



October 27, 2021

My Brother Priests and Deacons,

Pope Francis has encouraged the whole Church to participate in a *Listening and Discernment* process in preparation for the Synod of Bishops to take place in Rome in October of 2023. This preparation is an essential and integral element for the upcoming Synod entitled, *Communion, Participation and Mission*. Think of it as a world-wide *Listening Session* which, in fact, it is intended to be. Literally every diocese in the world and every parish in every diocese will be invited to take part and give some input. This diocesan phase will conclude in April of 2022 at which time every diocese in the world will forward to Rome a very concise summary of its findings which will determine the content and direction of the Synod. In fact, the aim of all is to help the Church and everyone in it to live, evangelize and operate in a synodal way. We will all be learning more about what that means in the weeks to come. I have put together a Synod Committee which will guide us all through this process over the coming months. You will be receiving much more material and information through them.

Many dioceses in the United States and throughout the world have already launched this effort with an opening celebration of the Eucharist. Our opening of this synodal process will take place on **the Vigil of the Feast of Christ the King on Saturday, November the 20th at Holy Spirit Church, Fresno at 4:00 PM**. It is a beautiful way to conclude our current Liturgical Year and to begin the New year with a focus on listening to the living voice of the People of God which is at the core of the synodal way. You are most welcome to join me, along with 1-2 representatives from each of our parishes. I understand that it is a busy day for everyone so please understand this as an invitation. **For those who cannot attend personally, and that would be most of you, please be sure to celebrate the opening of the Synod process in your parish in the following simple way:**

- At all of your Liturgies for the Feast of Christ the King on November 20th and 21st, read the first paragraph of this memo as a message from me announcing this major effort and introducing the very basic time frame of the diocesan process.

- Then, have everyone pray together the *Adsumus Prayer for the Synod* (enclosed). This can be done either at the end of your homily or before the Final Blessing and Dismissal.

I would like to leave you with a quote from the *Official Handbook* that every bishop in the world recently received in preparation for this extraordinary Synod:

“One of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council was the institution of the Synod of Bishops. While the Synod of Bishops has taken place up until now as a gathering of bishops with and under the authority of the Pope, the Church increasingly realizes that synodality is the path for the entire People of God. Hence the Synodal process is no longer only an assembly of bishops but a journey for all the faithful, in which every local Church has an integral part to play.”

I look forward to continuing this journey with you and find myself immensely grateful for your ministry, zeal and cooperation.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph V. Brennan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Joseph V. Brennan, D.D.
Bishop, Diocese of Fresno

Enclosed: *Adsumus Prayer* in English and Spanish