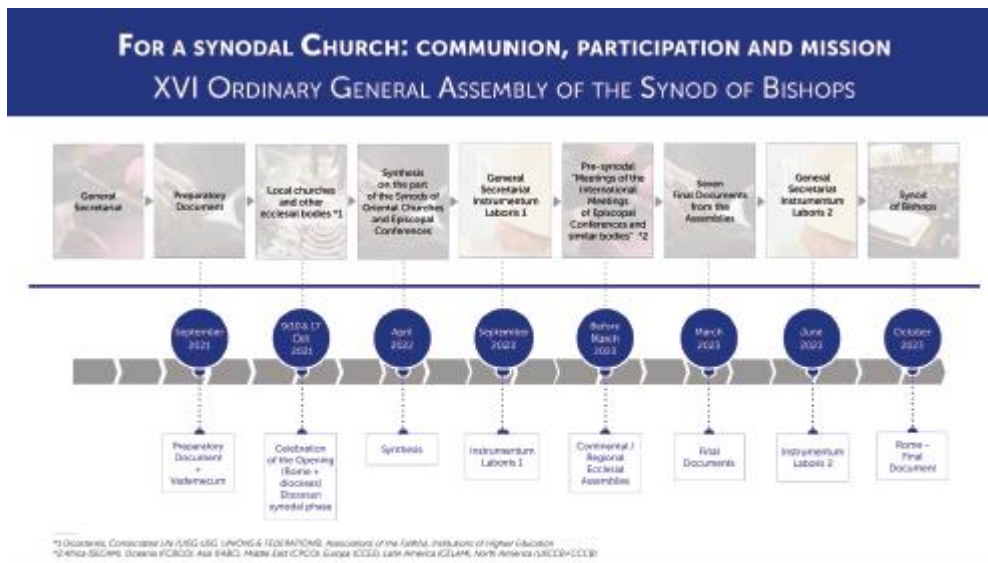




In October 2021, Pope Francis announced the opening of the path entitled “*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission*”.

With this convocation, Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: 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.

As illustrated below, this synodal journey begins in the fall of 2021 at the local diocesan level, includes discussion at Episcopal conferences and concludes in Rome at the Synod of Bishops in October 2023.



What is the Purpose of the Synod?

The true purpose of the Synod is 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. The objective then is not just a series of exercises that start and stop, but rather a journey of growing together by using the synodal process on an ongoing basis.

Although the consultation with the People of God does not imply the assumption within the Church of the dynamics of democracy based on the principle of majority (in other words, this is an ecclesial process that can only take place at the heart of a hierarchically structured community), in the end, this Synodal Process seeks to move towards a Church that is more fruitfully at the service of the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

What does this Synodal process mean for us in the Diocese of Rockford?

At the local level here in the Diocese of Rockford, the purpose of the first phase is to foster a consultation process in order to gather the wealth of the experiences that exist within the Diocese. *We will do this by asking for responses to the three specific questions listed below.*

Why am I being asked to participate in this Synod?

The entire People of God shares a common dignity and vocation through Baptism. All of us are called in virtue of our Baptism to be active participants in the life of the Church. In parishes, small Christian communities, lay movements, religious communities, and other forms of communion, we are all invited to listen to one another in order to hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who comes to guide our human efforts, breathing life and vitality into the Church and leading us into deeper communion for our mission in the world.

How can I prepare to Participate in this Synod?

The basic question for the faithful in Rockford to contemplate in this: *How does our “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 Church?*

The three dimensions of this “journeying together” are Communion (God gathers us together), Participation (a call for the involvement of all who belong to the People of God), and Mission (the Church exists to evangelize and witness to the love of God), all guided by the Holy Spirit.

To assist you in your prayerful preparation, you may access the “Prayer for the Synod” on the Diocesan website here <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/prayer-synod-synodality> or by using the QR code below:



How can I participate in the Synod?

For each of the three dimensions of the Synod (Communion, Participation, and Mission), you are asked to reflect upon your lived experiences and consider the questions on the reverse of this page.

The questions may be answered by accessing the survey online here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Synod20212023> or using the QR code here:



Pope Francis has asked that each diocese review, synthesize, and summarize the feedback in order to prepare a report that will be submitted to the Episcopal conference in the United States. This will help him prepare for the Synod of Bishops that will occur in October 2023.



Rockford Diocese: Synod Questions



After prayerful reflection, please answer the questions below by accessing the online survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Synod20212023> or using the QR code above.

Community Question: “Journeying together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and celebration of the Eucharist. How do prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and guide our common life and mission? When have they inspired the most important decisions in your life and the Church’s life? When have they not?

Participation Question: How have you and others participated in the everyday life of the Church? What joys did that participation provoke? When have you or others chosen not to participate and what were the obstacles that stood in the way? How does our church community form people to be more capable of “walking together,” listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue?

Mission Question: The mission of evangelization is entrusted by Christ to his Church to be carried out in all her forms of ministry, witness and service. In what ways has the Church lived its mission? What areas of the mission could be better lived? What experiences of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other religions and with those who have no religious affiliation? How does the Church help members to live out their service to society in a missionary way?

Additional Comments:
