

5 Things Every Catholic Should Know

On the Eve of the Global Synod

BACKGROUND

This October, bishops will gather together in Rome and, for the first time in our Church's memory, women religious, priests and deacons, lay women and men, including young people will join them as voting members. On the agenda: figuring out how to better be in communion with one another and together be a Church that goes out into the world to live Jesus' mission and spread Good News.

Those in attendance in Rome are tasked with coming ready to listen to the Holy Spirit and to continue the deliberations called for over the past two years through the Church's global listening process, which illuminated a number of hopes and dreams of the people of God.

One of those dreams – raised consistently, and clearly, in nearly every report from every bishop conference around the globe – is to rethink women's participation in the life of the Church.

This short guide seeks to provide insight on how your role as a witness helps shape Synod discernment and deliberation and promises of what the future holds.

5 Things Every Catholic Should Know on the Eve of the Global Synod

1. **We are invited to dream and deliberate together about the future of the Church.** Church leaders have invited Catholic communities worldwide to identify and discern matters on the hearts and minds of the people of the Church, including women's participation in Church leadership. Millions around the world accepted that invitation and expressed a desire for more consultation.
2. **There is global consensus about rethinking women's participation in the church.** The Synod's guiding documents and questions for reflection invite participants to dream and deliberate together about how Church structures—the way we *do Church* together—can better honor the equal baptismal dignity of women, including through the possibility of once again including them in the diaconate.
3. **Our shared history gives us a model for the leadership of women in the Church.** Women of the early Church like St. Phoebe were entrusted, in the words of St. Paul, as deacons to minister to God's people and be an example of courage, love, and leadership.
4. **The General Assembly in Rome is not the end of our collective discernment, but the beginning.** While we don't anticipate doctrinal changes or a final decision on the role of women in Church leadership, the synodal process legitimates discernment on the role of Catholic women as deacons and unveils the power of the witness of Catholic women.
5. **Each of us has a role in discernment.** By offering our witness and testimonies in the spirit of St. Phoebe, we live in joyful hope for the future of Catholic women's leadership and informing the faithful discernment of Church leaders.