



WHAT IS A SYNODAL ADVENT? A ADVENT WALKING TOGETHER

ADVENT 2023

On Sunday 3 December, **we begin the wonderful season of Advent. Four weeks** that open us to hope. In the first week the celebration of the Immaculate Conception begins, a day of grateful remembrance for the Daughters of Jesus and of joyful celebration for all Christians. joyful celebration for all Christians.

This Advent, **we invite you to have the experience of walking together.** Knowing that there is a lot of personal care, of pampering the group and of listening to the Spirit who "is at the door and knocks", who calls us, in events, in people and in everything around us.

In this year, in which we are very close to the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, we invite you to live **a different Advent, an Advent on the way with others.** We encourage you to prepare for the birth of Jesus by reading a section of the [Synthesis Report of the Assembly](#).

You can also do it alone, but it's better in company!

1. **Choose with whom you want to live this Advent** and propose to them to make this journey together. It can be your family, your community, the *Alcor* group, the Mother Candida Laity group, in the parish, with friends and, if you are lucky, with your work team.

We dare say that it is not necessary for them to be Christians, it is enough for them to be people who believe in life and in people.

2. Set **a day, time and place** to meet (it can even be online). From the index of the document "[Synthesis Report](#)" of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, choose one, two, three themes to read, pray and share. Depending on the days you are able to meet during Advent.
3. **Prepare** personally and carefully for the **meeting**.
 - a. Everyone will be clear about which point of the synthesis document to share and the outline of the meeting.
 - b. Read and underline the text.
 - c. Look for readings and experiences of others that will help you deepen your understanding of this reality.
 - d. Take it to prayer, let yourself be enlightened by the readings of that Sunday and listen to what it invites you to do in your personal life. Write down the motions.
 - e. Write down what you want to share with the group.



4. **The development of each meeting** will be as you decide. It can be sharing, just sharing, or using some method that favours the exchange. We offer you one.

Someone needs to lead the meeting. It can always be the same person or you can take turns. You can follow these steps:

- a. **Initial STOP.** After greeting each other and communicating the latest news, we have a personal moment of **silence**. We are probably coming from the hustle and bustle of the day and need to focus on the here and now. Silence the tasks, people and issues that have occupied our day to realise where I am and what I am here for. After a few minutes (as many as each of us needs), I ask myself: **How do I come to today's meeting?** I let a word emerge from me, the predominant feeling, and I give it a name, a word that expresses me at this moment.

To close it, **we share the word** that expresses how we come to the meeting. **In an orderly way**, without the need for explanations.

- b. I take up my notes after having read and prayed the point we bring and **write in a short sentence THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I WANT TO SAY TO THE GROUP about what this topic has awakened in me.** Just a thought. The most important of everything you want to say.

We share the most important thing in an orderly way. If we are in person, we will be sitting in a circle, so whoever wants to start and the person on the left continues, and so on until the last one speaks.

Each person will speak as if he/she were the first, without referring to what the previous ones have shared.

We are very free to share whatever we wish to share, but let what we say be our truth, let us not imply anything other than what we really feel.

What we say in the group stays in the group. No one comments outside on what someone else has said. That would break a trust that we have to build up little by little. Everyone must experience that they can say what they think and feel without fear of being judged.

And, of course, **this is not a time to react to anything** but to take my personal notes of what I hear and what resonates with me so that, at the end of this moment, I can realise where the group is on the topic we are discussing.

We end this moment by **"pulling out the THREAD"** of where the group is at. Some people are very good at this. It is not a synthesis of everything, but rather capturing the "thread"



left by the sharing and where the Spirit is blowing in us. Someone can offer the "thread" they discover and, if the rest accept it, we move on.

- c. **WE SHARE THE REST** of the ideas, feelings, emotions... that we have written down as a result of our reading, prayer and personal reflection. We do it in the same way as in the previous point but saying everything. **Without going into long** and unnecessary explanations.

At no time will we react to what anyone says, neither nodding nor reproving. Our task will be **to listen**, to take our notes of what I hear and **how what I hear resonates with me**.

- d. When everyone has finished, and if necessary, we open **a round of clarifying questions**. Not to enter into a dialogue but to make sure we understand what each person is saying.
- e. This is a very important moment, let's **RESONATE**. We take a few minutes of silence to reread our notes and write down what has had the greatest impact on us. After this time, we resonate what we have heard. It is not about discussing ideas but about sharing internal movements in the face of what the companions have said.

Also in order, as before.

- f. This is a good time **to listen to the readings of the day or of the corresponding Sunday** of Advent and let them illuminate our conversation. First we listen to the readings, allow a few minutes of silence and share.
- g. **ORDERLY DIALOGUE** (listening to the speaker until the end, without interrupting, taking notes and without entering into discussions) around the question: What is the relationship with the Christmas we are preparing for? The dialogue may lead us to draw practical conclusions for our life, for the life of the group... We can write down these conclusions.
- h. **CLOSE** the meeting by taking a short time of silence to help us to reflect on what we have heard during the meeting and to let the answers to three questions emerge:
- I. What do I feel? What has moved in me in this time?
 - II. Where do I feel it, in what part of my body?
 - III. What does it move/invite me to?

I note my answers. Brief. In one word. And, we finish by doing a round in which each one shares in **three words** how the meeting ends.

We can end with a **common prayer**, singing a song, dancing... whatever best expresses what the group has experienced.



5. At the end of the process, **celebrate and share** what you have experienced. We would love you to send us some pictures and your testimony of how Jesus has awakened in your heart.

Happy Advent 2023!