



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
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NEWS

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Diocese of Pittsburgh to help gather faith experiences for Pope Francis

All are invited to a kick-off Mass Sunday, October 17

At a special Mass on October 17, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. in St. Paul Cathedral, Bishop David Zubik will ask the Holy Spirit to guide the participation of local Catholics in a worldwide consultation that Pope Francis has convoked to help him identify how best to discern God's call to the Universal Church.

"The Holy Father has invited us to journey together, to speak together, to dream together and to listen to each other about how we, the entire worldwide Church, will carry out the mission that Jesus has given to all of us," Bishop Zubik said. "We will begin by gathering as a community, in the cathedral and on livestream, to pray together for the Holy Spirit to open our minds and our hearts."

All are invited and encouraged to attend the Mass at the cathedral. Every Catholic – including those who feel marginalized or who have left the Church – are invited to participate in gatherings that will be held early next year. Local details will be posted and updated on the diocesan website, www.diopitt.org, and people can text the word "Synod2021" to 84576 to receive information on their phones.

The process will continue on national and international levels, culminating in a Synod of Bishops at the Vatican in October 2023.

The Synod on Synodality is titled "For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission." "Synod" and "synodal" translate into "journeying together." The Vatican's preparatory document emphasizes that this journey of discernment is part of the renewal mandated by Vatican II. The three key concepts for the synod and its recommendations are communion, participation and mission.

"It's a global invitation to a process that stretches far and wide," said Ellen Mady, chancellor of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and co-chair of the local organizing team for the synod. Going through it enables us to engage in listening and discernment and participation that helps us to better get to know our own Church. And the very fact that it is a universal process is bringing the whole Church together."

"We're not getting together to talk about doctrinal questions," said Father Michael Sedor, diocesan director for canonical services and co-chair of the synod organizing team. "At the same time, we are not looking to exclude minority experiences because of doctrinal issues. If someone's experience of the faith doesn't exactly line up with the doctrine of the Church, it's okay to express that."

The goal of Pope Francis and local organizers is to provide small gatherings throughout the diocese where people can offer their thoughts, culminating in a diocesan-wide gathering in the spring. Each diocese is responsible for providing a summary of all participation and sending it to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The USCCB will compile all the diocesan synod documents for the Vatican.

“The Pope wants a Church that listens more attentively to each other,” said Bishop Zubik. “We are honored and eager to respond to his call to help strengthen the Church.”

Bishop Zubik asked all priests of the diocese to celebrate a Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit this weekend to mark the opening of the Synod for a Synodal Church.