



The Catholic
Archdiocese
of Edmonton

5.3 The Main Question for Consultation

A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.” How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”? (PD, 26)

In responding to this question, we are invited to:

- ✓ **Recall our experiences:** What experiences of our local Church does this question call to mind?
- ✓ **Re-read these experiences in greater depth:** What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds did they reveal? What insights have they elicited?
- ✓ **Gather the fruits to share:** Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound? What is the Spirit asking of us? What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for change, the steps to be taken? Where do we register a consensus? What paths are opening up for our local Church?

In responding to these questions, it is helpful to remember that “journeying together” occurs in two deeply interconnected ways. First, **we journey together with one another as the People of God**. Next, **we journey together as the People of God with the entire human family**. These two perspectives enrich one another and are helpful for our common discernment towards deeper communion and more fruitful mission.

Questions for Phase 1: Diocesan Consultation

(Derived from the Preparatory Document and the Vademecum)

1. COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

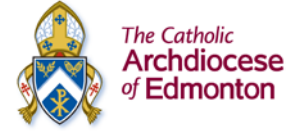
In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road.

- a. In our local Church, who are the ones “journeying together”?
- b. Who are our companions on the journey, including those outside the boundaries of the Church?
- c. How are we called to grow as companions?

2. LISTENING

Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.

- a. How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore?
- b. How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people?
- c. What facilitates or inhibits our listening?
- d. How do we integrate the contribution of Consecrated Men and Women?
- e. What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?
- f. What are some limitations in our ability to listen, especially to those who have different views than our own?



- g. How do we listen to the social and cultural context in which we live?
- h. How well do we listen to those on the peripheries?

3. SPEAKING OUT

All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity.

- a. What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and in society?
- b. When and how do we manage to say what is important to us?
- c. How does the relationship with the local media work (not only Catholic media)?
- d. Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?

4. CELEBRATION

“Walking together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.

- a. How do prayer and liturgical celebration inspire and direct our “journeying together”?
- b. How do they inspire the most important decisions?
- c. How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?
- d. What space is given to the exercise of the ministries of Lector and Acolyte?

5. CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION

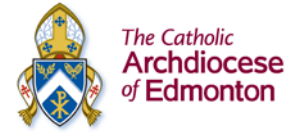
Synodality is at the service of the Church’s mission, in which all her members are called to participate.

- a. Since we are all missionary disciples, how is every baptized person called to participate in the mission of the Church?
- b. What hinders the baptized from being active in mission?
- c. What areas of mission are we neglecting?
- d. How does the community support its members who serve society in various ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, education, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, caring for the environment, etc.)?
- e. How does the Church help these members to live out their service to society in a missionary way?
- f. How is discernment about missionary choices made and by whom?
- g. How are the different traditions that constitute the patrimony of many Churches, especially the Oriental ones, integrated and adapted, with respect to the synodal style, in view of an effective Christian witness?
- h. How does collaboration work in territories where different *sui iuris* Churches are present?

6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Dialogue is a path of perseverance that also includes silences and sufferings, but which is capable of gathering the experience of persons and peoples.

- a. What are the places and means of dialogue within our particular Church?
- b. How are divergences of vision, or conflicts and difficulties addressed?



- c. How do we promote collaboration with neighbouring dioceses, religious communities in the area, lay associations and movements, etc.?
- d. What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to?
- e. What experiences of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other religions and with those who have no religious affiliation?
- f. How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society: the spheres of politics, economics, culture, civil society, and people who live in poverty?

7. ECUMENISM

The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one Baptism, has a special place in the Synodal journey.

- a. What relationships does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions and denominations?
- b. What do we share and how do we journey together?
- c. What fruits have we drawn from this “journeying together”?
- d. What are the difficulties?
- e. How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?

8. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

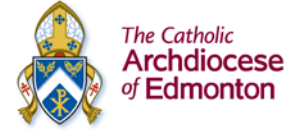
A synodal Church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.

- a. How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to reach them, and the steps to be taken?
- b. How is authority or governance exercised within our particular Church (Diocese/Eparchy)?
- c. How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice?
- d. How are evaluations conducted and by whom?
- e. How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted?
- f. Have we had fruitful experiences of synodality on a local level?
- g. How do synodal bodies function at the level of the particular Church (Pastoral Councils in parishes and dioceses, Presbyteral Council, etc.)?

9. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

In a Synodal style, decisions are made through discernment, based on a consensus that flows from the common obedience to the Spirit.

- a. By what procedures and methods do we discern together and make decisions?
- b. How can they be improved?
- c. How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchically structured communities?
- d. Do our decision-making methods help us to listen to the whole People of God?
- e. What is the relationship between consultation and decision-making, and how do we put these into practice?
- f. What tools and procedures do we use to promote transparency and accountability?
- g. How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?



10. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

The spirituality of journeying together is meant to become an educational principle for the formation of the human person and for Christians, families, and communities.

- a. How does our church community form people to be more capable of “walking together,” listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue?
- b. What formation is offered to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a Synodal way?
- c. What tools help us to read the dynamics of the culture in which we are immersed and their impact on our style of Church?

Additional Questions:

1. Please describe in one or two paragraphs the experience of the local gathering(s) held, as well as of the entire local Synodal consultations.
2. Based on the experience of your consultation(s), could you sum up in one or two sentences how the Spirit is calling us to grow in “journeying together” in your particular Church?
3. Are any other important issues that emerged from your local consultation not captured in any of the above questions?