



OSA COMMISSION FOR THE SYNOD 2021-2023
THE ORDER OF SAINT AUGUSTINE IN THE SYNODAL PROCESS
Communion, Participation and Mission

Dear brothers and sisters:

“The Church of God is convoked in synod... for a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission... A fundamental question impels and guides us: how is this journey together that allows the Church to proclaim the Gospel, according to the mission entrusted to her, taking place today at different levels: and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take to create a synodal Church? (Cf. Preparatory Document for the Synod. nn 1-2)

The Order of Saint Augustine must participate wherever we are present, assuming the synod as a path of **reflection, dialogue, listening and discernment**, whose main protagonist is the **Holy Spirit**. Therefore, it is a **spiritual process** of renewal and hope to grow in communion, to open ourselves to the reality of the world in which we live as an Order, and to review our presence and our structures, our way of being and evangelizing.

The Prior General in his letter to the brothers and sisters of the Order on the occasion of the opening of the synod reminded us that we must not forget that "synodality has deep Augustinian roots". He said in this regard:

Indeed, synodality has deep Augustinian roots: “The main purpose for you having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart.” (cf. Rule 1:3). And the Constitutions of the Order remind us that “Following the example of Saint Augustine, love for the Church brings us to a total availability for its needs, by accepting the tasks which the Church asks of us, according to the charism of the Order. Friars should remember that this availability for service to the Church constitutes one of the essential characteristics of Augustinian spirituality. In addition, when we are open to the world, we feel ourselves in solidarity with the human family and involved in its concerns, especially through an openness to the needs of the poor and the suffering, in the knowledge that the more we are united to Christ the more fruitful will our apostolate be.” (Constitutions, 35). (Letter, n. 201/2021)

In order to carry out this process, the Prior General and his Council have created this Commission whose **FUNCTIONS** are:

- To set in motion the synodal process within the Order.
- Motivate the members of the Order to live this synodal process.
- Help clarify doubts or resolve possible difficulties that may arise during the process.
- Coordinate the different actions of the synodal process in the Order.

From the Commission we want to encourage you to participate in this ecclesial event already begun. As soon as possible, we will send you a **prayer and some key Augustinian guidelines** of the synodal process to initiate awareness and reflection.



A. WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SYNODAL PROCESS:

The participation of the Order in this process will be on three levels:

1. **Participate in the diocesan synodal process.** The dioceses are organizing different synodal itineraries. Our presence is important to feel as part of the Church and to enrich with our contributions and our charism the diocesan ecclesial life.
2. **Participate in the national structures for Consecrated Life.** In the same way, these national organizations will be present in this synodal process. Our contributions to the discernment of religious life in general will be important.
3. **Participate in the synodal process within the Order.** This is the third level of participation. The Order is a part of the Church and we have the opportunity to reflect on our own Augustinian life, our co-responsibility within the Order, and our style of evangelization and dialogue with reality we encounter.

B. It is important to remember the **OBJETIVES OF THE SYNODAL PROCESS:**

1. **Communion:** To grow in communion within the Order.
2. **Participation:** To listen as an Order to the reality of the world in which we live.
3. **Mission:** To review and discern together our response as an Order to the current challenge of evangelization.

Pope Francis has emphasized that the synodal process is a **SPIRITUAL PROCESS**. Therefore, for its development and to be able to achieve the proposed objectives, it is important to:

- **Pray:** Through prayer we open ourselves to the Spirit.
- **Listen:** This is the most important aspect of this process.
- **Dialogue:** Exchange and confront opinions and ideas.
- **Discern:** Make decisions together based on consensus with creativity and always with an eye to improving our evangelizing presence.
- **Evaluate:** The evaluation of the implemented decisions is important so that the process does not end, but continues.

C. The first thing we have to do is **IDENTIFY OUR WALKING COMPANIONS**. We know that “Synod” means to *walk together*. Who are our “walking companions” on the different levels in which we live?

The journey we make as:

- Augustinian Religious
- Contemplative Augustinian Nuns
- Laity (Augustinian fraternities, various organized groups of lay people who live our spirituality and collaborate with the Order, other lay people who are not officially organized but who also participate in our spirituality, etc..)
- Other religious men and women of the Augustinian family or other religious families who collaborate with us in evangelization.

Outside this first circle of fellow travelers there are other believers and non-believers who, for various reasons, are far from us. They too must be heard to the extent that they want to participate in this synodal process.



Therefore, each community will have **to identify its walking companions and how to travel together** in this process.

D. TIMING OF THE PROCESS

We believe that awareness is fundamental for a fruitful participation in the synodal consultation. Taking into account that the reality of the Order is quite varied and the levels of awareness and information about the process initiated are also varied, the Commission has established two phases:

1st Phase: Awareness and Information Period. From November to January

Identify traveling companions with initial meetings for reading and reflection on the Preparatory Document and other materials that will be sent from this International Commission.

2nd Phase: Synodal Consultation Period. From February to June

E. ORGANIZATION

So that the process may be as effective as possible, it is necessary that, **in each Augustinian circumscription and in the federations of contemplative religious, a Synodal Team be created, made up of religious men and women and lay people**, to help the International Commission in the transmission of information during the consultation period. This team will be **named by the Prior Provincial, Vicar, or President of the Federation**. Once appointed, the names of the members and their e-mail addresses will be communicated to this International Commission **by December 15, 2021**.

It will also be necessary for each community to elect a **Synod coordinator** to convene the various meetings to be scheduled and to collect the decisions taken and to send them to the Synodal Team of the circumscription. Once synthesized they will be sent to the OSA International Commission for the Synod.

Before the beginning of the 2nd phase, the method for organizing the synod meetings will be sent.

F. CONCLUSION

In short, "as Augustinians and, even more, as Christians, we cannot feel alienated from the path of the Church. Let us be teachers of synodality from the coherent living of our charism. The Church invites us to participate actively in this beautiful task. It is a moment of true and profound renewal." (Letter, n. 201/2021)

It is a challenge for the Order and an invitation to make synodality a reality and to give eloquent witness. Therefore, from the OSA Commission for the Synod 2021-2023 we thank you for your availability and commitment to the Church and the Order and we encourage you to be enthusiastic and creative in this process so important for everyone.

With heartfelt greetings,

P. Enrique Martín

Coordinator-OSA Synod Commission

comisionosasinodo@gmail.com