



Pastoral letter

For a renewed Church

*Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and pleasing and perfect.*

Romans 12, 2

I welcomed with great joy Pope Francis's call to involve the local Churches in the preparation of the 2023 Synod of Bishops. Under the theme "For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission", this synod takes on a special colour at this time in our history.

The challenges facing our diocesan Church are numerous and the responses to them cannot be made without dialogue and listening. Let us think, among other things, about the present and future animation of our communities, the shortage of pastoral personnel, the path of truth and healing to be taken with the indigenous people, the ways of presenting the Gospel message to the younger generations or the social and environmental commitments to be consolidated. For each of these challenges, we know that there are no ready-made answers: we must constantly seek together how to being Church in the heart of this world. This world, our world, is in constant transformation. And it will continue to be so because it is alive. It is alive through hope, through the search for meaning, with progress and also with setbacks, with joys and contradictions. It is for this world that we exist as a Church. It is towards this world composed of people of all ages, origins, beliefs, states and lifestyles that Christ sends us on a mission.

In order to respond to the mission, the "path of synodality is the path which God expects of the Church of the third millennium,¹" Francis likes to say. This way of "walking together," according to the very etymology of the word synod, should challenge us. It obliges us to listen to one another, but above all, together, to listen to the Spirit. It encourages the participation of all the people of God in discerning, deciding and acting in Church. In other words, it is a concrete expression of co-responsibility.

¹ FRANCIS *Address at the Ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015.

In solidarity with the Leadership Team, I am announcing today my desire to see our diocesan Church embark on this synodal journey. We will do this in two ways: by participating in the common exercise requested by the Synod of Bishops, but above all by taking a step of listening and discernment at the level of our diocese. Listening attentively to what makes up the human adventure of the people here, reread in the light of the radicalness of the life and words of Jesus Christ, will be at the heart of our process. In the next few weeks, we will be presenting you with concrete ways in which we can embark on this process together.

This listening process will, I hope, inspire new ways of outreach, comfort, and compassion to continue to proclaim the Good News in our diocese. Let us be clear: this is not a project or an activity that will keep us busy for a while before moving on. Letting ourselves be inspired by what the Spirit is saying to our Church, we will walk together for many years, certainly a good ten: "journeying together is an easy concept to put into words, but not so easy to put into practice," Francis continues².

Putting synodality into practice will necessarily involve a renewal of our way of thinking in order to discern what God expects of us today (cf. *Romans* 12, 12). It is through this path that we will bring about a renewed Church, in constant conversion, aware of its resistance and fragilities. A Church that allows itself to be led by the Spirit along new paths, accepting to look at its past with humility and repentance, choosing above all to remain prophetic and to look to the future with the confidence that her Saviour gives her.

To become a synodal Church is to be assiduously women and men of listening and sharing at all moments of life. By committing itself today on this synodal path, the Church of Saint-Jean-Longueuil reaffirms its fundamental commitment to be at the service of all people by announcing the Gospel of the Beatitudes. I hope that this announcement will be incarnated in the culture and reality of the people who live here and now on the diocesan territory, people and realities that we must better understand and welcome, love and serve. This is how the Church of the disciples of Jesus will be built in our midst.

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² *Ibid.*