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# Why Synodality matters for the Church ?

**Nathalie Becquart, xmcj and Giacomo Costa, sj**  
General Secretariat of the Synod, Vatican

**Salamanca 23.11.2025 - 3.12.2025**

# Let us dream



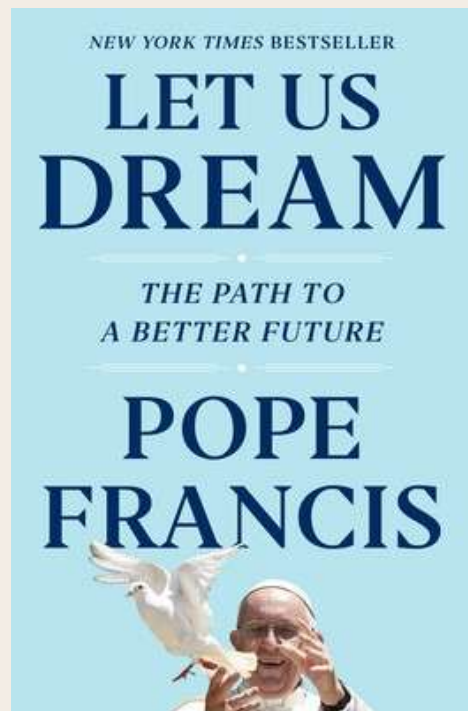
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# What is my dream for a synodal Church in one word/image?

**1' in silence**



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**3' to share my dream with my neighbour**



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# The purpose of the Synod



- “The **purpose of the Synod**, and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents, but **“to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to be nourished**, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another, and **create a bright resourcefulness** that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.”” (*PD*, 32)



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# The Dream of Young People

A Church that is:

- authentic
- free
- fraternal
- relational
- concrete
- transparent
- committed

**SYNODAL**



The **Bible** tells us that **great dreams** are those capable of being fruitful, capable of sowing peace, of sowing fraternity, of sowing joy...

Consider: **true dreams are the dreams of 'we'**. Great dreams include, involve, are extroverted, share, create new life.

*(Pope Francis, meeting with young Italians, August 2018)*



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# Is 25:6-8

On this mountain the Lord of the universe will make for all peoples **a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines**, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines well refined.

And **he will destroy** on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, **the veil that is spread over all nations**;

**He will swallow up death forever**. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.



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# Synodality...

...is the walking together of Christians with Christ and towards God's Kingdom, in union with all humanity

- orientated towards **mission**,
- involves gathering at all levels of the Church for **mutual listening, dialogue, and communal discernment**.
- involves **reaching consensus as an expression of Christ** rendering Himself present, He who is alive in the Spirit.
- consists in **reaching decisions** according to differentiated co-responsibilities.

➔ is a path of **spiritual renewal** and **structural reform**



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# Synodality demands...

the **continuous articulation** in the different local contexts and cultures **of certain polarities and tensions** that structure the life of the Church; for example:

- ➡ the local Church and the whole Church;
- ➡ the participation of all and the authority of some;
- ➡ the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood;
- ➡ ...



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# What we see, what we hear, what we discern

how the Spirit is moving the People of God and the local churches?  
Initiatives and projects, transformation and resistances



For a Synodal Church | Communion | Participation | Mission



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# The Spirit is working everywhere to implement synodality step by step



Different starting points  
and different rhythms



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# How the Spirit is moving ?

- The direction is clear from the grassroots to the Pope
- Lot of convergences and initiatives
- It doesn't make lot of noise but is a profound movement
- The Spirit is coherent to move forward the reception of Vatican II



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Conversation in the Spirit is spreading everywhere  
→ the best fruit of the synod



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**An immense need to be listened to**  
→ The call for a culture of synodality

## **The necessity of discernment in common**

- The more we face divisions, sufferings and challenges, the more we need synodality, solidarity and synergy
- We can't discern alone in a fast changing world with complex situations and polycrisis





# Creativity and inculturation



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# Resistances and fears as a sign that transformation is happening



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# From Pope Francis to Pope Leo XIV, synodality in action



**The People of God have spoken - The conclave as an experience of discernment**



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# Pope Leo is increasingly affirming the synodal way



See video and documents Jubilee of Synodal Teams 24-26 october 2026 on <https://www.synod.va/en/news/with-jubilee-enthusiasm-toward-the-2028-ecclesial-assembly.html>



See from 2:03:03 to 2:04:04 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHSWW-c-fHM>



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# TOWARDS A RELATIONAL CONVERSION

**FD 154.** Living through the synodal process again, we have become aware that **the salvation to be received and proclaimed is inherently relational**. We live it and witness to it together.

History reveals itself to us tragically marked by war, rivalry for power, and thousands of injustices and abuses. We know, however, that **the Spirit has placed the desire for authentic relationships and true bonds** in the heart of every human being. Creation itself speaks of unity and sharing, of diversity and of variously interconnected forms of life...



...The ultimate meaning of synodality is the witness that the Church is called to give to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, **the harmony of love that pours Himself out, to give Himself to the world.** We can live the communion that saves by walking in a synodal way, in the **intertwining of our vocations, charisms and ministries.**

By going forth to meet everyone in order to bring the joy of the Gospel we can live **the communion that saves:** with God, with the entire humanity and all of creation. It is then that **we will begin to experience, through sharing, the banquet of life that God offers to all peoples.**



# Three steps

1. The quality of relationship
2. Exchanging the gifts: every vocation, charism, ministry exists in relationship to others,
3. Relationships shaping the Church's structures



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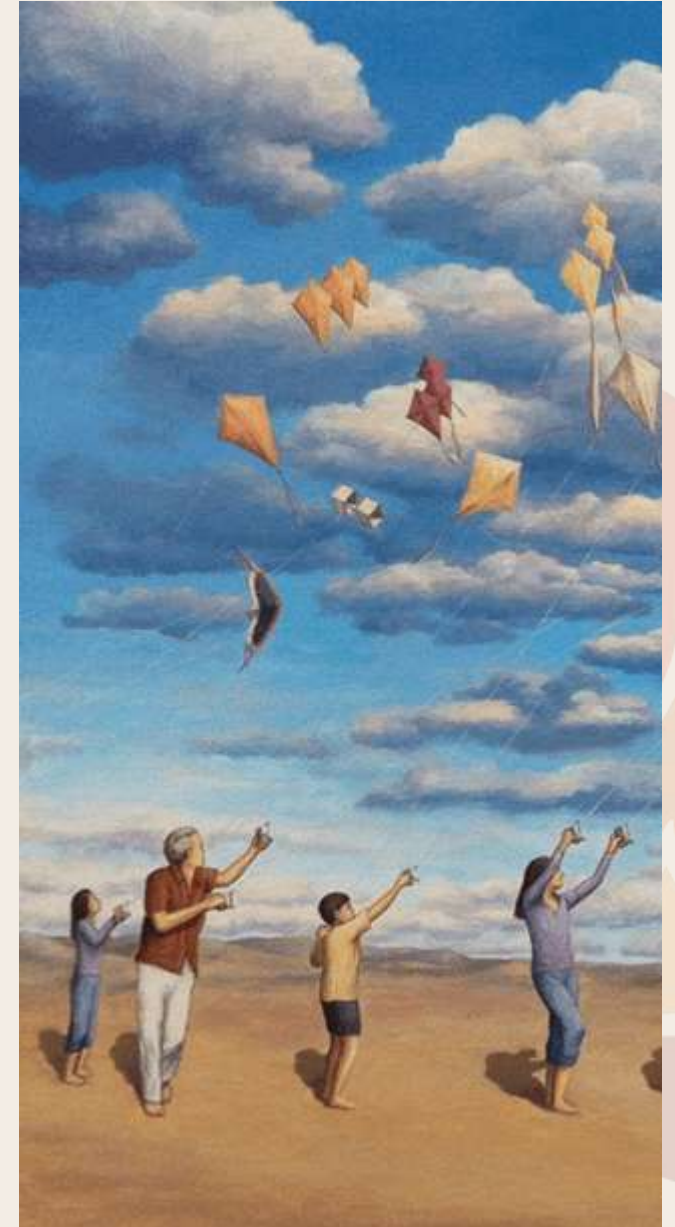
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# 1. The quality of relationships

**FD 50.** ... The desire for more real and meaningful relationships is not only a longing to belong to a close-knit group but may also reflect a deep sense of faith. **The evangelical quality of relationships in a community is decisive for the witness that the People of God are called to make in history.** “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (Jn 13:35).



## 2. Exchanging the gifts: every vocation, charism, ministry exists in relationship to others

**57.** In the Christian community, **all the Baptised are enriched with gifts to share**, each according to his or her vocation and way or condition of life. The various ecclesial vocations are many, yet they express the **one Baptismal call to holiness and mission...** These gifts are not the exclusive property of those who receive and use them



## 2. Exchanging the gifts: every vocation, charism, ministry exists in relationship to others

**57.** In the Christian community, **all the Baptised are enriched with gifts to share**, each according to his or her vocation and way or condition of life. The various ecclesial vocations they express the **call to holiness and mission**... These gifts are not the exclusive property of those who receive and use them

**FD 69.** A **Bishop's** task is to preside over a local Church as a **visible principle of unity**... **grace and the** discerning and bringing together in unity the gifts that the Spirit pours out on individuals and communities,

**= DIALOGUE!!!!**



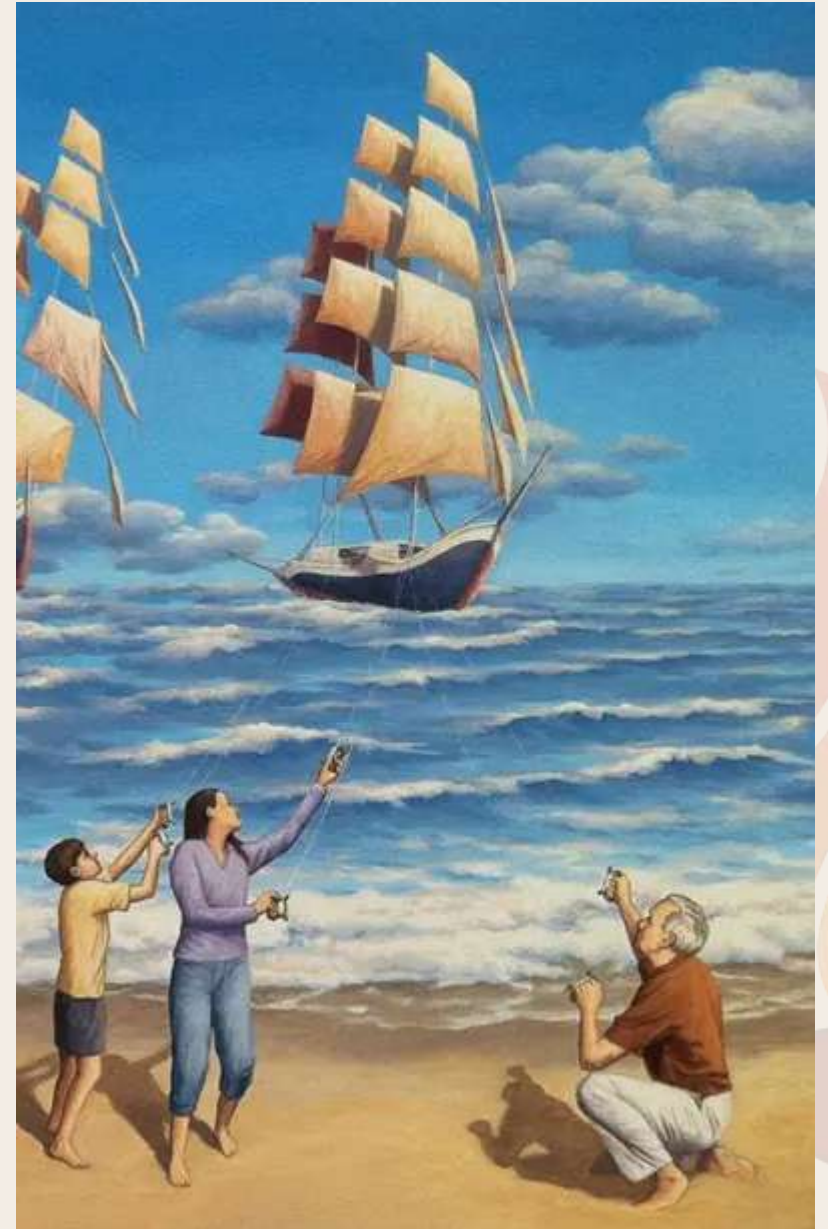
# 3. Relationships shaping the Church's structures: The Church as the People of God...

**FD 16.** “It has pleased God, however, to sanctify and save men and women **not individually and without regard for what binds them together, but to set them up as a people** who would acknowledge Him in truth and serve Him in holiness” (LG 9).

**FD 17.** Gathered from every tribe, language, people and nation and living in different contexts and cultures, **the synodal process gave us the “spiritual taste” (EG 268) of what it means to be the People of God.**  
The People of God is never the simple sum of the Baptised but **the communitarian and historical subject of synodality and mission**

## ... Sacrament of Unity

**32.** By appreciating all charisms and ministries, synodality enables the People of God to proclaim and witness to the Gospel to women and men of every place and time, **making itself a “visible sacrament” (LG 9)** of the fellowship and unity in Christ willed by God. Synodality and mission are intimately linked: mission illuminates synodality and synodality spurs to mission.



# Mapping the needs



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# What are the needs?

- To train for listening and discernment
- To foster a culture of speech and dialogue
- To promote and deepen a spirituality of synodality
- To invest in practices → experiential learning



# What are the needs?

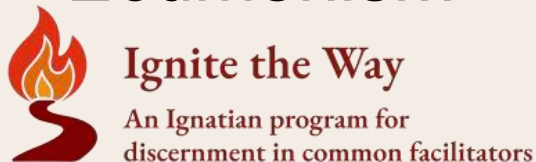
- Provide tools for reviewing synodal experiences and implementing synodality
- Listen to accounts of experiences and initiatives, and facilitate circulation of these experiences
- Listen, advise, and accompany synodal processes
- Embody and model synodality
- Promote synodality and provide/support formation in synodality through synodal pedagogies

# An overview of initiatives and projects

See note on global overview of implementation on <https://www.synodresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Global-Overview-of-Synodality-Implementation.pdf>

## **Synodality ad intra**

- Creation of Institutional Synodal Structures
- Diocesan Synodal Assemblies and Processes
- Formation and Education in Synodality
- Cultural Initiatives
- Ecumenism



## **Synodality ad extra**

- Interreligious dialogue
- Business world
- Political world
- Ecology
- Reconciliation and peace-building

See resources, tools and initiatives on  
<https://www.synodresources.org/implementation-phase-resources/>

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# Implication for our work



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# Fostering synergy and partnership

## Together, nobody alone



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# The importance of a deep spiritual grounding



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# Inculturation and adaptation to contexts



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# A priority for education and formation



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# Forming synodal competencies

- The spiritual foundation
- Integral self-awareness
- Assertive and effective communication
- Collaborative integration and teamwork
  - Intercultural and intergenerational dialogue capabilities
  - Shared leadership competencies that promote cooperation
- **Preventing anti-synodal attitudes**
  - Authoritarianism:
  - Egocentric narrow-mindedness
  - Reluctance to share:
  - Competition and rivalry:





# Synodality as an hermeneutical process



## **The synodal posture**

- A posture of humility and "decentering"
- Being one among others in the people of god
- Adopting an accompaniment approach
- Developing a listening and interpretative attitude
- The importance of mutuality

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# A new way of making decisions in the Church.

- **FD 84. The steps of ecclesial discernment** will differ depending on the various places and their traditions. Based on the synodal experience, we have identified some elements of discernment which should be included:
  - a) **clearly setting out the object of discernment** and disseminating information and the means for adequately understanding it;
  - b) **giving sufficient time for prayerful preparation**, for listening to the Word of God and for reflection on the question;
  - c) **an inner disposition of freedom** regarding one's own interests, both personal and as a group, and a commitment to the pursuit of the common good;
  - d) **listening attentively and respectfully** to each person's voice;
  - e) **searching for the widest possible consensus** which will emerge when “our hearts burn within us” (cf. *Lk 24.32*), without hiding conflicts or searching for the lowest common denominator;
  - f) **the leaders of the process formulate the consensus** in such a way that allows the participants to say whether they recognise themselves in it or not.



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# A synodal path to be pursued

our co-responsibility for the implementation phase



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# A shared framework to walk all together

- **June 2025 – December 2026:** implementation activities in local Churches and their groupings;
- **First semester of 2027:** evaluation Assemblies in Dioceses and Eparchies;
- **Second semester 2027:** evaluation Assemblies in national and international Episcopal Conferences, Eastern hierarchical structures and in other groupings of Churches;
- **First four months of 2028:** continental evaluation Assemblies;
- **October 2028:** Ecclesial Assembly in the Vatican



# THANK YOU!!!



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# Resources to Go Deeper

- Official Website of the General Secretariat of the Synod with all official documents in different languages : <https://www.synod.va/>
- Final Document in English: <https://www.synod.va/en/news/final-document-of-the-xvi-assembly.html>
- Pathways for the implementation phase of the Synod : <https://www.synod.va/en/the-synodal-process/phase-3-the-implementation/resources.html>
- Infographic on the Synodal method of Conversation in the Spirit : <https://www.synod.va/en/resources/communication-tools/infographics.html>
- Synod Resources Website (find or share resources): <https://www.synodresources.org/>
- Register for the Synod Newsletter: <https://www.synod.va/en/documents/choose-your-mailing-list.html>