



DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

McRaith Catholic Center | *Office of the Bishop*

December 2021

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On October 10, Pope Francis inaugurated a two-year synodal process which will culminate in a universal Synod scheduled to take place in Rome in October 2023. The following Sunday, October 17, the synodal process was inaugurated in every diocese of the world by every bishop with a celebration at their cathedral church.

“Synod” comes from two Greek words that mean “journeying together.” Admittedly, the words “synod”, “synodal”, and “synodality” are not terribly familiar to us. Yet, they find their foundations in the ancient Church itself. Synods have been held throughout the history of the Church and have traditionally consisted of a coming together of a group of bishops from various regions of the world, representing the people of God of their dioceses, in order to address some particular issue facing the Church.

This current experience of synod is unique in that Pope Francis is intending this process of “journeying together” be expanded to include all the baptized members of the Church. The level of listening to which our Holy Father is calling us is unprecedented. Millions of voices will be heard!

Pope Francis explains that this synodal path is not about gathering opinions but listening to the Holy Spirit. It is not about administering a survey designed to change the Church’s doctrines or disciplines according to popular opinions, but to call the Church to ongoing conversion and deeper communion with each other and with God. At its core, this synodal process is about listening to one another so that we might better listen to the Holy Spirit.

It is with this in mind that we begin the synodal process in the Diocese of Owensboro. During the months of January and February, 2022, each parish is encouraged to host listening sessions to which you will be invited. You will be asked to reflect on questions about your personal experience of the church and how the Church lives its mission to proclaim Christ. You will reflect upon the things you treasure most about our Church as well as the things that distress or pain you. A key component of the listening will include ways to bring to the table the voices of those who are easily ignored or marginalized. The Holy Spirit lives and works through all the Baptized, so we cannot afford to exclude anyone from the process.

In March, I will be traveling the Diocese hosting regional listening sessions. Please make plans to attend. I want to hear the fruits of your parish listening so that I can communicate that to the United States Conference of Bishops for the next phase of listening to happen on a continental level.

While it will be possible to electronically submit your individual reflections and contributions, I strongly encourage you to take part in your parish listening session in person and then to join me

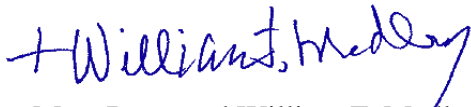
in March at a regional listening session. I am certain that participation in this synodal path to which the Holy Father has called us will bear much fruit in the life of our diocese.

To learn more about the synod in the Diocese of Owensboro, visit the diocese's website at www.owensborodiocese.org/synod . Please make plans now to participate, and join me in keeping our diocesan journey in your prayers by praying the Prayer for the Synod on Synodality:

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.

Praying for God's richest blessings for each of you.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend William F. Medley
Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro, KY