

Continental Phase Document (Dcs)

Notes and Highlights

Where we are in the synod process

The Synod on Synodality is a two-year process of listening and dialogue beginning with the opening in Rome on October 9 and 10, 2021 and concluding in 2023.

- Diocesan, individual, organizational input → National Synthesis Document
- National Synthesis Documents → Continental Phase Document
- Continental Phase Document Synthesis → Working document for synod gathering in October 2023



Where we
are in the
process

National Synthesis of the People of God
in the United States of America for the
Diocesan Phase of the 2021-2023 Synod

Timeline

Preparation

- 3-5 Delegates per Diocese (Est. 800-1200 people)
- Register by Monday, November 28, 2022
- DCS reflection and discernment on local level
- Continental Assemblies Resource December 2022

Participation

- 10 Virtual Assemblies December – January
- 5 English
- 3 Spanish
- 2 French

Discernment

- Drafting of North American Continental Synthesis – February 2023
- Due March 31, 2023



Where we
are in the
process

U.S. Team

- Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt, SEMV, Archdiocese of Hartford, Region I
- Alexandra Carroll, Communications Manager for Social Mission, Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development
- Richard Coll, Executive Director, Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development
- Bishop Daniel E. Flores, Chairman, Committee on Doctrine, Diocese of Brownsville
- Fr. Michael Fuller, General Secretary, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Julia McStravog, Consultant
- Sr. Leticia Salazar, ODN, Chancellor, San Bernardino
- Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv, Diocese of Lexington, Region V
- Bishop Joseph Tyson, Diocese of Yakima, Region XII
- Bishop David Walkowiak, Diocese of Grand Rapids, Region VI
- Bishop Thomas Zinkula, Diocese of Davenport, Region IX



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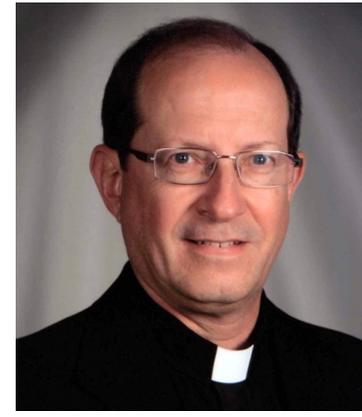
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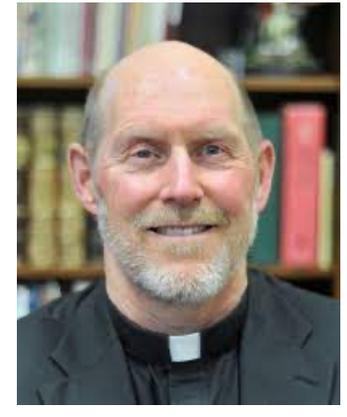
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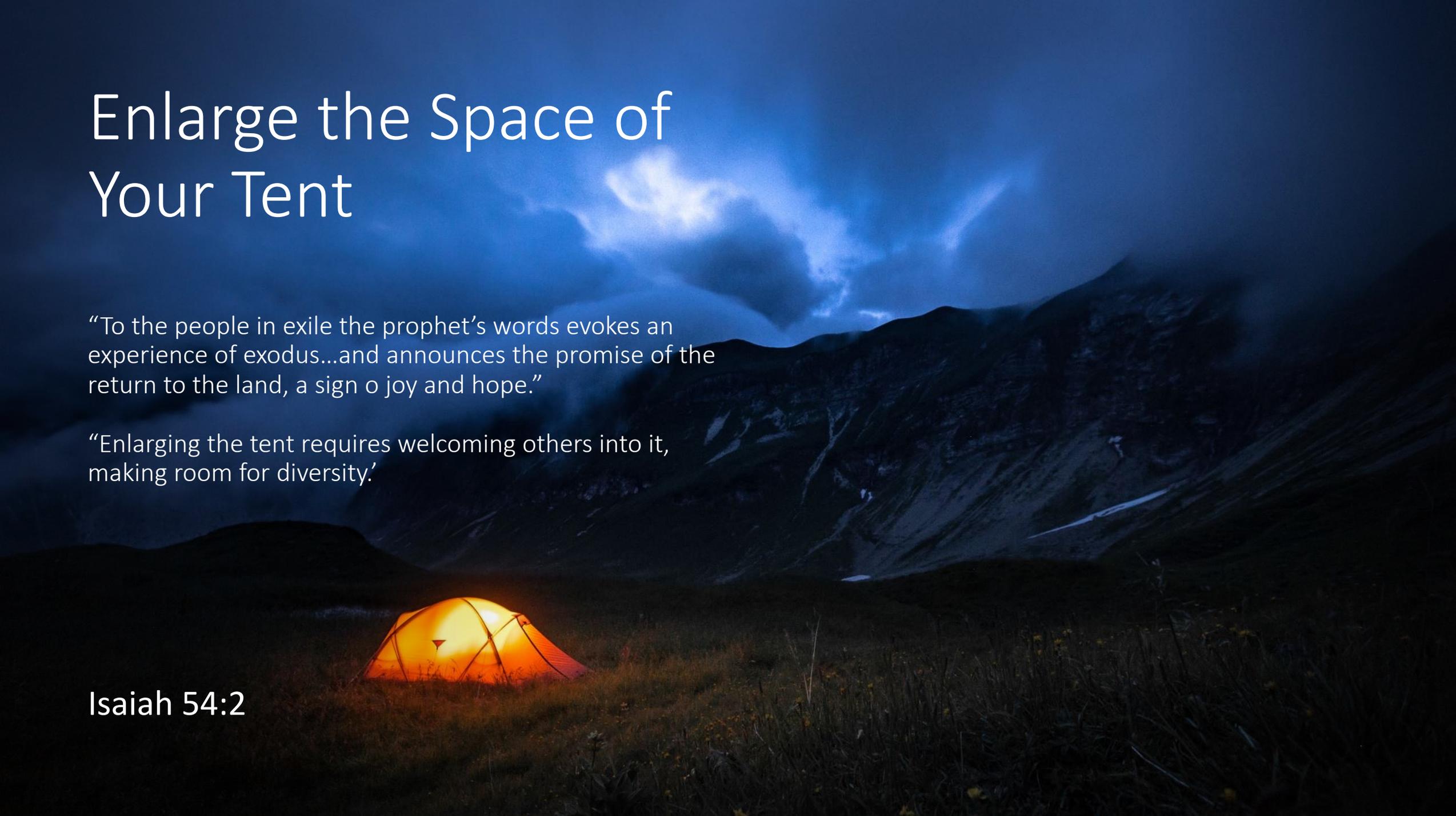
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<https://airtable.com/shrrDy2af7rD1uuml>

Enlarge the Space of Your Tent

A glowing orange tent is pitched in a dark, mountainous landscape under a blue, stormy sky. The tent is the only source of light, casting a warm glow on the surrounding grass. The background features dark, jagged mountains and a sky with dark, swirling clouds.

“To the people in exile the prophet’s words evokes an experience of exodus...and announces the promise of the return to the land, a sign of joy and hope.”

“Enlarging the tent requires welcoming others into it, making room for diversity.”

Isaiah 54:2

Vatican Description

Here within the approximately 45 pages that make up the Document for the Continental Stage (DCS) is the whole of humanity, with its wounds and fears, its imperfections and demands. This is the Document that will serve as the basis of the work for the second stage of the synodal path launched by Pope Francis in October 2021, with the consultation of the People of God.

Who Participated

Globally 112
out of 114
episcopal
conferences

All 15 oriental
catholic
churches

Reflections
from 17 out of
23 dicasteries
(offices) of the
roman curia

Religious
superiors
(USG/UISG)

Institutes of
consecrated
life and
societies of
apostolic life

Associations
and lay
movements of
the faithful

Over a
thousand
contributions
arrived from
individuals
and groups

Who wrote it?

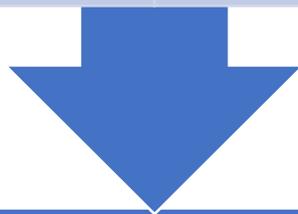
These materials were distributed to a group of

bishops

priests

consecrated
men and
women

lay men and
lay women



from all continents and with very diverse disciplinary expertise.

After reading the reports, they met for almost two weeks together with the writing group—

- the general relator
- the secretary general of the synod
- the undersecretaries & various officials of the synod secretariat
- members of the coordinating committee

This group was finally joined by the members of the general council.

Together they worked in an atmosphere of prayer and discernment to share the fruits of their reading in preparation for the drafting of this document for the continental stage (DCS).

The Writing Group



Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich

General relator



Cardinal Mario Grech

Secretary General



Msgr. Luis Marin De San
Martin, OSA & Sr
Nathalie Becquart, XMCJ

Undersecretaries



Grech, Schonborn, Gracias, Becquart, Kristen Colberg, Birgit Weiler, Rafael Luciaini, Martin





Section I
The
experience
of Synodality



Section I Appreciation

- Widespread appreciation for the method of spiritual conversation which allowed many to look honestly at the reality of Church life and name the lights and shadows.
- This honest appraisal bore immediate missionary fruit.
 - Some who had been hurt and left the church came back for this consultation

Section I Challenges

- Distrust & Rejection of synodality
 - Fear that doctrine will change; fear no real reform
- Clerics who are not interested/cooperating
- Lack of trust in Clergy because of Sex abuse
- Violence, war, Economic & political Divisions

Section I

Hope

“One could say that the synodal journey marked the first steps of the return from an experience of collective exile, the consequences of which affect the entire People of God: if the Church is not synodal, no one can really feel fully at home.”



Section II Listening to Scripture

Section II

Listening to Scripture

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



To the people in exile the prophet's words evokes the experience of the exodus, when they dwelt in tents, and announces the promise of the return to the land, a sign of joy and hope.

Enlarging the tent requires welcoming others into it, making room for their diversity. It thus entails a willingness to die to self out of love, finding oneself again in and through relationship with Christ and one's neighbor.

Comparing what you said to
the Section III of the
Continental Phase
Document

FC Participants

March 2 – April 6, 2022

600 Catholics from 170 dioceses in U.S. and around the world

STRONG AGREEMENT ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES



99% agreed that married men should be ordained priests

99% agreed that women should be ordained

Reverse Ordinatio Sacerdotalis

Place women of color and diverse identities in positions of leadership, ministry, governance & decision making

Open all ministries to women's full and equal participation

Open synods at all levels to women's full participation and voting

Open the development of policies, teachings, canon law, etc. to women's full and co-equal participation

Open preaching to women and laity

Open the diaconate to women

Open the priesthood to women

Section III
Toward a Missionary
Synodal Church

*How to Be
Church*

- radical inclusion
- shared belonging
- deep hospitality
- Deep listening
- New approaches to pastoral accompaniment
- *readiness to recognize that the peripheries can be the place where a call to conversion resounds...*
- *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).*
- All Done in accord with the teachings of Jesus

How to Be Church

- Recognize others as subjects of their own journey
- Make others feel welcomed, not judged, free to share their own spiritual journey
- Recognition for those who do not feel sufficiently recognized in the Church.

This is especially true for those lay men and women, deacons, consecrated men and women who previously had the feeling that the institutional Church was not interested in their faith experience or their opinions.

Obstacles

- The difficulty of listening deeply, being transformed because of the lack of communal processes for listening/discernment
- Lack of training in this area
- Hierarchical structures that foster autocratic tendencies and Clerical & individualistic culture fragments relationships
- Sociocultural/economic disparities that benefit the wealthy and educated
- The absence of “in-between” spaces that foster encounters between members of mutually separated groups

*When priests do not listen
- sadness and
estrangement arises
Without listening,
difficulties are taken out
of context and do not
address the essence of
the problems they are
experiencing, becoming
empty moralism. The
laity feel Priests and
Bishops fear having to
engage pastorally.*

Justice Concerns

Most frequently
mentioned

- Those in poverty
- Lonely elderly
- Indigenous people
- Migrants
- Street children
- Alcoholics/drug addicts
- Those engaged in crime
- Those engaged in prostitution
- Victims of trafficking
- Survivors of abuse
- Prisoners
- People with disabilities
- Those who suffer violence because of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, sexuality, Tribalism, Sectarianism
- Educational divide
- Environmental destruction
- Persecuted Christians

There is a consistent call for solidarity, dialogue, welcome, accompaniment

Young Catholics

The lack of young people
in synod process

*Since our young people
experience a high degree
of alienation, we need to
make a preferential
option for the young*

Family

- Many want to belong to the church but having loving relationships that are not accepted.
 - Divorced & remarried
 - Single parents
 - Polygamous marriage
 - LGBTQ people
- Catholics want more openness to discernment on the part of universal church on issues
- Catholics Want Church to meet people where they are...engage in dialogue

Women in the Church

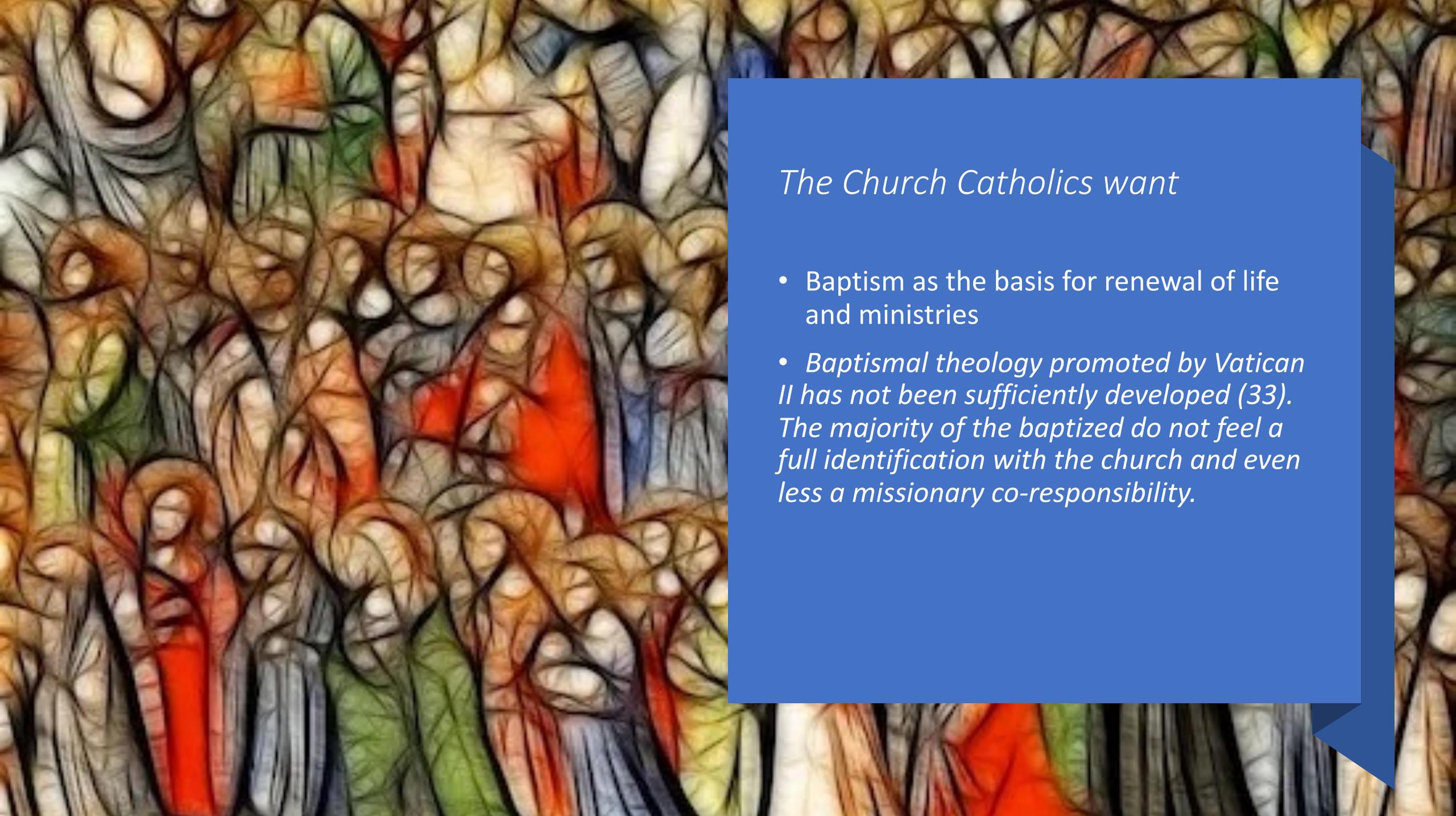
- Almost all reports want to see women's full and equal participation in the Church including
 - Women in decision making and governance
 - Women preaching
 - Female diaconate
 - End sexism in Church language
 - Fair wages for women
- Catholics were more divided on the issue of women's ordination to the priesthood
- Securing racial and ethnic justice for black, brown, Asian & native American women and men
- Security for women in terms of climate change, asylum, homelessness
- There was a recognition that women religious have been at the forefront

Reproductive Justice

Defense of life at all stages

(all reports discuss abortion prevention and post-abortion counseling, but no pro-choice voice reflected)

It gives the example of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, for which “paying special attention to women who decide to have an abortion due to fear of material poverty and rejection by their families in Ukraine; to carry out educational work among women who are called upon to make a responsible choice when going through a difficult time in their lives, with the aim of preserving and protecting the lives of unborn children and preventing abortion; to care for women with post-abortion syndrome,” is a part of synodality.



The Church Catholics want

- Baptism as the basis for renewal of life and ministries
- *Baptismal theology promoted by Vatican II has not been sufficiently developed (33). The majority of the baptized do not feel a full identification with the church and even less a missionary co-responsibility.*

The Church Catholics want

- Peacebuilding in the public square
- Addressing socio-environmental challenges
- Better formed, better accompanied priests & Leadership that is collaborative
- Renewed ecumenism/interfaith engagement & Communion between churches of different rites
- Church that appreciates and fulfills mission within specific cultural contexts
- Deepen local culture and incorporate it into liturgy
- Decentralization within a unified whole
- Learn from indigenous spirituality, wisdom, culture & Asking for forgiveness from Indigenous for our oppression

The Church Catholics want

End to entanglements between
partisan politics and the Church

End to clergy sex abuse

*Issues for
dialogue*

secularization

individualism

relativism

teaching on
abortion

contraception

ordination of
women

married clergy

Celibacy

divorce and
remarriage

Holy
Communion

Homosexuality

LGBTQIA+

Laity & ministry

There is no shortage of questions regarding lay ministry.

What concrete tasks can laity perform?

- Need more recognition and promotion of lay ministries
- Institute Catechists to have special status in community
- Confer mandates for responsibility
- Subsidiarity

Authority

*Shared &
Not shared*

- The charismatic gifts freely bestowed by the Holy Spirit help rejuvenate the Church. But are inseparable from the hierarchical gifts linked to Orders.
- The great challenge of synodality – how to harmonize the two
 - Without pitting them against one another
 - Under the guidance of pastors
 - Without opposing the Church's charismatic and institutional dimensions.

- The Church also needs synodal forms – especially in governance
- Canon law needs to change

We should not be afraid of the tensions but:

What is possible?

What is preferable?

Liturgy

- Prayer & Eucharist: unite, nurture synodality
- Synodal style of liturgical celebration
 - Welcoming differences
 - Valuing all ministries
 - Recognizing all charisms
 - Rethinking the centrality of the priest as celebrant
 - More active participation of the laity
 - Access of women to ministerial roles
 - An opportunity to experience new diverse forms of prayer and celebration
 - Need to link liturgical celebration to synodal – dialogical sharing and friendship
- Challenges
 - Preconciliar rites
 - Division
 - Limited access to 1962 Missal lamented
 - Differences over how to celebrate liturgy
 - Ideology, rift, division and confrontation taint
 - Homilies on politics and not on the Gospel

Synodality

Church lacks synodal practices at Continental stages – how to bring unity in diversity?

- People: Need high quality people to lead
- Curia: needs to be formed
- Bishops: Episcopal conferences – new role (76)
- Priests: need ongoing formation
- Communities: need formation
- All: need formation in listening and dialogue
- Councils: strengthen decision making in councils – pastoral, economic, diocesan, parish , episcopal, presbyteral
 - Not only consultative, but places of communal discernment
 - Need transparency, dialogue, discernment, evaluation, empowerment of all and end authoritarianism

Small group questions

- Having read the document and listened to the summary
- Where do you find hope?
- What concerns do you have?
- Do you feel that the issues you care most about are being addressed adequately?
- If you could name three issues that need to be addressed and reformed, what three would you choose?

Helpful Links

Continental Phase Document:

<https://www.synod.va/en/highlights/working-document-for-the-continental-stage.html>

National synthesis of diocesan and individual responses

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/US%20National%20Synthesis%202021-2023%20Synod.pdf>

Handbook on Synod listening in parishes and dioceses:

<https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/document/common/vademecum/Vademecum-EN-A4.pdf>

In our own words:

<https://futurechurch.org/justice-in-the-church/synod-report/>