



**CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
EL PASO**



Guide for the Listening Sessions of the Synod Interim Year (2023-2024)

What happened in the Synod? What is next?

In October 2023, the XVI Assembly of the Synod of Bishops gathered in Rome to continue the synodal process that began in every diocese of the world since 2021. The Synod Assembly, which for the first time was composed not only of bishops, but also of priests, deacons, religious sisters and brothers, and male and female lay leaders, dealt with the many important themes that emerged at the diocesan, national, and continental levels of the process.

Some of these themes, found in the Synthesis Report *A Synodal Church in Mission*, were: the experience of being a Catholic community, the relation to other non-Catholic churches and confessions, the role of different groups in the life of the Church (the poor, the youth, those with disabilities, women, the clergy, among others), and the mission of the Church in the current world (listening and accompanying people in different situations in life, discerning new questions of modernity, mission in the digital environment, fostering the participation of all the faithful in decision-making processes, forming all Catholics to be missionary disciples, etc.).

The desire of the Synod Assembly, which will gather again in October 2024 to finalize its discussions, is that all dioceses continue reflecting on these topics in order to enrich the conversations of the upcoming Assembly. Based on their experience of the themes mentioned above and on the contents of the Synthesis report, all the baptized are asked to participate in listening sessions and to consider the questions found in the next page.

We would like to invite you to participate in these listening sessions with an open heart, allowing the Holy Spirit who lives within you to continue speaking to the Church. Thank you for your participation in the listening sessions and in this Synodal Path.

The Method of the Conversation in the Spirit

The October 2023 Synod Assembly used a method called the "Conversation in the Spirit" to carry out the small-group discussions. This method consists of three rounds. It begins with a period of about 3-4 min. of silence to invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit. In the first round, each member of the small group shares about his or her own experience for about 3-4 min. A period of silence follows to allow the Spirit to speak to the members through what was shared. In the second round, each member shares for 3-4 min. what moved him or her from what other members shared. The round concludes with another moment of prayerful silence. In the third round, each member shares for 3-4 min. about the convergences and divergences he or she perceives within the group, as well as matters for further consideration and concrete steps that can be taken. The session concludes with a prayer, and a member of the group shares a summary of the experience and of the discussion with the whole assembly.

Prayer for the Synod: *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.	Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life
With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;	and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.	All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.	Amen.

Scripture Passage

(Another passage may be used in place of the following one.)

A reading from the holy gospel according to John. John 17:6-10.17-18

Jesus prayed: "I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world."

Questions for the Listening Session

Consider the following questions in the light of all the themes that have emerged in the synod discussions, and especially those which you consider most relevant to your experience of Church (e.g., in your parish community, school, religious congregation, diocesan ministry, lay movement, etc.).

It may be useful to mention concrete experiences, especially personal ones, to illustrate your answers to these questions. You can also use biblical passages, stories, images, or other creative ways to convey your group's findings.

1. Where have I seen or experienced successes—and distresses—within the Church (in its life, ministries and programs, leadership, organization, structures, etc.) that encourage or hinder our mission to preach the Gospel?
2. How can the Church help all the baptized to respond to their call to proclaim the Gospel and to live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?

