

Item	Description
No. 10	Formation activities in synodality and the synodal character of Christian Initiation
FD reference	142-151
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 formation of missionary disciples begins with and is rooted in Christian Initiation. Becoming missionary disciples of the Lord is not something achieved once and for all. It demands continuous conversion, growing in love, it is about joyful witness of faith. It is about openness and encounter, sharing and collaboration, reflection and discernment in common.
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>	The formation of missionary disciples is an ongoing process that is rooted in Christian initiation and continuously renewed through active participation in the Sunday Eucharist. During the synodal process, communities requested an integral, shared, and ongoing formation that engages all dimensions of the human person while promoting collaboration among the laity, consecrated persons, and ordained ministers. This shared synodal training serves as the foundation for specific vocations, including candidates for ordained ministry and Bishops, who must be prepared to exercise authority and discernment in a synodal manner. Catholic-inspired formation centers, such as schools and universities, play a prophetic role by offering an alternative to individualism and promoting intercultural dialogue. Additionally, the Church must prioritize critical formation in navigating the digital environment safely, promoting a culture of safeguarding for minors and vulnerable individuals, and advancing social doctrine regarding peace, justice, and care for our common home.
Terms to explain <i>Explain any terms a parishioner may not know with a one-liner</i>	Synodal Character – involving everyone, parish groups and communities building relationship with one another and with the church Synodal way – immersion in daily life and collaboration with everyone Safeguarding culture - making communities ever safer places for minors and vulnerable persons; Church structures, regulations and legal procedures, prevention of abuse and timely responses.
Sample answers <i>Provide sample answers as prompts in case (but let the discussion flow first)</i>	What has been lived: Too focused on intellectual formation. Not enough accompaniment and living and bold witnesses. Surprises, gratitude and Scripture that illuminated the journey: Not enough collaboration and discernment in the Spirit. 1 Cor 12:12-31 One Body with many parts Difficulties, obstacles and questions that remain open: Very self-centered, not going out to evangelize, not opened to continue formation. Voices from the margins or things only just beginning to emerge: That we do not have a missionary spirit and are not missionary enough.

142. The formation of missionary disciples begins with and is rooted in Christian Initiation. In each person's journey of faith, there is an encounter with many people, groups and small communities that have helped foster their relationship with the Lord and introduce them in the communion of the Church: parents and family members, godparents, catechists and educators, liturgical leaders and those providing charitable services, Deacons, Priests and the Bishop himself. Sometimes, once the journey of Initiation is over, the bond with the community weakens, and formation becomes neglected. However, becoming missionary disciples of the Lord is not something achieved once and for all. It demands continuous conversion, growing in love "to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph 4:13) and being open to the gifts of the Spirit for a living and joyful witness of faith. This is why it is important to rediscover how the Sunday Eucharist is formative for Christians: "The full extent of our formation is our conformation to Christ [...]: it does not have to do with an abstract mental process, but with becoming Him" (DD 41). For many of the faithful, the Sunday Eucharist is their only contact with the Church: ensuring it is celebrated in the best possible manner, with particular regard to the homily and to the "active participation" (SC 14) of everyone, is decisive for synodality. In the Mass, we experience synodality coming to life in the Church as a grace received from above. This precedes the synodality that comes about as the result of our own efforts. Under the presidency of one and thanks to the ministry of a few, all can participate at the twofold table of the Word and the Bread. The gift of communion, mission and participation - the three cornerstones of synodality - is realised and renewed in every Eucharist.

143. One of the requests that emerged most strongly and from all contexts during the synodal process is that the formation provided by the Christian community be integral, ongoing and shared. Such formation must aim not only at acquiring theoretical knowledge but also at promoting the capacity for openness and encounter, sharing and collaboration, reflection and discernment in common. Formation must consequently engage all the dimensions of the human person (intellectual, affective, relational and spiritual) and include concrete experiences that are appropriately accompanied. There was also a marked insistence throughout the synodal process upon the need for a common and shared formation, in which men and women, laity, consecrated persons, ordained ministers and candidates for ordained ministry participate together, thus enabling them to grow together in knowledge and mutual esteem and in the ability to collaborate. This requires the presence of suitable and competent formators, capable of demonstrating with their lives what they transmit with their words. Only in this way will formation be truly generative and transformative. Nor should we overlook the contribution that the pedagogical disciplines can make to providing well-focused formation, adult learning and teaching methods and the accompaniment of individuals and communities. We, therefore, need to invest in the formation of formators.

144. The Church already has many places and resources for the formation of missionary disciples: families, small communities, parishes, ecclesial associations, seminaries and religious communities, academic institutions, and also places for serving and working with the marginalised, as well as missionary and volunteer initiatives. In each of these areas, the community expresses its capacity to educate in discipleship and to accompany through witness. This encounter often brings together people of different generations, from the youngest to the oldest. In the Church, no one simply receives formation: everyone is an active subject and has something to give to others. Popular piety, too, is a precious treasure of the Church, which teaches the whole People of God on the journey.

145. Among the formative practices that can benefit from the new impetus of synodality, special attention should be given to catechesis so that, in addition to being part of the journey of initiation, catechesis is continuously drawing people outwards in mission. Communities of missionary disciples will know how to implement catechesis under the sign of mercy and

bring it closer to each person's lived experience, taking it to the existential peripheries without losing the Catechism of the Catholic Church as a reference point. It can thus become a 'laboratory of dialogue' with the men and women of our time (cf. Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation, Directory for Catechesis, 54) and illuminate their search for meaning. In many Churches, catechists are the fundamental resource for accompaniment and formation; in others, their service must be better appreciated and supported by the community, breaking away from a logic of delegation, which contradicts synodality. Taking into account the scale of the phenomena of human migration, it is important that catechesis promotes deeper relationships of mutual acquaintance amongst Churches of origin and destination.

146. In addition to specifically pastoral settings and resources, the Christian community is present in many other places of formation, such as in schools, vocational training colleges, and universities, as well as where people are formed for social and political commitment in the worlds of sport, music and art. Despite the diversity of cultural contexts, which determine very different practices and traditions, Catholic-inspired formation centres are increasingly finding themselves on the frontline of a Church that is always moving outwards in mission. Inspired by the practices of synodality, they can become fertile contexts for friendly and participative relationships. They become contexts that give witness to life; in them, the skills and organisation are, above all, lay-led, and the contribution of families is prioritised. In particular, Catholic schools and universities play an important role in the dialogue between faith and culture and in providing moral education on values, offering a formation oriented towards Christ, the icon of life in its fullness. Thus, they become capable of promoting an alternative to the dominant models that are often driven by individualism and competition, thereby also playing a prophetic role. In some contexts, they are the only settings where children and young people come into contact with the Church. When inspired by intercultural and interreligious dialogue, their educational engagement is also valued by those of other religious traditions as a form of human development.

147. Shared synodal formation for all the Baptised constitutes the horizon within which to understand and practise the specific formation required for individual ministries and vocations. For this to happen, it must be implemented as an exchange of gifts between different vocations (communion), in the perspective of a service to be performed (mission) and in a style of involvement and education in differentiated co-responsibility (participation). This request, which emerged strongly from the synodal process, often requires a demanding change of mentality and a renewed approach to both formation contexts and processes. Above all, it implies an inner readiness to be enriched by the encounter with brothers and sisters in the faith, overcoming prejudices and partisan views. The ecumenical dimension of formation cannot but facilitate this change in mentality.

148. Throughout the synodal process, a widely expressed request was that the discernment and formation of candidates for ordained ministry be undertaken in a synodal way. There should be a significant presence of women, an immersion in the daily life of communities, and formation to enable collaboration with everyone in the Church and in how to practise ecclesial discernment. This implies a courageous investment of energy in the preparation of formators. The Assembly calls for a revision of the Ratio Fundamental Institutionis Sacerdotalis in order to incorporate the requests made by the Synod. They should be translated into precise guidelines for a formation to synodality. Formation pathways should awaken in candidates their passion for the mission to all peoples (ad gentes). Formation of Bishops is just as necessary so that they may better assume their mission of bringing together in unity the gifts of the Spirit and exercise in a synodal manner the authority conferred on them. The synodal way of formation implies that the ecumenical dimension is present in all aspects of the paths towards ordained ministries.

149. The synodal process has insistently drawn attention to some specific areas of formation of the People of God for synodality. The first of these concerns the impact of the digital environment on learning processes, concentration, the perception of self and the world, and the building of interpersonal relationships. Digital culture constitutes a crucial dimension of the Church's witness in contemporary culture and an emerging missionary field. This requires ensuring that the Christian message is present online in reliable ways that do not ideologically distort its content. Although digital media has great potential to improve our lives, it can also cause harm and injury through bullying, misinformation, sexual exploitation and addiction. Church educational institutions must help children and adults develop critical skills to safely navigate the web.

150. Another area of great importance is the promotion in all ecclesial contexts of a culture of safeguarding, making communities ever safer places for minors and vulnerable persons. The work to equip Church structures with regulations and legal procedures that enable the prevention of abuse and timely responses to inappropriate behaviour has already begun. It is necessary to continue this commitment, offering ongoing specific and adequate formation to those who work in contact with minors and vulnerable adults so that they can act competently and recognise the signals, often silent, of those experiencing difficulties and needing help. It is essential that victims are welcomed and supported, and this needs to be done sensitively. This requires great humanity and must be carried out with the help of qualified people. We must all allow ourselves to be moved by their suffering and practise that proximity, which, through concrete choices, will uplift them, help them and prepare a different future for all. Safeguarding processes must be constantly monitored and evaluated. Victims and survivors must be welcomed and supported with great sensitivity.

151. The concerns of the Church's social doctrine, commitment to peace and justice, care for our common home and intercultural and interreligious dialogue, must also be more widely shared among the People of God so that the action of missionary disciples can influence the construction of a more just and compassionate world. The commitment to defending life and human rights, for the proper ordering of society, for the dignity of work, for a fair and supportive economy, and an integral ecology is part of the evangelising mission that the Church is called to live and incarnate in history.