



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

22 September 2021

My Dear Sisters & Brothers,

As many are aware our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has announced a Synod entitled *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*, which will commence on October 10, 2021, and conclude with the convening of an in person gathering from around the world in Rome in October of 2023.

This Synod's purpose is to lead the whole Church into a deeper understanding of our mission in the world. Bishops, priests and deacons will organize and attend meetings in every diocese around the world with the purpose of listening to the concerns, the joys, the frustrations, the ideas and even the anger of the faithful related to the Catholic Church today and where they suggest it should move toward tomorrow. We will always remain true to Church Doctrine, Dogma and the guidance of the Doctors of the Church.

This Synod, by direction of our Holy Father, begins at a diocesan level on the weekend of October 16-17, 2021 and concludes at the local level in April 2022. Within this timeframe, every diocese is to convene meetings at a local level and then regional levels, culminating in a written report (Synthesis) summarizing the discussions within the meetings in April 2022. As soon as we receive the guidelines for the opening Mass for the Synod on the weekend of October 16-17 our Office of Worship will share them with all priests to assist you in planning parish liturgies that weekend.

This direction given to us by the Holy Father comes during the busy times for us of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. It comes as our faith formation at all levels is in full force and our Catholic schools are in session. It comes during our winter

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months, which makes meeting and travel more difficult. It comes during a global pandemic that requires us to constantly monitor data and direction to ensure that whatever we do, we engage appropriate public health measures to protect our parishioners and neighbors. The challenges I note are not unique to us, but reality for all dioceses throughout the world. We are all called to accomplish the goals of the Synod while stepping up to meet and listen in the spirit of synodality.

For this reason, my staff has prepared the attached timeline and guidance documents. I pray these assist pastors and their teams in hosting their local meetings, assist our Deans and my staff in convening regional meetings and in providing direction for all of us in leadership in the Sioux City Diocese as we pose the questions and then simply listen while noting the comments for the benefit of our Holy Father.

I ask pastors to review the attached information, follow the timeline and work in concert with my office to successfully complete our portion of this worldwide process. I further ask for everyone's prayers during this Synod. My brother priests and deacons, along with the faithful, will be in my constant prayers for a successful and fruitful synodal experience.

If you have questions or need assistance, feel free to contact Deacon Mark Prosser at 712-233-7536 or prosserm@scdiocese.org.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "R. Walker Nickless". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless
Bishop of Sioux City