



ARCHDIOCESE OF ANCHORAGE-JUNEAU
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

October 17, 2021

Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis inaugurated a two-year preparation process for the 2023 Synod with the theme **“For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.”** Synodality sets out to achieve an ambitious goal: teaching and uniting the faithful, lay and religious, by coming together in dialogue to explore the needs and focus of the Church.

Our Holy Father began the Synod preparation process last weekend at the Vatican with prayers invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the celebration of the Eucharist. This weekend, we do the same in the Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau. A Synod is a process of pastoral planning with the voices of all Catholics to be heard. The Synod is for the good of the whole Church, both locally and universally.

There are three phases to the Synod process: Diocesan, Continental, and Assembly of Bishops in Rome. The Diocesan Phase begins today as we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This phase is a wonderful opportunity to come together in our new Archdiocese, uniting it with the Catholic Church throughout the world. The process in the Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau will involve focused listening sessions in our parishes, schools, and social action groups.

The Diocesan Phase in our Archdiocese will continue until March 1, 2022. You will have the opportunity to gather at your parish and local communities to respond to questions, listen to each other, provide individual and group feedback, reactions, and suggestions. During this phase of the process, we encounter and experience the synodal journey together.

The success of synodality ultimately rests with all of us. I invite you to participate in the dialogue and discussion sessions when they are available at your parish.

May God bless you, and may the Holy Spirit guide us in our endeavor.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop Andrew Bellisario, C.M.