

Dear People of the Archdiocese of St. John's,

In October of 2021, Pope Francis opened a **Synod on Synodality** which began a synodal process in the Church that continues to this very day. It has included gatherings of the faithful, lay and ordained, all over the world, at the local diocesan level as well as at national, continental, and international levels, including Assemblies in Rome in October of 2023 and October of 2024.

The **Synod on Synodality** is, in essence, an invitation to listen to one another. To listen to our collective experiences as a people of Faith. Pope Francis, when he called the Synod, envisioned a Church where everyone's voice matters. He called the Church to renew its efforts to listen to God's people and for God's people to listen to the Church with its rich teachings and tradition. Together, lay, religious, ordained, and those at the margins of society, are being invited to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to all of us as Church in this time and place in our history.

Part of this synodal experience is discovering how we are already living synodally. It is important to examine and celebrate how we are being Synodal and how we can grow more in this way as we look to the future.

Here, in our Archdiocese, we had **Listening Sessions** in 2021-2022 in preparation for the October 2023 Assembly in Rome and again in the Spring of 2024 in preparation for the October 2024 Assembly in Rome.

In 2024, the Assembly in Rome produced a document based on all the previous consultations, called the **Final Document**. Pope Francis accepted this document as official magisterial teaching of the Church.

We are now being invited to again have **Listening Sessions** at the diocesan level to reflect upon this **Final Document**, and in the late Spring of 2027, to have an **Archdiocesan Assembly** at which we gather the fruits of these listening sessions and compile an Archdiocesan **Narrative** and an Archdiocesan **Letter to other Churches**. In June of 2027, this **Narrative** and **Letter** are to be forwarded to the National Synodal Team and the General Secretariat of the Synod to be used by them in preparing for the October 2028 Assembly in Rome.

With the above in mind, I am inviting each parish of the Archdiocese to form a **Parish Small Group** of five to eight persons to meet in three to six **Listening Sessions** between now and March of 2027. At the end of their last meeting, I am asking that these **Parish Small Groups** each prepare a two-page **Narrative** that summarizes the group's reflections at their

meetings and their dreams and hopes for their parish. These ***Narratives*** will then be shared at our ***Archdiocesan Assembly*** in the Spring and moulded into an Archdiocesan ***Narrative*** to be shared with the Church Universal.

Please join with me in praying for God's blessings upon this ***Recollection Stage*** of our Archdiocesan Synodal Journey, and for the Holy Spirit's inspiration and guidance for all those who will be invited to participate in these ***Listening Sessions*** and our ***Archdiocesan Assembly***.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Peter Hundt

Archbishop of St. John's