



## **Journeying Together**

Diocese of Las Cruces  
2021-2022

### **XVI Synod of Bishops Overview**

#### **What is the Synod of Bishops?**

It is a meeting of bishops from all over the world established by Pope Paul VI in 1965, in response to the desire of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council to discuss doctrinal or pastoral matters. Synods offer suggestions to the pope, which may or may not become official teachings at a later time. The word “synod” is derived from two Greek words: *syn*, meaning “together” and *hodos*, meaning “road” or “way”; together, it means a “coming together.”

In April 2021 Pope Francis formally declared the XVI Synod of Bishops, which will take place between 2021 and 2023 and is titled “For a synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.”

#### **What is the role of the Diocese of Las Cruces in the Synod of Bishops?**

The Holy Father has asked that all dioceses around the world participate in the XVI Synod of Bishops by engaging the local Christian faithful in a process of discernment with regard to subjects of concern to the universal Church. Our feedback from parishes and other communities of Catholics will be submitted as part of the Diocese of Las Cruces’ report to the Synod of Bishops.

In addition, Bishop Peter Baldacchino wishes to engage the Christian faithful of the Diocese to hear their concerns and assess the needs of the people of the Diocese. This will assist in establishing priorities for the Diocese for the next five years.

#### **What will be the Synod process in our Diocese?**

The Synod begins with a consultive process in order to hear the voices of as many of the faithful as possible. Each parish will be asked to engage in its own consultive process, with a Guidebook being provided by the Diocese in order to assist with the planning. There will be vicariate-level meetings as well as consultive sessions for particular groups, such as youth and young adults, families, seminarians, etc. After the consultive process ends, Bishop

Baldacchino, in consultation with the Synod Preparatory Commission, will gather the topics and issues that will be discussed during the synod meeting itself.

The synod assembly itself takes place after the consultative process is complete. At the synod assembly, topics and issues are presented by the Bishop for discussion. Upon conclusion of the synod meeting, a report of the entire synod process will be prepared for submission to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (“USCCB”) and the priorities for the Diocese will be promulgated by Bishop Baldacchino.

The USCCB, along with all other episcopal conferences of the world, will submit their reports to the Vatican in preparation for the meeting of the world’s bishops, which will occur in October 2022.

### **Who will participate as members of the Synod?**

Bishop Baldacchino will oversee the entire synod process. Members of the Diocesan Synod will include the priests who comprise the Presbyteral Council, the Vicars Forane of the six vicarates, as well as other individuals invited by Bishop Baldacchino. Each parish will also be asked to select two (2) parishioners to serve as members of the Synod.

### **Can the synod body pass new rules and laws at a diocesan synod?**

No, authority remains with the diocesan bishop at the synod to formally establish any binding rules or laws in a diocese. The synod body only provides discussion and a consultative vote to the diocesan bishop for his consideration.