



28 October 2022

Tēnā koutou katoa,

**Synod on Synodality: Communion, participation mission**

The Synod on Synodality has reached the continental phase, which will take place between 28 October 2022 and 31 March 2023.

The continental phase for Oceania involves the countries and territories covered by the Bishops Conferences of New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands and the Episcopal Conference of the Pacific.

On 27 October the Holy See released the Document for the Continental Stage, which is the result of the discernment of all the responses received from around the world.

We now need to carry out a discernment process in Aotearoa New Zealand on this document. The results of our discernment will be integrated with similar documents from the other Bishops Conferences of Oceania. The resulting draft will be considered by the bishops of the region at the Assembly of the Federation of Bishops Conferences of Oceania in Suva in February, which will finalise a synthesis from Oceania to go to the Synod Office in March.

The discernment process on the Document for the Continental Stage has to take place between 19 October and 5 December, so that the New Zealand response can be ready by 22 December, so is more limited than that conducted at the earlier stage. There is just one process for the country, not separate processes for dioceses, religious orders and Catholic organisations. Because of the timeframe the process is being limited to diocesan and national groups, and religious congregations.

We invite you to participate in this next stage of discernment on behalf of your diocesan or national group or religious congregation. It is our hope that you will be able to make time in your regular meeting schedules to contribute or can convene a group for the purpose.

The Document for the Continental Stage is not a document to be amended, corrected or enlarged, but a true guide for an ongoing discernment, fruit of listening to the People of God. We ask you to use the Spiritual Conversation process which was widely used in the earlier stage, or another discernment process your members are familiar with, to prepare your response to the document.

**Your response is needed by Thursday 1 December. It should be in the form of 3-4 points, with a limit of 500 words in total. It is to be sent to the person who conveyed this invitation to you, or to the contact details they have provided.**

With thanks for your assistance and blessings,

✠ John Dew, Cardinal Archbishop of Wellington,  
Apostolic Administrator of Palmerston North and  
NZCBC President

✠ Michael Dooley, Bishop of Dunedin

✠ Michael Gielen, Bishop of Christchurch

✠ Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Auckland, Apostolic  
Administrator of Hamilton and NZCBC Vice  
President and Secretary

✠ Paul Martin SM, Coadjutor Archbishop of  
Wellington

Attachments:

- Document for the Continental Stage (Holy See)
- NZCBC Synod Continental Phase - Background Document
- Synod Continental Phase - Spiritual Conversation Guide