



### **SYNOD OF BISHOPS 2023**

Pope Francis recently announced that the next Synod of Bishops will take place in October 2023. The Theme of the Synod is: ***For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.*** For the first time, the meeting will be the culmination of a “three-year path” involving all of the People of God at every level of the Church. This “path” is a process rather than an event, which Pope Francis will solemnly inaugurate this October 9-10, is meant to be a manifestation of “synodality) which is a form that realizes the participation of all the people of God in mission.

The synodal path will take place in three phases. The first phase (October 2021 to April 2022) begins on October 17<sup>th</sup> under the leadership of the Bishop in each Diocese. This stage is conceived as a broad consultation with the People of God in each Diocese. The second phase (September 2022 to March 2023) is the “continental” phase. This will involve the fruit of deliberations on each Continent. For example, Canada and the United States of America will collate their responses to the questions posed by the Holy See and submit them to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops in Rome by March 2023. The final phase of the Synod will take place in October 2023 with the celebration of the Assembly of Bishops in Rome.

In the Diocese of Hamilton, a Committee has been established to guide the Diocesan Phase of the Synodal Process. Information will be sent to the Parishes in late October and the parishioners in the Diocese of Hamilton will have an opportunity to respond to the questions to be considered by the Synod. The actual consultation will take place beginning in November and conclude by mid-December, so that our Diocesan Report can be prepared and sent to the Ontario Assembly of Catholic Bishops to be included in the Canadian report. We pray for the success of this unique and historic synodal process:

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in your name.

With you alone to guide us, make yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in you our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of the truth and what is right.

All this we ask of you, who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son,  
for ever and ever. Amen.