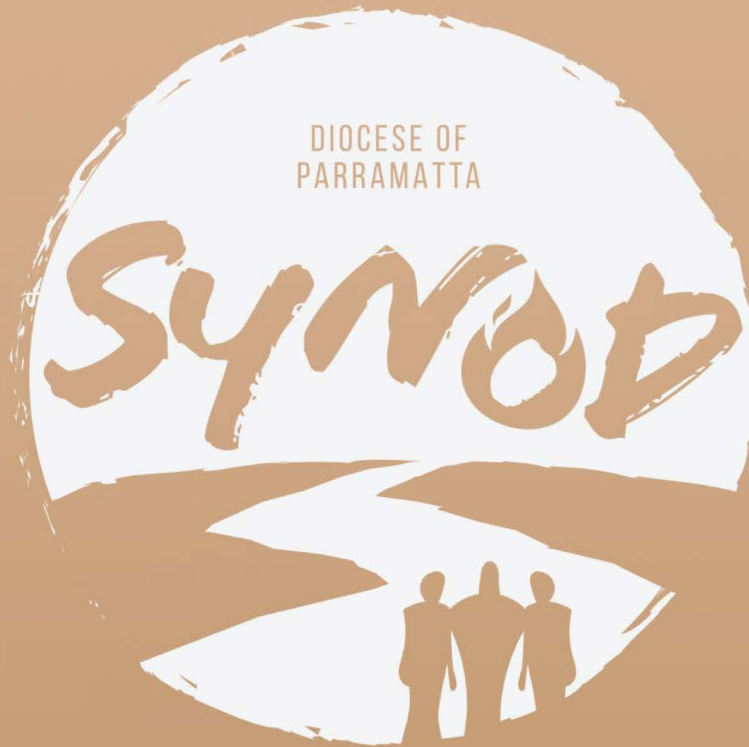




DIOCESE of
PARRAMATTA



THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION and Accompanying Questions

About this document

The purpose of this document is to offer guidance for participants through the preparatory stages of the Synod of the Diocese of Parramatta and outline The Fundamental Question guiding the process.

This document includes the summary explaining the 'Pillars of a Synodal Church' found in the Vatican's *Vademecum* document for the Synod on Synodality and accompanying questions which have been developed to deepen dialogue on the topics of communion, participation, and mission for the purposes of the Diocesan Synod.

The Fundamental Question

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Diocese of Parramatta seeks to engage in a process of listening, dialogue, and discernment to learn and understand the path to becoming a more synodal church. To be synodal means to ‘walk together’ guided by the Holy Spirit.

The fundamental question that will guide the journey towards the Synod is:

**In what ways can we respond to the call of the Holy Spirit
to be a more synodal Church in the Diocese of Parramatta?**

Pillars of a Synodal Church

Inspired by the Synod on Synodality, convoked by Pope Francis, the Diocese of Parramatta, will use the three key dimensions expressed as pillars of a synodal church to guide local discussions for submissions. These are *Communion, Participation, and Mission*.

*Communion: By his gracious will, God gathers us together as diverse peoples of one faith, through the covenant that he offers to his people. The communion we share finds its deepest roots in the love and unity of the Trinity. It is Christ who reconciles us to the Father and unites us with each other in the Holy Spirit. Together, we are inspired by listening to the Word of God, through the living Tradition of the Church, and grounded in the *sensus fidei* (the sense of the faithful) that we share. We all have a role to play in discerning and living out God's call for his people.*

Participation: A call for the involvement of all who belong to the People of God – laity, consecrated and ordained – to engage in the exercise of deep and respectful listening to one another. This listening creates space for us to hear the Holy Spirit together and guides our aspirations for the Church of the Third Millennium. Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are qualified and are called to serve one another through the gifts they have each received from the Holy Spirit. In a synodal Church the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God's will (ICT, Syn., 67-68). Genuine efforts must be made to ensure the inclusion of those at the margins or who feel excluded.

Mission: The Church exists to evangelise. We can never be centred on ourselves. Our mission is to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. This Synodal Process has a deeply missionary dimension to it. It 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. In this way, synodality is a path by which the Church can more fruitfully fulfil her mission of evangelisation in the world, as a leaven at the service of the coming of God's kingdom.”

Source: https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/vademecum/en_vade.pdf

Accompanying Questions

To assist participants to explore the fundamental question, the following questions aim to provide a framework for discussion in a one-on-one or group setting. The hope is that participants continue to dialogue with the desire to 'walk together' as a people of God, and with the whole of humanity.

These questions serve as a catalyst for discussion. Participants are welcome to explore topics relating to the life and mission of the local Church beyond the questions provided.

Communion

- What are the factors that make a great community? What brings people together?
- How can the church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains deepen communion, and still honour the rich diversity of our community?
- How do you try to accompany or 'walk with' family and friends through their struggles and joys?

Participation:

- What are the challenges or pressures that stop you from being more engaged in your local faith community?
- How can we encourage greater participation in the life of the Church at both a local and Diocesan level?
- How does your community effectively identify and share the gifts of its people?

Mission:

- What do you believe the mission of the Church is in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains?
- How do we ensure the ongoing nourishment of our faith communities, while expanding the tent for others to be included?
- Describe your local community and the needs you perceive. What are the ways in which we can meet the needs of today and into the future? Provide one practical suggestion on how we could meet that need.