

Continental Phase Draft Document



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Enlarge the Space of Your Tent (Is 54:2)

[Documento-Tappa-Continentale-EN.pdf \(usccb.org\)](https://www.usccb.org/documento-tappa-continentale-en.pdf)

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Section 1

The Experience of the Journey

➤ Appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the conversation

“Our current ‘synod’ experience has awakened in the lay faithful the idea of, and a desire to, get involved in the life of the Church, in its engagement with the world today, and in its pastoral work on the ground” (EC Canada).

➤ Challenges:

- Fear of change or fear of no change
- Resistance of clerics
- Lack of trust because of the sex abuse scandal
- War, poverty, political divisions



Section 2

Listening to the Scriptures

Section 2

Enlarge the space of your tent, spread out your tent cloths unsparingly, lengthen your ropes and make firm your pegs(Is 54:2).

“This is how many reports *envision the Church: an expansive, but not homogeneous dwelling, capable of sheltering all, but open, letting in and out* (cf. Jn. 10:9), and moving toward embracing the Father and all of humanity.” (Section 2:27)



Section 3

Toward a Missionary Synodal Church

How to Be Church

“Instead of behaving like gatekeepers trying to exclude others from the table, we need to do more to make sure that people know that everyone can find a place and a home here.” (remark by a parish group from the USA).

- Radical inclusion especially those who do not feel welcomed - deep hospitality
- Shared, belonging for all – not judging others
- Deep listening – recognize others on a spiritual journey
- New approaches to pastoral accompaniment
- Readiness to “recognize that the peripheries can be the place where a call to conversion resounds...” (Section 3:32)

Obstacles to Synod Process

- Difficulty in listening deeply
- Lack of training in communal processes for listening/discernment
- Hierarchical structures that foster autocratic tendencies
- Clerical & individualistic culture, isolation of priests
- Fragmented relationships
- Sociocultural/economic disparities that benefit the wealthy and educated
- Absence of “in between” spaces that foster encounters between members of mutually separated groups

Items for Consideration in the Draft Report

Justice concerns:
race, ethnicity,
gender, culture,
sexuality and abuse
victims, tribalism

Preferential options
for young people

Family issues:
divorce, celibacy
LGBTQIA's

Full respect for and
equal participation of
women

Defense of life at all
levels

Synodal style liturgies

Ecumenical
engagement



What Catholics Indicated They Want

“People ask that the Church be a refuge for the wounded and broken, not an institution for the perfect. They want the Church to meet people wherever they are, to walk with them rather than judge them, and to build real relationships through caring and authenticity, not a purpose of superiority” (EC USA)

(Section 3:39)



What Catholics Indicated They Want

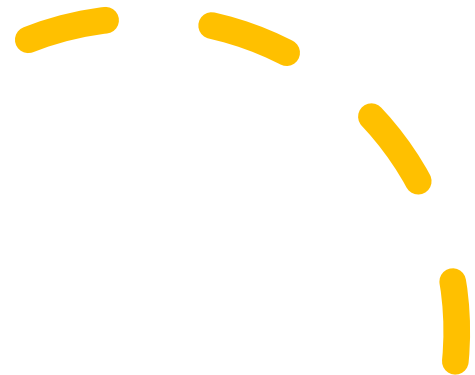
- A listening welcoming inclusive Church with Baptism as the basis of renewal
- High quality people to lead
- Ongoing synodal formation for both clergy and lay persons
- Strengthen decision making in councils – pastoral, economic, diocesan, parish, episcopal, presbyteral – that demonstrate transparency, dialogue, discernment, evaluation, empowerment of all
- Recognize and celebrate various culture and diversity in the liturgy
- Fully recognize the importance of including women in the full life of the church
- End to sexual abuse and entanglements in politics

Section 4

Next Steps

- Finalization of the Continental Draft - March 2023
- 7 Continental drafts to form the basis for the document *Instrumentum Laboris* to be used for the Synod Meeting - June 2023
- Assembly of Synod of Bishops in Rome – October 2023
- Assembly of Synod of Bishops in Rome – October 2024

“Walking together as the People of God requires us to recognize the need for continual conversion, individual and communal.” (Section 4: 101)



“The message of our synodal way is simple: we are learning to walk together, and sit together to break the one bread, in such a way that each is able to find their place. Everyone is called to take part in this journey, no one is excluded. To this we feel called so that we can credibly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus to all people. This is the path we seek to continue on in our next Continental Stage.”(Section 4:104)

