

Appendix D

Preparing the diocesan synthesis

The diocesan synthesis conveys the main fruits of the discernment of the whole People of God across the diocese. It is recommended that this be captured in a written document of up to 10 pages. Other materials such as images, videos, stories, artistic expressions, and personal testimonies can be submitted as attachments, insofar as they help to bring out the experience and input of participants.

The diocesan synthesis should reflect the diversity of views and opinions expressed, and pay particular attention to the lived experiences of participants, both positive and negative. The synthesis should be faithful to the people's voices and to whatever emerged from their discernment and dialogue, rather than a series of generalized or doctrinally correct statements. Points of view that are contrary to one another need not be omitted but can be acknowledged and stated as such. Views should not be excluded simply because they were expressed by a small minority of participants. Indeed, sometimes the perspective of what we could call the "minority report" can be a prophetic witness to what God wants to say to the Church.

The content of the synthesis may be organized according to the following questions, which are offered as suggestions. The aim is to aptly convey the diverse fruits, insights, joys, and challenges of the synodal experience and discernment among the people of the diocese:

- In terms of the process of the consultation, what were the main steps taken in the diocese? What were the main questions posed? What was done to engage as many participants as possible and to reach out to the peripheries? Approximately what proportion of people in the diocese participated in one way or other? Were there any groups of people whose participation was especially noteworthy? Where there specific groups of people who did not participate for any reason?
- What was most significant about the whole experience of the consultation? What were the high points and low points, or the consolations and desolations? What dispositions, attitudes, or feelings were notable? What tensions or disagreements emerged from the

listening process? What topics or issues gave rise to diverse points of view? Overall, what were the fruits that the Holy Spirit has brought about through this experience?

- Among the feedback from the local meetings, what was particularly significant, surprising or unexpected? What new perspectives or new horizons opened up? Which particular stories or real-life experiences were especially moving and why? Which points of view seem to have strong resonance? Which points of view were mentioned less but are interesting and noteworthy?
- Overall, what has the Holy Spirit inspired the community to see regarding the current reality of synodality in the local church, including the present lights and shadows? What did participants have to say about areas where the Church is in need of healing and conversion, in its spiritual life, culture, attitudes, structures, pastoral practices, relationships, and missionary outreach?
- In what ways is the Holy Spirit inviting the local church to grow in synodality? What dreams, desires, and aspirations for the church were expressed by participants? Based on their feedback, what steps does the diocese feel called to take in becoming more synodal? What are the next steps forward for our diocese on the path of synodality, in communion with the whole Church?
- What cultural image(s) articulate(s) our experience of synodality?

It is recommended that the synthesis be prepared by a small team of persons rather than a large assembly. This team will carry out its task in collaboration with the diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Contact Person(s). They should read all the submissions in a spirit of prayer. The team meetings themselves should be synodal and spiritually discerning, listening to the living voice of the People of God across the diocese under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



Each diocese can choose to prepare the synthesis either before or after the Diocesan Pre-synodal Meeting, as long as the fruits of that meeting are also incorporated into the diocesan synthesis. As much as possible, everyone should feel that his or her voice has been represented in the synthesis. As a model of transparency, the members of the drafting team as well as the process of synthesizing the feedback can be made known to all. It is strongly recommended that the synthesis be made public once it has been drafted, as a touchstone for the journey of the diocese along the path of synodality. As much as possible, opportunities can be given to the People of God to review and respond to the content of the diocesan synthesis before it is officially sent to the episcopal conference.



SYNOD OF BISHOPS