

St. John - St. Paul Collaborative



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission



www.sjspwellesley.org

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY... OPPORTUNITIES DURING LENT



Throughout Lent, we will be talking and providing ongoing education and enrichment about the Synod. We will prepare our hearts for the difficult task of sharing and holding the stories of joy and sorrow in our Church.

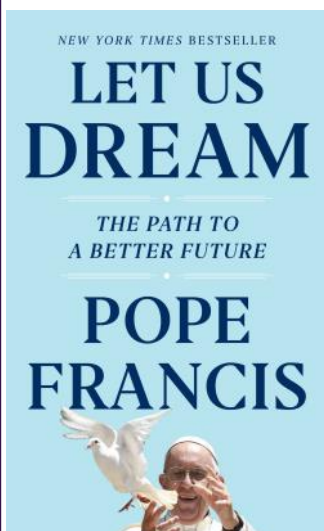
Be sure to catch the bulletin and website for our *'Walking Together Corner'* which will have weekly enrichment articles about synodality and the process for this Synod.

COMMUNITY READS

A Community Read and Lecture Series

Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future

by Pope Francis



This Lent, we will dive deeply into Pope Francis' recent book, written during the pandemic, which he begins by exploring what crisis and upheaval can teach us. He then gives a scathing critique of the systems and ideologies that have conspired to produce this current crisis. Finally, he offers an inspiring blueprint for building a safer, fairer, and healthier world, showing how ordinary people acting together - despite their differences - can discover unforeseen possibilities.

Thursdays at 7:00pm at St. Paul Parish Hall

March 10 with Sr. Evelyn Ronan

Part One: A Time to See

March 24 with Kelly Meraw

Part Two: A Time to Choose

April 7 with Fr. Bryan Hehir

Part Three: A Time to Act

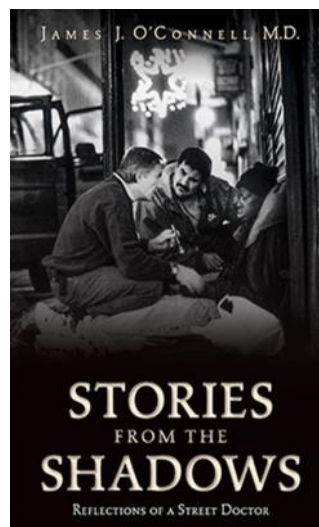
We encourage everyone to read the Pope's book, but it is not required or even necessary to have read the book to benefit from the lectures - all are strongly urged to attend!

Available at local libraries, bookstores, and Amazon.

A Community Read and Author Talk

*Stories from the Shadows:
Reflections of a Street Doctor*

by James J. O'Connell, M.D.



Dr. O'Connell is President of *Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program*, the recipient of this year's Collaborative Lenten Gift. His collection of stories and essays were written during his thirty years of caring for people experiencing homelessness in Boston. *"...this volume instantly and irrevocably transports you into a fascinating universe of individuals usually invisible to us... often faceless and nameless, lost in plain sight, and forced to live on the fringes of society. But this*

volume makes unforgettable those who are usually forgotten." - Howard K. Koh, M.D., M.P.H.

Wednesdays at 7:00pm at St. John

March 16: Dr. James O'Connell, Author

March 30: A Book Discussion with Kelly Meraw

We encourage everyone to read Dr. O'Connell's book, but it is not required or even necessary to have read the book to benefit from his lecture - all are strongly urged to attend!

Available at local libraries and through the BHCHP website. A limited number of copies available for purchase through the Collaborative - please call either office to reserve a copy. Copies will also available for purchase at Dr. O'Connell's lecture so you can read after the lecture and participate in the Book Discussion!

SYNOD MESSAGE FROM FR. JIM

***"Dear brothers and sisters, let us have a good journey together!
May we be pilgrims in love with the Gospel and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit."***
-Pope Francis

My dear friends in Christ,

With this "Synod on Synodality", Pope Francis is calling all of us, the entire People of God, to journey together! This is a journey of encounter, of listening and discerning with the whole Church. It is about listening deeply and allowing all voices to be heard, especially those on the margins. This is what it means to be the Body of Christ.

The term, "synod" is unfamiliar to many of us, and can be confusing. The word derives from an ancient Greek term that means "coming together" or "traveling together." Simply put, as Pope Francis has described, "a synodal Church is a Church which listens." Let us not be intimidated by the language, but focused on walking together, speaking boldly, listening deeply, and holding the tension that exists when we ourselves may not have answers or consolation.

This is a completely unique and unprecedented opportunity, because on this journey, no one is to be left behind or excluded. Unlike past synods, this is not simply a discussion for the hierarchy, or for those on the inside - Pope Francis is calling all of us to express our faith, our hopes, and our dreams for the Church.

During Lent, we will prepare our hearts and minds for the journey, and for the difficult task of holding the stories of joy and sorrow surrounding how the Church journeys together. We invite you to dive deeply into the preparation, and into Francis' vision of synodality, by participating in our upcoming community-read of Pope Francis' latest book, "Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future."

In the Easter Season, our Collaborative will offer many ways to engage in the work of the synod, including listening sessions and other opportunities to allow all of us to share our own stories and listen deeply to each other. By June our Synod Committee will share the fruits of that listening with the Diocese and the Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops. We must understand, though, that this is not a synod with a simple beginning, middle, and end; instead, we are called to continue to gather the fruits of what the Holy Spirit is saying to us, and to put synodality into practice from now on.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Jim

***"Let us not miss out on the grace-filled opportunities born of encounter, listening and discernment.
In the joyful conviction that, even as we seek the Lord, he always comes with his love to meet us first."***
-Pope Francis



NCRonline.org/cartoons

WHAT IS THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY?



Wait, there's a synod happening?

What exactly is a synod?

A synod is a gathering, traditionally of bishops, that helps the Church to walk forward together in the same direction. The word “synod” comes from the Greek *syn-bodos*, meaning “the same way” or “**the same path.**” Synods were common in the first centuries of Christianity, giving bishops the opportunities to meet and discuss issues of importance for the life of the Church. In recent decades, synods have been organized every two or three years, bringing together bishops, experts, and various delegates to discuss topics like the Eucharist, the Word of God, the Middle East, the new evangelization, the family, young people, and the Amazon. In each case, bishops vote on a Final Document, then the pope writes his own text – called an “apostolic exhortation” – to **open new pathways and shed new light** on what was discussed at the synod, so that it can *radiate across the entire Church*.

What's unique about this synod on synodality?

Unlike past synods, this one isn't about addressing a particular issue. This synod is totally **unprecedented**, for at least three reasons.

1. It is no longer only a **one-month Synod of Bishops** but a **two-year synodal process for the entire People of God, all the baptized!** All are invited and no one is to be left behind or excluded!
2. It is a synod that aims on giving the entire Church a ***lived experience*** of synodality. It's not just about filling in a questionnaire, but gathering the fruits of what the Holy Spirit is saying to us here and now.
3. The aim of the synod is not just to talk *about* synodality, but to **put synodality into practice from now onwards**, in every diocese, parish, and country across the whole world. This calls all of us, at every level of the Church, to renew our way of being and working together moving forward.

So why a synod on synodality?

Of course, *synodality* is difficult to pronounce but it is even more challenging to put it into practice. The whole process is about helping the whole Church to walk forward together, united in the mission we share. This begins by paying attention to those who are often forgotten, excluded, or not listened to – hearing what God has to say to us through those we may ignore. **The path to a Church that listens and walks together starts with you and me... this synod does not end!**



So what is synodality anyways?

Fundamentally, synodality is about *journeying together*. This happens through listening to one another in order to hear what God is saying to all of us. It is realizing that the Holy Spirit can speak through anyone to help us walk forward together on our journey as the People of God. The point is not that we take two years to understand some new buzzword that will soon fade. Synodality is no passing phase! Rather, "walking together" is at the heart of what the Church is all about, as the **People of God on pilgrimage** in the midst of the world. In the days of the early Church, Saint John Chrysostom said that for him "Church" and "synod" were synonyms, since **the Church is all about walking together**. In this sense, synodality is a way of renewing the Church from her deepest roots, in order to be more **united with one another** and better **carry out our mission** in the world. Concretely, being "synodal" is a way of being and a way of working that takes a more **grassroots, collaborative** approach, taking time to **discern** the path forward together. It highlights the fact that **we all have something precious to contribute** to the Body of Christ. In this way, a "synodal Church" is a **Church that listens**: "It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The lay faithful, the bishops, the pope: **all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit**, the "Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:17), **in order to know what He is saying to the Church**" (Pope Francis, *Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops*, October 17, 2015).

Questions and answers adapted from Salt + Light Media



WALKING TOGETHER CORNER

While Synods are as old as the Church herself, this Synod on Synodality is unprecedented in so many ways. Our challenge as Catholics is to actively resist the temptation to see this Synod as something similar to anything we've experienced in our lifetimes. There are significant signs that this is a consultation of the entire people of God like no other and truly a step toward fulfillment of the work of the Second Vatican Council.

One of those signs is in the appointment of Sister Nathalie Becquart as Undersecretary of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, making her the first woman to have the right to vote in the Catholic Synod of Bishops.

Pope Francis has made significant attempts to reform the hierarchical structures that have defined the Roman Catholic Church for centuries — structures that have in many ways limited the influence of lay people and especially women. Few have had such a decisive say on shaping the future of the institution as Sr. Nathalie.

Sr. Nathalie is a French Religious of the Congregation of Xavières. In May of 2019, she was appointed by Pope Francis, along with four other women and one man, as Consultor to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops in the Catholic Church. She played a significant role in both the Synod dedicated to Young People in the Synod on the Pan-Amazonian region.

She sees the appointment as Undersecretary (No. 2 Officer at this Synod!) as a part of Pope Francis' effort "to implement synodality at every level of the Church's life and to benefit from the important contribution that women can make." She also comments that her appointment points to a move to disconnect the exercise of leadership from ordination.

To hear from Sister Nathalie herself about this important appointment, check out the "Synodality Starts with Coffee with Sr. Nathalie Becquart" podcast:

<https://www.jesuits.org/synod/>



Synod Undersecretary, Sr. Nathalie Becquart ►

We hope you found this Synod Edition of the bulletin helpful. We will be using the "Walking Together Corner" to keep you updated on what we are doing as a Collaborative as we walk through this Synodal journey together. Should you have any questions please email synod@sjspwellesley.org.

A SYNOD??? EXPLAIN IT LIKE I'M FIVE

WHAT DOES POPE FRANCIS WANT US TO DO?

Pope Francis wants to hear from all of us - the whole Church! The way he has asked us to do this is through a synodal process. "Synod" means "journeying together" and it involves listening deeply to the Holy Spirit and to each other to discern the Church we are called to be! Unlike past synods, this synod is not just for bishops and hierarchy - Pope Francis is calling all of us to share our faith, our hopes, our sorrows, and our dreams for the Church. All voices must be heard, especially those on the margins - no one is to be left behind or excluded!

WHEN IS THIS HAPPENING AT OUR COLLABORATIVE?

During **Lent**, we will share more about the Synod and synodality here in the bulletin, via our Collaborative Email list (be sure to sign up!) and on our website and social media. We will prepare our hearts and minds for the often difficult task of sharing and hearing the stories of joy and sorrow surrounding how the Church journeys together. We encourage you to join in this preparation by participating in our Lenten Community Reads, Lectures, and Discussions!

In the **Easter Season**, as a Collaborative we will engage in the work of the synod through listening sessions and other opportunities to allow each of us to share our stories and listen deeply to each other and the Holy Spirit.

By **summer**, we will share the fruits of that listening with the Archdiocese of Boston and with the Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops.

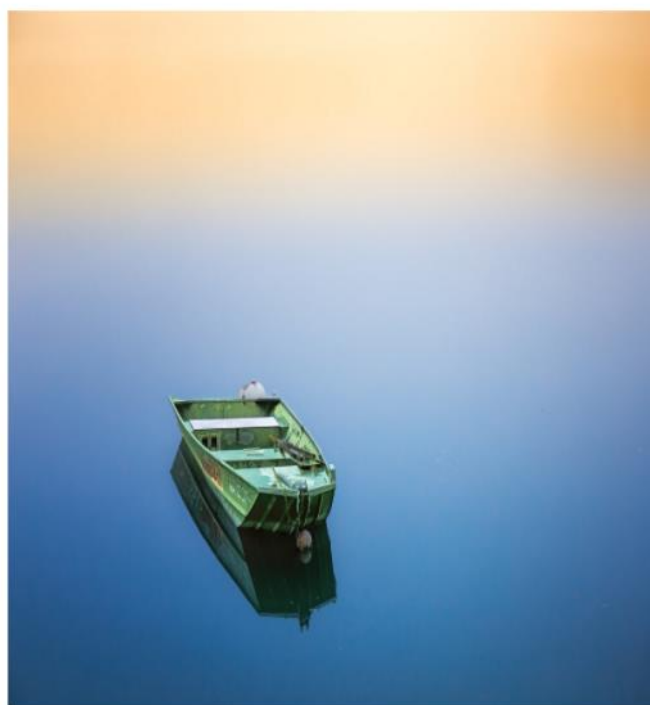
AND THEN IT'S OVER?

No! In October of 2023, all the bishops will meet in a formal synod process to engage with the documents from around the world.

OK, SO THEN IT'S OVER?

No! Our synodal journey does not end! Pope Francis is calling us to put synodality - speaking boldly, listening deeply, and including all - into practice in our parishes and in our Church *from now on!*

OUR PRAYER FOR THE SYNOD



In silence, we listen

We come to you, Oh God,
in silence to listen with the ear of the heart to
the indwelling voice of your Holy Spirit.

We pray for unity of all the poor, the voiceless,
the marginalized and all of those who are
excluded.

Gift our bishops with open hearts and ears to
hear the Church, the people of God, with
wisdom, knowledge, patience and courage.
Amen.

St. Scholastica Monastery - USA

FR. JIM AND FR. HEHIR TALK ABOUT THE SYNOD!

The weekend of February 26-27 was dedicated to introducing and explaining this "Synod on Synodality" and how it is unfolding here at our Collaborative and around the world. Fr. Jim and Fr. Hehir focused their homilies on the meaning of "synodality" and what it means for us and for our Church - **please visit the Synod page on our website to listen (or listen again!) www.sjspwellesley.org/synod**

**Q: WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME A POPE ASKED YOU
WHAT YOU THOUGHT?**

A: NEVER - UNTIL NOW!



IT'S TIME TO SHARE OUR STORIES - HE'S LISTENING!



Learn more on our website:

www.sjspwellesley.org/synod

***Check back frequently for updates during
this ongoing journey of encounter - of
listening and discerning with the whole
Church.***

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