



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

DIRECTORY COMPANION

1. What is the Synod?

A diocesan synod is a formal gathering convened by the diocesan Bishop to assist him in governing and caring for the local Church. It is a time of prayer and listening to the Holy Spirit and to one another, culminating in a General Assembly with representatives of the clergy, vowed religious, and laity to assist the local Bishop.

2. What is Synod 2027?

Synod 2027 is an event of communion expected to strengthen the Church in her mission, which will assist Archbishop Casey in his governance of the archdiocese.

The synod is a time for prayerful discernment of how God is calling our archdiocese to live out and share the Gospel. Listening is an important part of Synod 2027. The faithful listening for the Holy Spirit as well as listening to one another before offering their insights to the archbishop.

At its heart, Synod 2027 is intended to:

- Discern the Archdiocese's pastoral priorities
- Strengthen communion and unity
- Encourage spiritual renewal
- Adapt universal Church law appropriately to local circumstances
- Develop strategic plans for the Archdiocese
- Strengthen the Church's missionary discipleship
- Help the Archdiocese respond to the needs of the present era

3. Synod 2027 Timeline

June 19, 2026

Opening Evening Prayer began the preliminary phase of Synod 2027. Evening Prayer was held at Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Centerville.

Fall 2026

Conversations in the Spirit sessions take place across the Archdiocese. These sessions include a prayerfully listening for the Holy Spirit and sharing personal insights of the local Church. These sessions aim to bring the faithful into deeper communion with one another and with Christ, and to strengthen the Church's mission to bring the Gospel to all.

June 19, 2027

The Synod officially opens with a Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Peter in Chains at 11 a.m.

Summer 2027

Initial Synod 2027 sessions take place.

September 15 - 18, 2027

The General Assembly takes place at the Sharonville Convention Center.

September 18, 2027

Mass concludes the synodal sessions.

4. Who Participates?

The Synod is intentionally broader than just priests or Archdiocesan leadership.

Membership includes both people who participate because of their canonical office and additional people selected or appointed to represent the wider Church.

Among those members identified are:

- Archbishop and specified Archdiocesan officials
- Pastors
- Lay representatives from Families of Parishes
- Priests
- Permanent deacons*
- Archdiocesan Pastoral Council members
- Religious communities*
- Archdiocesan Pastoral Center leadership*
- Catholic school principals*
- Catholic university representatives*
- Directors of evangelization, worship, and administration from parishes*
- Representatives of different ages, ethnicities, states of life, ministries, apostolates, and organizations

For lay representation from Families of Parishes, the number of representatives is intended to be proportionate to average Sunday Mass attendance, while also considering representation among the different parish/church communities and balanced representation of men and women.

Synod membership is intended to represent the breadth and diversity of the local Church, not simply its organizational leadership.

**representatives from across the archdiocese will represent these groups, not all of the individuals belonging to that grouping*

5. Who Leads the Synod?

President

Archbishop Robert G. Casey

As diocesan Bishop, presides over the Synod; encourages full participation; engages in direct listening; sets the agenda for and presides over the General Assembly; and establishes pastoral priorities, legislative outcomes, and direct implementation.

Synod Preparatory Commission

More than 20 individuals from across the Archdiocese selected to offer high-level guidance and feedback throughout the development of Synod 2027. This group provides input and insights in the Synod process; informs Synod process design; champions Synod 2027 with respective groups; offers insight into Synod data and key themes; participates in the General Assembly, and offers reaction to and synthesis of priorities identified in the General Assembly.

Secretariat of the Synod

Eight leaders provide strategic leadership and communication to all aspects of Synod 2027, including planning and development of the Synod process and schedule; and creating and leading the logistical coordination of all Synod plans.

Moderator

Very Rev. Jan Schmidt

The Moderator oversees all aspects of the Synod process; maintains communication with the Archbishop and key stakeholders; serves as a working member of the Secretariat and Preparatory Commission.

Secretary

Mr. Jeremy Helmes, Director of Parish Vitality & Mission

He oversees the Secretariat of the Synod and is a working member of the Preparatory Commission.

6. How Will the Matters for Consideration Be Chosen?

The Preparatory Commission develops preliminary questions to facilitate conversations during Conversations in the Spirit sessions.

The prayers and personal insights of those who attend the Conversations in the Spirit sessions are accepted with gratitude. Following the Conversations, discernment of matters is not a tallying of responses, but a prayerful reading of how the Holy Spirit is calling us to fulfill the mission of the Church at this moment. Every prayer and personal insight offered is part of the process, but not every contribution will be closely examined at subsequent stages.

The matters emerging from Synod 2027 are not the sum of what was said at the Conversations in the Spirit sessions. They are the fruit of careful discernment – informed by what the Holy Spirit surfaced through the faithful.

Ultimately, however, the Archbishop determines the questions upon which the Synod will deliberate.

There are also boundaries to what can be considered. The Synod cannot use the consultation process to challenge perennial Church teaching or deliberate on matters reserved to the Holy See or other ecclesiastical authorities.

7. What happens at the General Assembly?

Synod members have the opportunity to consider the questions established by the Archbishop and express their opinions during the General Assembly.

After discussion, consensus is expressed through Proposals or Amendments, which are then submitted to a vote.

The Archbishop then considers those recommendations alongside:

- The needs, wishes, and desires expressed by the People of God
- Church tradition
- Universal Church law
- His responsibility as diocesan Bishop

From that discernment, synodal documents, decrees, or declarations may result.

Only the diocesan Bishop can validly sign and promulgate the Synod's declarations and decrees.