

ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER DISCERNMENT PROCESS

SYNOD 2021-2023



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Apostolate: The activity of the Christian which fulfills the apostolic nature of the whole Church by working to extend the reign of Christ to the entire world. In a specific sense, a Christian association of persons who are dedicated to the propagation of the faith.

Apostolic Mindset: A supernatural mode of thinking, feeling, and acting that resembles that of the apostles. It is uniquely characterized by 1) a sense of unique calling from the Father, 2) a costly imitation of Christ, 3) an utter reliance on the Holy Spirit, 4) a conviction of the primacy of the Gospel and 5) a joyfully countercultural witness.

Archbishop: The bishop of an archdiocese, appointed for the pastoral care of the people in that territory.

Archdiocese: The diocese that is the head of an Ecclesiastical Province. The province of the Archdiocese of Denver also includes the dioceses of Cheyenne, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo. A diocese is a portion of the People of God entrusted to a bishop. Three things comprise a diocese: the bishop, the presbyterate, and the people of God. The shepherding of the people of God is entrusted to the bishop. The presbyterate (priests) cooperate with the bishop in this mission to ensure that, gathered in the Holy Spirit, through the Gospel and the Eucharist, the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church is present.

Auxiliary Bishop: A bishop appointed at the request of the diocesan bishop to assist him in the pastoral care of the diocese. In Denver, our auxiliary bishop is Bishop Jorge Rodriguez.

Baptismal Grace: In Baptism, God gives us grace. It is in baptism that we are saved, buried with Christ, incorporated into his Body, washed of our sins, regenerated, cleansed, and become dwelling places for the Holy Spirit (See *Acts 2:38, 22:16; Rom. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:11, 12:13; Gal. 3:26-27; Eph. 5:25-27; Col. 2:11-12; Titus 3:5; 1 Pt. 3:18-22*).

Biblical Worldview: What we believe and the values we have compose our worldview, which is a way to understand and act in society. A worldview shapes the choices we make and how we act. Many factors can influence our worldview;



as Christians, the most decisive factor in forming our worldview should be the revelation of God in Sacred Scripture so that we “have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16): “Through what lens do I see the world? Is it a political or social ideology? Or is it through the lens of the Gospel of Christ?”

Bishop: A successor of the Apostles; one who has received the fullness of ordination and upon whom the offices of sanctifying, teaching, and governing have been conferred. (*Canon 375*)

Catechesis: An education of children, young people, and adults in the faith of the Church through the teaching of Christian doctrine in an organic and systematic way to make them disciples of Jesus Christ.

Catechumenate: The period of RCIA (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*) in which the catechumens (*unbaptized persons preparing for full initiation into the Church at the Easter Vigil*) are formed in the faith and aims at bringing their conversion and their faith to maturity within the ecclesial community. May also be used as a synonym for the entire RCIA process.

CCC: The Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Chancery: The building that houses the departments, central services, and Office of the Archbishop, for the archdiocese. Also known as the curia, or in Denver, the Pastoral Center. The Chancery is also a general term referring to the departments and central services themselves which assist the archbishop in his ministry to the people of God.

Charism: A Greek word (*charismata*) used in the New Testament for “favor” or “gratuitous gift.” Literally, “gifts of grace,” described by St. Paul as gratuitous blessings of an extraordinary and transitory nature conferred directly for the good of others. Indirectly, they may also benefit the one who possesses the charisms, but their immediate purpose is for the spiritual welfare of the Christian community. Charisms, or spiritual gifts, are special abilities given to all Christians by the Holy Spirit to give them the power both to represent Christ and to be a channel of God’s goodness for people. Whether extraordinary or ordinary, all charisms ought to be exercised in the service of God.

Christendom: When the institutions of a society (legal, economic, educational, cultural, etc.) are animated by Christian beliefs, principles, and morals.

Christian Witness: A joyful proclamation of “what we have heard, seen, and touched” in our life-changing encounters with Jesus Christ manifested through his Church (1 Jn 1:1). In response to and by the grace of one’s election in Christ, the Christian witness decides to make Jesus the Lord of one’s life and bear witness to



him by word and deed.

Communion: Literally, “to be one with.” “By his gracious will, God gathers us together as diverse peoples of one faith, through the covenant that he offers to his people. The communion we share finds its deepest roots in the love and unity of the Trinity. It is Christ who reconciles us to the Father and unites us with each other in the Holy Spirit” (*from the Vatican’s instruction document on the diocesan phase of the Synod*). Our unity as Catholics is manifested by sharing the same creed or profession of faith, the same sacraments, and the same common discipleship.

Conversion: A radical reorientation of the whole life away from sin and evil and toward God. This change of heart or conversion is a central element of Christ’s preaching, of the Church’s ministry of evangelization and of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Cultural Competency: The purpose/adoption of cultural competency is (1) to understand our own culture/values and how those differ from others, (2) to be better equipped to have cross-cultural conversations and relationships, and (3) to have our leadership, initiatives, missionary activity, etc. be adequately representative of the cultural makeup of our diocese.

Deacon: The first rank of the clergy, configured by his ordination to Christ the Servant. The deacon is ordained to the service of the Church’s ministry as an ordinary minister of the Word of God, of Baptism, and of Marriage. A Permanent Deacon is one who is not studying or preparing to be ordained a priest.

Dean: A priest with extra pastoral and administrative duties who helps to organize smaller geographical regions of the archdiocese.

Deanery: A group of neighboring parishes within an archdiocese, defined by a geographic area for the purposes of administration (Canon 374). In the Archdiocese of Denver, there are currently 13 deaneries. Each deanery is guided and overseen by an appointed dean.

Diocesan Archdiocesan Retreat: A manner of referring to the common experience of all the faithful in the diocese hearing the same message during the Advent Preaching Series, and prayerfully reflecting on those homilies during the week.

Discernment: The process of distinguishing the voice of the Lord from my human thoughts, feelings, and desires.

Disciple: Those who accept Jesus’ message to follow him are called disciples. Jesus associates with his disciples his own life, reveals the mystery of the



Kingdom, and gives them a share in his mission, his joy, and his sufferings.

Discipleship: An intentional mentorship relationship meant to produce growth in a relationship with God through teaching, sacramental preparation, growth in prayer and virtue.

Docility to the Holy Spirit: One's cooperation with the Holy Spirit. One of the many paradoxes of the Christian faith is to surrender one's personal will to the will of God. One who is docile listens for and is sensitive to God's promptings and acts according to these promptings.

Domestic Church: The family is called the Domestic Church because it is, on a small scale, what the Church is on a large scale. It is primarily in the Domestic Church that children are taught how to practice the faith.

Ecclesial: Of or pertaining to the Church and its teachings.

Encounter: A meeting with the person of Jesus Christ that involves a perceptible experience of his beauty, goodness, and truth, in such a way that it transforms a person's life, giving it a new horizon and a decisive direction. Encounters are marked by joy, lead to integral life conversion and inspire evangelistic zeal. They come about through: the witness of Christians, the Sacraments, prayer, and sovereign acts of God.

Evangelization: The proclamation of Christ and his Gospel by word and the testimony of life, in fulfillment of Christ's command. The purpose of evangelization is precisely an interior change: the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs.

Evangelizing Community: A joyful community that operates harmoniously in response to a collective experience of God's love, shares the Gospel, rolls up its sleeves and is ready to do difficult work, is patiently and persistently proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and producing fruit that will remain (cf. John 15:16).

Facilitators: These people assist the pastor in running parish discernment sessions, working as the emcee for the gathering. They open the session, introduce the theme or questions to be discerned, guarantee sufficient time for prayer and subsequent discussion. If the parish is offering a large-group discernment session, the facilitator also ensures each sub-group is able to share their prayer insights with the whole group.

God as the Architect: God has a plan for how he wants to build-up the Church in



Northern Colorado, but we do not know his full plan. By saying that “God is the Architect,” we acknowledge this plan, as well as acknowledge our need to return to him each step of the way. When we turn to God in prayer, we humbly ask him to reveal to us the next step in his plan to build-up the Church.

Hierarchy: The Apostles and their successors, the college of bishops, to whom Christ gave the authority to teach, sanctify, and govern the Church in his name.

Kerygma/proclamation: *Kerygma* is a Greek word used in the New Testament to refer to the compelling proclamation of the Gospel message: that God created us out of love for us, and that Jesus Christ became human in order to rescue us from slavery to the Evil One, freeing us by his Passion, Death, and Resurrection. The *kerygma* can be distilled into four words for easy remembrance: Created, Captured, Rescued, and Response.

Laity: Refers to the faithful in a specific state of life: anyone who is not ordained a deacon, priest, or bishop is a layperson. In some documents, the Church refers to three states of life: the ordained, religious (such as nuns or religious brothers), and the laity.

Lay Ecclesial Movements: The many volunteer groups and Apostolates present in the Archdiocese of Denver are referred to as Lay Ecclesial Movements. They exist by private agreement, freely made among members with the intent to attain the aims mentioned in Canon 298§1 and Canon 299§1). These are diverse groups that, in responding to the needs of the time, pursue mission-oriented and educational activities. They are motivated by the love of Jesus Christ, openness to gifts of the Holy Spirit, and a desire to evangelize by confessing and living out the Catholic faith in full Communion with the Church and by recognizing and respecting each other’s charisma with mutual charity, joy, and peace. “Their presence is encouraging because it shows that this springtime is advancing and revealing the freshness of the Christian experience based on personal encounter with Christ” (St. John Paul II, Message at First World Congress of Ecclesial Movements,1998).

Lectio Divina - means “divine reading,” A method of praying with Scripture in order to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

Listening: During this synodal process, the faithful of the Archdiocese of Denver are being invited to join together in an experience of listening to the voice of the Lord. We are interested in and care deeply about the thoughts, opinions, experiences, and suggestions of our people. However, the synodal process is not focused on gathering our human consensus regarding the direction of the Church. The Catholic Church is not directed by a democratic vote of her members, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Pope Francis has invited the entire Church at this



time to turn our ear to the Lord and listen together for the Holy Spirit's direction.

Members: These are people who will take part in the Diocesan Synodal Event after the parish listening sessions. Some members are required by Canon Law to attend, such as the Deans and the Rectors of the two seminaries. Each parish will also send two parish representatives as members of the Synodal Event.

Mission: Just as he was sent by the Father, Jesus sent his Apostles into the world to continue his own saving mission at his Ascension when he told the Apostles, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20, cf. CCC 858). The Church is missionary by its very nature. The apostolic mission of the Church is fulfilled according to the different states of life of the disciple: clergy, lay, or religious.

Missionary Disciple: Disciples who, animated by the Holy Spirit, are sent to share the Gospel (good news) and journey with others to encounter Jesus, grow in relationship with him, and witness him to others.

Mode of Operating: The mentality and manner out of which we operate. Maintenance mode, or Christendom mode, operates in a broadly Christian culture. Apostolic mode, or Evangelizing mode, operates in a secular culture in order to convert souls, and ultimately the institutions and whole culture, to Christ.

New Evangelization: A term coined by Pope St. John Paul II, the New Evangelization is not "new" in its content, but rather in its ardor, methods, and expression. The term New Evangelization also expresses a shift of evangelical attention from those in distant lands who have never heard of Christ to those baptized Christians and cultures in need of renewal and personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

Parish: A stable community of the faithful within a particular Church (diocese) whose pastoral care is confided by the archbishop to the priest as pastor.

Parish Coordinator: The parish coordinator manages all the "behind the scenes" details of the listening session so the pastor, facilitator, table leaders, scribe, parish representatives, and attendees can simply "show up" and be confident everything is prepared for a listening session.

Parish Council: A small group of individuals tasked with advising the pastor of a parish on matters related to parish governance.

Parish Representative: Two members of the parish, chosen by the pastor, to attend the Parish Discernment Sessions and the Diocesan Synodal Event. The



representatives will prophetically listen during the parish discernment sessions so that they can bring the fruits of these discussions to the Diocesan Synodal Event.

Participation: By virtue of baptism, all the faithful share in a general way in Christ's Priesthood, Prophetic Mission, and Kingship. Those who have received priestly ordination (priests and bishops) share in these offices of Christ in a more specific way. All the baptized faithful are called to participate in the mission that Christ entrusted to the Church by offering to God sacrifices during our daily lives, boldly proclaiming the Gospel and organizing our "spheres of influence" (usually one's family or perhaps one's workplace) according to the Gospel message. In this time specifically, we participate in this mission by praying and discussing where and how the Holy Spirit is calling the Archdiocese of Denver to evangelize.

Preaching Series: A period of time when the Sunday homilies all deal with the same theme, with each successive week building upon what was covered the previous week. In the Archdiocese of Denver, priests are being asked to preach the foundational Gospel message (Created, Captured, Rescued, Response) over the four Sundays of Advent in 2021.

Presbyter/Presbyterate: *Presbyter* is the Greek word for a priest who is not a bishop. The presbyterate is the group of priests, gathered around the diocesan bishop, who help the bishop exercise his ministry of teaching, sanctifying and governing around the diocese.

Prophetic Listening: The context of this phrase is a "small group discernment gathering" and applies to the action of the table leader, facilitator, scribe, or parish representative. Prophetic Listening is listening intently to what is being shared by the individual in the group while at the same time listening intently to the Holy Spirit. While listening to the person in front of me, I'm inviting the Holy Spirit to "highlight" or "draw my attention" to the things that are being shared that bear a certain weight or spiritual consequence. It's an active disposition during which I am expecting the Holy Spirit to help me understand what is most important from what the person is sharing.

RCIA: The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is a formalized process by which one enters into the Catholic Church.

Salvation: The forgiveness of sins and restoration of friendship with God, which can be done by God alone (CCC 169).

Sanctification: The process by which we are made holy. Sanctifying grace heals our human nature wounded by sin by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity. It is a habitual, supernatural gift that continues the work of sanctifying us — of making us holy, Christ-like, and "perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect" (CCC 1999).



Scribe: The scribe takes notes of what is said during the Parish Discernment Sessions so that the parish representatives can pray with the fruits of the discussions in anticipation of the Diocesan Synodal Event.

Strategic Leadership Team (SLT): The SLT is a core group of individuals selected by the archbishop who help him discern God's plan and implement the steps necessary to achieve this plan. A pastor may have a pastoral leadership team who helps him accomplish the same goal in the parish.

Synod: A mechanism of governance within the Church whereby the diocesan bishop consults with the faithful of his diocese or the pope consults with a group of bishops on a given question. Synods are consultative only, which means that pope or the diocesan bishop can, with prayerful deliberation, accept or reject any proposals put forth by the synod members.

Synod of Bishops: A stable consultative body that advises the Pope. They generally meet every three years and discuss a given topic. The theme of the 2023 Synod is "Synodality" and they have asked every diocese in the world to have an experience of synodality as a means of preparation.

Synodal Action: Synodal action occurs as a fruit of the consultative process. After praying and discussing together how the Holy Spirit is guiding the Church, the faithful act together, under the guidance of the bishop, to implement the results of the communal discernment.

Synodal Church: The Church is synodal when she collectively listens for the voice of God, discusses the fruits of that communal prayer, submits that discussion to the discernment of the Pastors of the Church and acts upon that discernment.

Synodal Process/Journey: The synodal process begins by collectively listening to God, then continues by respectfully listening to each other share the fruits of prayer. This second stage requires trust, respect and a willingness to disagree without feeling personally attacked. The fruits of this discussion then become the source of further prayer and discernment, which should finally lead to action.

Synodality: a mode of being whereby the Church uses the synod as a consultative process before making decisions so as to have a broad range of insights from the personal prayer of the individual members of the faithful.

Table Leaders: In a large-group discernment session, the table leader shepherds the discussion so that everyone is heard and the discussion remains on topic.

Vision: An idea or concept visualizing where an organization sees itself at some point in the future.



Vocation: A call from God to a distinctive state of life in which the person can reach holiness.

Witness: (1) The ministry by which a disciple makes known or expresses the Gospel through words and deeds; (2) a disciple of Jesus Christ who makes known or expresses the Gospel through words and deeds.

