

Synodality as a Liturgical and Spiritual Moment



There is a danger of viewing synodality in bureaucratic terms as some sort of vast opinion poll. Rather, synodality shares the nature of the Church as Sacrament, as taught by the 2nd Vatican Council:

The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely-knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race; it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission. (Lumen Gentium 1)

Synods throughout history have made this link between the sacramental-liturgical experience of the worshipping assembly and the synodal experience of ecclesial life.

This means that at the heart both of the community assembled in worship and gathered in synod is the Paschal Mystery: Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday

- **Good Friday** suffering and death will be met as we die to self and to accustomed ecclesial ways of being and doing
- This will lead to the **Holy Saturday** darkness, confusion, and disorientation
- With perseverance the newness of **Easter Sunday** will be encountered both as surprise and gift

This celebration and experience of the Paschal Mystery point to the Trinitarian dimension of the Synod as a liturgical and spiritual moment. The Synod's key-words of Communion, Participation, and Mission show how this synodal process is rooted in the life of the Most Holy Trinity and which is shared by the community of believers.

The proposed structure of our meetings in the diocese aims to foster this liturgical-spiritual experience of synodality:

- Gathered round the Holy Bible, the group is constituted through listening deeply to God's Word in Scripture
- The participants move through meditation and prayer to the silence of contemplation
- Through this, they are made ready for the spiritual conversation during which they will listen to and dialogue with each other as they reflect on the specific themes of the meeting

- The final prayer concludes this spiritual moment and confirms the bond between the group and the larger liturgical assembly of the parish

The dynamic of each meeting aims to reflect our communal journey, led by the Spirit, into all truth: each individual is asked to begin by identifying a word or short phrase from the biblical text listened to, then to offer a short prayer based on that word, and finally to share at more length with the group a reflection which comes from this word and prayer. Listening deeply and respectfully to others will then deepen the participants' understanding.

