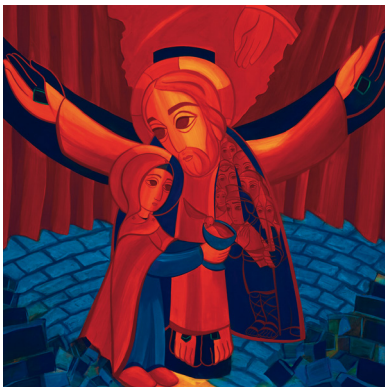


Preparing to participate in the synod journey

Preparing with the Holy Spirit

As you ready yourself for your journey, consider prayerfully preparing:

- **1) Set the time and place:** Set aside 30 minutes or more in a comfortable, relaxed, quiet place. Have a journal or somewhere you keep notes ready to write your reflections, thoughts or inspirations. As a sacred space you prepare, consider lighting a candle, quieting your mind with sacred music, having a Crucifix, Rosary or sacred image to focus on.
- **2) Pray:** Invoke the help of the Holy Spirit to be present through this journey:



Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

*O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. **Amen.***

- **3) Silence:** Take a few moments between each exercise to just sit in silence. Let the Holy Spirit speak directly to your heart. Center your thoughts on the action of your breath. If your mind wanders, let the thought gently pass and re-focus on the breath again.

4) Sacred Scripture meditation: Slowly read from The Gospel of Luke

The Road to Emmaus (New American Bible Revised Edition, Luke 24:13-33)

13 Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles[f] from Jerusalem called Emmaus, 14 and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. 15 And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, 16 [g]but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. 17 He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who

does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" 19 And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. 21 But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. 22 Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning 23 and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. 24 Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." 25 And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer[h] these things and enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. 28 As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. 29 But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. 31 With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. 32 Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" 33

What stands out for you? Is there a word or a phrase the Holy Spirit is drawing you to? What do you think the Holy Spirit is trying to convey to you in this passage? Put yourself in the scene as a disciple walking with this group. What is burning in your heart?

Reflection: The faithful disciples journeying are like the Church during this time of Synod. They welcome the stranger, share with Him the latest news, and look at the crisis of today in the light of the saving action of God throughout history. They gather around a feast, see Christ, and the Holy Spirit moves them to engage in the Church's mission: proclamation of the Risen Christ. An aim of the Synod is to walk together and listen to one another as we look at the signs of the times overshadowed by the cross and come to understand them in the light of the Risen Christ. Then we will participate in the mission of the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit burning in our hearts.

- **5) Question to ponder regarding communion, participation and mission:**
 - In your lived experience, what have been your joys, sorrows and obstacles in journeying with the Church? In your lived experience, past and present, how has the church (however you define it) been with you or not?
 - Are you encouraged to speak up courageously and responsibly about challenges and concerns?

- If we are being asked to become a Synodal Church, one that listens and walks together, how are you listening to other voices in our midst? Do you feel heard? How can we create greater opportunities for people to be heard in Church and in the public square?
 - What kind of support do you and others need to grow in your personal relationship with Jesus and how can the Church accompany and support this? What do you dream and hope “church” can be?
- What steps would you suggest the Church could take together (a step you could imagine taking yourself!) in order to more fully walk with you and with others in the light and mission of the Gospel.
- How is the Holy Spirit inviting you as part of the LGBTQ+ community to grow in this “journeying together”.

May the Holy Spirit always be with you on your journey, and may your journey always be on the road with Christ Jesus! Amen.