better with others in society (e.g. in politics, economics, culture, civil society, and those who live in poverty?)*
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[Click here to respond](#)

7. WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS

Walking with other Christians is essential to our mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

- *How well do we as Catholics know our sisters and brothers in other churches?*
 - *What do we share and how do we journey with Christians from other churches (denominations)?*
 - *Why don't we do more together?*
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[Click here to respond](#)

8. SHARING RESPONSIBILITY

Our Church is all about participation and shared responsibility.

- *Catholics aim to balance authority and governance with teamwork and co-responsibility. How well do we achieve this?*
- *How could we balance these better?*
- *How do we encourage lay involvement, participation and leadership?*

[Click here to respond](#)

9. OUR DECISION-MAKING

Our aim is to make decisions by discerning what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community.

- *How well do you feel we do this?*
- *What methods or processes do Catholic communities use to include people in discernment and decision-making?*
- *What do you think we should do to improve our efforts in this?*

[Click here to respond](#)

10. LEARNING TO JOURNEY TOGETHER

All of us need to be open to change and ongoing learning.

- *To what extent do you find Catholics are open to change and new learning?*
- *How do we as a Catholic community form our people to listen, participate and be open to change?*
- *Have you found Church leaders to be willing to listen, participate and remain open to new ways?*

[Click here to respond](#)

TO SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE:

Please submit your response by **TUESDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2021**.

This can be done by:

Emailing it to synod@pndiocese.org.nz

Posting it to:

Handwrite or type your response to the questions in this document and post it to:

SYNOD 2021-23

Diocese of Palmerston North

PO Box 5279

Terrace End

Palmerston North 4441

Dropping it in to reception at the Diocesan Centre, 33 Amesbury Street, Palmerston North

We thank you for your participation!

... 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 ...

(PD32)