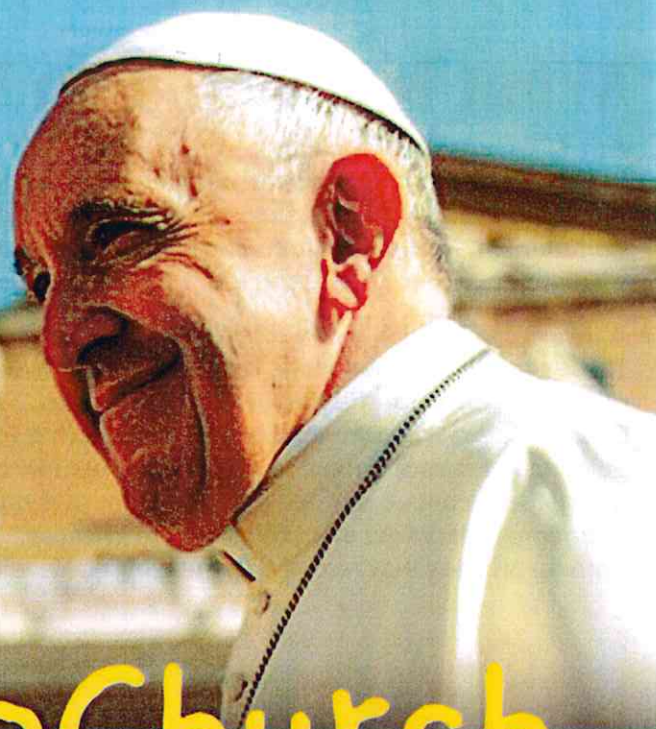




Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission



# #ListeningChurch

*Our Holy Father Pope Francis has invited the Catholic Church to embark on a journey together. Through listening and discernment rooted in the Holy Spirit, the entire people of God will be called to contribute to a process by which the Church deepens in understanding of Her mission and looks toward the future.*

## YOU ARE INVITED!

Pope Francis and Bishop Edward Rice invite YOU to join the conversation in your community!

In May of 2021, Pope Francis introduced the Synod on Synodality which is a journey of dialogue and discernment, in which **ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD** are called to pray and reflect upon the Holy Spirit's will for the Church. This synod is not just a convening of Bishops reflecting on a particular topic and advising the Pope. Through our listening and sharing, together we will seek to understand the Holy Spirit's will.

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 6:00-8:00PM**

We value your experiences, insights, and concerns! Will you please come and share them?

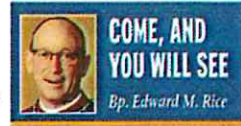


For more info on the Synod, please scan the QR code or check the website at <https://dioscg.org/synod-on-synodality-2021-2023/>





# What is a Synod on Synodality?



In May 2021, Pope Francis invited the global Catholic Church to gather and reflect on communion, participation, and mission within the Church. The two-year process of listening and dialogue is themed, “*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, & Mission*,” being referred to as the “Synod on Synodality,” which the Holy Father officially opened with Mass at Saint Peter’s Basilica on Oct. 10.

A Synod on Synodality—what? What does that mean, what is it about, and how am I expected to get involved? These are all good questions that I am trying to anticipate and respond to as the diocese continues to implement our new “Norms for the Parish Pastoral Council.” As you hopefully are familiar with by now, our own “Mutually Shared Vision, One Church, East to West: Loving Jesus, Serving Jesus, and Sharing Jesus” was developed under the guidance of Bishop Johnston after he traveled throughout the diocese participating in listening sessions to identify the spiritual concerns of the people. From that effort was born our three priorities, “Growth in Holiness, Forming Intentional Disciples, and Being Sent to Witness.” The process in which Bishop Johnston engaged is a type of synodal process that resulted in the diocese developing its Mutually Shared Vision.



**Through listening and discernment rooted in the Holy Spirit, the entire people of God will be called to contribute to a process by which the Church deepens in understanding of Her mission and looks to the future.**

After some two years of work in revising our “Norms for the Parish Pastoral Council,” we are just at the beginning stages of getting the new norms off the ground and into the hands of parish pastoral council members. At the same time, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, (USCCB) has asked all dioceses to participate in an initiation to focus on Eucharistic Revival. This effort, beginning next summer, will be a three-year process “To foster deeper devotion and knowledge about the Eucharist.” Additionally, Pope Francis has initiated the Synod on Synodality, hoping to move the Church forward in a spirit of “communion, participation and mission.” These three words are crucial to the understanding of a “Synod” and in a very beautiful way they fit perfectly into what our diocese is attempting to accomplish through the new parish pastoral council norms and our priorities of “holiness, intentional discipleship and witness.”

How we listen, how we journey, and how we include others is at the very heart of what a Synod is all about. Beginning with the seven Deans of the diocese, and including the Parish Pastoral Council members, we have the perfect opportunity to hold a wider dialogue to listen and journey and include others as we discover how to move our parishes in holiness, intentional discipleship and being witnesses to others. And I hope these are not just “buzzwords.” All of our efforts should result in a deeper love for the Eucharist and an active sacramental life, bringing the People of God to the altar. And it is at the altar that we fall within the shadow of the Cross. And it is at the foot of the cross that we discover Our Lady.

Bishop states, “The purpose of the Synod, and therefore of the consultation, is not to produce documents, but ‘to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.’”

By entering into this process, every member of the diocese is invited to offer their thoughts on how to grow in holiness, to be intentional disciples, and being sent to witness to others about the beauty of our faith. This input will assist our Parish Pastoral Council members as they discern how to move forward with parish renewal. And in all honesty, we need this renewal—from the bottom up and from the top down. All of us are being invited to personal conversion and to be a Church on mission. As I quoted earlier, and many others have said the same, authors and bishops alike, “The Church does not have a mission, the mission has a Church.” The primary function of the Church is to proclaim Jesus Christ and draw all people into intimate relationship with him.