



February 22, 2021

**Pastoral Letter reveals plan for Synod in the Diocese of Dallas
Bishop calls for Historic Response to Historic challenges**

Recognizing that the pandemic has taken its toll on discipleship and could lead to diocesan members becoming complacent, Bishop Edward J. Burns announced that he will convene a synod in the Diocese of Dallas on December 12, 2021 on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

In a Pastoral Letter sent to the Catholic faithful on February 19, 2021 Bishop Burns announced his plan for the synod, which will be the first in 87 years in the Diocese of Dallas. The last synod was called by the third Bishop of Dallas, Bishop Joseph P. Lynch, in 1934.

Titled: *The Journey Through Lent, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost - A Post-Pandemic Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Dallas*, Bishop Burns' pastoral letter <http://cathdal.org/pastoralletter> presents a vision to renew the Church in the Diocese of Dallas after the historic COVID-19 pandemic. The starting point for the pastoral letter is a reflection on the journey through Lent, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost.

The document highlights recent events surrounding the pandemic as a perfect opportunity to embrace once again the apostolic mission. The pastoral plan points to the need to follow the example of the original apostles to go out into the world to transform it and spread the message of Jesus to the ends of the Earth.

The pastoral letter offers a review of the state of the Diocese of Dallas during the four years of Bishop Burns' episcopal ministry in the Diocese. While highlighting the strengths of the Diocese, Bishop Burns emphasizes the importance of lay involvement in keeping the pastoral activity and personal involvement of the Diocese flourishing.

The diocesan synod process will include significant time for listening sessions in the parishes of the Diocese. These listening sessions will be facilitated by the diocesan preparatory commission which will be responsible for proposing the preparatory documentation for the synod. The multi-day synod event will take place in 2024 and the resolutions approved at that gathering will be implemented in the following years. This time will also be used to focus on the spiritual, pastoral and temporal renewal of the Diocese.

The pastoral plan will conclude on December 12, 2031 with a major diocesan-wide Mass to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Our Lady of Guadalupe's appearance to Saint Juan Diego and the conclusion of the synod's decade-long journey of faith and revitalization.

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