

By Mary Kay McPartlin

Most Saturdays Feb. 12 through April 23 from 9 a.m. to noon, Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Crookston are invited to gather at different locations to participate in synodality prayer and listening sessions. The invitation for each session is for all those in the Diocese of Crookston – people may attend whichever session is most convenient and are not limited to one nearest their parish.

"After consultation with the diocesan Synod team, we decided to focus the events on prayer and listening, especially giving me an opportunity to hear directly from the people what things in the diocese are working well and the challenges and opportunities we face," said Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens.

Each prayer and listening session follows the same format, and Bishop Cozzens plans to attend most. This special event provides him the opportunity to continue traveling throughout the diocese to meet his Catholic flock. He is excited about the opportunity to listen to the ideas and concerns of people throughout the Diocese of Crookston.

According to Bishop Cozzens, "It will be a great opportunity to pray and listen to the Holy Spirit together as we discern where God is leading us. As our Holy Father has said, the Synod is not a political process but a discernment process, a process of listening to the Holy Spirit. We know the Holy Spirit speaks through many sources as we discern his voice from the voice of our world and culture."

The format is designed to focus first on prayer, then table discussions. A session facilitator will provide introductions and guide attendees through the morning's agenda.

Synod Background

On May 21, 2021, Pope Francis surprised the Church by announcing that the Synod of Bishops postponed due to the pandemic will be preceded by a synodal process that includes "listening to all of the baptized" in every local diocese before the bishops gather again in 2023.

The theme of the synodal process is: "For a synodal Church: Communion, participation and mission."

In comments made to Vatican Media, Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, said the change "from an event into a process" was chosen because "the time was ripe for a wider participation of the people of God in a decision-making process that affects the whole Church and everyone in the Church."

Cardinal Grech explained, "The governing principle of this consultation of the people of God is contained in the ancient principle 'that which touches upon all must be approved by all.'" He added, "This is not about democracy or populism or anything like that. Rather, it is the Church that, as the people of God, a people who, by virtue of baptism, is an active subject in the life and mission of the Church."

Cardinal Grech emphasized the importance of allowing everyone to have their voices heard. "God willing, one of the fruits of the synod is that we might all understand that a decision-making process in the Church always begins with listening, because only in this way can we understand how and where the Spirit wants to lead the Church."

All Synod sessions are on Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon unless otherwise noted

Saturday, Feb. 12 — St. Bernard, Thief River Falls (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Saturday, Feb. 19 — St. Joseph, Brooks (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Saturday, March 5 — Holy Rosary, Detroit Lakes (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Saturday, Mar 12 — Sacred Heart, Roseau & St. Michael, Mahanomen (9:00 am to 12:00 pm)

Saturday, March 19 — TBD (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Saturday, March 26 — Sacred Heart, East Grand Forks (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Tuesday, March 29 — St. Joseph, Moorhead (6 to 9 p.m.)

Saturday, April 2 — Sts. Peter and Paul, Warren (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Saturday, April 9 — St. Joseph, Ada (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Saturday, April 23 — TBD (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)