



Toolkit for Facilitating Synodal Encounters on Eucharistic Renewal

*A Continued Call to Live Fully, Consciously,
and Actively Participating in the Celebration of Eucharistic Liturgy*



LIVING AS A SYNODAL CHURCH
COMMUNION. PARTICIPATION. MISSION.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS | JUNE 2022

Toolkit for Facilitating Synodal Encounters on Eucharistic Renewal: A Continued Call to Live Fully, Consciously, and Actively Participating in the Celebration of Eucharistic Liturgy is a compilation of resources taken from the Preparatory Document and Vademecum by the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops to facilitate discussions on the Synod of Synodality, the EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL website developed by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and with proper permissions granted by Office for Divine Worship & Sacraments of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati from TOGETHER.

<https://www.synod.va/en.html>

<https://eucharisticrevival.org/>

<https://resources.catholicaoc.org/offices/divine-worship-and-sacraments/together>

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The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio

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For additional inquiries, contact The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio.

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For this presence to be properly proclaimed and lived, it is not enough that the disciples of Christ pray individually and commemorate the death and Resurrection of Christ inwardly, in the secrecy of their hearts. Those who have received the grace of baptism are not saved as individuals alone, but as members of the Mystical Body, having become part of the People of God.

It is important therefore that they come together to express fully the very identity of the Church, the *ekklesia*, the assembly called together by the Risen Lord who offered his life "to reunite the scattered children of God" (Jn 11:52).

They have become "one" in Christ (cf. Gal 3:28) through the gift of the Spirit.

”

Letter of Welcome from Archbishop Gustavo

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Holy Spirit has inspired the Universal Church to rediscover the gift of Synodality. It is the blessing of walking together, listening to one another, and assembling again around the table of the Eucharist following the coronavirus pandemic. Our conversations and Synodal listening sessions have allowed us to reach a major milestone, yet we are far from concluding this process. I want to encourage all to keep the momentum alive and continue the Synodal conversation in your movements, groups, parishes, and institutions this time on *the* topic of primary importance for our identity as Catholics: The Real Presence of Jesus Christ especially as we encounter him in the Sunday Mass celebration.

Impelled by missionary zeal, we must take this conversation to every level of our Assembly as “*Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that **full, conscious, and active participation** in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy*”.¹ The centrality of the Sunday Mass celebration and the certitude that Jesus IS the Eucharist must be the core of our mission. The words of Jesus are clear and unambiguous: “*This is my body*” and “*This is my blood*”. Bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. They become the actual presence of Jesus. It is the risen Lord: Source and Summit of our faith. We each have stories to tell. Our Synodal process continues uninterrupted. These Synodal conversations are paving the way to discern together the future of our Archdiocesan Church.

I commend the efforts of every participant who engaged in Synodal conversations thus far. I invite you to become an ambassador of this model of “*being Church*” that we embrace. I also invite you to encourage those who have remained silent to come forward and participate. The contribution of each is essential. This booklet and resources posted on the website www.archsa.org/synodality are offered to assist the dialogue to continue. Please contact us at synodality@archsa.org to share your opinions, ideas, or concerns. As the process continues to unfold you remain in my prayers, and please keep me in yours!

Sincerely yours in Jesus,



Most Reverend Gustavo García-Siller, M.Sp.S.
Archbishop of San Antonio



¹ Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 14—Pope Paul VI, December 4, 1963

Toolkit for Leaders

I. Background

Why do we need to continue a synodal process to now talk about the Eucharist?

The Dogmatic Constitution of the Second Vatican Council on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states: “Nevertheless, the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s supper”². The Bishops of the United States are calling for a three-year grassroots revival of devotion and belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. They believe that God wants to see **a movement of Catholics across the United States, healed, converted, formed, and unified by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist—and sent out in mission “for the life of the world”**. The momentum created by the implementation of the local synodal process: Living as a Synodal Church in San Antonio offers a natural avenue of transition to keep the conversation going. Through listening and discernment rooted in the Holy Spirit and the Magisterium of the Church we want to rediscover the Source and Summit of our Faith. Full, active, and conscious participation in the Celebration of the Mass disposes us to notice God’s action and cultivate the conditions that will prevent us from receiving the graces of salvation in vain. Doing so, we can make our entire life an offering to God through Christ in the Holy Spirit.

What is the intended fruit of the National Eucharistic Renewal?

Grounded in prayer and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the synodal process oriented towards the Eucharistic renewal aligns with the goals defined by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

- a) To provide a more profound encounter with Jesus Christ in the Sunday liturgy as a point of unity among all Catholics, and through this powerful encounter, find personal healing and courage to take the Gospel to a world in need of authentic love—the love of Christ found in the Eucharist.
- b) To spark personal conversions through the joyful discovery of a relationship with Christ by encountering the love of God present in Jesus in the Eucharist.
- c) To elevate the truth and practices of our Catholic faith through the rediscovery of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist—the Source and Summit of our Church and of who we are as a people of God.
- d) To form, inspire, and launch missionary disciples, filled with love of God and neighbor that comes from an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist, to the margins of the Church and the world.

²Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 10—Pope Paul VI, December 4, 1963

Who will be involved?

The goal of continuing our Synodal process focused on Eucharistic Renewal is to engage every Catholic in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. This effort intends to become an organic movement. Although there will be activities, formation opportunities and workshops connected with the process, it should not be considered a program or an event. It is meant to provide opportunities for the faithful to fall deeper in love with Jesus in the Eucharist and to be inspired and equipped to share that love with others.

II. Preparation

Prayer for Eucharistic Renewal*

My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You!

I beg pardon for those who do not believe,
nor adore, nor hope, nor love You.

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly.

I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference by which He is offended.

And, through the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of You the conversion of sinners. Amen.

**You can continue using the Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus prayer if you prefer.*

Inviting your group and gathering materials

The synodal encounters will follow the basic principles and structures of the synodal process previously implemented in the Archdiocese of San Antonio for the topic of Synodality.

Choose a space where those invited can gather in groups of 6–8 persons.

- a) Set aside at least 90 minutes for this process.
- b) Invite your group and ask for their participation. Pulpit announcement and bulletin inserts are a good way of raising awareness about an upcoming synodal encounter. Give two weeks' notice to your group if possible.
- c) Download copies of the *Prayer for Eucharistic Renewal* for yourself and each participant (**QR Code #1, Page 16**). You can continue using the *Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus prayer* if you prefer.
- d) Use questions suggested in the following pages to conduct the encounter. Slight modification of the verbiage for any question is acceptable as long as the conversation remains faithfully connected with the desire of recognizing the centrality of the celebration of the Mass (especially on Sunday) as the quintessential element for a full, active, and conscious participation of our vocation as Eucharistic People of God.
- e) Consider doing a social media campaign, regularly posting the theme and questions to be engaged in the synodal encounter so participants can pray and think about their position, opinion, and understanding about the matter in advance.
- f) Pastors are encouraged to preach a homily series—on the theme(s) selected—and coordinate with his religious education team to reinforce the concepts and ideas during Religious Education Classes.
- g) Incorporate in weekly staff, groups and movements' meetings the selection of a theme, read and reflect upon the questions and, if possible, summarize the fruit of that conversation.
- h) Prior to the planned discussion session, have the *Prayer for Eucharistic Renewal* (**QR Code #1, Page 16**) or the *Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus prayer* for each participant. At each table, have a copy of the *Approaches for Dialogue* (**QR Code #2, Page 16**), and *Questions and Reflection Sheets* (**QR Code #3, Page 16**), along with a working pen. Also, be sure to have extra lined paper at each table for those who wish to take extra notes.

III. Sample Schedule

- 15 Mins.** Welcome, Introductions, Prayer: Use the *Prayer for Eucharistic Renewal* or *Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus prayer*. Have each table choose a **Scribe** to act as a note-taker who will summarize the conversation. Two **Fundamental Questions** are selected for discussion and marked in the **Reflection Sheets** provided for the discussion.
- Optional:* Select up to two additional **Auxiliary Questions** for discussion. Have each table choose a **Discussion Leader** to moderate and keep conversation going (could be the same person as the **Scribe**).
- Upon selection of a facilitator in the group, try spending the first minutes of the encounter getting to know each other.
- 5 Mins.** Where and whenever necessary, give a short background to the Synodal Process and the Eucharistic Renewal process and review the **Approaches for Dialogue** out loud with participants.
- 20 Mins.** Begin discussing **Question #1** and incorporate the feedback from participants (preferably in bullet point format) into the **Reflection Sheet**. Ask participants to be honest, open, and respectful. Ensure each **Scribe** takes careful notes. Keep track of the time given for each question.
- 20 Mins.** After the allotted time, move to **Reflection Sheet, Question #2** with participants, asking them to discuss honestly, openly, and respectfully. Again, ensure each **Scribe** takes careful notes.
- 20 Mins.** *Optional:* Discuss briefly up to two **Auxiliary Questions** selected at the beginning of the synodal encounter.
- 10 Mins.** Conclude the encounter with a prayer and encouragement to think and pray about what they just heard, discussed, or struck them. Make concluding remarks, Thank You's, and try to engage a follow up meeting to continue reflecting on the topics just discussed and new ones. End your Session.

Approaches that enable genuine listening and dialogue as we participate in the Synodal Process

- We are invited to speak with authenticity and honesty. Everyone can grow in understanding through dialogue.
- We can often be resistant to what the Holy Spirit is inspiring us to consider. We are called to set aside attitudes of complacency and comfort.
- Move forward with the conviction of faith. We are called to be beacons of hope, not prophets of doom.

- Keep in mind that Synodality is a spiritual process led by the Holy Spirit. We are pilgrims & servants on the path marked out for us by God.
- Avoid the temptation to focus solely on personal concerns. The Synodal Process is an opportunity to look beyond ourselves and see the needs and concerns of others.
- Avoid the temptation to only see "*problems*." The challenges, difficulties, and hardships facing our world and our Church are many. We can miss the light if we focus only on the darkness.
- Don't take any comment personally. Everyone is doing their best given the circumstances.
- As we proceed along the journey of the Synodal Process, keep in mind that the goal is to discern how God calls us to walk forward together. No one Synodal Process will resolve all our concerns and problems.
- Remember that Synodality is an attitude and an approach of moving forward in a co-responsible way that is open to welcoming God's inspiration over time.

Before a synodal encounter begins...

Consider sharing broadly with invitees of the synodal encounter the following probing questions and statements. They will help participants to assess individual perceptions about liturgy, Sacraments and devotional life of the parish.

- a)** Does the congregation fully, actively, and consciously participate in the Sunday Mass?
- b)** What is the quality of the liturgy in general, music, hospitality, and environment at the Sunday Mass?
- c)** Regarding homilies:
 - 1.** Is it biblically oriented, are Sacred Scriptures the core of them?
 - 2.** Do homilies fit every time in the appropriate liturgical season (Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent, Easter)?
 - 3.** Do they announce or proclaim the "*Good News*" of Jesus Christ?
 - 4.** Do you perceive homilies to be relatable and speak to the reality of your life?
 - 5.** Do they call you to action?
- d)** What types of liturgies are celebrated (traditional, contemporary, gospel, etc.)?
- e)** Are special feasts and devotions celebrated throughout the year?
- f)** Has the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) been implemented and is the entire community supportive and involved?
- g)** How well are the sick and the shut-ins cared for and visited?
- h)** Are there convenient times scheduled for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) on Saturday and Sunday?

Who facilitates synodal consultations?

Good facilitation has participants engaging with one another in meaningful dialogue on the given topic or question. The facilitator is not the center of conversation but rather a guide for the conversation. It is important to select and train excellent facilitators for this listening process. **Strong Facilitators** are people who:

- Are at home with their Catholic faith
- Are prayerful and reflective
- Have strong interpersonal skills
- Have effective communication skills
- Are willing participants in the Synodal Process
- Are able to maintain a "big picture" view without injecting their personal agenda
- Can focus a conversation
- Can connect participants with each other without becoming the center of the conversation.

It is important to select facilitators with the experience and competencies needed, depending on the nature and makeup of the group.

- Volunteers can usually facilitate parish, diocesan, religious order, movements, or similar synodal consultations.
- A Catholic professional facilitator—or someone else with higher level facilitation skills—may be needed on occasion when participants come from marginalized groups (e.g., different ethnic or cultural groups, abuse survivors, youth, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities, migrants/refugees, etc.) or when special interest groups are participating in a particular consultation.
- All facilitators need preparation and training on the synodal approach, the synodal purpose, and the Synodal Process.

Facilitating a synodal consultation

As **Facilitator**, you will be asked to:

- Establish clear boundaries of time and topic for speakers.
- Gently interrupt a speaker who talks disproportionately more than others.
- Gently interrupt and redirect a speaker who gets off topic.
- Gently re-focus a speaker who is preoccupied with an issue that is not pertinent to the topic or inhibits the participation of others in the group.

Practical suggestions for successful facilitation

It helps to set ground rules and expectations at the start of the consultation by emphasizing the need for broad participation and safety. Some examples of boundary-related ground rules are:

- a)** One person speaks at a time and the others listen attentively.
- b)** Discernment means speaking, listening and prayerfully reflecting. For this reason, pausing in silence between speakers to consider what is said is a good approach.
- c)** Speak when you can add to the conversation, not when you are trying to intentionally end it.
- d)** Stay on topic.
- e)** Keep your comments reasonably brief so others have time to participate.
- f)** This is a conversation focused on the future and possible solutions.
- g)** If someone offers a comment in the form of a complaint, ask the person to reframe her or his comment in the form of a hope or aspiration.
- h)** If you have to interrupt a participant, it helps to acknowledge their contribution by providing a brief synthesis of what you heard them say and thank them for their contribution.

Examples of ground rules for synodal consultations

This consultation is a safe place to talk. We will treat each other and what anyone says with reverence and respect.

- a)** One person speaks at a time. We all will listen with an open mind.
- b)** We will be stopping the conversation at certain intervals to reflect and pray.
- c)** Our primary mode is dialogue: When we speak, our purpose is to advance the conversation. Please avoid arguing or comments that seek to advance a personal agenda.
- d)** We limit how long we speak so that everyone has time to share.
- e)** We only speak once until everyone has had an opportunity to share.
- f)** We will be reporting the themes and experiences to the (arch)diocese and bishop's conference as they emerge from the consultation discussions without indicating the names of individual participants.
- g)** As participants, when we tell others of our experience of the consultation, we will not attribute anything we share to particular people or groups.

IV. Submit Reflection Sheet to the Archdiocese of San Antonio

Leader of Synodal Process session then submits **Reflection Sheets** without delay. To simplify the submission of the summary of your synodal conversation, you are going to need to download the "Rocketbook" app on your smartphone:



For iPhone:
Scan **QR Code #4, Page 16**



For Android:
Scan **QR Code #5, Page 16**

Create a Rocketbook account using your email address. When prompted for a "destination", type the email address "synodality@archsa.org". Using your camera, scan your **Reflection Sheets** to send them to the destination "synodality@archsa.org". If you need assistance, email synodality@archsa.org.

If you have any trouble installing, scanning or submitting the Reflection Sheets through Rocketbook app, please simply scan the Reflection Sheets and attach them to an email to synodality@archsa.org. For your convenience, you can also fax the Reflection Sheets to the Archdiocese of San Antonio at (210) 734-0708.

Questions

You are asked to select for discussion **two of the four *Fundamental Questions*** during the synodal encounter. It is **optional to select no more than two *Auxiliary Questions*** depending on the special interest the group holding the encounter might have. ***Do not substitute or leave out the Fundamental Questions from the discussion.***

1. Fundamental Questions

- 1.1.** *What is your experience of the Sunday Mass celebration in your parish?*
 - 1.2.** *The Church believes and teaches that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ. How does this understanding shape our life?*
 - 1.3.** *How do you and your family make Sunday the most important day of the week?*
 - 1.4.** *Having received the Eucharist, what can we do to become more fully a Eucharistic people sharing this nourishment and its graces with the marginalized?*
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2. Auxiliary Questions

The questions below are optional and can be incorporated in the discussion during a synodal encounter if time or pastoral interest allows.

- 2.1.** *What keeps me from being truly present to God at Mass?*
- 2.2.** *What are some ways I can be the presence of Christ to others?*
- 2.3.** *What does obligation to participate in Sunday and holy day Mass mean to me?*
- 2.4.** *How do I compare my experience of participating in Mass in person as compared to experiencing it online?*
- 2.5.** *Is the congregation fully, actively, and consciously participating in the liturgy? If not, what is preventing them from doing so?*
- 2.6.** *How do you experience liturgical music in your parish at Sunday Mass?*
- 2.7.** *What is your experience of the homily during Sunday Mass?*
- 2.8.** *How does the celebration of Sunday Mass in your parish promote and pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life?*

For Final Consideration and Reflection...

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* tells us, at no. 7, that "To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in his Church, especially in its liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of his minister, 'the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,'³ but especially under the eucharistic elements. By his power he is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ himself who baptizes.⁴ He is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for he promised: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' " (Mt 18:20).

³Council of Trent, sess. 22, 17 Sept 1562, *Doctrine on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, chap. 2.

⁴See Augustine, *In Ioannis Evangelium Tractatus* 6, chap. 1, n. 7.



QR Codes to Download Resources

QR Code #1
Prayer for
Eucharistic Renewal



QR Code #2
Approaches
for Dialogue



QR Code #3
Questions and
Reflection Sheets



QR Code #4
Rocketbook for iPhone



QR Code #5
Rocketbook for Android



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