



General Secretariat for the Synod of the Bishops



The Diocesan Contact Person(s)/Team

The work of the Diocesan Contact Person(s)/Team will involve the following general functions or tasks:

- Serve as liaison between the diocese and the episcopal conference (and their contact person or team).
- Serve as the point(s) of reference for parishes and other groups in the diocese regarding the synodal consultation.
- Serve the main contact person(s) for the Bishop of the diocese regarding the Synodal Process.
- Work in a synodal manner with a team to develop how the diocesan process will unfold and discuss the topics and issues related to synodality (as outlined by the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops and the episcopal conference), as well as the process of collecting, analysing, and synthesizing the consultation input from across the diocese.
- Invite all parishes to take part in the consultation process, organizing gatherings to participate in the Synodal Process on the local level. Parishes can join together with other parishes to promote a greater sense of communion and journeying together. The Diocesan Contact Person(s)/Team should encourage parishes to foster a spirit of fraternity, co-responsibility, and the full and active participation of the ordained, consecrated religious, and lay women and men of the community, including children, young people, single persons, married couples, families, and the elderly. In this way, the consultation process will represent the diversity of socio-economic and cultural/ethnic backgrounds and abilities in the local area, as well as encouraging consultation with those who are less active in the practice of the Catholic faith, those from different Christian denominations and other faith traditions, and residents in the local or civic community who have no connection to the parish.
- Invite each ministry, movement, ecclesial body, and department/office within the diocese to provide input to the questions included in the *Vademecum* and the accompanying documents from the vantage point of their specific ministry or focus area. Each of these groups can hold its own consultation, or work together with one another and/or with parishes in the diocese. Efforts should be made to involve all the various apostolates, cultures, communities, groups, initiatives, and ecumenical/interreligious efforts within diocese in the consultation process, fostering an authentic experience of synodality in the local Church.
- Offer training and accompaniment (in the form of workshops, webinars, videos, materials, and/or personal support) to those who will be responsible for carrying out and facilitating the consultation process on the local level (in parishes, communities, etc.), in order to help them to understand the meaning of synodality, the objectives of the current Synodal Process, and the

characteristics of the synodal experience that they are trying to foster (for more information please consult the *Vademecum* or the Synod website).

- Develop methods for receiving input from the consultation process across the diocese and communicate this process to parishes, diocesan groups, religious communities, and movements, engaging the *widest participation possible*. This may include:
 - Suggesting that parishes/communities appoint their own contact person/team to carry out the consultation.
 - Suggesting that parishes/communities conduct one, two, or more consultation meetings with people in the local community. Parishes/groups may wish to have a special consultation for certain groups (for example, adolescents, young adults, married couples, migrants, those who less active in the faith, the poor and other marginalized communities).
 - Suggesting that parishes find a way of synthesizing or take note of each consultation/conversation (either by means of a secretary/note taker, through recording the meeting electronically, having participants or facilitators upload their notes online, or other means).
 - Setting up a specific deadline and the process/means by which all input is sent on to the Diocesan Contact Person(s)/Team.
 - Encouraging gatherings after the consultation process with those who participated and others, to share what has been done to follow-up on the input provided, and to discern the next steps for integrating the spirit and style of synodality on the local level.
- Regularly check in with each parish/community throughout the consultation phase, providing support, encouragement, accompaniment, and reiterating gratitude along the way.
- Gather the syntheses/input/insights from the local consultations in a timely manner.
- Oversee the organization of the diocesan pre-synodal meeting (See Appendix C)
- Analyse and synthesize the input gathered, developing *one succinct diocesan synthesis* totalling a maximum of **ten pages**, which will then be communicated to the episcopal conference by their stated deadline. This synthesis should be developed by the team working with the Diocesan Contact Person(s), in collaboration with the Bishop and/or his designate. (See Appendix D)
- Send the diocesan synthesis to the episcopal conference in a timely manner.

The Diocesan Contact Person(s) and team should have the following qualities:

- A spiritually mature person with a living faith.
- A natural collaborator.
- An effective communicator.
- The ability to synthesize a variety of information.
- The ability to interact well with people of diverse cultural, generational, and ecclesial backgrounds.
- Familiarity with diocesan structures and processes.
- Prior experience working in collaborative initiatives or synodal processes.
- Humility in working with a co-leader and/or team, graciously open to the insights and gifts of others and to try new ways of proceeding.