



## Diocesan Synod 2021

September 23, 2021

To the Priests, Deacons, and Lay Faithful,

As many of you already know, my heart and vision for our Archdiocese is a Church that is alive in Christ and missionary in its zeal to bring the message, hope, and love of Christ to all. My journey through this first year of ministry as your Archbishop coincides with a crucial time in the life of the Church and the world which has been marked by increased suffering, injustice, and abuse of power. It is important that our path forward include humbly listening to one another, and especially to those on the margins of the Church and of society. For this reason, it is somewhat providential that in April 2021, Pope Francis initiated a synodal journey of the whole People of God, to begin in October 2021 in each local Church and culminating in October 2023 in the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

A Synod is fundamentally a spiritual process of listening and discerning how God is calling us to be a Church in the third millennium. It is a humble listening and a journey together which aims towards unity and understanding and should not be confused with a political process marked by power struggles. In creating the opportunity for listening, dialogue, and discernment at the local level through this Synod, Pope Francis is calling the Church to rediscover its deeply synodal nature.

Our diocesan synodal process will bring together the voices of the People of God in order to ask one fundamental question: ***A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.” How is this “journeying together” happening today in our local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?*** This synodal journey together will solemnly begin on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of October in Rome, followed by an official opening in our own diocese the following Sunday October 17<sup>th</sup>. Please stay tuned for further details on this.

We will do our best during this time of pandemic to find creative and flexible ways of embarking on this journey, mindful also of the many challenges currently being faced both within the parish and the broader community. As a diocesan centre, we will also try to

communicate well throughout this process. On this note, we have created a webpage for the synod process on our Archdiocesan website which will serve as a tool for communication. You will find some relevant documents and links here if you wish to learn more. I wish to share with you also that Marisa Casagrande is serving as the main coordinator for this process and working closely with our pastoral team. We ask that you direct any English inquiries to Ted Hurley ([thurley@archottawa.ca](mailto:thurley@archottawa.ca)), English pastoral services coordinator, and French inquiries to H el ene Laporte ([HLaporte@archottawa.ca](mailto:HLaporte@archottawa.ca)), French pastoral services coordinator.

May the Holy Spirit guide us in this journey together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marcel Damphousse". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

✠ Marcel Damphousse  
Archbishop of Ottawa-Cornwall