



YOU ARE CALLED.  
YOU MATTER.



YOU

*belong*

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October 4, 2023  
St. Francis of Assisi, Memorial

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

On the Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi, we begin a pathway of pastoral renewal in the Diocese of Calgary.

What is a pastoral renewal, and why did we decide to launch it on this day?

A pastoral renewal is an invitation to the Church of the Diocese of Calgary to renew and

strengthen our commitment as individuals, parishes, and as a diocese to live the life that Christ calls us to in the midst of our world. We respond to His call through our baptism, our personal witness of the Faith and our desire to participate in the mission that Christ entrusted to the Church.

Our pastoral renewal is being launched on the Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi and it coincides with the opening of the First Session of the Synodal Assembly in Rome where I am currently present with Pope

Francis, my brother bishops, and delegates from around the world. The life of our Diocese is united with the universal Church as witnessed through my participation at the Synod but also in our embarking on this pastoral renewal. It is in learning the synodal way of walking with others on the path of salvation, we encounter one another and experience together the presence of Christ in our midst and those whom He is calling us to serve.

While praying in the little church of St. Damian, St. Francis was drawn to the San Damiano cross and from there heard the voice of the Lord saying to him to repair His house which is falling apart. While mindful of the chapel that was in disrepair, St. Francis was much more aware of the call of Christ to lead the Church on a path of prayer, penance, and renewal. He did this by following Him more intently and in joyful humility living his life and offering his work as a more authentic witness of Christ to all his brothers and sisters.

In a similar way, through this pastoral renewal, Catholics in the Diocese of Calgary are being called to intensify our following of Christ through three areas of pastoral priority that will help us as the Church to become more intentional in walking with the people. They are the fruit of our diocesan phase of the Synod and a year long process of further prayer, dialogue and discernment. In the coming years this pastoral renewal will call us:

- 1 To be intentional in living our baptism and in the orientation of the parishes and the Diocese in being formed as missionary disciples of our Lord.
- 2 To be a church of encounter and witness, to grow in our ability to listen to people's lived experiences, to be more present to one another through our shared faith and more authentic in our witness to Christ in word and deed.

- 3 Finally, to strengthen the human family in our own homes, in our parishes, in our schools, and in places where the Lord sends us so that we learn to accompany people at all stages of life.

This pastoral renewal, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, will enable us to respond better to the call for a deeper conversion and experience the renewal that is needed in our world today.

As we embark on this path of renewal in the Diocese may we share in the zeal and passion of St. Francis in following Christ, and may we imitate all the saints who accepted their call to renewal within the Church by choosing the path of courage, fidelity and humility in being one with the Lord.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



+William T. McGrattan  
Bishop of Calgary



Image: St. Francis in the Desert  
Giovanni Bellini (Italian, ca. 1424/35–1516)