



Sharing Your Community's Story

The primary purpose of this Synod 2021-2023 process is to transform the hearts of every person and community that truly engages the synodal path, not to generate a report or a document. What matters most is not as much the destination as it is the journey people took to reach that horizon.

The experience of encounter, dialogue, conversation, and accompaniment, then, are paramount. As individuals recall these moments, hearts and minds were likely impacted and perhaps transformed. The relationships built may become lasting spiritual friendships; the words said may have affirmed or challenged others and their perspectives; and the creative ideas generated may be the start of new initiatives and direction for a community. This growth and these developments, if taken seriously, can form a fresh narrative for the Church at whatever level the consultation took place.

The official report is the sharing of your community's story with the universal Church. The report is not meant to be a litmus test, a list of demands, or a rehash of the proceedings; rather it is meant to convey a story that has and could continue to unfold within the community.

Putting the story to paper is an important part of the journey itself, as it helps pastoral leaders reflect on and articulate the experience of walking the synodal path. It remains a testament to the first stage of this current synodal journey. Technically, the completion of a written report is not the end of the process, as true synodality is something that cannot be contained within a given period of

time but unfolds over the course of the life of a community; it is an ongoing and dynamic process. However, the written report is a snapshot of this initial experience; one could view it as the “first chapter” of a longer narrative that is still being written about your faith community.

Sharing the community's story gives pastoral leaders an opportunity to pass along the positive and challenging elements of the encounter, the insights raised when everyone was brought to the table, and the hopes and dreams of the People of God.

From a technical perspective, the submitted report should be **no more than ten (10) pages in length**, in an effort to be succinct in telling the key learnings and experiences of the process) and include the following four (4) elements:

1. **Demographics of the participants**, to share “who” was consulted and how they identify
2. **Context of the consultation**, the “where, when, and how” the conversations took place
3. **The methodology used for consultation**, such as informal dialogues, small groups, a format suggested by a guidebook or resource, one-on-one conversations, focus on a particular question, etc.
4. **The central themes, topics, questions, and recommendations that were raised up**, which should constitute the majority of the report

Combined, this report will tell your story – one that the Church wants to hear and one that could be a great foundation for whatever comes next beyond this particular synodal journey.

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