



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF YOUNGSTOWN

September 23, 2021

Dear Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Diocese of Youngstown,

Pope Francis has called for the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to begin the weekend of October 9th and 10th in Rome. The path for the Synod is: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.” The Holy Father will formally begin this process on that weekend with a Mass in Rome.

On October 17, 2021, every diocesan bishop is being asked by the Holy Father to begin this journey in their particular Church with a Mass in their Cathedral. I hope you will plan to be present for this liturgy which will begin at 2:00pm in Saint Columba Cathedral.

The word “Synod” comes from a Greek word which means, “to be on the journey together.” All of us by virtue of our Christian baptism are on a path together. It is important that as we continue the journey that we first, open ourselves to the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit affords the possibility of conversion for each and every one of us. That same Spirit changed the hearts of those first followers of Jesus from fear to faith. We are all in need of conversion and we all need the Holy Spirit. Throughout this process I invite you to pray to the Holy Spirit so that our journey will yield a deeper sense of communion, participation and mission in our lives.

Second, as we journey together, I invite you to listen not only to the Holy Spirit but also to voice of others. Our journey is one that is always to be rooted in dialogue. While we have much to share, there is also even more for us to learn especially when we step back and attentively and prayerfully listen to others. The framework of the Synodal journey involves a host of questions for us to ponder in our dialogue. We will be offering opportunities throughout the diocese in the future for dialogue which will eventually become part of the record. This is a time for us all to dream together.

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Finally, as we walk together, let us not forget that we come to church so that we may go forth and be Church and walk together with Christ at the center. Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that “Church and Synod are synonymous.”

Please find enclosed two items for your use. The first one is three bulletin announcements about the Synod. This could also be used as one insert. The second one is a proposed timeline.

This is an exciting time for our entire Church. I ask you to pray with me that this journey will not only renew us but also bring us all closer together so, “*That All May Be One.*” Together, let us go forth and be the Church.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Bonnar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Most Reverend David J. Bonnar
Bishop of Youngstown

DJB/sdmp
Enc.