



For a synodal Church



With the Blessed Virgin Mary Towards the Sixteenth Ordinary Synod of Bishops

*Mary, the mother of God, is always with us on the synodal path, for she is also 'Mother of the Church' (Mater Ecclesiae); mother of all those who are companions and disciples of her son. Whenever we are feeling lost, confused, or hesitant about the way, we only have to look to her to point out the way. Mary does not speak. She does not need to. She only needs to direct our gaze to her son. In her wordless gesture, she sums up the whole mission of the Church. Even when the People of God are 'in via'—on the journey—they are always in mission. The two cannot be separated, for there is but one way and one object of our desire, one source of our life and our hope: Jesus Christ. (General Secretariat for the Synod, **Towards a spirituality for synodality, p.45**)*

Through the General Secretariat for the Synod, our Holy Father Pope Francis has asked all Dioceses throughout the world to observe a “World Day of Prayer for the Sixteenth Ordinary Synod of Bishops 2021-2024,” on the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Wednesday, May 31, 2023, entrusting the “Synod on Synodality” to loving protection, care and intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

All the clergy, religious and lay faithful of the Diocese of Trenton in all the parishes of the Diocese, especially those named in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary under any of her titles, are asked to pray for this special intention on May 31, 2023.

Catholic schools, and other Catholic organizations and institutions are also encouraged to join in this prayer intention.

As Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, I especially recommend prayer to Our Blessed Virgin Mary through her most holy rosary.

At Masses throughout the Diocese, mention of the Synod can be made in homilies and the Prayers of the Faithful. These prayers might also be prayed with an announcement of the intention after the post-communion prayer:

PRAYER TO MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH *(Pope Francis)*

Mother, help our faith! Open our ears to hear God’s word and to recognize his voice and call. Awaken in us a desire to follow in his footsteps, to go forth from our own land and to receive his promise. Help us to be touched by his love, that we may touch him in faith. Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him and to believe in his love, especially at times of trial, beneath the shadow of the cross, when our faith is called to mature. Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One. Remind us that those who believe are never alone. Teach us to see all things with the eyes of Jesus, that he may be light for our path. And may this light of faith always increase in us, until the dawn of that undying day, which is Christ himself, your Son, our Lord! Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SIXTEENTH ORDINARY SYNOD OF BISHOPS

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts.
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.
Amen.

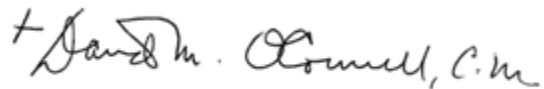
O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

O Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, pray for us.

O Mary, Queen of the Assumption, pray for us!

Joining you in prayer, through the Blessed Virgin Mary's intercession, I remain

Faithfully yours in the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David M. O'Connell, C.M." The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M., J.C.D.
Bishop of Trenton