

## The Continental Stage of the Synod on Synodality: communion, participation, mission



The continental stage of the Synod involves group reflection and discernment on the Document for the Continental Stage, using the Spiritual Conversation process.

It is important to understand the Document for the Continental Stage, **not as a document to be amended**, corrected or enlarged, but as a true guide for an ongoing discernment, fruit of listening to the People of God.

### THE PROCESS

#### PRIOR TO THE GROUP GATHERING

Ask participants to read and reflect prayerfully on the Document for the Continental Stage prior to the group gathering.

When the group has gathered:

#### SILENT REFLECTION

Take time for prayerful reflection before entering the process.

#### FIRST ROUND

Give time for everyone to share the fruit of their reflection. All take a turn to speak while the rest of the group listens. Do not rush the process.

Starter question: What insights, themes, priorities, calls to action stood out for you in the document?

#### SILENT REFLECTION

Allow another time of silence for people to reflect on what they have just heard.

## **SECOND ROUND**

Everyone is invited to share a word or a thought that SOMEONE ELSE HAS SHARED which has touched them.

## **THIRD ROUND**

Together, the members of the group look at what stands out. What is the essence of the sharing that has taken place?

The group should agree on 3 or 4 points which have emerged from their discernment. These points should be documented by the scribe and written up in no more than 500 words, and conveyed to the person receiving the responses for their diocese, national body or religious congregation.

“Celebrating a Synod means walking on the same road, walking together... Dear brothers and sisters, let us have a good journey together! May we be pilgrims in love with the Gospel and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit. Let us not miss out on the grace-filled opportunities born of encounter, listening and discernment. In the joyful conviction that, even as we seek the Lord, he always comes with his love to meet us first.”

*Pope Francis, homily for the opening of the synodal path 10 October 2021.*