



**ST. MARY QUEEN OF PEACE
SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC EPARCHY
IN THE USA & CANADA**

1500 Depaul Street • Elmont, NY 11003

Office of the Bishop

Most Rev. Dr. Philipos Mar Stephanos Thottathil

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Circular 4/2022

Dear Rt. Rev. Corepiscopoi, Rev. Fathers, Rev. Sisters, and Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Cordial Greetings to you!

Holy Father Pope Francis has announced to conduct a Special Synod of the Church to be held in November 2023 in Vatican and has solicited the involvement and consultation of the entire Church in preparation for this Synod. This pastoral letter is to invite your active participation in a “consultation process” in preparation for this forthcoming global event. The theme of this Synod is “Synodality of Synod- *Communion, Participation and Mission.*”

Communion

The communion we share finds its deepest roots in the love and unity of the Trinity. Together, we are inspired by listening to the Word of God, through the living Tradition of the Church, and grounded in the *sensus fidei* (faith of the people) that we share. We all have a role to play in discerning and living out God’s call for his people.

Participation

Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are qualified and are called to serve one another through the gifts they have each received from the Holy Spirit in Baptism. In a synodal Church the whole community is called together to pray, listen, analyze, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God’s will.

Mission

Our mission is to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. This Synodal Process has a deeply missionary dimension to it. It is intended to enable the Church to better witness to the Gospel, especially with those who live on the spiritual, social, economic, political, geographical, and existential peripheries of our world.

Synodality & Synodal Process

In general, the term Synod means “consultative and decision-making process and forum in the Church” on subjects which are relevant in the life of the Church. There are canonical, spiritual, and pastoral nuances and dimensions related to the System of Synod and Synodality in the Church. In the Oriental Churches, Synod refers to the highest body of Bishops, and the Consultative Body consisting of Bishops, Priests, Religious, and Laity is known as the “Assembly of the Church,” but in the Latin Church, a Synod is a Consultative Body involving the Bishops, Priests, Religious and Faithful within a diocese or in the universal Church.

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Pope Francis proposes to conduct this Synod in a special way. He envisages a paradigm shift—a change of thrust and meaning in this Synod. According to Pope Francis: Synod is an ‘Ongoing Process;’ ‘Synod is a New Way of Being of the Church;’ Synod is a journey together in Faith of the People of God.’ This Synodal process involves consultations, listening, dialogue, and prayer in participation of maximum number of individuals and groups of people from within the Church and society.

Pope Francis said “we recall that the purpose of the Synod is not to produce documents, but to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another, and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands”

Based on these perspectives, you are invited to share your thoughts and experiences by filling out the online survey no later than **June 30, 2022**:

<https://forms.gle/xUPN5Y8FGchENfjX7>

With prayerful best wishes and blessings,
In Jesus Christ,

Bishop Philipos Mar Stephanos Thottathil
Eparch, Mary Queen of Peace Eparchy in the USA & Canada

Dated: May 20, 2022

NB: Kindly share this Circular with all the families of our Parishes & Missions, Religious Sisters, and encourage them to participate in the survey.

We expect all the members of our MCCL & MCYM Animators, Catechism Teachers & Principals to promote and participate in this survey as well.

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