

February 13, 2022

Dear Friends,

You may or may not have heard that Pope Francis has called a Synod for next year in Rome. In preparation for the Synod where bishops and others from all over the world will gather and discuss and give counsel to the Holy Father about how best to bring the message of the Good News to the many varied people in the world today. And how can each believer best live out the truth of the gospel in their own daily lives.

I am old enough to remember the Second Vatican Council. It began in 1962 and concluded in 1965. In each of those four years, bishops from all over the world came to Rome and met in session for several months. Each year's meetings produced four documents, a total of sixteen by the end of the Council. Each session had over 2500 bishops in attendance. The final votes in each document would be something like 2476 to 29. This was the work of the Holy Spirit in those sessions. I truly believe that. I also believe that the implementation of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council were not fully understood, not fully grasped and not fully implemented. Many were. Others were hijacked by people of strong viewpoints who saw an opportunity to change the Catholic Church from within. We have had sixty years of a mixed bag. Much good. Some not so good.

So, here we are in 2022 and the Pope wants to have a Synod in Rome. But now, because of what is available to all people, all over the world, through social media of various kinds, the Pope would like to provide opportunities for the bishops who are to gather next year, to hear from the people—Catholics of course and others who believe in Christ and those who do not. To be clear, I personally think this is a great risk the Holy Father is taking because doors will be opened concerning which he or the bishops have no or little control. I also believe that his decision is the right decision. Why? Because we will pray more and we will have to rely more on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to prevent these efforts from being hi-jacked too.

Then why take the risk? Because the Church needs it. Because the Holy Spirit has been imparted to every and all believers and lives within each of us and animates us. Just step back for a moment and ask yourself: If I had the opportunity, a real opportunity, to say something to the Holy Father in Rome and to the bishops around the world, what would I say? What would I tell them? Not just: what would I criticize them for doing or for not doing, but what do I think they do not know or know fully enough (not about the content of the faith) about the living of the faith and what Catholics most struggle with and need help with? And what you believe Catholics really do very well but it isn't known in Rome or even in the diocesan offices? What is the best of our faith and how would you tell the Holy Father about it? And what has made a difference in your own life—or that you cannot live without?

With the above in mind, when we do training sessions over the next six weeks and they are followed by listening sessions, would you consider being involved? If you thought that what you said would be heard, recorded and forwarded to the local bishop and then forwarded onto the gathering in Rome? Because that is what the Holy Father is asking. Can you imagine the amount of trust this takes after all we have been through especially these last twenty years of scandal and disappointment and discouragement? With so many Catholics disgusted and walking away?

Here is what I am going to do and what I am asking you to do. Would you find a little niche where you can pray and ask Our Lord this simple question: Lord, do you want me to be involved in this? And if the answer you receive from the Lord is: Yes. Then a further question: Lord, what do YOU want me to tell them? Not. What should I say. BUT. Lord, what do YOU want me to say—from my heart of hearts?

You want a genuine authentic renewal of our faith to happen? Participate. Then hold on tight because it is going to be some ride. But it will be the Lord's ride. And He's the best!

Peace

Msgr. McHenry