



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

1150 Buffalo Road
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September 17, 2021
Memorial of Saint Robert Bellarmine

Reverend and dear Fathers; dear Pastoral Administrators:

As you may be aware, Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has convoked the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, from October 2021 through October 2023. The first phase is the “diocesan synodal phase” which will begin in October 2021 in all dioceses throughout the world under the theme: **“For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.”**

This first phase is described as “listening to one another and walking forward together, guided by the Holy Spirit” (*Vademecum*, no. 4.1). The Synod then will proceed to a continental phase, and finally conclude with an Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October 2023. From its theme, we understand that Jesus Christ is “the absolute protagonist who takes the initiative, sowing the words and signs of the coming of the Kingdom without ‘showing partiality’ (cf. Acts 10:34)” (*Preparatory Document*, p. 20).

In response to the request of our Holy Father, I have appointed two Diocesan Representatives, Mr. Bernard Grizard, Director of Pastoral Services, and Dr. Shannon Kilbridge, Associate Director of Pastoral Services, who will foster “a broad consultation process in order to gather the wealth of the experiences of lived synodality” (*Preparatory Document*, no. 31; *Vademecum*, no. 1.5). The information gathered will be used for the creation of a ten-page report (as instructed) that is to be submitted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in April, 2022. I have attached a preliminary timeline for the first stage of the synodal process. Mr. Grizard and Dr. Kilbridge will send additional information in the coming weeks, inviting your participation and describing possible means of extending this invitation to others.

While this is an initiative for the Church throughout the world, it also comes at the same time as the Catholic Church in the United States has been preparing to begin the *Eucharistic Revival*, which will take place from July 2022 to December 2024. In this regard, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* cites the Second Vatican Council’s teaching: “The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch” (*CCC*, no. 1324).” Thus, these two initiatives necessarily complement each other, for once we have come to truly know, love and bond with Jesus, we appreciate the call of every baptized person to participate in His life which culminates in Eucharistic Communion, which then embraces the mission: the charitable service we render to our sisters and brothers in God’s family and the invitation extended to all people, especially the poor, the suffering,

the outcast, the forgotten, the foreigner and the alienated to encounter the Risen Christ, visible in the Most Holy Eucharist, His voice heard in Holy Scripture, and His love felt through their sisters and brothers in the family of God.

Invoking the intercession of our Diocesan patron, Saint John Fisher, I remain, with an assurance of my prayers,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

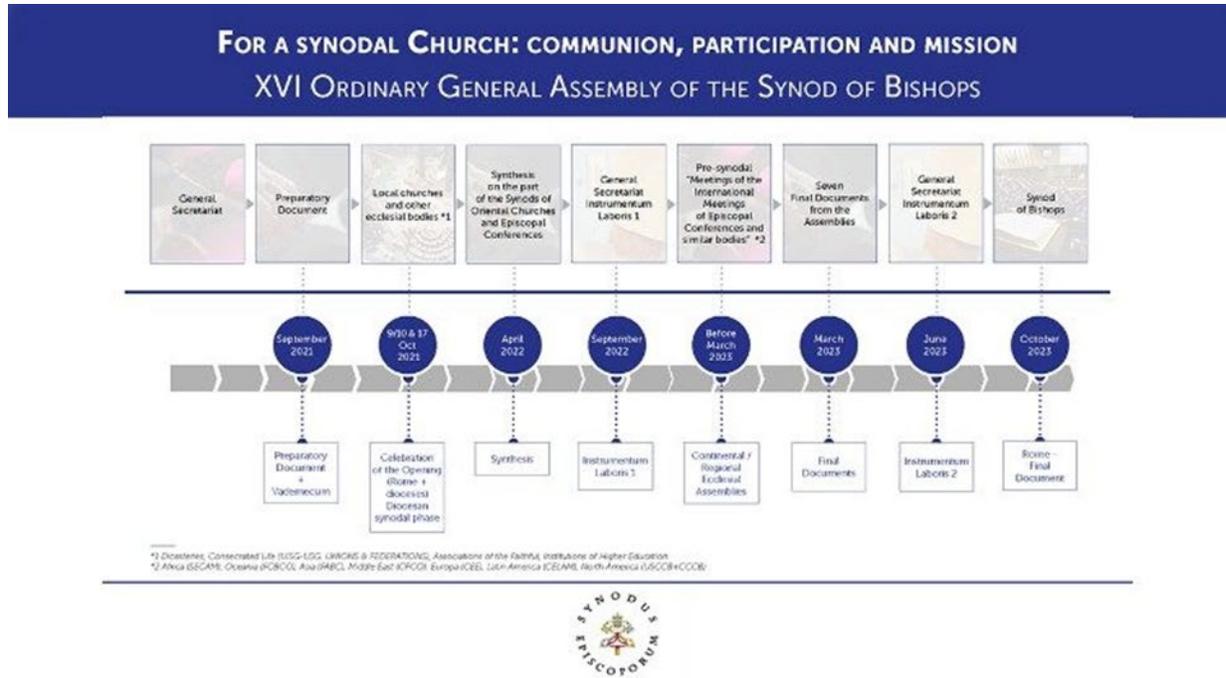
+ *Salvatore R. Matano*

*The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Rochester*

-with attachment-

For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission

XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops



Diocesan Synod Process Preliminary Timeline

June 22, 2021: Memorandum from Reverend Monsignor Jeffrey D. Burill, General Secretary of the USCCB, to submit representative names for the Synodal Consultation

June 30, 2021: Bishop Matano named Mr. Bernard Grizard and Dr. Shannon Kilbridge Diocesan representatives for the Synodal process.

September 6, 2021: Vatican released the Preparatory Document and Vademecum for the Synod

<http://www.synod.va/en/news/preparatory-document.html>

<http://www.synod.va/en/news/vademecum-for-the-synod-on-synodality.html>

September 7, 2021: Memorandum from Reverend Michael J.K. Fuller, Interim General Secretary of the USCCB, announcing the release of the documents and the USCCB contact

September 7 - 17:

- Brainstorming with Bishop Matano about implementation of a synodal process in the DOR
- Development of a general plan and timeline for the Diocesan phase of the Synod

- Information gathering on survey platform options, Eucharistic Revival timelines, and other planned resources from the USCCB

September 20 – October 17:

- Letter to Pastors from Bishop Matano introducing the process to them and inviting to work with representatives for implementing the synod process
- Email from Mr. Grizard and Dr. Kilbridge to pastors providing more details and timeframe about the process
- Possible hiring of administrative support staff
- Meeting with Eucharistic Revival Committee
- Development of an online survey which can be used for individual responses directly to the diocese
- Development of facilitation resource to assist parishes and special groups to hold in person input sessions
- Create Synod landing page on the DOR website
- Bishop's letter in the October edition of the Catholic Courier
- Bishop's Mass on October 9 – 10
- Invitation for parishes to announce on October 17th and pray for the success of the Synod

October 30, 2021 – March 1, 2022:

- Communication of survey link and in person options to parishes and special groups
- Support for in person opportunities
- Identification of underrepresented groups and outreach to provide input
- Identification of drafting team and process

March 1 – April 2022:

- Identify key areas of concern for the report to be sent to USCCB
- Creation and approval of the report

April 2022:

- Bishop sends report to USCCB
- Presentation of results to Presbyteral Council and parishes