



## THE OFFICIAL LOGO OF THE SYNODAL PATH

A large, majestic tree, full of wisdom and light, reaches for the sky — a sign of deep vitality and hope which expresses the cross of Christ. It carries the Eucharist, which shines like the sun. The horizontal branches, opened like hands or wings, suggest, at the same time, the Holy Spirit.

The people of God are not static: they are on the move, in direct reference to the etymology of the word synod, which means “walking together.” The people are united by the same common dynamic that this Tree of Life breathes into them, from which they begin their walk.

These fifteen silhouettes sum up our entire humanity in its diversity of life situations, of generations, and of origins. This aspect is reinforced by the multiplicity of bright colors which are themselves signs of joy. Most importantly, there is no hierarchy within the people — all are on the same footing: young, old, men, women, teenagers, children, lay people, religious, parents, couples, singles; the bishop and the nun are not in front of them, but among them. Quite naturally, children and then adolescents open their walk, in reference to these words of Jesus in the Gospel: “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children” (*Matthew 11:25*).

The horizontal baseline which reads, “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission” runs from left to right in the direction of this march, underlining and strengthening it, to end with the title “Synod 2021 - 2023,” the high point that synthesizes the whole.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROCESS

### † WHAT IS SYNODALITY?

Synodality, as defined by the International Theological Commission in 2018, is “the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God.” It is a call for intentional listening and journeying together, through and with the Holy Spirit.

In the words of Pope Francis, a synodal church is a “listening church knowing that listening is more than feeling. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. We must all listen to the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Truth to know what the Spirit is saying to the church. [...] This is what the Lord expects from the church of the third millennium” (*Address at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015*).

Synodality provides opportunities to listen to the Holy Spirit and the People of God in order to discern together and walk forward on a common path, accompanying each other on the spiritual journey as we live out our missionary call.

### † WHY ARE WE PARTICIPATING IN A SYNOD AT THIS TIME?

In October 2015, Pope Francis stated that “the world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the church strengthens cooperation in all areas of her mission.” This

process is especially important during times of epochal changes in church and society. We must reflect on the signs of the times in light of the gospel.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted us all on a personal, local and global scale. The church continues to struggle from the wounds caused by the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable people. Intolerance and violence has fomented divisions, not only in church and society, but even within our own families.

“The decision to ‘journey together’ is a prophetic sign for the human family, which needs a shared project capable of pursuing the good of all. We need to let ourselves be educated by the Spirit to a truly synodal mentality, entering with courage and freedom of heart into a conversion process that is indispensable for the ‘continual reformation of which the church always has need, in so far as she is a human institution’” (*Synod 2023 Preparatory Document, no. 9*).

#### † WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

All the baptized are invited to participate in this synodal process. Special care should be taken to involve those persons who may be at risk of being excluded: persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, the elderly, people who live in poverty, inactive Catholics, etc.

At the same time, in order to participate fully in the act of discerning, it is important to hear the voices of others. Therefore, no one — no matter their religious affiliation — will be excluded from sharing their perspective and experience.

#### † WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE DIOCESE?

Each diocese will carry out the synodal process in a way that best responds to their local circumstances. In the Diocese of Cleveland, a leadership team has been formed to prepare for and implement the process within the eight-county area. Maximum participation will be encouraged through all diocesan structures and communication channels to involve the greatest number of people as possible.

#### † WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PARISH?

Parishes are encouraged to make use of existing “synodal” bodies, such as the parish pastoral council and other ministry groups, to organize, facilitate, and give life to the synodal process in the faith community, while also reaching out to the peripheries and to those voices that are seldom heard.

The feedback received throughout the listening process should be gathered into a synthesis and submitted to the diocesan leadership team by the specified deadline.

#### † HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There will be a variety of ways for people to get involved in the synod process, as individuals or as part of a faith community. Everyone is encouraged to gather, respond to the questions that will be provided, listen to one another, and submit their feedback. We also encourage you to participate in any additional informal activities for formation, fellowship and prayer, that are organized at the parish and/or diocesan levels.