

Communal Prayer for Synod for 2021-2022

Reflection

The theme given us for this Synod is **A Synod for a Synodal Church: Communion / Participation/ Mission**. This is not just for our diocese or any diocese in the US but for all the People of God in the US and in every country in the world. Pope Francis is emphatic that every voice in the world be heard by the Church for the World Synod of Bishops in 2023. He is inviting us to a common experience for all the faithful which can be uniting and challenging at the same time.

This is a critical time for the Church and Churches in the world, and for the world community itself. The theme of Synodality invites us to be listening together to what God has to say to his people in this time and in this world community, to journey together in communion and mutual support. Maybe the question is **“How do we BE church today and into tomorrow?”**

We’ve been on a journey – a long journey – generations- long of growing and building the Church, the Body of Christ among us. This is a body that must keep changing, as a living body of hopes, dreams, faith and trust; a body blessed with sacramental ointments that heal, strengthen and name us as the family of God.

We are also a body bruised and broken, challenged and strained, yet held together as one by God’s love and design. We come together knowing we cannot be Church alone. This is not about one or a few, but **ALL** of us adding color, texture and spirit to the soul of God among us.

We are products of our time today, here and now. We need a living and loving Church for this third millennium – still new and unfolding in our midst. We need to go to the margins and meet people who no longer journey with us and engage them, invite them and listen to them. We need to include those whose voices are rarely heard, for we all are loved dearly by God.

Pope Francis characterizes two interrelated goals of listening: “to listen to God, so that with him we may hear the cry of his people; and to listen to his people until we are in harmony with the will to which God calls us.” And again, he says that “the world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission.”

So, our task here in our Diocese is to join in the conversations, the prayer and sharing at each level; to listen deeply to what God’s desire is for the Church now, today. We are a beautiful array of cultures and customs that shape and express our one faith in Jesus, in our one Church, the Body of Christ. That richness is who we are. Our participation is valuable to the end product, because we have already been sent by our Baptism to be disciples of Jesus, to live and preach by our lives the faith that is the gift to us and to the world.

So we journey together, sojourners, if you will, side by side, leading all we meet along this road mapped out by God, to be disciples of the Gospel Mission of Jesus in our Church today.

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