
Netherlands: “guidelines” for the diocesan stage of the Synod. Three themes, “celebrating, co-responsible for the mission, and dialogue in Church and society”

The Bishops' Conference of the Netherlands sent to the dioceses the guidelines to help them with the local stages of the Synod. “Such guidelines mean to be a starting point for the discussions that every diocese will organise about the themes of the Synod”, the Bishops' website says. In all seven Dutch dioceses, the runup to the Synod will begin with a Eucharistic celebration on Sunday 17th October. Then, the stage of reflections and discussions will begin. Of the ten themes listed by the Secretariat of the Synod for the preliminary stage, the Bishops' Conference of the Netherlands have selected three: “Celebrating”, “Co-responsible for the mission”, and “Dialoguing in the Church and in society”. “The choice was partly inspired by the Dutch Bishops' concern for the vulnerability of the Church and of Christianity in our country and in Western society”, the Bishops' notice explains, “and by the hope that Christianity and Church may have a future in our regions”. The three selected words also encapsulate the general themes – *communio*, *participatio* and *missio* – mentioned in the title of the Synod. Every diocese will discuss these themes on the basis of the questions worked out by the Secretariat of the Synod, with the involvement of movements, associations, committees, groups, individuals, at its choice; however, one or more of the other key themes can also be discussed if they wish. Every diocese shall produce a document that the Bishops' Conference of the Netherlands will gather into a national document, sent to the Secretariat of the Synod in Rome.

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