



“Enlarge the space of your tent”

(Is 54:2)

**WORKING DOCUMENT
FOR THE CONTINENTAL STAGE**



Prayer


Lord, you have gathered all your People in Synod. We give you thanks for the joy experienced by those who decided to set out to listen to God and to their brothers and sisters during this year, with an attitude of welcome, humility, hospitality and siblinghood. Help us to enter these pages as on “holy ground.” Come Holy Spirit: may you be the guide of our journey together....



Chapter 4 : A Glimpse Towards the Future (The Next Steps)



“Looking to the future of the synodal process requires considering two very different time horizons. The first is the long-term horizon, in which synodality takes the form of a perennial call to personal conversion and reform of the Church. The second, clearly at the service of the first, is the one that focuses our attention on the events of the Continental Stage that we experiencing” (#98).

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of numerous colorful footprints in shades of grey, blue, orange, yellow, green, and red, arranged in a trail that curves upwards and to the right.

Chapter 4 : A Glimpse Towards the Future (The Next Steps)

- Expressed desire to be less a Church of maintenance and conservation and more a Church on mission:
 - Expression of joy and desire to continue the journey
 - Need for continuous discernment to help read the Word of God and signs of the times together
 - Need for ongoing personal and communal conversion
 - Need for ongoing reform of the Church
 - Listening and dialogue is the way to access the gifts of the Spirit
 - Need to learn to grow in harmony, not uniformity



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Methodology for the Continental Stage:
The DCS is meant to guide us and enable us to deepen our discernment, keeping in mind the question that animates the entire process: “How does this ‘journeying together,’ which takes place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to Her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?” (PD, no. 2).

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- To pursue this process of listening, dialogue and discernment, the reflection will focus on three questions:



“After having read and prayed with the DCS, which intuitions resonate most strongly with the lived experiences and realities of the Church in your continent? Which experiences are new, or illuminating to you?”



“After having read and prayed with the DCS, what substantial tensions or divergences emerge as particularly important in your continent’s perspective? Consequently, what are the questions or issues that should be addressed and considered in the next steps of the process?” –



“Looking at what emerges from the previous two questions, what are the priorities, recurring themes and calls to action that can be shared with other local Churches around the world and discussed during the First Session of the Synodal Assembly in October 2023?”

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• Key Stages in the Process

DCS sent to diocesan bishops; bishops and diocesan team arrange an ecclesial process of discernment on the DCS with the three questions

Episcopal Conference collects and synthesize the responses to the three questions from the dioceses

The reflections and discernment of the Episcopal Conference shared within the Continental Assembly

Continental Assembly for further discernment

Continental Assembly draft a Final Document and submit by March 31, 2023.

Instrumentum Laboris drafted by June 2023.