

# Synod of Bishops: The Continental Stage

Preparation for the Synod of Bishops began October 2021 with a world wide effort to create local responses and a subsequent Diocesan response. The first (diocesan) phase of the synodal process concluded with the creation of a national response ([available on the web site](#)) and the next stage of the process, known as the Continental Stage, is about to begin. Australia is part of the Oceania Response.



## The Continental Stage

At a meeting towards the end of September the Synod General Secretariat prepared a *Document for the Continental Stage*. This *Document* will be shared with the Bishops' Conferences and dioceses around the world, who will coordinate further reflection on its contents. We are assured this is not a matter of beginning consultation all over again, but of continuing the dialogue that has already begun. National syntheses have been prepared around the world. The Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops used these documents to prepare an *instrumentum laboris*, or working document, for the Synod. Continental gatherings of bishops conferences will also be used to prepare for the Synod of Bishops.

## Australia's contribution to reflection on the *Document*

In Australia, Trudy Dantis from the National Centre for Pastoral Research has been appointed to serve as the ACBC representative on the Synod Oceania Taskforce chaired by Susan Pascoe AM.

The national Synod working group will create processes and resources for the Continental stage to assist groups to reflect on the *Document* and provide feedback. The NCPR will establish an online portal to collect this feedback nationally. It is planned to collect feedback in November and in early December. More information will be sent in the coming weeks, and especially once the *Document* is published.

## Reflection group coordinators

At this stage, the NCPR would like to identify dioceses and/or individuals who would be keen on participating in this phase and would be willing to coordinate one or more small reflection groups (in person or online) for this task. The groups would comprise of people who:

- 1) Are a mix of lay, religious and clergy
- 2) Are aware of Church matters at a national and diocesan level
- 3) Have the ability to read and reflect on the *Document* and provide feedback

**Please let Fr Kevin Maloney ([vicargeneral@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:vicargeneral@ballarat.catholic.org.au)) know if you are interested in being a group coordinator from your parish.** The NCPR plans to host a webinar in **late October** to assist group coordinators in collecting feedback for this process.

## Synod Resource

Attached [here](#) is a document *Towards a Spirituality of Synodality* which has been released by the Synod General Secretariat. This resource offers an overview of the main features of a synodal spirituality that can inform and assist the synodal process. This can also be accessed

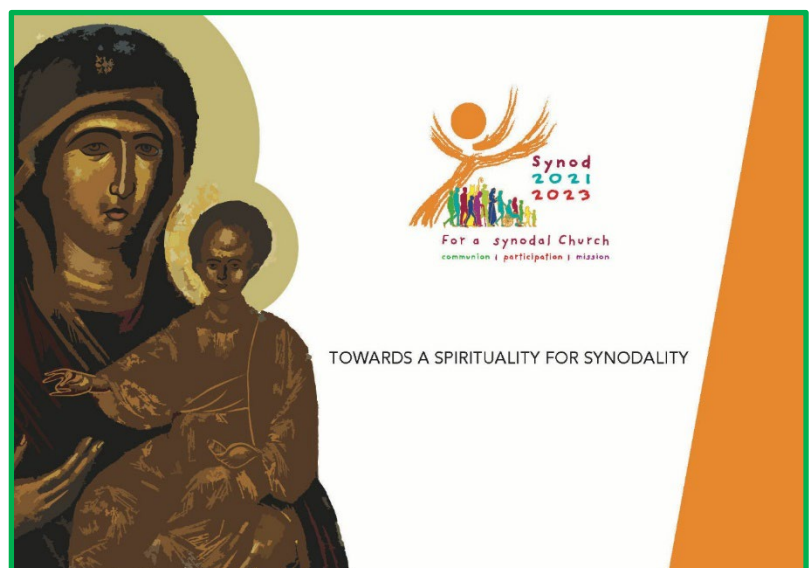
at:

<https://www.synod.va/en/highlights/towards-a-spirituality-for-synodality.html>

## More information on the Continental Stage

As we move into the Continental Stage, several resources have been made available to help further our understanding of this stage:

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



Two other interesting resources include: The Frequently Asked Questions guide in English:

[https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/continental-stage/FAQ\\_Continental-Stage\\_EN.pdf](https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/continental-stage/FAQ_Continental-Stage_EN.pdf)

The second is the address from Susan Pascoe, who is on the Oceania Task Force for the Continental Stage and is a member of the Methodological Commission:

[https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/continental-stage/EN\\_Pascoe.pdf](https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/continental-stage/EN_Pascoe.pdf)

**Synodality workshops:**

The Lumen Christi Institute is hosting an online symposium series on the topic of synodality. To learn more about the series and to register to attending the webinars, please click here:

<https://www.lumenchristi.org/news/2022/08/synodality-in-perspective-traditions-past-present>