

APPENDIX II

NEXT SYNODAL STEPS DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

Through this Synodal Process, the Diocese of St. Petersburg identified three immediate steps the Spirit is inviting us to work on or address in order to grow in our “journeying together”. These steps are an outgrowth of what we heard during our listening and discernment sessions, and follow the Synodal theme of Communion, Participation and Mission.

Communion: Fervently work on communication with our parishes and the faithful.

Concretely, the Pastoral Center (Chancery) will take steps to improve and open communication lines with pastors and their lay staffs.

In the various areas of ministry at the Pastoral Center, we will form advisory teams so that Diocesan leaders may better serve and be more collaborative with our local parishes, schools, lay associations, and other diocesan entities, (similar to the apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, on reforming the Roman Curia).

Most Reverend Gregory Parkes is prolific on social media, highlighting the good works within the Diocese and addressing the relevant concerns of the world through Catholic teaching and response. It is the hope and prayer that his upcoming medical procedure will ultimately allow him to engage more fully in the ministry to which he has been called.

Participation: Increasing collaboration amount clergy and laity

A theological implication of shared responsibility is that the laity share with their pastors the responsibility for guiding the mission to which God calls the Church. In order for the Church to have the fullness of God’s light and guidance, the laity needs to be involved in discernment and decision-making through the process of consultation and synodality. Consultative bodies (councils, commissions and committees) are a critical means for participation and collaboration between the clergy and laity. Bishop Parkes is initiating steps of support for parishes, schools and diocesan entities in the formation and implementation of consultative/synodal structures (including Pastoral Councils), in accordance with the expected Vatican document from the 2023 Synod on Synodality. Planning processes and training will be provided to parishes and schools on best practices for consultation and collaboration among the lay volunteer disciples, lay ecclesial ministers, and clergy. Training will including discernment processes, collaboration, hospitality, and formational training

of pastoral councils, finance councils, ministerial commissions, and boards and committees, both at the diocesan and parish/school levels.

Other forms of collaboration within the Diocese include more effective and intentional collaboration between parishes and school at the Deanery level. Mentorships between new pastors, new clergy and new lay ecclesial ministers are also being established.

MISSION: Transformational Parish Growth Summit

The Synod process expressed people's deep desire for others to develop a close relationship with Christ and His Church. Many expressed concern and disappointment that a significant number of Catholics are not practicing their faith and hoped that they would come back. Hearing and sharing this concern, Bishop Parkes initiated the Transformational Parish Growth Summit. Providing 32 hours of praying, learning, dreaming, and envisioning concrete plans for filling our churches, the theme for the full-immersion Summit, which was held April 25-27, 2022, was based on Luke 14:23, the Parable of the Great Feast. In this Parable, Jesus speaks of a dinner that was prepared, but those who were invited never showed. The Master then orders the servant to find new people to invite so that "My house may be filled."

An outgrowth of the Synod process, The Parish Growth Summit is an initiative of "Courageously Living the Gospel," the Diocesan vision that calls us to proclaim the Gospel and invite all to encounter the love and mercy of Jesus Christ. The Summit provided participants who are serious about growing the Church the inspiration, resources, and a concrete plans for growing engagement, evangelization and missionary discipleship within the parish. Seven pillars of effective evangelization were shared: Prayerful, Invitational, Hospitable, Inspirational, Sacramental, Formational and Missionful. Leaders were challenged to go outside their comfort zone and push the limit. Our greatest Christian vocation is to be disciples who make disciples. Inviting others with a personal invitation, like Jesus did, is essential to this vocation.

However, this was not a one-time effort. Working collaboratively with other parishes and schools and accompanied by members of the Pastoral Center and other ministerial organizations, faith leaders will work throughout the next few years on concrete ways to invite people to Church and engage them more fully as disciples.