

1

What is the point of a Parish Pastoral Council or Finance Committee if it is merely consultative?

- 'A [parish] pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only' (Can. 536 §2)
- 'A [diocesan] pastoral council possesses only a consultative vote' (Can. 514 §1)
- 'The presbyteral council possesses only a consultative vote; the diocesan bishop is to hear it in affairs of greater importance but needs its consent only in cases expressly defined by law.' (Can. 500 §2)
- 'The only legislator in a diocesan synod is the diocesan bishop; the other members of the synod possess only a consultative vote. Only he signs the synodal declarations and decrees, which can be published by his authority alone.' (Can. 466)
- 'It is for the synod of bishops to discuss the questions for consideration and express its wishes but not to resolve them or issue decrees about them unless in certain cases the Roman Pontiff has endowed it with deliberative power, in which case he ratifies the decisions of the synod.' (Can. 343)

2

**We expect
more input!**




3

**But how much
impact do we
actually have?**



4



Direct participation
... as long as you're in the majority
... and everyone is well informed

5

Consultation and Deliberation

- ‘the recurring formula in the Code of Canon Law, “merely consultative” vote should be reviewed to eliminate the possibility of ambiguity. It seems appropriate to carry out a revision of Canon Law from a synodal perspective, clarifying the distinction and relation between consultation and deliberation and shedding light on the responsibilities of those who play different roles in the decision-making process.’
(*Synod Final Document*, 92)
- ‘if counsel is required, the act of a superior who does not hear those persons is invalid; although not obliged to accept their opinion even if unanimous, a superior is nonetheless not to act contrary to that opinion, especially if unanimous, without a reason which is overriding in the superior’s judgment.’ (Can. 127 §2.2)

6

Listening to Consultation

‘Those with pastoral authority are obliged to listen to those who participate in the consultation and may not act as if the consultation had not taken place. Therefore, those in authority will not depart from the fruits of consultation that produce an agreement without a compelling reason which must be appropriately explained. As in any community that lives according to justice, the exercise of authority in the Church does not consist in an arbitrary imposition of will.’

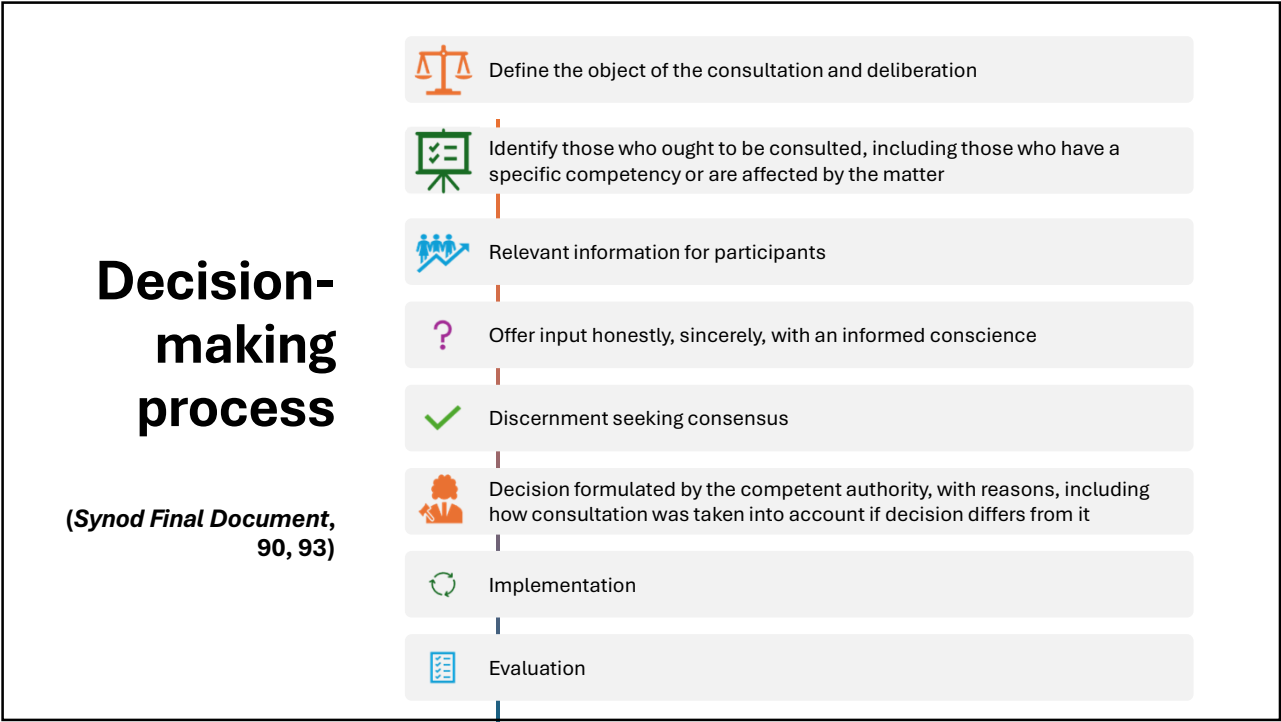
Synod Final Document, 91

7

Synodal Consultation

‘The members of the People of God who take part in them [synodal assemblies] are responding to the summons of the Lord, listening as a community to what the Spirit is saying to the Church through the Word of God which resonates in their situation, and interpreting the signs of the times with the eyes of faith. In the synodal Church the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on taking pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God’s will. So, in coming to formulate their own decisions, pastors must listen carefully to the wishes of the faithful.’
(ITC, *Synodality*, 68)

8



9

How can we encourage this process?

- Report on implementation of synodal processes of accountability and evaluation at *ad limina*. (Synod Final Report, 101)
- Synodal team in each diocese and country
 - Membership reported to Synod Secretariat
- Evaluation assemblies 2027–2028
 - Diocese, National, Continental
- October 2028: International ecclesial assembly, Rome
- ACBC commitment to Synod in each diocese every ten years

10

Changing Culture



11



12



‘Peter is thus entrusted with the task of “loving more” and giving his life for the flock. The ministry of Peter is distinguished precisely by this self-sacrificing love, because the Church of Rome presides in charity and its true authority is the charity of Christ. It is never a question of capturing others by force, by religious propaganda or by means of power. Instead, it is always and only a question of loving as Jesus did ... Moreover, if the rock is Christ, Peter must shepherd the flock without ever yielding to the temptation to be an autocrat, lording it over those entrusted to him.’