



BISHOP OF HAMILTON

January 4, 2023

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

Thirteen months ago, the Holy Father invited the whole Church, and indeed the whole world, to enter into a journey called the *Synod on Synodality*. This journey will culminate with the Synod of Bishops which will take place in October of 2023 and 2024. It is an opportunity for the Church to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through its members.

After the initial opening ceremony in Rome in October 2021, each Diocese also celebrated an opening ceremony followed by a listening process to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. In the Diocese of Hamilton, our process involved some *in-person discussions*, however since Covid restrictions made in-person gatherings difficult, if not close to impossible, most of the input came through *an online survey*. We received just under 2,000 survey results. These results were analyzed and our *Diocesan Report* was produced. (This Report along with all the other reports on the Synod can be found on our Diocesan website.) This Report was combined with the eleven other Ontario Latin-rite Diocesan Reports and two Ontario Eastern Eparchial Reports to create the *Ontario Synod Report*. The Ontario Report was sent to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and together with the reports from the three other Canadian regions was used to create the *Canadian Report*, which was subsequently sent to Rome.

We are now at the *Continental Stage* of the Synod. The Vatican having received 112 Latin Rite Reports and 15 Oriental Church Reports, has produced a working document called, "*Enlarge the space of your tent*". This document will be discussed by the seven continental groups. Our group is the *North American group*, which consists of Canada and the United States of America. These final seven reports will be sent to the Vatican, and from these, the *Working Document for the Synod of Bishops* will be created.

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FORWARD TOGETHER IN CHRIST

Inspired by the Synodal process, and aware that we needed a collective reflection on the life of our Diocese, we initiated a process called, *Forward Together in Christ*.

Our first step was to arrange discussions groups with our Priests, Permanent Deacons and Pastoral Ministers. These discussions have already provided greater insight to our Diocesan challenges and hopes. As we move into the Spring, we will expand our outreach by asking for the input of various Catholic groups and organizations. Next Fall, ***Forward Together in Christ***, will move into the parish phase of our consultations. Priests and people of each parish in our Diocese will be invited to come together for discussion and wisdom sharing. It is by hearing the many voices of the Church, Clergy, Religious and Laity that we will be able to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit and move ***Forward Together in Christ***. Over the next several months, the Diocese will produce three brochures: “*What is Synodality*”, “*The Synod*”, and “*Forward Together in Christ*”. Hopefully, these brochures will assist all of us to better understand and participate in the Synodal process, for it is TOGETHER, moved by the Spirit, that we build the Kingdom of God.

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

+ Douglas Crosby, OMI

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton.

+ W.L. Lobsinger

(Most Rev.) Wayne Lobsinger
Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton.

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