

For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission

Consultation Questionnaire for different groups in the Parish/Diocese

Group 1: Altar Servers, students, youth, Catechism Children, etc.

Age group: 6-10

- ❖ Do you like coming to Church?
- ❖ If yes, why do you like to come to Church?
- ❖ If no, why do you not like to come to Church?
- ❖ Draw a picture showing what you like best about the Church?

Age Group: 11-16

- ❖ What comes to your mind, when you hear the word Church?
- ❖ What do you like most in the Church?
- ❖ What do you dislike about the church?
- ❖ Do you want to become a Father/Sister? Why or why not?
- ❖ Describe about the Church in a picture, or a poem or a small write up.

Age Group: Youth 17 and above

- ❖ What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'Church'?
- ❖ What is your experience of being part of the Church?
- ❖ What role do you play in the Church?
- ❖ What is your dream Church?
- ❖ If you had any choice, what changes would you like to see in the Church?
- ❖ How have you been responding to the cry of the earth and the present ecological emergency?
- ❖ What do you think about priests and religious in the church?

"I cannot participate if I conceive of myself as the whole and do not recognize myself as part of a shared project."

Group 2: Parish Pastoral Council: Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body (Synodal Body) participating in the life and mission of the Church at parish level.

- ❖ What has been your experience of being a member of PPC?
- ❖ What is your role as a member of the PPC?
- ❖ Do you feel free to express your opinions including dissent?
- ❖ Do you feel being heard?
- ❖ Do you feel co-responsible? How do you express it?
- ❖ How is the team-work and co-responsibility put into practice in your local Church?
- ❖ Do you listen to/ advise the priests/ religious in the parish? How is it taken?

Group 3: The Catholic Association: *The Catholic Association has a different role than of Parish Pastoral Council. The role of the Catholic Association is to be a link between the Church (parish) and the secular world.*

- ❖ Do you feel your parish reaches out and makes enough impact on the secular world? How?
- ❖ How have you been a link between the Church (at parish level) and the society in the area of politics, economics, education, health, employment, cultural and in a special way to people at peripheries?
- ❖ Have you done anything at the parish level to reach out to the society at large? Share some best practices.
- ❖ How have you been responding to the cry of the earth and the present ecological emergency?
- ❖ How have you been responding to the socio-political and social concerns of the society?

Group 4: All Associations (Vincent De Paul, Legion of Mary): *All the pious associations in the Church have a particular charism to participate in the mission of the Church.*

- ❖ How have you been participating in the life and mission of the Church?
- ❖ Have you been able to draw others to join or to be part of your association, especially the youngsters?
- ❖ If so, how have you done it?
- ❖ If not, what are some of the reasons?

Group 5: Women: *As baptized people of God, women are equal participants in the life and mission of the Church.*

- ❖ What has been your experience as a woman in the Church?
- ❖ Do you feel being heard?
- ❖ Are you equally respected, empowered, co-responsible in the Church?
- ❖ Do you feel freedom to express your opinions including dissent?
- ❖ Are you part of decision-making process in your parish? How?

Group 6: Small Christian Communities (SCC/BCC): *Pope John Paul II calls SCCs a concrete expression of the Church, home and family for everyone.*

- ❖ Why is SCC important in a parish?
- ❖ Do you belong to any SCC in your Parish?
- ❖ Do you feel a sense of belonging to the parish and SCCs?
- ❖ As a member of your SCC, how do you carry out the mission of the Church in your neighborhood?
- ❖ How would you like to improve your SCC functioning?
- ❖ How do you bear witness to Christ with people of other faiths in your neighborhood and at work place?

Group 7: For economically weaker sections in the parish

- ❖ What is Church according to you?
- ❖ When you see the fathers/sisters in your institution what comes to your mind first?
- ❖ Do you feel a sense of belonging to the parish?
- ❖ Do you feel respected and accepted by other members of the parish community?
- ❖ What have been your positive experiences of being in a parish community?
- ❖ What have been your not so pleasant experiences just because you are economically weak or educationally backward?
- ❖ Do you feel listened to by the church/ priests and religious?
- ❖ What measures do you suggest to bring a change in the relationship between the church (its leaders) and backward classes in a parish?

Group 8: For those from various ethnic and cultural groups (Tribals/Adivasis, Tamils, Bengalis, Mangaloreans, North East, etc.)

- ❖ What have been your experiences of being part of parish/diocesan community as a person coming from another cultural and ethnic background?
- ❖ Have you ever felt disadvantaged or marginalized in the church just because you are different?
- ❖ What have been your unique contributions towards the life and mission of the church?
- ❖ Do you have space and opportunities in the local church to express your faith through your cultural differences? If yes, how?
- ❖ From your close bond to nature how have you been responding to the cry of the earth?
- ❖ What are some suggestions you would like to make to better integrate ethnic groups and migrants into the life of your parish/diocese?

Group 9: Ecumenism (Week of Christian Unity) For Catholics: Christians of different churches are united by baptism and faith in Jesus Christ (John 17:21)

- ❖ What is your experience of journeying together with Christians belonging to other denominations?
- ❖ What difficulties/ challenges do you think you will face in journeying together with Christians of other churches?
- ❖ What inspirations/ measures does the spirit invite you to share in order for your parish/ diocese to have a more ecumenical relationship with people of other faiths?

For Other Christians

- ❖ What is your experience of walking together with members of the Catholic Church?
- ❖ What difficulties/challenges do you face in journeying together with the Catholic Church?
- ❖ Do you have anything to say to Catholic Church positively and/or not so positively?

Group 10: All Institutions (Education/ Health/ Social Service): *The institutions are meant for service to humanity and function as agents of social transformation.*

- ❖ In the light of the above statement, what would you say about the current situation of your institution?
- ❖ How is your institution different from other institutions, which are doing the same service in the secular world?
- ❖ What is the real goal of your institution? What do you wish to achieve?
- ❖ Are your institutions serving mainly the elite and the powerful or those at the periphery and is sub served?
- ❖ If Christ asks you, "What more do you achieve than others?" what would be your answer?
- ❖ What do you think needs to be changed in the way we run our Institutions?

Group 11: All Commissions of the Diocese: *All commissions function as the prolonged arms to carry out the Vision and Mission of the Diocese.*

- ❖ What are the ways and means by which your Commission is fulfilling the vision and mission of the Diocese?
- ❖ What difficulties/ challenges do you face in carrying the vision and mission through your commission?
- ❖ How have you been responding to the cry of the poor, the women/children/youth in their difficulties, faith and storms of life?
- ❖ How have you been responding to the cry of the earth and the present ecological emergency?
- ❖ Through the mission of your commission what would you like the Diocese to achieve by 2025 and 2030?
- ❖ How do you practice and express the idea of a Synodal church via your commission? Share some best practices.

Group 12: Clergy and Religious: *Pope Francis invites Consecrated persons to revive their original memory, warning that "over time it risks losing its strength, especially when we replace the attractiveness of 'we' with the strength of 'I'".*

Religious communities have a dual role on this Synodal path:

1. As a religious in the community
2. As a religious in the Parish

For Priests both Diocesan and Religious

- ❖ Are you inspired by the idea of a Synodal Church (Communion- Participation – Mission)?
- ❖ If so, what is significant about it according to you and if not, what are your reasons?
- ❖ Share an experience of “the journeying together” among your fellow clergy and Bishop. How does this journeying together impact your vocation and life?
- ❖ In what ways have you been responding to the cry of the marginalized and cry of the earth?
- ❖ What attitudinal changes/style of functioning will be required from your part to make the Synodal Church a reality?
- ❖ What structural changes will be required in the church (local and universal) to make the Synodal Church a reality?

For Religious Sisters and Brothers

- ❖ Being a religious sister/brother, how do you experience fellowship and connecting with each other in the Parish (Clergy and lay faithful)? Are you comfortable? What needs to be changed?
- ❖ What challenges do you face in walking together?
- ❖ What are the steps taken to go beyond the usual activities of the congregation in reaching out to laity in your parish?
- ❖ Is there sufficient space in the Church for you to contribute from your specific charisms?
- ❖ What are your dreams and concerns for a Synodal Church?

Group 13: For those in Formation

For Seminarians both diocesan and Religious

- ❖ How have you been walking together with the local church, with members of other churches, with people of other faiths and the entire earth community?
- ❖ What are some of your positive experiences of walking together?
- ❖ What are some of the obstacles you come across?
- ❖ As persons preparing to be ordained and take leadership roles in the Church, what is your dream for a Synodal Church?
- ❖ Based on your experience with current clergy, share one personal change you would like to bring in yourself?

For novices/candidates/aspirants for religious life: As persons in formation you are preparing yourself to serve the Church and people.

- ❖ What do you understand by this word ‘Church’?
- ❖ What are your positive experiences of being part of the Church?
- ❖ What dreams do you have for the Church?
- ❖ Given an opportunity what changes would you like to bring in the Church?
- ❖ Are you sensitive to the needs of the society? Mention 3 concerns in the society around you that requires you to be more synodal in walking the path with the People of God.

Common questions for All

(To be discussed by all groups except children from 0 to 10)

Pope Francis Says, "A Poor Church for the Poor"

Synodal relationship between Religious Community and the Parish Church

I. THE JOURNEYING COMPANIONS

In the Church and in society, we are side by side on the same road.

- ✓ In your local Church, who are the ones "journeying together"?
- ✓ When we say: "Our Church," who are the members with whom we share Faith?
- ✓ How are we walking together to grow in the faith?

II. LISTENING:

Listening is the first step, but it requires having an Open mind, without prejudice.

- ✓ How do we listen?
- ✓ How are the Laity, especially young people and women, listened to?
- ✓ How do we integrate the contribution of Consecrated Men and Women?
- ✓ How can the Church better listen to all voices?

III. SPEAKING OUT

All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia (Speaking freely and candidly).

- ✓ Is there an openness to dialogue between the clergy, religious and laity?
- ✓ Is there a system of giving feedback to one another and then discerning together the way forward?
- ✓ Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?

IV. CELEBRATING

"Journeying together" is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.

- ✓ How do prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and direct our "journeying together"?
- ✓ How do we promote the active participation of all the Faithful in the liturgy and promote holiness?
- ✓ Is our coming together an experience of celebrating the faith or a source of sadness?

V. WITH THE OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one Baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey.

- ✓ What relations do we have with the brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations?
- ✓ What fruits have we drawn from this "journeying together"?
- ✓ What are the difficulties? How does the spirit invite us to overcome them?

VI. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

A synodal Church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.

- ✓ How is authority exercised within our parish Church/ Diocese?
- ✓ What are the practices of teamwork and co-responsibility?
- ✓ What formation do we offer for discernment and the exercise of authority?

VII. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

In a synodal style, decisions are made through discernment, based on a consensus that flows from the common obedience to the Spirit.

- ✓ How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchically structured communities?
- ✓ How and with what tools do we promote transparency and accountability?
- ✓ Are we all involved in decision-making? What are your suggestions in this area?

VIII. COMMUNION:

"No one, no one, should be excluded or feel excluded from this journey; no one, no one, should think 'it doesn't concern me'." Pope Francis

- ✓ In which areas of parish life (liturgical, charitable, social, educational, health etc.) does your parish feel synodal? What are the different synodal practices/ forums in your parish?
- ✓ In which areas of parish life (liturgical, charitable, social, educational, health etc.) your religious community takes active part?
- ✓ In what ways can you help to build up communion effectively and authentically in the Parish?
- ✓ How do you associate with members of the Church who have drifted away from practice?

IX. PARTICIPATION:

"I cannot participate if I conceive of myself as the whole and do not recognize myself as part of a shared project. We cannot call ourselves a vocational community, and even less a community of life, if the participation of some or others is missing." Pope Francis

- ✓ How do religious communities effectively participate in the life of the parish? How is their relationship with the priests and the laity?
- ✓ What are the ways your parish hears different voices - particularly those on the periphery of parish life?
- ✓ How can we better enable full participation and co-responsibility in the life of the Church at the parish and diocesan levels?
- ✓ How does your parish effectively identify and use the gifts of its people?
- ✓ How can we improve the "we feeling" togetherness, and belongingness of the parish in spite of differences of opinions and attitudes of the parish members?

X MISSION

“Through baptism, we, children of God are entrusted with the mission of spreading the Good News. We are co-responsible in the mission of the Church.” Pope Francis

- ✓ What would you say is the Church’s mission?
- ✓ What is your experience of the Church as poor and for the poor?
- ✓ What are the ways in which your parish/ communities/ institutions reach out to poor people and those who are at the periphery?
- ✓ What are the ways by which your local community responds to the cry of the earth?
- ✓ What are the new ways of evangelization in the light of critical laws and other restrictions prevailing in our country?
- ✓ What approaches and concrete changes could help the local church evolve into a more synodal church? Mention the areas (such as catechetical formation, liturgy, outreach, ecumenism, ongoing formation of clergy/religious, administration etc).
- ✓ What is the Spirit asking of us at this moment?

In responding to the above each question, we are invited to:

- ❖ Recall our experiences: What experience of the local Church does this question call to mind?
- ❖ Re-read these experiences in greater depth: What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds did they reveal? What insights have they elicited?
- ❖ Gather the fruits to share:
 - Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound?
 - What is the Spirit asking of us?
 - What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for change, the steps to be taken?
 - Where do we register a consensus?
 - What paths are opening up for our local Church?

