



SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF MISSISSAUGA

For the Glory of God

Prot. No. 130/ 2021

November 10, 2021

CIRCULAR - Synodal Church

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis officially inaugurated the path towards the Synod 2021- 2023 on October 10, 2021, with the topic “**For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission**”. Following this solemn opening, the Synodal journey is planned to proceed with in three phases:

- 1) Phase in the Local Churches and other ecclesial realities: October 2021- August 2022
- 2) Continental Phase: September 2022- March 2023
- 3) Universal Church Phase: October 2023

What does the word synod mean?

Synod is originally a Greek word composed of *syn* (with or together with) and *odos* (path or way). So, Synod indicates the path along which the People of God journeying together. “The principle of synodality is the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God” (46, *Synodality in the Life and the Mission of the Church*). Since the beginning of the Church, synods have been convoked on various levels (diocesan, provincial, regional, patriarchal, or universal) to discern, in the light of the Word of God and listening to the Holy Spirit, when doctrinal, liturgical, canonical and pastoral questions that arose from time to time had to be resolved.

Synodal Process

The synodal journey in the three phases will follow the eparchial, continental, and universal, with each phase to be the fruit of a “*journeying together*” of the whole people of God. The Synod of Bishops is the point of convergence of this listening process conducted at every level of the Church’s life. In “*journeying together*”, we will listen to each other with an open mind and heart, without prejudices, and speaking with courage integrating freedom, truth, and charity (30, *Preparatory Document*). A synodal Church walks forward in communion to pursue a common mission through the participation of each and every one of her members.

Pope Francis wants to hear from the whole Church about what is happening in local parishes. The Church wants to know what individuals think we should all be doing to help make our parishes better. The way he has proposed for doing this is a synodal process. The synod 'is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be, to make people's hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength to our hands for our common mission' (Cf. 32, *Preparatory Document*).

Journeying Together in our Eparchy

Our eparchial level inauguration will be conducted virtually on November 20, 2021; and we are conducting an Orientation Session virtually on the same day on the topic **“Synod 2021-2023: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission”**. I cordially invite our Priests, Consecrated men and women, Pastoral Council and Finance Council members, all the Heads of the Departments and Associations of the Eparchy, Parish Council Members and the *Kaikkarans* from the parishes. The resource persons for the session are Rev. Dr. Thomas Vadakkal (Secretary, CBCI Office for Doctrine and Asst. Professor, *Paurastya Vidyapitham* Vadavathoor) and Rev. Dr. Sebastian Chalackal (Professor, *Paurastya Vidyapitham* Vadavathoor).

Our eparchial synodal process will bring together the voices of the People of God reflecting how is this “*journeying together*” happening today in the local Church and what steps does the holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “*journeying together*”.

I invite all of you to keep the synodal process and our Eparchy for “*journeying together*” in the Way, the Truth, and the Life in your daily prayers.

Yours in Christ,



Mar Jose Kalluvelil

Bishop, Eparchy of Mississauga

NB. Please read this Circular in our parishes and missions during Holy Qurbana on **November 14, 2021**.