

The Pastor's Column - June 29th, 2023



- *How can we make listening to the People of God the ordinary and habitual way of conducting decision-making processes in the Church at all levels of its life?*
- *What efforts have been made to welcome the voice of the poorest and to integrate their contribution?*
- *What concrete steps are needed to welcome those who feel excluded from the Church because of their status or sexuality (for example, remarried divorcees, people in polygamous marriages, LGBTQ+ people, etc.)?*
- *How can welcoming migrants become an opportunity to walk with people from another culture, especially when we share the same faith?*
- *Is it possible to envisage women's inclusion in the diaconate, and in what way?*

Who is asking all these questions and Why? Breaking News: The Vatican is!

These are but a few of the provocative questions being posed in preparation to attend the upcoming Synod on Synodality this October. Clerics and Lay folks will be discussing all these issues and for the first time in centuries, religious women and lay men and women will have a voice AND a vote! Something to salute this

Independence Holiday! [Here's the link to the document with all the reflection questions.](#)

What does this all mean and what is Synodality? "Walking Together" is what synod means and Pope Francis is calling us to envision a Church that responds to the Lord by accompanying one another on the journey of faith. He says: "A synodal Church is a Church that listens, because it is aware that listening 'is more than hearing.' It is a reciprocal listening in which everyone has something to learn, each one listening to the others; and all listening to the Holy Spirit." God willing this will begin a new chapter in our Church challenging it not to think and act "Top Down" but rather in a manner that is truly collaborative. It's a significant and bold step which won't come to pass unless we do our part.

This fall we will begin a process in which we can all come together and listen to one another and the Holy Spirit so we can chart an agenda to respond to the mandate of Jesus: Go out to all the world and tell the Good News. A new parish council will be established to work with the pastoral staff to help realize our goals.

Yes, there is much to do. However, **Summer is here!** It is time to slow down a bit, rest and rejuvenate. Enjoy the Outdoors! Amid your summer plans, I invite you to take a moment to imagine how St. Paul's can best meet the needs of our day and serve our fellow parishioners and those beyond the pews, especially the most vulnerable among us.

I'm new here... so I'll be around all of July and most of August if you have a blinding new insight that can't wait until September. Most of all, I look forward to renewing old friendships and making new ones! It's great to be back as your Pastor!

Happy 4th of July!
Dios Te Bendiga! God Bless!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Eric". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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