



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF LAS CRUCES

*Office of the Bishop*

October 17, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In April 2021, Pope Francis announced the next General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.” Since its establishment during the Second Vatican Council, the Synod of Bishops has provided a forum for the forward progress of our Church. Recognizing that the Church today must exist “permanently in a state of mission,” the Holy Father has stated that the Synod of Bishops “must increasingly become a privileged instrument for listening to the People of God.” (*Episcopalis Communio*) As Pope Francis convokes the XVI Synod of Bishops, the People of God throughout the universal Church will be invited to speak and will be heard in a most intentional way.

The synodal process for the Diocese of Las Cruces begins in communion with the Universal Church on the weekend of October 16-17, 2021, with the opening Mass on the evening of October 16, 5:30 pm, at the Cathedral. The special Synod closes on the feast of Pentecost, June 5, 2022. During this time, every parish and all the People of God throughout the world are called upon to participate in the consultation process, so that we may “gather the wealth of the experiences” of our local church (*Vademecum* 31).

Saint John Paul II said that “the secret of the success of the Synod, as of every other ecclesial event and initiative, is in fact prayer,” and accordingly, I ask that you pray for the Synod here and around the world, “so that it might become an authentic event of grace.” Alongside the priests, religious and laity of the Diocese, I will be taking an active role in this diocesan phase of the Synod and ask the same of each of you. I encourage you to fully participate to the extent possible in your own parish consultative sessions and to provide your voice to the synodal process. Look forward to hearing more in the coming weeks from your pastor.

Sincerely yours,

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✠ Most Reverend Peter Baldacchino  
Bishop of Las Cruces