

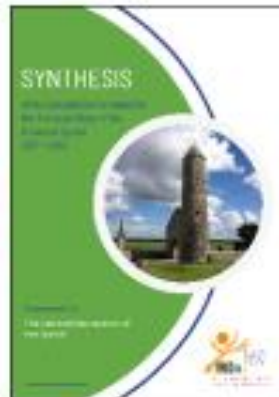
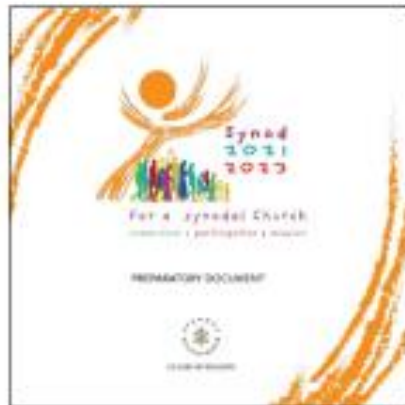


# XVI General Assembly

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Vatican,  
October 4-29, 2023

# A Two Year Preparation



# CCEE Preparation for Delegates



- Cardinal Hollerich, Relator general for the synod:

- Conversion



- Cardinal Grech, Secretary General of the Synod:
  - “No Synod without Prayer”



# The Irish Connection

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- Bishop Alan McGuckian
- Bishop Brendan Leahy
- Sr. Patricia Murray IBVM
- Fr. Eamon Conway
- Sr. Mary Baron OLA
- Cardinal Kevin Farrell

# Ecumenical Vigil

- *Syn-odos'*: let us walk together...





# Pope Francis's Homily

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'God does not like declarations and shouting, gossiping and noise: rather, he prefers, as he did with Elijah, to speak in the "**still small voice**" (*1 Kings* 19:12), in a "thread of resounding silence".'

The Synod...a ***kairós* of fraternity**, a place where the Holy Spirit will purify the Church from gossip, ideologies and polarization.

# Retreat in Sacrofano (Oct 1-3)



- Fr. Timothy Radcliffe and Mother Angelini.
- A Chance to land
- Meeting one another
- Initial “warm-up”!
- Foundations
  - Openness to the Spirit







# Opening Mass, October 4





# Pope Francis' Homily

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- “Let us continue to remember that it is not a political gathering, but a convocation in the Spirit; not a polarized parliament, but a place of grace and communion. The Holy Spirit often shatters our expectations to create something new that surpasses our predictions and negativity... Let us allow the **Holy Spirit to be the protagonist** of the Synod!”

# Pope Francis

- Present for the General Congregations





# Synod Hall

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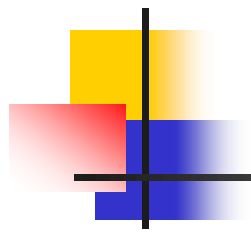
- A Picture is worth a Thousand Words!



# Synod Hall 2023 – Paul VI Hall







# Previous Synods – Synod Hall





# Limerick Synod 2016



# Technology



# How the Synod worked

XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

## INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS

For the First Session  
(October 2023)



- Opening General Addresses, Spiritual inputs and Testimonies
- Small groups for modules (*circoli minori*) -> 2-page summaries
- Plenary Sessions (*General Congregations*)
- Central Writing Commission -> Final Summary (help of team)





# Modules

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- A. Characteristics of Synodality
- B 1. **Communion:** How can we be more fully a sign and instrument of union with God and of the unity of all humanity?"
- B 2. **Co-responsibility in Mission:** How can we better share gifts and tasks in the service of the Gospel?"
- B 3. **Participation, governance and authority:** What processes, structures and institutions are needed in a missionary synodal Church?
- C. Towards Final Summary Report

# Testimonies



# Masses in St. Peter's Basilica





# Moment of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees







# Pilgrimage to the Catacombs

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# Rosary for Peace





## 20 Chapters 3 Sections

- Convergences
- Matters for consideration
- Proposals





# A Synodal Church in Mission: Synthesis Report



- The Synodal Face of the Church
- All Disciples, All Missionaries
- Weaving Bonds, Building Communities





# The Face of the Synodal Church

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- In its broadest sense, **synodality** can be understood as Christians walking in communion with Christ toward the Kingdom along with the whole of humanity. Its orientation is towards mission, and its practice involves gathering in assembly at each level of ecclesial life. It involves reciprocal listening, dialogue, community discernment, and creation of consensus as an expression that renders Christ present in the Holy Spirit, each taking decisions in accordance with their responsibilities.
- Gathered and Sent by the **Trinity**
- People in **Poverty**, Protagonists of the Church's Journey



# Proposals

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- Adapt “**conversation in the Spirit**” method
- Each diocese to “equip itself with suitable **people trained** to facilitate and accompany processes of ecclesial discernment”.
- If the Eucharist shapes synodality, then the first step we should take is to **celebrate the Mass in a way that befits the gift...**
- As part of the **rethinking of diaconal ministry**, the Church should promote a stronger orientation towards service to those who are poor.
- Celebrating together the year 2025 that marks the anniversary of the **Council of Nicaea** (325).



# All Disciples, All Missionaries

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- **Church is Mission** – family, laity, charisms
- **Women** in the Life and Mission of the Church: “Churches all over the world have expressed a clear request that the active contribution of women would be recognised and valued, and that their pastoral leadership increase in all areas of the Church's life and mission”.
- Different positions expressed regarding women's **access to the diaconal ministry**.
- Need for greater **appreciation of Charisms**, Consecrated Life and Lay Associations and Movements.
- Priests and Deacons – issue of **formation**



# Proposals

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- More creativity in **establishing ministries** according to the needs of local churches.
- It is urgent to ensure that **women** can participate in **decision-making** processes and assume roles of responsibility in pastoral care and ministry.
- Theological and pastoral research on the access of **women to the diaconate** should be continued.
- Recommend an assessment of how **the permanent diaconate** ministry has been implemented since Vatican II.
- **Transparency and a culture of accountability** are of crucial importance for us to move forward in building a synodal Church.

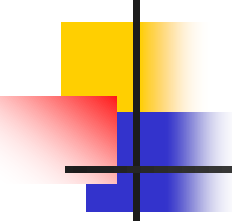




# Weaving Bonds, Building Communities

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- **Formation** involves the Community.
- Careful consideration needed of **matters that are controversial** within the Church, such as the anthropological effects of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, non-violence and legitimate self-defence, issues related to ministry, and issues related to sexuality and “bodiliness”, among others... At the heart of many of these controversial matters lies the question of the relationship between love and truth”.
- “**If we use doctrine harshly** and with a judgmental attitude, we betray the Gospel; if **we practice mercy ‘on the cheap’**, we do not convey God's love”.

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- Towards a **Listening and Accompanying** Church
  - **Digital culture** represents a fundamental change in the way we conceive of reality and consequently relate to ourselves, one another, our surroundings, and even to God... We must also consider the implications of the new digital missionary frontier for the renewal of existing parish and diocesan structures.
  - **Co-responsibility** of all in mission



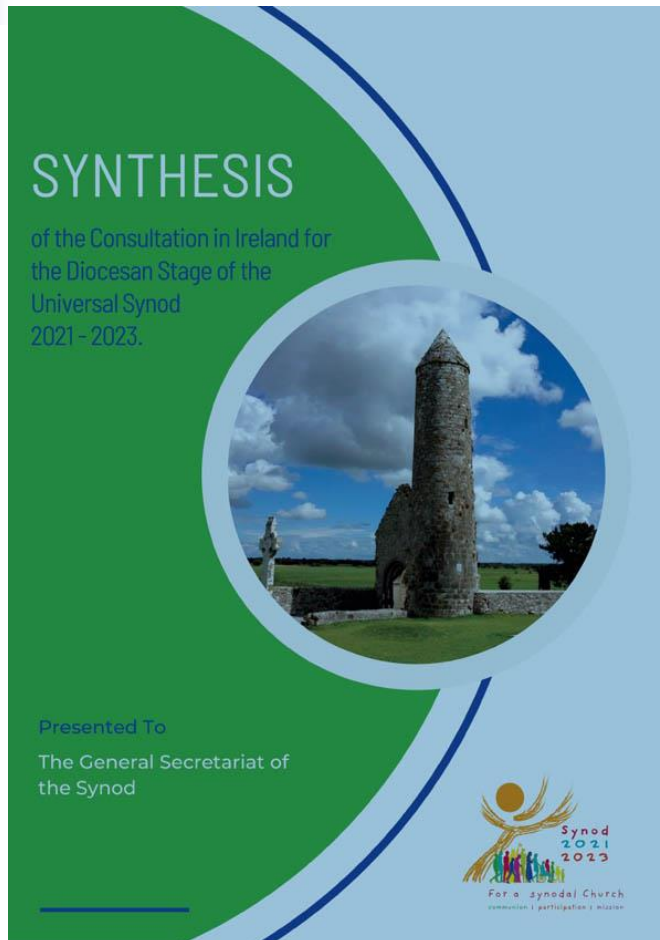
# Proposals

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- Establish a **ministry of listening** and accompaniment
- Encourage and **network digital missionaries**
- Make **Pastoral Councils Obligatory**
- The **synodal processes** at all levels of the Church should be evaluated



# Irish Synodal Pathway



- **In tune** with the universal Synodal process
- Diocesan and Regional Level
- **First Assembly** in 2025
- **Local Steps** following on from the Rome October 2023 Synodal Assembly

# Research for the Development of a Facilitative Leadership Training Programme

Prepared for the Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church in Ireland



Prepared by  
Dave Thompson, October 2023



A pilot training programme is being prepared and will be offered to dioceses and others to train leaders in facilitation leadership within a Synodal Church. It is expected that training will take place in regional sessions from January to March 2024