



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

September 24, 2021

Dear Brother Priests and Deacons,

His Holiness Pope Francis has announced that the next Synod of Bishops will begin with the participation of every diocese throughout the world. Entitled *For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission*, the Holy Father will open the Synod this October, with each diocese invited to celebrate the opening of the Synod on Sunday, October 17, 2021. The diocesan phase, which will conclude in April 2022, is an invitation by Pope Francis for us as the local Church of Philadelphia to offer our experience of journeying together as the People of God for the benefit of the universal Church. This consultation is an opportunity for all the baptized to be heard and to deepen our experience of being a synodal Church.

The scope of this diocesan phrase is ambitious and will require further discernment as to how we can best respond to the Holy Father's invitation to participate in the Synod. Our response is important, not only for the good of the universal Church, but for the opportunity it offers us and all the faithful of the Archdiocese to reflect on our lived experience of being the People of God. I have asked Monsignor Brian Hennessy to coordinate our celebration of the Synod here in Philadelphia, and he will communicate further information to you as it becomes available.

I invite you to join with me on Sunday, October 17th in the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul for a Holy Hour beginning at 5:00 pm and for the opening Mass for the diocesan phase of the Synod at 6:30 pm. This will be a wonderful way for each of us to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit and to invite him to guide us on this continued journey of accompanying and listening to one another. Included with this letter is a flyer with information on the Holy Hour and Mass, to which I encourage you to invite members of your communities.

Thank you for all you do to promote and deepen the participation of the faithful in the life of the Church and for all you will do in support of the Synod.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nelson J. Pérez".

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.
Archbishop of Philadelphia

(enclosure)