



## Synod Commission Meeting Minutes November 3, 2021 6:00 pm



**Present:** Bishop Robert McElroy, Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan, Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano, Katrina “Kat” Albrandt, Sylvia Benning, Athena Besa, Chris Bongato, Aida Bustos, Victor Carmona, Theresa “Terry” Clark, Kevin Eckery, Robert “Bobby” Ehnou, Rev. Rey Evangelista, Leonardo Fonseca, Maria Galace, Maria Olivia “Marioly” Galván, Rev. John Hurley, CSP, Rev. Devdas Masillamony, Rev. Michael Murphy, Sr. Juliet Mousseu, RSCJ, Vi Salazar. **In absentia:** Deacon Tim Shulz

Following dinner at 6:00 pm, the meeting began at 6:32 pm with opening prayer led by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan and introductions by all commission members.

### Overview & Timeline of Synodal Process

Bishop McElroy elaborated on the role of the commission members as primary interlocutors in how we move forward in this project Pope Francis has entrusted to us. This synodal process is distinct from previous synods as it does not focus on one independent issue. Synodality is not compartmentalized. This process will serve as an examen that will allow the local church to listen to the People of God, discern the needs, and implement strategies that will lead the Diocese of San Diego to employ a culture of synodality more deeply at all levels. The proposed synodal phased process was presented to the commission members for approval.

- **Phase 1: October, 2021-June, 2022- Listening**  
During this time, we are capturing and gathering the qualitative and quantitative input.
- **Phase 2: July, 2022- September, 2022- Discernment**  
Synod Commission will complete the analyzing of the qualitative and quantitative data, seek to discern its meaning for our local church and define strategies for moving toward synodality.
- **Phase 3: October, 2022- May, 2023- Encounter**  
This phase will allow for implementation of an action plan to bring the 10 qualities of Synodality more deeply to our diocese at all levels.

This phased approach will allow the Diocese of San Diego to make strides forward that are meaningful ahead of the universal synod and the release of their recommendations.

Bishop McElroy noted that the Imperial Valley will have its own separate synod commission given the distant realities that are present in that community. Bishop Ramón Bejarano will serve as the synod coordinator and Vino Pajanor will serve as a commission member representing Catholic Charities.

### Identifying Groups for Consultation

The listening process will entail the engagement of various groups for consultation.

These are categorized as:

- Parishes
- Organizations and Movements
- Marginalized Groups

The intended pathway is for the implementation of small group circle discussions that will occur within the parish groups, affinity groups and marginalized groups. The timeline for parishes to commence their group engagements will likely occur during the month of February to avoid scheduling conflicts and other parish commitments during the Lenten season. The affinity groups and marginalized groups will not be directly impacted by this timeline.

The period leading up to the scheduled parish listening sessions will allow the process-committee time to prepare a guiding instrument and resources.

### **Synod Communication**

Sharing the progress of the synodal process with the wider community will be a key factor throughout this project. A diocesan webpage was created to document the journey and provide illustrative updates on how the diocese is proactively responding to this initiative. The diocesan Communications Office will be assisting throughout this process in preparing weekly video vignettes in English and Spanish to provide context to this synodal journey. The use of digital media will provide a visible avenue for greater engagement. The commission inquired about the possibility of outreach to the unchurched or those who are currently inactive and how social media might assist. The communications team will follow up with this request. For updates and to view the progress of the synod, visit [www.sdcatholic.org/synod](http://www.sdcatholic.org/synod) or [www.sdcatholic.org/sinodo](http://www.sdcatholic.org/sinodo).

### **Sub-Committee tasks**

Bishop McElroy has appointed Robert “Bobby” Ehnou and Maria Olivia “Marioly” Galván as synod coordinators. Each will chair a sub-committee that will assist in guiding the process. The first sub-committee chaired by Bobby will focus on establishing the methodology and process for the synod small group circles. This group will assist in:

- Formulating questions and establishing a process
- Responding to the question- What will be ascertained?
- Identifying common aspects applicable to all 10 synodal themes.

Commission members that have volunteered to assist in this sub-committee are: Terry Clark, Kat Albrandt, Rev. Devdas Masillamony, Sr Juliet Mousseu, RSCJ and Victor Carmona.

The second sub-committee chaired by Marioly will focus on identifying the groups for consultation in all the various sectors within the life of the church. This group will assist in:

- Identifying Groups (organizations, movements by language and culture, identify possible focus groups and marginalized groups)
- Responding to the question- Whom shall we engage to reach these groups?
- Determining how can we effectively engage them?

Commission members that have volunteered to assist in this sub-committee are: Maria Galace, Sylvia Benning, Athena Besa and Vino Pajanor.

Bobby and Marioly will each coordinate separate meetings with their respective sub-committees.

## **General Discussion**

After learning of the process, a general discussion allowed members to express questions, clarifications or suggestions. Some of the feedback received was:

- The communication component would be effective if it was shared with parishes so they in turn can incorporate the updates onto their websites, bulletins, and Flocknote.
- Given the most recent synod (2019- Christus Vivit) on Young Adult Ministry, it would be helpful to involve the university Newman Centers.
- As outreach is discerned, remaining sensitive to the cultural bearings in affinity and parish groups is important.
- In the development of an instrument, valuable information can be captured and used to update the often outdated contacts that parishes and groups may have.
- A nomadic group that should be considered is the active duty military.
- Having materials or resources in Vietnamese would be a great help, particularly those that are not part of a circle.
- It is important to clarify the role of the pastor throughout the process. Will there be a need to appoint someone at the parish? If so, the process should be user friendly.

## **Action items**

- **Title for the synodal journey.** There was some concern expressed by a few commission members with the term synodality, given the unfamiliarity with the concept and its complexity to explain and translate. Others advocated in favor of using this term in order to keep the essence of the process. After further consideration, Bishop McElroy tasked all commission members to prayerfully discern a theme that would describe the purpose of this process and reflect upon synodality; considering the 10 characteristics that were shared during the meeting. Members are encouraged to come up with different titles and present these at the December synodal commission meeting.

After sharing the proposed schedule of monthly meetings with the commission members, Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano led closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Maria Olivia “Marioly” Galván