

A large, stylized graphic in the background features a sun on the left and a tree with thick, textured branches on the right, both rendered in a light orange color. The text is overlaid on 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, positioned at the bottom left of the slide.

Communicating about the Synod & National Synthesis
20 October 2022

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

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.

Agenda

- **Part I**

- *How to Communicate about the Synod & the National Synthesis*

- **Part II**

- Reflection
- Large Group Q & A
- Brainstorm

Communicating about the Synod & National Synthesis

- Communicating about the Synod – and especially the National Synthesis – is more about creating a space for dialogue than it is about broadcasting updates.
- Communications seeks to answer one of three situations: Need for Information, Fear, Unmet Expectations
- **How** you convey your message v. **What** is your message
- Communicating about the National Synthesis – and the Synod at large – requires **reassurance**, **hope**, and **courage**

Keys to Communicating about the National Synthesis

- Clarity
- Transparency
- Communicate Internally
- Set the Context
- Tell the Story
- Accompany

Clarity

- Define goals, purpose, and messaging
- Keep things simple, understandable, and direct
- Rely on facts – do not speculate

Transparency

- Keep things direct, easily understandable
- Provide consistent messaging and updates
- Be honest and courageous
- Dialogue and meet people where they are

Communicate Internally

- Talk to everyone in the (arch)diocese: colleagues, parishes, schools, universities, justice and charity programs, NGOs, ministries, etc.
- Define roles and responsibilities for all internal collaborators
- Share resources and consistently check-in

Set the Context

- Explain what the National Synthesis is and is not – and what the (arch)diocesan plan is and is not
- Define the expectations of process moving forward
- Situate the National Synthesis – and Synod – within your diocesan and/or parish Synthesis and Synod process

Tell the Story

- Place local stories and highlights at the forefront
- Invite further reflection and dialogue into the conversation
- Make the process real and relatable

Accompany

- Maintain consistent communication – invite ongoing dialogue
- Lead with hope and encouragement
- Seek to foster relationship and encounter throughout the process

Reflection

Message For The 56th World Day of Social Communications, Pope Francis, 2022

On the one hand, then, God always reveals himself by communicating freely; and on the other hand, man and woman are asked to tune in, to be willing to listen. The Lord explicitly calls the human person to a covenant of love, so that they can fully become what they are: the image and likeness of God in his capacity to listen, to welcome, to give space to others. Fundamentally, listening is a dimension of love.

The lack of listening, which we experience so often in daily life, is unfortunately also evident in public life, where, instead of listening to each other, we often “talk past one another”. This is a symptom of the fact that, rather than seeking the true and the good, consensus is sought; rather than listening, one pays attention to the audience. Good communication, instead, does not try to impress the public with a soundbite, with the aim of ridiculing the other person, but pays attention to the reasons of the other person and tries to grasp the complexity of reality. Listening is therefore the first indispensable ingredient of dialogue and good communication.

It is only by putting aside monologues that the harmony of voices that is the guarantee of true communication can be achieved. Listening to several sources, “not stopping at the first tavern” — as the experts in the field teach us — ensures the reliability and seriousness of the information we transmit. Listening to several voices, listening to each other, even in the Church, among brothers and sisters, allows us to exercise the art of discernment, which always appears as the ability to orient ourselves in a symphony of voices.

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Visit of Mary to Elizabeth
Father George Saget
1963
Vanderbilt University Library,
Art in the Christian Tradition

Large Group Brainstorm

- What questions do you have about communicating about the National Synthesis or the Synod?
- What best practices do you want to share that have worked well in your (arch)diocese?

Small Groups & Emmaus Partners

- We encourage you to **sign up** to participate in a small group or be matched with an Emmaus prayer partner to support you in your work on synodality.
- Groups and partners will be created in November 2022
- Link to sign up form in email

Upcoming Diocesan Synod Meetings

- Thursday, October 27, 2022 3 PM ET: *Living Synodality & Dialogue*
- Tuesday, November 22, 2022 3 PM ET: *Living Synodality & Young Adults*
- Tuesday, December 20, 2022 3 PM ET: *Living Synodality & Spirituality: Luke 24*
- Tuesday, January 24, 2023 3 PM ET
- Tuesday, February 21, 2023 3 PM ET
- Tuesday, March 21, 2023 3 PM ET
- Tuesday, April 18, 2023 3 PM ET
- Tuesday, May 23, 2023 3 PM ET
- Tuesday, June 20, 2023 3 PM ET

Important Dates

- **October 2022:** Document for the Continental Stage (DCS)
- **Continental Phase:** Dates are shifting. We will have an update at the end of October.
- **February 13-17, 2023:** Continental Phase Writing Retreat
- **March 31, 2023:** Continental Synthesis Due