

Break Open the Synod Prayer



Pope Francis invites you and all the faithful to “journey together” by participating in listening sessions as part of the preparation for the 2023 Synod of Bishops: "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission. Learn more about the Synod and how you can participate at www.saginaw.org/synod2023. Listening sessions at our parish will be held on (insert date). You can also contact (insert parish contact person and contact info) for more information.

During the Second Vatican Council, participants would pray the *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus* (We stand before You, Holy Spirit) before every session. The prayer has been used at councils, synods, and other Church gatherings for hundreds of years. It is attributed to Saint Isidore of Seville (c. 560 - 636).

The prayer has been adapted for this specific Synodal Process. We will unpack the prayer below to help you know and understand what we’re praying for. We’re asking the Holy Spirit to do big things in our lives and in the life of the Church.

*We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;*

The first stanza of this prayer is straightforward: we are acknowledging that we stand before the Holy Spirit both as individuals and as a community. However, we are not standing here passively waiting for the Holy Spirit to do something. No, we stand here opening our hearts and minds to the action of the Holy Spirit, ready to play a role in dynamic cooperation with one another, the universal Church, and the Holy Spirit. We stand with our walking shoes on, ready to journey together. We may not know where the Synodal Process will lead us, but we have prepared a place for God to guide us as we move forward.

*Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path*

nor partiality influence our actions.

This stanza might be the hardest one to digest. We don't typically like to call attention to our deficits and sin. But it's true that we are weak and we are sinful. We're acknowledging that we have biases and agendas. We're asking the Holy Spirit to help form our hearts, our minds, and our actions. We're asking the Spirit to help us recognize our biases and agendas and, as we participate in the Synodal Process, to be able to discern between what we want and what the Spirit wants. The original Latin says, "do not let us disturb the order of justice." We must remain focused on what is right and just, and not stand in the way of the Holy Spirit.

Let us find in You our unity

so that we may journey together to eternal life

and not stray from the way of truth

and what is right.

Many of our saints have prayed that their wills be united to the will of God, and that is our prayer here: that together we are joined together with the Spirit as we journey toward eternal life. Our destination is heaven, where we will be in perfect communion with God and with each other. Our communion this side of heaven may not be perfect, but we can work on it. The Synodal Process may be challenging because it demands that we listen to one another. We must hear the stories of our brothers and sisters who are different from us. We are moving forward together in communion, and as long as we let the Spirit who is Wisdom and Love lead us, we will remain on the right and true path.

All this we ask of You,

who are at work in every place and time,

in the communion of the Father and the Son,

forever and ever.

Amen.

Whether we pray together or individually, we're asking for something amazing! We're asking the Holy Spirit to move in and move among us. This is the same Spirit who was there at the beginning of time; the same Spirit who descended at Pentecost; the same Spirit who has touched the hearts of sinners and unbelievers with the grace of conversion, and who has inspired saints, believers, movements, councils and synods and in ways we cannot comprehend. The same Spirit who is eternally in communion with the Father and Son in the Holy Trinity. The Spirit is always on the move and is moving with us during this Synod.

Learn more about the Synod, the Synod Prayer, and how you can participate at www.saginaw.org/synod2023.