

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE

SYNOD?

What is Synodality?

Synodality literally translates as "on the same path" or "journeying together."

"Fundamentally, synodality is about journeying together. This happens through listening to one another in order to hear what God is saying to all of us. It is realizing that the Holy Spirit can speak through anyone to help us walk forward together on our journey as the People of God."

In short, a synod is like a family meeting. Good family meetings listen to everyone in the family - from oldest to youngest. They are marked by deep listening in an effort to understand one another and to understand what the Holy Spirit is asking the family to do and to be. Like families, synods are not a democracy.

Every voice must be heard, but the path isn't necessarily determined by the loudest voice. It is determined by deep listening and discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit in each person's experience and insights.

Discerning the Holy Spirit is a "Church speak" way to talk about listening and understanding how the Holy Spirit is moving in our concrete reality. It happens through prayerful listening in the context of the Scriptures and the way God has acted in the Church in the past.

<https://slmedia.org/blog/what-is-the-synod-on-synodality>

What is the process for Erie?

October-November: Pastors will select parishioners to facilitate the synodal process at the parish level, and facilitators will be chosen for those on the margins, such as the differently abled, impoverished, and non-practicing Catholics.

January: Diocesan training of facilitators

February - March: Local Synodal gatherings take place. The faithful are encouraged to take part in the synodal gathering hosted by their parish, or if that is not feasible, the gathering hosted by another parish.

March-April: Diocesan representatives process responses and write synodal report.

Does my voice matter ?

Your voice is important to hear the breadth of what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Diocese of Erie for the 2021 Diocesan phase of the Synod on Syodality. More importantly, your participation in listening and discerning the Holy Spirit's action is important for building a culture of synodality in our diocese for the long term.

In the Vademecum, a document released before a synod to prepare participants, Pope Francis writes that the primary question for this synod is, "How does this "journeying together" take place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel? and what steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church? (PD, 2)" (VD 1.3)

Over the next 6 months, the Diocese of Erie will be listening to its people to hear, honestly and charitably, about how we listen and journey with one another at the familial, parish, and diocesan level. The Diocese will also be listening to discern ways that the Holy Spirit is calling it to grow in a spirit of "journeying together," attentive to the direction of the Holy Spirit speaking through all its members and in the signs of the times.

In some synods, the questions focus on a particular challenge or topic (eg. Eucharist, New Evangelization) and the work of the synod is primarily done in preparation to or during the synod. This synod is different. The diocesan phase will take place over the next 6 months, but the most important work remains in continuing and growing a diocesan culture of synodality. Your participation helps us as a diocese continue listening and discerning; to become more fully a people who are "journeying together" in the Holy Spirit.

