For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission

Listening Circles Hosted By
The Wheaton Franciscan and IBVM Communities

February 8 and 12, 2022
Flow

• Prayer with time for silence
• Small groups
  • Host – to keep conversation moving and allowing everyone to speak
  • Scribe to capture THEMES (not verbatim)
  • Return to large group for brief sharing
• Prepare for next session
Synodality

“Synodality is the way of being the Church today according to the will of God, in a dynamic of discerning and listening together to the voice of the Holy Spirit.”

Pope Francis
“The purpose of the Synod, and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents, but “to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to be nourished, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another, and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.”

• (PD, 32)
Dialogue, Discussion and Discernment

It is helpful to distinguish between the different types of exchanges:

• Dialogue is two way, cooperative, and its purpose is to build relationship and exchange perspectives between participants.
• Discussion is a process of talking about something in order to reach a decision or to exchange ideas.
• Debate is two way and competitive, where the purpose is to convince another.
• Diatribe is one direction, and its purpose is to browbeat, inspire, shame or emote.
Agreements for Dialogue

• We work together to keep this a safe place for dialogue.
• We treat each other and what each one says with reverence and respect.
• We speak one at a time.
• We limit how long we speak so that everyone has time to share.
• We speak only once until everyone has had an opportunity to share.
• We speak for the purpose of advancing the conversation. We avoid arguing or making comments that seek to promote a personal agenda.
• We hold in confidentiality, what we hear. We do not attribute anything shared to a particular people or groups.
• We report the themes and experiences without indicating the names of individual participants.
• We take a moment of silence as needed.
Together, listening to the Holy Spirit, let us be led by God.

• We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.
• With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
• We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.
• Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
• All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.
Fundamental Question?

How is this “journeying together” happening today in our local Church?

What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?
1. Identify a host
2. Identify a scribe
3. Check in: share your name and what enticed you to be here
4. Pause to collectively reflect on the question and your response
5. Go round to reflectively share your response
6. Check-out... with a thank you to one another