

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

PEOPLE YOU WANT TO KNOW. NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW.

Opening the path toward the Synod on Synodality with humility as the first virtue

People from around the archdiocese have begun to assist in the upcoming Synod of Bishops, a worldwide listening process announced by Pope Francis.

Persons from parishes, schools, colleges, and various ministries are helping to ensure that Catholics and others from every corner of the archdiocese have the chance to be heard.

The archdiocesan Synod began with an opening Mass at San Fernando Cathedral on October 17 celebrated by Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS.

The Mass broadcast on Catholic Television of San Antonio. An invited group then met in the San Fernando Cathedral Center right after the Mass to take part in a listening session.

The idea of the Synod is to get feedback on issues important to the Catholic Church today. The information eventually will be used in a meeting of bishops at the Vatican, and it also will be used by Archbishop Gustavo to plan how best to meet the needs of those here in the archdiocese.

The Synod process should not be seen as a way to change established Church doctrine.

Rather, it is a way for individuals to express positive as well as challenging observations on aspects of the Church, and a way to help influence how the Church ministers to people in the archdiocese and around the world.

In his remarks to open the listening session at the cathedral, Archbishop Gustavo described how “Synodos” is a Greek word for walking or journeying together. Saint John Chrysostom says that Synod and Church are synonymous. The first Christians even called the new religion “the way.”

“The Church is the People of God on a pilgrimage to heaven,” said the archbishop. “Many are there already; we are walking together, moved by the Holy Spirit. Synodality is an essential dimension of the Church.”

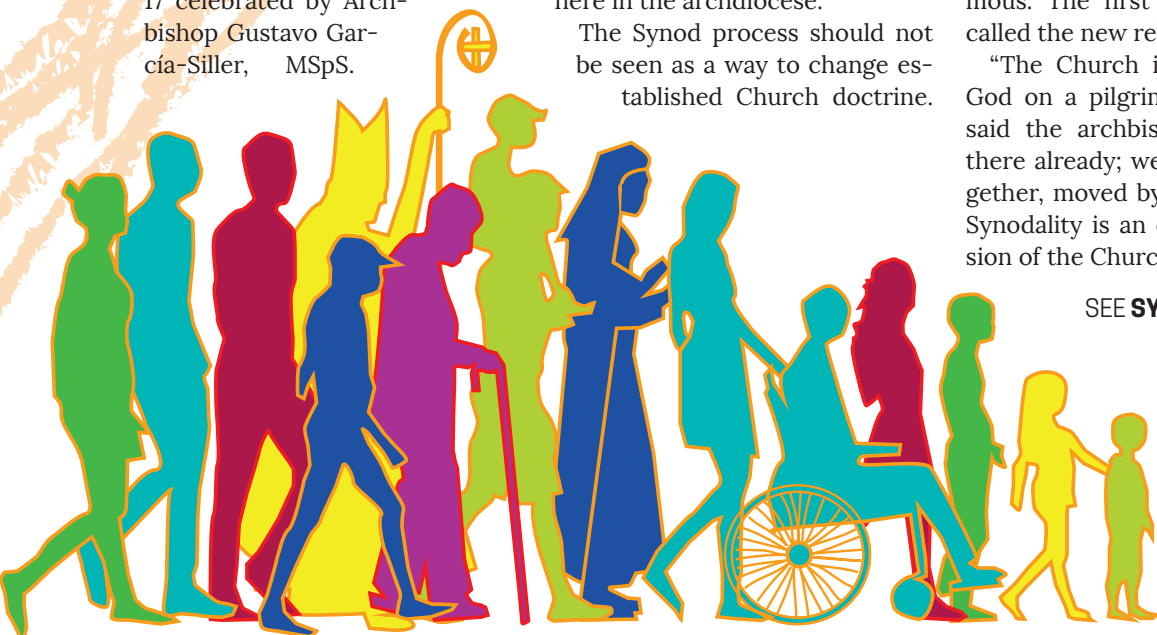
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Assembly Convocation 2021 focuses on Living as a Synodal Church

The Archdiocese of San Antonio echoes the call of Pope Francis to live as a Synodal Church. It is with this desire of the Holy Father that the archdiocese has announced an important step in the local Church's Synodal journey – Assembly Convocation 2021: Living a Synodal Church. Assembly brings the people of the archdiocese together to express communion with one another, participate in the sacramental life of the Church, and in mission as disciples of Jesus Christ. By a special grace from God, the seventh Assembly will be hosted during the beginning of this journey of Synodal transformation convoked by Pope Francis. For the first time, the Assembly will be part of the annual Clergy Convocation as a sign of pastors' unity with the people they serve on the Synodal journey.

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HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Those who work in the medical field honored at liturgy at St. Luke Church.



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HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

The season to reflect and give thanks and gratitude to God for blessings received.



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PARISH GROUNDBREAKING

Vietnamese Martyrs Church celebrates with Mass and procession.

SYNOD 2021-2023

SYNOD 2021-2023: Invoking the Holy Spirit

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However, in the last few decades, something has happened in society and in the Church throughout the world, and Archbishop Gustavo shared about some of these cultural shifts.

“When my generation was brought up, we were taught rules that most people followed. Through certain shared disciplines, we learned to relate to one another and with God, and we received our very identity as individuals and as a people. That no longer works like before, as people do not understand or trust one another like they did 60 years ago. In other words, we live at a time where people do not understand each other and everyone walks in a different direction. Most people no longer share the same values. People no longer share the same worldview, and so distrust has risen. Ultimately, all authority figures have lost credibility in the minds of people,” the archbishop explained. “A new society needs to emerge and the Church has an essential role to play in that process. Dictating rules and discipline is not enough. We need to reach out to each other’s heart to encounter, listen and discern.”

In the early 1960’s – as the whole world began to transition through the time that 60 years later Pope Francis has called an epochal change – Pope St. John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council. At

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—ARCHBISHOP GUSTAVO GARCÍA-SILLER, MSPS

sembly of the Synod of Bishops which will discuss Synodality itself.

“Pope Francis want us to listen to one another and walk together as one People of God, in order to learn what the Holy Spirit wishes to teach us



Archdiocesan participation in the Synod launched October 17 with a Mass at San Fernando Cathedral celebrated by Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS. Prayers of the faithful at the liturgy were recited in seven languages.

the end, the Council said that what laid ahead was “the period of the most gigantic transformations ever realized” in the history of the world. Pope St. Paul VI, who closed that Council, realized that bishops from around the world would still need to meet from time to time to advise him about different matters. He called those gatherings assemblies of the Synod of Bishops. Some of the most recent ones have discussed youth, the family and the New Evangelization, which Archbishop Gustavo attended at the Vatican in 2013.

The Missionary of the Holy Spirit said that what began in Rome and is occurring in San Antonio is quite unique. It is a path in preparation for an As-

sembly of the Synod of Bishops which will discuss Synodality itself. about that very process of being a pilgrim People. The Holy Father wants us to be more The Church, the People of God. Given the importance and the nature of the theme, the Pope wants the whole People of God to take part in this process,” the archbishop noted. “The fundamental question of the Synod is how this ‘journeying together’ is taking place today in our particular Churches.”

The San Antonio prelate told listeners how the Synod could be seen as a New Pentecost, using readings from the Acts of the Apostles.

Archbishop Gustavo declared, “That is the birth of Synodality. The story goes on and here we are, 2,000 years later.”

The archbishop concluded by saying that together we are inspired and grounded in the faith that we share. “The Holy Spirit communicates the faith to each one of us through the rest, in communion with the bishops and the pope. Participation refers to a call for the involvement of all who belong to the People of God. Finally, mission expresses the fact that the Church exists to evangelize.”

Attendees then gathered in table groups to elaborate on two discussion questions prior to closing comments from Auxiliary Bishop Gary Janak.

President of USCCB welcomes the ‘Synod on Synodality’ convoked by Pope Francis as diocesan consultation and dialogue phase begins

WASHINGTON • In May 2021, Pope Francis invited the global Catholic Church to gather and reflect on communion, participation, and mission within the Church. The two-year process of listening and dialogue is themed, *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, & Mission* being referred to as the “Synod on Synodality,” which the Holy Father officially opened with Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica on October 10. Dioceses throughout the world began the

next phase of the synod which includes consultation and dialogue at the diocesan level. Using a preparatory document and questionnaire to guide the discussion from the Holy See’s Synod Office, this phase runs through April 2022.

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), expressed solidarity with Pope Francis and the universal Church on the embarkation of the Synod say-

ing, “The Holy Father has called for the local churches to hold inclusive consultations with the People of God as part of the Synod. We face a challenge after over a year of being physically distanced within our communities because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Synod is an opportunity to meet the immense and important request of the Holy Father to engage in dialogue to better understand our call to holiness and feel the responsibility to participate in

the life of the Church.” He continued, “Outreach, communication, support, and encouragement are vital in order to be missionary disciples. As is with the nature of the Synod, I hope we will learn as we ‘journey together.’”

The USCCB’s website will be updated with highlights from the Synod at the local level, as well as an ongoing effort to incorporate Synodal lessons learned into the resources offered. The webpage on the Synod may be found at: www.usccb.org/synod.

SYNOD 2021-2023

Vatican gives world's dioceses more time to consult Catholics ahead of Synod on Synodality

(CNA) • The Vatican announced on October 29 that it will give dioceses around the world more time to complete local consultations ahead of the 2023 Synod on Synodality.

The Secretariat General for the Synod of Bishops said on Oct. 29 that bishops' conferences worldwide would now have until Aug. 15, 2022, to submit summaries of their consultations.

The body overseeing the two-year synodal process had previously asked for summaries by April 2022, six months after the diocesan phase was formally opened by Pope Francis in October.

The change means that dioceses now have 10 months to complete the consultation process, which has been described as the largest in human history.

Dioceses are likely to welcome the extension as synod organizers have urged them to include "all the baptized" in the consultation process, not only churchgoers.

A handbook for dioceses says: "Special care should be taken to involve those persons who may risk being excluded: women, the handicapped, refugees, migrants, the elderly, people who live in poverty, Catholics who rarely or never practice their faith, etc."

The Secretariat General said: "The numerous communications we have received in these first weeks of the synodal process from the Episcopal Conferences, dioceses and eparchies are truly an encouraging confirmation of those in the Church who are committed to celebrating the first phase of the synodal process – the theme of which is For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission – constituted by the consultation of the People of God. For all this, we are truly grateful."

"During this period, we have heard, over and over again and from many quarters, the request to extend the duration of the first phase of the synodal process in order to provide a greater opportunity for the people of

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God to have an authentic experience of listening and dialogue."

It went on: "Aware that a synodal Church is a Church that listens, considering that this first phase is essential for this synodal path and evaluating these requests, and always seeking the good of the Church, the Ordinary Council of the Synod of Bishops has decided to extend until Aug. 15, 2022, the deadline for the presentation of the summaries of



Pope Francis takes part in a moment of reflection for the opening of the Synodal path at the Vatican's New Synod Hall.

the consultations by the Episcopal Conferences, the Oriental Catholic Churches *sui iuris* and other ecclesial bodies."

The Vatican announced in May that the process leading to the Synod on Synodality would open with a diocesan phase lasting from October 2021 to April 2022.

A second, continental phase will take place from September 2022 to March 2023.

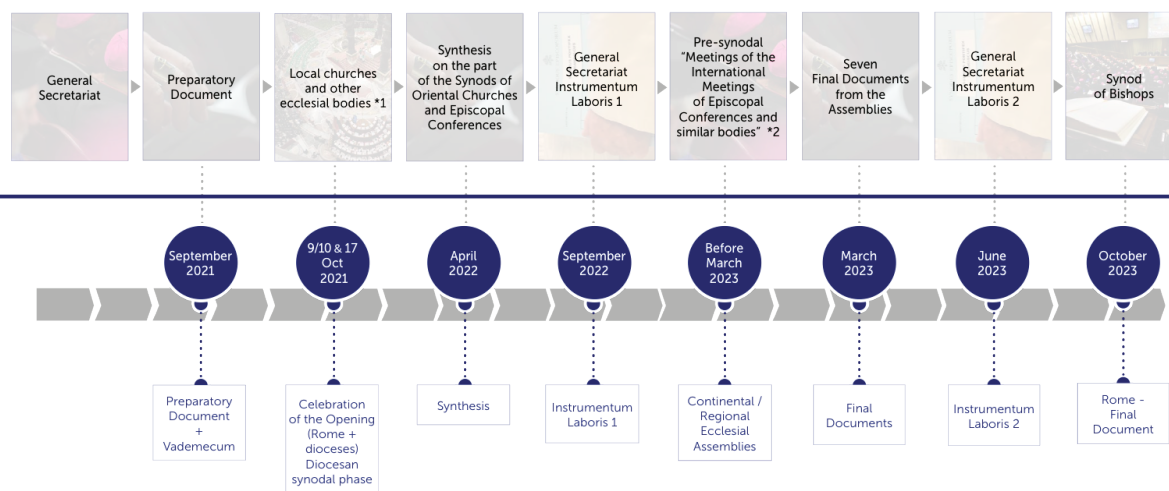
The third, universal phase will begin with the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican in October 2023.



In an address to Catholics in the Diocese of Rome in September, Pope Francis stressed the significance of the diocesan phase of the synodal process.

"To return to the synodal process, the diocesan phase is very important, since it involves listening to all the baptized, the subject of the infallible *sensus fidei in credendo* [sense of faith in believing]," he said.

FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS



*1 Dioceses, Consecrated Life (USG-USG, UNIONS & FEDERATIONS), Associations of the Faithful, Institutions of Higher Education

*2 Africa (SECAM), Oceania (FCBCO), Asia (FABC), Middle East (CPCO), Europa (CEE), Latin America (CELAM), North America (USCCB+CCCC)



CONTINUED FROM

LIVING: Many opportunities to participate

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HISTORY

From 2015-2019, the archdiocese hosted its largest annual conference for parish leaders and Catholic school teachers known as the Assembly. At this full-day conference, attendees enjoyed talks from a variety of renowned Catholic speakers, Mass with the archbishop, opportunities for confession and adoration, and an exhibition of organizations and vendors offering Catholic resources and merchandise. Assembly served as an important annual renewal for Catholic communities to gather and build a Catholic culture of encounter and accompaniment.

In 2020, the global pandemic changed the way society operated and continues to keep everyone creative in ways to outreach. Empowered with hope while aligned with the safety recommendations at the time, the archdiocese hosted the annual Assembly entirely as a digital event, live streaming across social media and on CTSA, Spectrum Channel 15. The event gathered Catholic communities across the 19 counties of the archdiocese on a new online platform, a digital stage for evangelization and catechesis.

THE SYNODAL PROCESS

The archdiocesan Synodal process is aligned with the Diocesan Phase of the world-wide synod leading towards the 16th General Assembly of Bishops in October 2023 on the theme: For a Synodal Church: Communion. Participation, and Mission convoked by Pope Francis. Locally, it is conveyed and led by Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS, in special gatherings of clergy and faithful to offer him assistance in setting the direction for the future of the local Church. The outcomes do not include addressing doctrinal questions or Church teaching. Instead, it will be focused on pastoral planning, touching on all elements of the local Church. Before discerning its implementation, the archbishop, along with

the Synod Steering Committee, will listen to recommendations and suggestions of the faithful.

To have a Synod means “to walk together.” A Synod is a dynamic diocesan planning activity. While it is centrally enabled (by a bishop or the pope), it is also locally guided by leaders at every level (pastors, parish leaders, and the faithful). The Synod strives for listening to the real questions and authentic needs of the local Church and sifts for the real issues with a wider vision where subsidiarity and creativity are greatly needed, encouraged, and embraced.

A NEW APPROACH

Immediately after Assembly each year, the priests of the archdiocese gather for an annual, three-day retreat called the Clergy Convocation. In 2021, the archbishop desired that the Assembly be transformed into an opportunity to gather pastors with their communities in a space for worship and dialogue for the opening day of the Clergy Convocation. To accomplish this, the archdiocese has combined two annual events – Assembly and the Clergy Convocation – to create Assembly Convocation 2021: Living a Synodal Church. This will serve as a unique opportunity for parish leaders to come together with their pastors on a Synodal journey. Parish leaders will have the opportunity to join their pastors for Mass with the archbishop, a keynote address on the theme of Synodality, and two small group discussions. After Assembly Convocation, it is the archbishop's desire that pastors return to their parishes with the formula for implementing Synodal Assembly Convocations at their parishes with their communities.

WHO IS INVITED?

Assembly looks different in 2021 than it has in previous years. As the first day of the annual Clergy Convocation, priests will join together with parish leaders to celebrate the gifts of the local church and the people of God. For the first time, laity will be invited to join for the opening day of the convocation. The participation of the laity in small group discussions at the parish level is vital to the Synodal journey on which the archdiocese is now embarking. For that to happen, it is

necessary to have a “pilot” experience that can be replicated at parish level by the pastor and the leaders he asks to accompany him on this day. Pastors have been asked to invite four parish leaders from their respective parishes to accompany them for the first day of the Assembly Convocation. All priests are expected to attend because this marks the first day of their retreat.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE

Assembly Convocation is a one part of the larger Synodal process convoked by Pope Francis through Archbishop Gustavo and all the bishops for each of their (arch)dioceses. The Synodal process in the archdiocese began with the opening Mass at the Cathedral of San Fernando on October 17. It will continue through this special iteration of the archdiocesan Assembly on Saturday, Nov. 6, at St. Matthew Church, where pastors will gather with their parish leaders for dialogue. In the months following Assembly, parishes will conduct additional listening and interactive sessions with the People of God throughout the archdiocese. At the end of a two-year

period of reflection on Synodality, a report will be sent to the Vatican, offering insight into the needs of the Church at this time.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

All people of the archdiocese are invited to participate in Assembly Convocation 2021 in new and unique ways. First, the faithful are invited to read the International Theological Commission document “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church.” This document summarizes the findings that undertook a study on Synodality in the life and mission of the Church.

Second, the faithful are invited to pray for the Synodal process in the archdiocese and throughout the entire world as convened by Pope Francis. Tune in to CTSA on Facebook or YouTube on Saturday, Nov. 6, at 8:15 a.m., to participate in the live-streamed Mass celebrated by Archbishop Gustavo joined with priests from throughout the archdiocese.

A third way to participate is to join in the conversation at upcoming archdiocesan events. The Synodal process will be infused into all future events.

Oblate Service Corporation Oblate Missionary Society, Inc

JOB OPENING

The Oblate Missionary Society, Inc.-Oblate Missions, a division of Oblate Service Corporation, is applicants for GROTTO SUPPORT at the Oblate Lourdes Grotto y Tepeyac. The Oblate Missionary Society, Inc. is a nonprofit mission development and fundraising office, located in Belleville, Illinois and San Antonio, TX.

POSITION: GROTTO SUPPORT

POSITION STATUS: Part-time, Non-Exempt

POSITION SUMMARY: Provides support for Grotto Masses and activities; light chapel and grounds maintenance. Assists with preparing chapel, altar and sacristy for scheduled liturgies (Ex: Mass and Eucharistic Adoration, etc.) and authorized special events. Provides general office support (answers telephones, welcomes visitors, receives and properly documents Mass requests, distributes food cards, secures funds received in accordance to procedures, etc.) Assists with kitchen hospitality duties as needed particularly during special events. Assist with preparing for special events (liturgical and religious activities). Monitors and opens Grotto Hall exterior public restrooms as needed (Ex: unlock, turn on lights, inspects premises, monitors every hour). Inspects the Grotto premises and responds to safety, maintenance and janitorial needs of the Oblate Lourdes Grotto, Grotto Chapel and Grotto Ministry Center grounds and facilities (Ex: Restrooms, pedestrian areas, seating areas, stairs, Grotto Sanctuary, devotional areas) in accordance with established safety guidelines. Provides light janitorial help. Performs other duties as required.

WORK HOURS: Sundays 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. occasional special events and evening shifts as needed.

EDUCATION/SKILLS: High school diploma or equivalency, required. Experience in sacristy ministry, preferred. Communication, personal, and organization skills, required. Basic bilingual (English and Spanish) language skills, required. Basic knowledge of the Roman Catholic Church, required.

JOB CLOSING DATE: Until Filled

Qualified candidates should send resume to mvaldez@omiusa.org

Employee referrals are welcomed

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