



Renewing our Mission as One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church

September 15, 2022

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On December 6, 2021, the Diocese of San José, following the call of Pope Francis to be a "listening Church," I called on our diocese to begin a yearlong process of prayer, listening, and discernment in preparation for our first Diocesan Synod to be held on January 27 - 29, 2023. I invited us all – laity, religious, and clergy – to call upon the Holy Spirit to prepare ourselves for a process of listening, discernment, and pastoral planning. Implementing a new pastoral plan will prepare us for our 50th Jubilee of the Diocese of San José in 2031, which happily coincides with the 500th anniversary of Mary's appearance and message to St. Juan Diego in 1531. We will look to Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Star of the New Evangelization, as our guide as we seek to evangelize anew Silicon Valley.

This post-pandemic time is a time of tremendous opportunity. This is a time to **renew our faith** in Christ and to strike out "into the deep water" (Luke 5:4) with trust that the Lord is with us in the boat, the Church, battered as it may be by many headwinds, yet continuing toward the destiny to which he calls us, the fullness of the Kingdom of God.

The upcoming Diocesan Synod 2023 mirrors what Pope Francis has done for the global Church through the Universal Synod, but with a local focus. The synodal process involves **encountering** each other, **listening** to one another, and **discerning** where and how the Holy Spirit calls us to proclaim and live the Gospel. Pope Francis has spoken of the "infinite creativity" of the Holy Spirit (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 278) and the need for us not to sit "on the sidelines of this march of living hope" and let things pass us by. Instead, we should be engaged actively in life and the world. Our mission as a Church in this world demands new initiatives and creativity in teaching the truth and living the faith.

Therefore, with the Diocesan Synod 2023, ***we seek to renew the Diocese of San José in depth (spiritually for laity, religious, clergy) and in width (organizationally for parishes, schools, chancery) to fulfill the mission of renewing all things in Christ.*** I have appointed a Synod Steering Committee of laity and clergy to help plan and implement the synod process.

Taking into consideration the feedback from the diocesan report on the universal synod, the Synod Steering Committee recommendations, and initial consultations with priests, deacons, and diocesan leaders this spring and summer, we will use the four marks of the Church to guide our consultations with our parish and school communities in the upcoming months: ***One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.***

- **One:** To embrace and tangibly demonstrate the unity of our Church across the Diocese

- **Holy:** To inspire and form the Catholics in truly becoming disciples of Jesus Christ
- **Catholic:** To increase the faithful's encounter of Santa Clara County's unique diversity and to leverage such diversity (ethnic, age, social-economic, etc.) to enrich our local Church
- **Apostolic:** To become outward-looking in order to evangelize individuals, families, and our culture

In our synod process, we will listen to the wisdom and insights of the faithful throughout the diocese to surface various creative ideas and discern pastoral needs and priorities in our diocese for the coming years. I invite you to learn more about the process and how you can participate by visiting the [Diocesan Synod 2023 webpage](#).

Our Lady's appearance to St. Juan Diego set in motion an unimaginable, unforeseen, dynamic evangelization of the Americas where the response to the Gospel message had previously been rather limited. Through Mary's presence, words, and intercession, the Gospel message spread deeply and broadly. We pray that Our Lady of Guadalupe will guide us in our diocesan synod.

I asked that all Catholics in the diocese join me in praying for the success of our diocesan synod and for the growth and deepening of the Catholic faith in our diocese. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, let us ask the Lord to guide us and accompany us, to give us renewed strength and determination in facing the challenges ahead as we proclaim and live the Gospel.

Most Rev. Oscar Cantú
Bishop of San José

