

Your participation in the local Synodal Process can take place  
in person or by ZOOM.  
Contact your local parish or the Synod Committee to join a dialogue session.  
To learn more about this process  
go to **[AoAJ.org](http://AoAJ.org)** or contact the Synod Committee directly at:

**Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau**  
**Synod Committee**  
**225 Cordova St. Anchorage, AK 99501**  
**Email: [Synod@aoaj.org](mailto:Synod@aoaj.org)**  
**907-297-7700**

### The Synod Prayer

We stand together 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.



## Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau

### Synod Participant Guide

*This guide is to assist you in preparing  
for your participation in a dialogue session*

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has invited the Catholic Church to embark on a journey together. Through listening and discernment rooted in the Holy Spirit, the entire people of God are called to contribute to a process by which the Church deepens in understanding of Her mission and looks toward the future.



The objective of this Synodal Process is to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church. The synodal process is intended to enable the Church to better witness to the Gospel, especially with those who live on the spiritual, social, economic, political, geographical, and existential peripheries of our world.

The Purpose of this synod is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be, to make people's hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationship, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength to our hands for our common mission.



What can I expect during a Dialogue Sessions?

Dialogue Sessions involve groups coming together to pray, reflect on scripture, listen to one another, dialogue about the Church for the future and submit ideas and hopes for the Church.

During the Listening part of all Dialogue Sessions, each person will have an equal amount of time to share their thoughts and responses to one primary question applying it to any of the ten main themes.

Responses will be submitted to the Archdiocese Synod Committee in order to compile a report to be presented to Archbishop Andrew Bellisario, C.M.

What has been heard and discussed throughout the Archdiocese’s synod process will not only be included in content compiled with Dioceses throughout the United States but will also be included in the pastoral planning for the future of our Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau.

Attitudes For Participating in the Synodal Process

Pope Francis has shared his vision for what the practice of Synodality looks like concretely. Synods are a time to dream and “spend time with the future.” We are encouraged to create a local process that inspires people, with no one excluded to create a vision of the future filled with the joy of the Gospel. The attitudes below will help ensure positive dialogue:

- ◆ **Dialogue requires respect**, Everyone has the right to be welcomed and heard, just as everyone has the right to speak. Following a dialogue session, if discussing your experience with others, it is extremely important to remember that what has been shared is not to be used as gossip.
- ◆ **Dialogue requires humility**, Dialogue encourages others to consider another’s viewpoint without debate, judgement or the intention to convince others.
- ◆ **Dialogue requires openness**, to the Holy Spirit: We are called to be open to new thoughts and ideas. Synods are an exercise in discernment which is based on the conviction that God is at work in the world and we are called to listen to what the Spirit suggests to us. By learning from one another, we can better reflect the wonderful multi-faceted reality of what Christ’s Church is meant to be.
- ◆ **Dialogue requires people over ideas**, We need to overcome ideologies and avoid the risk of giving greater important to ideas than to the reality of the concrete ways people live out their faith.
- ◆ **Listening requires unity**, Listening calls us to leave behind prejudices and stereotypes and have courage to look beyond how things have always been done.
- ◆ **Listening requires that all are seen as equal**, The Church is the Body of Christ filled with different gifts in which each member has a unique role to play. We are all interdependent on one another and we all share an equal dignity amidst the holy people of God. Synodality calls upon pastors to listen attentively to the flock just as it calls the laity to freely and honestly express their views.
- ◆ **Synodality calls us to be beacons of hope**, not prophets of doom. Focus not only on problems but appreciate where the Holy Spirit is generating life and see how we can let God work more fully.

The Primary Question and Ten Themes to consider when participating in a Dialogue Session

*The Church’s mission is to proclaim the gospel, journey together, and serve others.*  
*How can the church best live out this mission?*

Consider one or more of the following themes when responding.  
This document can be used as a worksheet as you prepare to share your responses.

1. As **Companions on the Journey**, are all of the people of God included?
2. Are we **Listening** to everyone, especially minorities, the vulnerable, people living on the margins and those who feel separated from the Church?
3. **Speaking out**, what enables or hinders speaking up courageously and responsibly in our local church?
4. **Celebration**, how should the church promote active participation of all the faithful in Mass? How can it inspire and guide our common life and mission of the church?
5. **Sharing Responsibility for our Common Mission**, how do we ensure the various social ministries of the church are active and supported by all of the faithful?
6. **Dialogue in Church and Society**, what particular issues in the Church and society need more attention?
7. **Ecumenism**, how can the Church community relate with members of other Christian traditions and denominations?
8. **Authority and Participation**, how is authority exercised within our local Church? How are lay ministries promoted and lay people encouraged as co-responsible members?
9. **Discerning and Deciding**, how does the Church make decisions and how can it be improved to include to promote transparency and accountability?
10. **Forming Ourselves in Synodality**, how do we form people to be more capable of walking together, listening to one another, participating in mission and engaging in dialogue?