

Sample Bulletin Announcements

Week 5

Journeying Together through the Synod

Sharing Your Own Experience



Pope Francis has given all the Catholic faithful an opportunity to take part in the preparation for the 2023 Synod of Bishops in our own diocese and parishes. You might wonder why the experience of individual people is so important. Our stories illustrate how we live our faith in the concrete everyday of our lives. Listening to each other’s stories helps us relate to one another, to empathize, to recognize our common hopes and the faith that sustains us. If we are willing to ponder these stories and consider them in the light of our call to be Church, then we might be able to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church in our time.

Week 6

Journeying Together through the Synod

Listening to Everyone



The author James Joyce is known for describing the Catholic Church as “here comes everybody!” We hope the next few months will be a time for great listening – listening among those who are active within the parish, and those who are no longer engaged; those who attend Mass regularly and those who don’t feel welcome. Our stories are sacred. They demonstrate how God works in each of lives to bring about His plan. This Synod process invites us to stand in the shoes of another and learn from the story that they share.

Please plan to participate in a synod session and invite others you know to tell their stories.

<<INSERT PARISH SESSION INFO>>

Week 7

Journeying Together through the Synod

Listening can Change Hearts & Minds



The goal of synod listening is not data gathering or problem-solving. It is not focused on debating the controversial issues of the day or complaining. It is primarily a spiritual exercise, rooted in prayer. Everyone has something to share. Everyone has something to learn. Listening to each other and to the Holy Spirit can change our attitudes, illuminate our understandings, and guide our behavior. It can change us!

Pope Francis hopes this listening will “plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships.” From it will come a way of being Church that remains faithful to the truths of our faith but allows us to pastorally respond anew to the needs of the present time. Here’s how you can participate:

<<INSERT PARISH SESSION INFO>>

Week 8

Journeying Together through the Synod *What is the Spiritual Conversation Method?*



Synod listening sessions take around 90 minutes and follow the Spiritual Conversation Method. This method is based on a form of “communal apostolic discernment” that began with the Jesuits and has been in use for more than 500 years. It has a few steps:

- Begin with prayer and reflection on your experience
- Share your experience in a small group; listen closely to others’ stories.
- Sit in silence to take in all you have heard.
- Comment on what moved you, resonated with you.
- Sit in silence to pay attention to your inner thoughts.
- Talk about how Spirit may be prompting action.

<<INSERT PARISH SESSION INFO>>

Week 9

Journeying Together through the Synod



If you would like to participate in a synod listening session, we invite you to come and share a piece of your own story of journeying with the Church and to learn from the experiences of others, both good and bad. Each of us comes with the hope of improving the way we journey together.

The process of listening being introduced during this synod will help us to grow in our own ability to journey together. It will stimulate reflection on different ways our parishes and our diocese can be intentional about deepening communion, expanding participation, and focusing on mission. Please be a part of this work of the Church—it takes all of us together to make a difference.

<<INSERT PARISH SESSION INFO>>

Week 10

Journeying Together through the Synod *Trust and Confidentiality*



Listening sessions take place in small groups of 6 to 8 people. Participants listen to one another with care and respect, building trust and enabling honest, authentic sharing. What is shared is held in confidence by the group.

Your story is important. Because these listening sessions are in preparation for the Synod of Bishops, notes will be taken in each small group. Identifying information will not be passed on. The note-taker will report on the “gist” of each story, the impact of the experiences shared on the members of the group, and thoughts about what the Spirit may be saying to the Church. They will submit a report form to the diocese for each Spiritual Conversation that will form the basis of our Diocesan report.

<<INSERT PARISH SESSION INFO>>

Week 11

Journeying Together through the Synod

How will sharing my story become a part of the Synod?



A report from each listening session will be given to the Diocesan Synod Committee. It is their task to learn from these responses about the circumstances in which we, as Church, are doing a good job of journeying together and where we could do a better job of accompanying one another in faith. They will also gather the “fruit” of discernment in terms of what the Spirit might be saying to the Church through the stories shared. These elements will form the

basis for the diocesan report.

Each diocese will submit a report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by June. These will be examined at the national level by region, then collated into one continental report. The Synod office at the Vatican will use the USCCB report and reports from bishops’ conferences around the world to create the preparatory document for the Synod of Bishops in October 2023.

If you have any questions or thoughts to share, please contact our synod Co-chairs Deacon Pat Brannigan and Mrs. Mary Liz Ivins at synod@dioceseoftrenton.org