

Archdiocese of Santa Fe
4000 St. Joseph Place NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120



Telephone: 505-831-8120
Fax: 505-831-8101
Email: archbishop.office@archdiosf.org

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

October 17, 2021
Year of Saint Joseph

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This past Sunday at a Mass celebrated in St. Peter Basilica, Pope Francis inaugurated *Synod 2021-2023: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*. This Sunday, October 17th, marks the beginning of the diocesan phase of the synodal process, a process that invites our local Church, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit as we discern how God is calling us to communion, participation and mission here in the Southwest.

The word "synod" comes from the Greek and means "an assembly." There have been quite a few synods in the Catholic Church over the centuries, each with a particular theme. The *Synod for a Synodal Church* is assembling the entire Church, at the invitation of our Holy Father, to take up the question of what it means to be Church. We will assemble in parishes and schools, in religious orders and councils. The entire archdiocese will be involved: lay, religious and ordained as we discern how the Holy Spirit is leading us in communion, participation and mission. What a marvelous way for all of us to live out our baptismal call to be the Body of Christ in the modern world as we listen deeply to the Word of God that urges us forward.

Actually, in one sense we began this process quite a few months ago. Last spring, I organized a commission to study how our archdiocese can emerge from Chapter 11 reorganization, building on our strengths and discerning how the Lord is calling us to move forward as we continue to seek healing for those who have been abused and for our local Church. This *Rebuild My Church Commission* recently concluded that their task is in essence the same as the diocesan synodal process beginning today. Thus, it turns out we have been planning for the synod all along. Now we are taking steps to combine both initiatives into one discernment process. In the weeks ahead, we will be announcing the elements of this process and how we will all be involved in this prayerful and life-giving synod.

I ask you to join me today in entrusting this synodal process to God and to the maternal intercession of Mary, Queen of the Apostles and Mother of the Church. The first phase of the *Synod for a Synodal Church*, and indeed the entire process, is about prayer. Therefore, I ask that we begin by praying to the Holy Spirit, seeking Divine Guidance as we engage this marvelous expression of what it means to be Church, the Body of Christ. Beginning today, I ask that all parishes, schools, religious orders and other Catholic entities throughout the archdiocese pray to the Holy Spirit for enlightenment and direction. I have attached the Synod Prayer to this letter, recommending that it be used at Mass either to conclude the Prayer of the Faithful or before the final blessing. This prayer is also fitting to begin or end paralyturgical events, meetings or classes. Let us all open our hearts to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and ask our Blessed Mother to intercede for us as well, confident that God will illumine our path of communion, participation and mission.

Wishing you the fullness of Christ's peace and with sentiments of gratitude, I remain

Your Servant in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Wester". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend John C. Wester
Archbishop of Santa Fe