

No. 4	Transparency, accountability and evaluation
FD reference	95–102
Explanation Restate the point in plain language a parishioner will understand on first reading. Avoid the words used in the original heading where a simpler word will do.	Transparency in the Church should be based on Scripture and evangelical principles of truth, loyalty, and integrity. Accountability is to foster trust, particularly for vulnerable groups to prevent abuse (power, physical, verbal, etc) or clericalism. Leadership accountability must respect privacy and actively reject practices that obscure wrongdoing. The synodal Church is urged to develop a culture of accountability and implement regular evaluations, which can enhance mission responsiveness to the Holy Spirit. Moreover, adopting best practices from civil society can promote significant change and visibility for the Church's initiatives.
What the Final Document says Three to five sentences drawn from the cited FD paragraphs. Explain the idea; do not reproduce long extracts.	<i>Transparency is rooted in Sacred Scriptures rather than mere administrative requirements. It honors privacy and dignity, even against unreasonable civil demands. This evangelical transparency fosters trusting relationships within a synodal Church, crucial for protecting the vulnerable. Maintaining trust through accountability and transparency practices enhances the Church's credibility. (FD 96-97)</i> <i>Evaluation - "It is rather a communication effort that proves to be a powerful educational tool for bringing about a change in culture. It also enables us to give greater visibility to many valuable initiatives of the Church and its institutions, which too often remain hidden." (FD 102)</i>
Terms to explain Explain any terms a parishioner may not know with a one-liner	Transparency is about being clear about our intentions as leaders and the overall workings of the local church. This building of trust and open communication in relationships is needed
Sample answers Provide sample answers as prompts in case (but let the discussion flow first)	Steps Taken • "Our parish have ministries and a finance council to help in decision-making and accountability" • "We are constantly evaluating ourselves to find ways to improve, if any" Steps Underway • "We need to find a way to make the annual reports more transparent" • "We are learning to listen more to the Holy Spirit in our decision-making." Difficulties • "Some members of ministries do not feel accountable for their duties." • "Transparency is only for the selected few." Perspective Coming to View • "I understand that we need to build trust in our relationships with one another to continue our mission in a synodal church."

Item		Description
No. 5	Missionary renewal of parishes and local communities	
FD reference	117-119	
Explanation <i>Restate the point in plain language a parishioner will understand on first reading. Avoid the words used in the original heading where a simpler word will do.</i>	The parish is more than just a place where we attend Mass. It is a family of people who come together to pray, learn, support one another and serve others. People in our parish may be different in age, culture, background and way of life, but we are all part of the same Church family. Our parish should welcome everyone, including people who are new, lonely, struggling or often forgotten. We should find ways to reach people not only inside the church but also in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities.	
What the Final Document says <i>Three to five sentences drawn from the cited FD paragraphs. Explain the idea; do not reproduce long extracts.</i>	As a historically vital and diverse community, the parish serves as a welcoming home where people of all generations and backgrounds gather to grow in faith. To respond to modern mobility, parishes must look outward and adapt their structures to support people in witnessing to their faith in daily life. This local mission is greatly enriched by religious orders, movements, and smaller faith groups that bring the Gospel directly into schools, hospitals, and marginalized communities. Finally, by strengthening collaboration across broader regional and national networks, the Church can better serve a rapidly changing world while honoring unique local cultures.	
Terms to explain <i>Explain any terms a parishioner may not know with a one-liner</i>	1. Eucharist : The celebration of the Mass, especially receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. 2. Discernment : Prayerfully seeking to understand what God is calling us to do. 3. Pastoral action : Practical ways the Church cares for, guides and serves people in their faith and daily lives. 4. Bishop / Eparch : A Bishop leads a Catholic diocese; an Eparch is the equivalent leader in certain Eastern Catholic Churches. 5. Christian initiation : The process of becoming fully part of the Christian community through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. 6. Basic ecclesial communities : Small faith communities that live out Church life closely within their neighbourhoods or local areas. 7. Synodality : Walking together as a Church by listening, sharing, discerning and working together. 8. Terrain : A place or environment where something can grow or develop; here, small Christian communities are places where close relationships and faith can grow. 9. Marginalised : People who are often left out, ignored or treated as less important by society. 10. Milieus : Different social environments or groups where people live, work, study or interact. 11. Monastery : A place where monks or nuns live a dedicated life of prayer and service to God. 12. Synergy : Different people or groups working together so that their combined efforts are stronger. 13. Ecclesiastical province : A group of neighbouring dioceses usually organised under a metropolitan archbishop. 14. Interconnectedness : The way people and communities are increasingly connected and able to influence one another. 15. False particularism : Focusing so much on one's own local culture or group that it weakens our unity with the wider Church. 16. Dynamism of synodality : The active way of walking together, listening, sharing, working and making decisions as a Church community. 17. Integral human development : Helping people grow and live well in every part of life—physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and spiritually. 18. AG 22 : A reference to <i>Ad Gentes</i> paragraph 22, a Vatican II teaching about presenting the Christian faith appropriately within different cultures	



Item	Description
Sample answers <i>Provide sample answers as prompts in case (but let the discussion flow first)</i>	1. <u>Steps taken:</u> Our parish welcomes people of different ages and backgrounds and gives them opportunities to pray, learn and serve together. 2. <u>Steps underway:</u> We can create more activities where children, young people, families and older parishioners can meet, share and work together 3. <u>Difficulties :</u> Sometimes we only spend time with our own friends or groups, so we may not notice people who are new, lonely or different from us 4. <u>Perspective coming to view:</u> A parish is not only a place where we attend Mass. It is a community where we walk together, help one another and bring Jesus’ love to others.

95. Decision-making does not conclude the discernment process. It must be accompanied and followed by practices of accountability and evaluation undertaken in a spirit of transparency inspired by evangelical criteria. Accountability to the community for one's ministry belongs to our oldest tradition: to the Apostolic Church itself. Chapter Eleven of the Acts of the Apostles offers us the example of Peter's being held to account upon his return to Jerusalem for baptising Cornelius, a Gentile, when "the circumcised believers criticised him, saying, 'Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?'" (Acts 11:2-3). Peter responded by setting out the reasons for his decision.

96. In particular, it has been requested that greater light be shed on the meaning of transparency. The synodal process has connected it to words such as truth, loyalty, clarity, honesty, integrity, consistency, rejection of obscurity, hypocrisy and ambiguity, and absence of ulterior motives. The Gospel blessing of those who are "pure in heart" (Mt 5:8) and the command to be "innocent as doves" (Mt 10:16) resonated in this regard as well the words of the Apostle Paul: "We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God" (2 Cor 4:2). Thus, when we speak of transparency we are referring to a fundamental attitude grounded in the Sacred Scriptures and not to a series of administrative or procedural requirements. Transparency, in its correct evangelical sense, does not compromise respect for privacy and confidentiality, the protection of persons, their dignity and rights, even in the face of unreasonable demands of civil authorities. However, this privacy can never legitimate practices contrary to the Gospel or become a pretext for a cover-up or to circumvent actions to combat evil. With regard to the seal of the confessional, "The sacramental seal is indispensable and no human power has jurisdiction over it, nor can lay any claim to it." (Francis, Address to Participants at the course organised by the Apostolic Penitentiary, 29 March 2019)

97. The attitude to transparency we have just outlined safeguards the trust and credibility needed by a synodal Church that is attentive to relationships. When this trust is violated, the weakest and the most vulnerable suffer the most. Wherever the Church enjoys trust, the practice of transparency, accountability, and evaluation helps to strengthen its credibility. These practices are even more critical where the Church's credibility needs rebuilding. They are particularly important in regard to the safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults.

98. These practices contribute to keeping the Church faithful to its mission. The absence of these practices is one of the consequences of clericalism, which is thus fuelled. Clericalism is based on the implicit assumption that those who have authority in the Church are not to be held to account for their actions and decisions as if they were isolated from or above the rest of the People of God. Transparency and accountability should not only be invoked when it comes to sexual, financial and other forms of abuse. These practices also concern the lifestyle of pastors, pastoral planning, methods of evangelisation, and the way in which the Church respects human dignity, for example, in regard to the working conditions within its institutions.

99. If the synodal Church wants to be welcoming, then the culture and praxis of accountability must shape its actions at all levels. However, those in positions of authority have greater responsibility in this regard and are called to account for it to God and to His People. While accountability to one's superiors has been practised over the centuries, the dimension of authority's being accountable to the community is in need of restoration. The

structures and procedures established through the experience of consecrated life (such as chapters, canonical visitations, etc.) can serve as an inspiration in this regard.

100. Similarly, it is necessary to have structures and methods for regularly evaluating the exercise of ministry. Such evaluation is not a judgement upon an individual. Rather, it allows a way of assisting the minister by highlighting positive aspects of their ministry and bringing to light areas for improvement. The evaluation also assists the local Church in learning from experience, adjusting plans of action, determining the outcomes of its decisions in relation to its mission, and remaining attentive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

101. Local Churches and their groupings are responsible for developing effective forms and processes of accountability and evaluation in a synodal way in addition to adhering to the criteria and oversight of structures already established by canonical norms. These should be appropriate to the context, including the requirements of civil law, the legitimate expectations of society and the availability of experts in the field. It is also necessary to draw on the skills of those, especially laypeople, who have greater expertise regarding accountability and evaluation. Best practices within civil society should be discerned and adapted for use within Church contexts. The way in which accountability and evaluation processes are implemented at the local level should be included in the report presented during the visits ad limina.

102. It seems necessary to ensure, at the very least, the establishment everywhere of the following in forms appropriate to different contexts:

- a) effective functioning of finance councils;
- b) effective involvement of the People of God, in particular of the more competent members, in pastoral and financial planning;
- c) preparation and publication (appropriate to the local context and in an accessible form) of an annual financial report, insofar as possible externally audited, demonstrating the transparency of how the temporal goods and financial resources of the Church and its institutions are being managed;
- d) the preparation and publication of an annual report on the carrying out of the local Church's mission, including also safeguarding initiatives (the protection of minors and vulnerable adults), and progress made in promoting the laity's access to positions of authority and to decision-making processes, specifying the proportion of men and women;
- e) periodic evaluations of all the ministries and roles within the Church.

We need to realise that this is not a bureaucratic task for its own sake. It is rather a communication effort that proves to be a powerful educational tool for bringing about a change in culture. It also enables us to give greater visibility to many valuable initiatives of the Church and its institutions, which too often remain hidden.

117. The parish is one of the main organising units in the local Church present throughout our history. The parish community that gathers in the celebration of the Eucharist is a privileged place of relationships, welcome, discernment and mission. Changes in how we experience and live our relationship with locality require us to reconsider how parishes are configured. What characterises the parish is that it is a community that is not self-selecting. People gather there from different generations, professions, geographical origins and social classes and status. Responding to the new needs of mission requires opening up to new forms of pastoral action that take into account the mobility of people and the space in which their life unfolds. By placing a special emphasis on Christian initiation and offering accompaniment and formation, the parish community will be able to support people in the different stages of life in fulfilling their mission in the world. In this way, it will become more evident that the parish is not centred on itself but oriented towards mission. The parish is then called to sustain the commitment of so many people who in so many ways live and bear witness to their faith in through their profession, in social, cultural and political activities. In many regions of the world, small Christian communities or basic ecclesial communities are the terrain where meaningful relationships of closeness and reciprocity can flourish, offering the opportunity to experience synodality concretely.

118. We recognise that institutes of consecrated life, societies of apostolic life, as well as associations, movements and new communities, have the ability to take root locally and, at the same time, connect different places and milieus, often at a national or international level. Their action, together with that of many individuals and informal groups, often brings the Gospel to highly diverse contexts: to hospitals, prisons, homes for the elderly, reception centres for migrants, minors, those marginalised and victims of violence; to centres of education and training, schools and universities where young people and families meet; to the arenas of culture and politics and of integral human development, where new forms of living together are imagined and constructed. We look with gratitude also to monasteries, which are places of gathering and discernment and speak of a “beyond” that concerns the whole Church and directs its path. It is the particular responsibility of the Bishop or Eparch to animate these diverse bodies and to nurture the bonds of unity. Institutes and associations are called to act in synergy with the local Church, participating in the dynamism of synodality.

119. Placing greater value on the ‘intermediate’ spaces between the local Church and the universal Church – such as ecclesiastical provinces and national and continental groupings of Churches – can foster a more meaningful presence of the Church in the world of today. Increased mobility and interconnectedness make the boundaries between Churches fluid, requiring ministry across a “great socio-cultural region”. Such ministry needs to ensure that the Christian life “be adapted to the character and disposition of each culture” while avoiding all “false particularism” (AG 22).