

HOMILIES FROM ARCHBISHOP JACKELS ABOUT THE SYNOD

6 FEBRUARY 2022 | FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

Pope Francis (God preserve him) is asking people all over the world to participate in a new way for the Catholic Church to make big decisions, called synodality.

Synodality is a Church word for the process of listening to God, and to what each other says they learned in prayer, and based on that, together to determine the way forward.

In our Archdiocese, we're using the synodal exercise to pray, dialogue, and plan for which parishes will stay open, how to strengthen them, and provide leadership to them.

Because of COVID concerns, we're relying mostly on people to fill out a survey, either on paper or on-line. Please fill it out, and send it in before the end of the month.

The survey doesn't ask leading questions, so as to skew the results. If what you heard from God in prayer, or from others, isn't represented on the survey, then write it in.

People might make suggestions that are above my paygrade to tackle, which only the Pope can address. But if you write it in, I'll send it up the synodal path to the Pope.

The more participants in our synodal exercise for pastoral planning, the more certain we'll be of the criteria for a vital parish, and that all will take ownership of the outcome.

Nothing is preordained. But for a parish to be seen as vital, to be strengthened, and to receive pastoral leaders, there has to be *something* going on between Sundays, like:

Outreach to the poor, learning and teaching the Gospel, daily prayers and Sunday Mass, with parishioners willingly and generously sharing their time, talent, and treasure.

If we don't speak up, we don't really have a right to complain. And if we don't step up, by sharing our time, talents and treasure, we might end up without a parish in our area.

It takes humility, accepting our need for God and others, like Isaiah and Peter, to pray to God, dialogue with others, and participate in the give-and-take of group decision-making.

In faith, I believe God is saying to each of us: Who shall I send to continue the mission of Jesus in ministry? In hope, I pray we'll each answer: Here I am. Send me.