

St. Augustine's Church Launches its Participation in the Synodal Process

The following is taken from Archbishop Miller's homily at the Opening Mass of the Synodal Journey for the Synod on Synodality in the Archdiocese of Vancouver on October 24, 2021 at Holy Rosary Cathedral (<https://rcav.org/synod/resources#archbishop-miller>)

“Introduction

The good Lord has gathered us in our Cathedral this afternoon to begin an historic synodal process in preparation for the Synod of Bishops that will be held in Rome, two years from now, in October 2023. Its theme will be: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission.”

What Is the Synod and the Synodal Process?

The Archdiocese of Vancouver is no stranger to the role of a synod in the Church's life. On May 4, 1997, Archbishop Adam Exner released his pastoral letter “Toward a New Springtime,” which set the Archdiocese on a nine-year journey. This synodal process, that many of you took part in, culminated with the Final Synod Assembly and Declaration on the Synod on December 3, 2006. Today we are embarking on a different process, a journey with the universal Church guided by the Holy Father.

The word “Synod” comes from the Greek word that means both an assembly of persons and a journey taken together of mind, heart, and spirit, one aimed at discerning God's will for his Church.

Likewise, the word “synodality” refers to those habits of mind, heart and spirit needed for us to participate fruitfully in discussions that will manifest and deepen the unity in communion so necessary for advancing the Church's mission. “

Starting in March our Parish will hold a series of Conversation Circles to address 6 questions which will form the basis of our Parish input to the Synod process. The questions are:

1. What helps or prevents you from being active in the Church's mission?
2. What areas of the Church's mission are we missing or neglecting?
3. What particular issues in the Church do we need to pay more attention to?
4. What particular issues in society do we need to pay more attention to?

5. How can we, the local Church, journey with our Indigenous brothers and sisters in a process of healing and reconciliation?
6. From this time of listening, could you sum up in one or two sentences how the Spirit is calling us to grow in “journeying together” in our Church in Vancouver?

Note: The Church's mission is to follow Christ's great commission to his disciples ... “To make disciples of all nations”.....

Over the next few weeks we will be posting opportunities for you to participate in these Conversation Circles so please keep an eye on the bulletin and our Website.

Our Archbishop makes clear how important this process is in this quote from his Homily at Holy Rosary Cathedral on October 24, 2021

“In coming weeks and months, under the direction of our Chancellor, Barb Dowding, and the team she is working with, we will all be learning how to put this synodal way – this “synodality” – into practice, so that, in years to come, it will become more of a habit. Admittedly, it seems right now that Rome has thrown us into the deep end of the pool. However, let’s remember that this is only the first attempt using a process that the Pope hopes will characterize the Church’s future life. We’re all learning together, and it will be a challenge.

It’s a daunting task, but a necessary one. I believe that at all costs we have to avoid “the mistake of not taking seriously the times in which we are living” and of trying to apply “old solutions to new problems.”³

We also have to keep from thinking that the Synod and the synodal process mimic parliamentary debate, are just elaborate opinion polls or are study groups for those learned in theology or Church affairs. Quite the contrary, Francis says unequivocally that everyone is called to participate, because “the Synod is an ecclesial event and its protagonist is the Holy Spirit.”⁴

³ Francis, Opening Address for the Synod (9 October 2021).

⁴ Francis, Opening Address for the Synod (9 October 2021).

There is rich material on this process available at RCAV.org/synod/resources