

Introduction to Synod 2023

- ***Synods in general***

A synod is a gathering of Church leaders who get together to discuss specific topics of concern for the Church. The word *synod* itself is Greek and literally means “a journey together.”

Synods are as old as the Church, and from the beginning were the chief way that the Church made important decisions about faith and morals, and the Church itself. Although synods became less common over time, following Vatican II, they were revived as a way to better discern the urgings of the Holy Spirit in the Church today. Recent synods have focused on various themes such as the family, the Eucharist, consecrated life, the role of the laity, youth, social justice, and the New Evangelization.

- ***Theme of Synod 2023***

This synod is a bit different from previous synods. It’s not so much about a “what” as a “how.” How are we journeying together as a Church? The preparatory document for the synod has phrased the fundamental question in this way:

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.” How is this “journeying together” happening in your particular Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together?”

- ***The role of all the faithful***

We begin with our Catholic understanding of how the Holy Spirit works – that all members of the Church, be they pope, bishop, clergy, religious, or layperson, share in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. What is the Holy Spirit saying to us at this juncture of time? How does the Church as a whole discern the direction that the Holy Spirit is leading us?

- ***The Diocesan Phase in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan***

The synod itself will meet in 2023. However, leading up to this event will be an extensive consultation process in the dioceses of the world. Between now and Easter, parishes in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan will be holding listening gatherings with a wide range of people to share their experience of “journeying together.” We will be discerning where the Holy Spirit is leading us to grow in our “journeying together.” These gatherings are your opportunity to share your experience of “journeying together”, with the aim of helping in that discernment.

- ***The destination of the input from the Diocesan Phase***

The results of these listening gatherings will be compiled here in the Archdiocese, then forwarded to the Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops. The assembly will synthesize all of the reports from the various dioceses, then will forward it to the Secretariat of the Synod in Rome. This will help in the preparation of the working document for the actual synod proceedings in October 2023, which several bishops, representing all the bishops of Canada, will attend.

The input and synthesis will also be shared across the Archdiocese in the spring of 2022.



Archdiocese of
Grouard-McLennan

