

Four Part Bulletin Series on our Diocese's participation on the Latest Synod:

(To be run consecutively in your Parish Bulletin from Sunday, January 9th to 30th)

Part 1: What is a Synod? And what is this latest Synod all about?

A Synod is a formal process, used by the Church, in which a large number of people are consulted on a specific topic for discussion. Though it usually leads to a formal gathering from which a formal document is produced, Synods can involve countless discussion groups that precede the formal gathering, assuring the greatest amount of participation possible. Two of the most recent Church Synods include the Synod on the Family and the Synod on Youth.

In the latest Synod, opened by Pope Francis on October 10th, 2021, the Pope has asked the Church to reflect on how we journey together as Church, listen and respond to the working of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world, and how decisions are reached at all levels: who is involved, who is excluded and how can our processes be improved. In order to be a Church that walks, works and worships together, it is important that we work together for the greatest amount of participation and respect.

Part 2: How will the latest Synod work?

In order to facilitate as much participation in the discussion process as possible, Pope Francis has asked that a special document be prepared that contains both the purpose of the Synod, the way it will be organized and the various areas of discussion under consideration. This document is available from the Vatican by typing, "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission" in your Search Engine. By using this common tool, bishops from around the world are encouraged to involve as many people as possible in discussion groups throughout their Diocese. This process will conclude on June 1, 2022.

Each country, in turn, will synthesize the results from each participating diocese and send it to Rome. In receiving the collected work from around the world, Rome is charged to write an initial report that will initiate a second round of discussion and a second, more definitive, report, which, together with all that has preceded it, will be the matter for a formal gathering in Rome in 2023. The whole Synod will conclude with the issuing of a formal document that will include a reflection on our lived experience, how it is working and pastoral recommendations for the future.

Part 3: How Can I Be Involved in the Latest Synod?

Parish Pastoral Councils in each parish will be asked to organize a special meeting in January to discuss the five questions prepared for this Synod. In the last question they will be asked how they can best organize similar discussions throughout the parish, with as many different groups as possible. Opportunities to get involved in a Synod discussion group should begin as early as January and will extend to the end of May. Service Organizations, Ministry Groups, Family Groups, Single Groups, Children and Youth, Seniors, Movements within the Parish, and any other formal or informal grouping of people may also take the initiative to organize a discussion group around the same questions.

The Diocese is also planning to organize a limited amount of Zoom discussion groups, especially with youth and young adults. Sessions with youths will be advertised throughout the diocese and will require appropriate supervision and parental oversight/permission. We ask that each discussion group submit a synthesis to the diocese, outlining the most salient points and insights that came out of their discussion. The Synthesis can be sent to: Attention: Denise Rumboldt, 469 Curling St., Corner Brook, NL, A2H 3K8.

Part 4: How Will the Diocese Continue the Discussion Begun in the Latest Synod?

The Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador is very excited to play its part in the latest Synod. The Diocese not only wants to contribute to the overall success of the Synod, but we also want to follow up on the feedback and insights of our people on the way our parishes and organizations are administered.

Once the results of the initial consultation are received and synthesized, the resulting document will not only be part of the overall Synod, it will be the framework for further discussion on the local level and the way we journey together as the People of God. In short, we would like to use this Synod, and the discussions that follow, to shape the way and means by which we listen, discern and come to know the voice of God as we journey together as the People of God in Western Newfoundland and Labrador.