



### ***The Diocesan Phase and Your Role in the Process***

Much of the richness of this listening phase will come from discussions among parishes, lay movements, schools and universities, religious congregations, neighborhood Christian communities, social action, ecumenical and inter-religious movements, and other groups. Bishops initiate the process, so it is likely that involvement at the diocesan level will be coordinated through the regular communication channels of the diocesan Bishop. Those parishes with a Parish Pastoral Council, and those dioceses with a Diocesan Pastoral Council, can make use of these existing “synodal” bodies to organize, facilitate, and give life to the Synodal Process at the local level, provided that efforts are made to reach out to the peripheries and to those voices that are seldom heard. The aim is not to overwhelm dioceses and parishes, but rather to integrate the Synodal Process into the life of the local Church in creative ways that promote deepen communion, fuller participation, and a more fruitful mission.

In this listening phase we encourage people to gather, respond to stimulus questions/images/scenarios together, listen to each other, and provide individual and group feedback, ideas, reactions, and suggestions. However, if circumstances (such as pandemic restrictions or physical distance) make face-to-face interaction difficult, then it is possible to use moderated online discussion groups, self-guided online activities, chat groups, phone calls, and various forms of social communication, as well as paper-based and online questionnaires. Prayer materials, biblical reflections, and sacred music, as well as works of art, poetry, and so on, can also be used to stimulate reflection and dialogue.

This diocesan phase is an opportunity for parishes and dioceses to encounter, experience, and live out the synodal journey together, thus discovering or developing synodal tools and pathways that are best suited for their local context, which will ultimately become the new style of the local Churches on the path of synodality.

#### Source

<https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/document/common/vademecum/Vademecum-EN-A4.pdf>

#### 3.1 The Diocesan Phase