



Formation resources in preparation for attending a Conversations in the Spirit session

Participating in a Conversations in the Spirit session is the primary way the faithful can participate in Synod 2027. Please spend some time with these excerpts from several Church documents to prepare for your participation.

1. Lumen Gentium - "Light of the Nations" (1964), Dogmatic Constitution on the Church promulgated by Pope Paul VI

Focus Questions: What is the Church's mission? How am I called to contribute to it?

Paragraph 5:

"When Jesus had arisen, he appeared as the one constituted as Lord, Christ and eternal priest. He poured out on his disciples the Spirit promised by the Father. From this source the Church received the mission to proclaim and to spread the Kingdom among all peoples and to be its initial budding forth. While it slowly grows, the Church strains toward the completed Kingdom united in glory with its King."

Paragraph 17:

"As the Son was sent by the Father, so he too sent the apostles, saying: 'Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations.' The Church has received this solemn mandate of Christ to proclaim the saving truth from the apostles and must carry it out. Wherefore she makes the words of the Apostle her own: 'Woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel,' and continues unceasingly to send heralds of the Gospel. The Church is compelled by the Holy Spirit to do her part that God's plan may be fully realized, whereby he has constituted Christ as the source of salvation for the whole world. By the proclamation of the Gospel she prepares her hearers to receive and make profess the faith. She disposes them for Baptism, snatches them from error and incorporates them into full maturity in Christ. Through her work, whatever good is in the minds and hearts of men, whatever lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, is cleansed, raised up and perfected unto the glory of God. The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ, according to his state."

Paragraph 31:

"The term 'laity' means all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those in the religious life. These faithful are by Baptism made one body with Christ. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ, and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and world. What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature. But the laity, by their very vocation, seeks the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, in all the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life. They are called by God to work for the sanctification of the world



from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity."

Paragraph 33:

"The lay apostolate is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their Baptism and Confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. By the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. The laity is called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself. Upon all the laity, therefore, rests the noble duty of working to extend the divine plan of salvation to all men of each epoch."

2. Instructions on Diocesan Synods (1997) Pope John Paul II

Focus Questions: How do synods support the Church's mission? What's the relationship between synods and the bishops?

Part I of this document reads in part:

1. The purpose of the diocesan Synod is to assist the Bishop in the exercise of the office proper to him, namely, that of governing the Christian community. . . .

The Synod offers the Bishop the opportunity of calling to cooperate with him and with his priests some members of the laity as well as some chosen religious. This is a particular form of that responsibility and concerns all of the faithful in building up the Body of Christ. . . .

The Synod is thus "contextually and inseparably an action of episcopal governance and an event of communion, thus expressing that nature of hierarchical communion which belongs to the profound nature of the Church". The People of God is thus not an amorphous aggregate of the disciples of Christ, but is rather a priestly community, organically structured from its inception according to the will of its Founder whose head, in every diocese, is the Bishop, the visible source and foundation of unity and its sole representative. Thus any attempt to place the Synod in opposition to the Bishop on the grounds of "representation of the People of God" is contrary to the authentic order of ecclesial relations. . . .

2. . . . At the conclusion of the Synod, the Bishop, by signing the synodal declarations and decrees, vests with his authority all that is taught or obliged by them. In this way episcopal authority expresses its true character of ministry - which implies "hearing its subjects" and "calling on them to cooperate generously" in seeking to discern the will of the Spirit at a given moment in a diocese - and not the imposition of an arbitrary will. . . .

3. Communion and mission, both indispensable aspects of the Church's pastoral activities, constitute "the good of the diocesan community" mentioned in Canon 460 as the final object of the Synod. . . .



The work of the Synod is to promote acceptance of the Church's salvific doctrine and to encourage the faithful in their following of Christ. Since the Church is "sent into the world to proclaim and bear witness to that communion by which it is constituted, as well as to actualize it and to spread it", the Synod also seeks to further that apostolic zeal which inspires so many ecclesial activities promoted by the guidance of lawful Pastors . . .

[The] Synod contributes in shaping the pastoral activities of the particular Church and lends continuity to its own liturgical, spiritual and canonical traditions. The local juridical patrimony as well as the guidelines for the pastoral government of the diocese will be themselves the object of careful reflection and study on the part of the Synod, always bearing in mind the need for renewal and, where necessary, remedying lacunae in diocesan norms. The Synod will also evaluate the adequacy of pastoral programs already in place, and with the help of divine grace, propose new pastoral plans where such are deemed desirable.

**"The secret of the success of the Synod, as of every other
ecclesial event and initiative, is in fact prayer."**

— Pope John Paul II

RADIATE CHRIST

Pastoral Center

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100 East Eighth Street

|

Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

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www.CatholicAOC.org