

# MISSION INTENTIONS

OCTOBER 2023-2024

We pray for the Church, that she may always listen to all people and be open to dialogue at every level, and allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit to serve all the world.

## Monthly Focus: Synod 21-24

Pope Francis has always encouraged the faithful to be listeners: to one another, to our neighbors and to the Holy Spirit. Listening is so important to living a Christ-like life that in 2021 the Holy Father called the Church to a three-year Synod for Catholics to pray together and listen to one another and the Holy Spirit to discern how the Church can continue to grow and walk together as it continues to carry out Christ's mission.

The Synod 21-24 has three themes: Communion, Participation, and Mission. Communion celebrates the relationship between believers modeled on the Trinity, and that everyone has a responsibility to live out God's call for his Church. Participation reminds us that all the faithful are qualified to serve the Church and participate in this synod by virtue of their Baptism. Mission refers to the work of the Church to spread the Gospel and challenges us to be better witnesses of Christ's love. Let us join the Holy Father in prayer this month, that the Church may be a good listener so its people can continue Jesus' ministry.

## Leading to Knowledge of the Faith

From the earliest days of the Church, believers have been gathering together for prayer and guidance from the Holy Spirit. We read in Acts 1:14, "*All [the disciples] were constantly devoting themselves to prayer...*", and in Acts 2:1-3, "*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.*" The Synod 21-24 continues this tradition of gathering for prayer and listening for the Holy Spirit to help guide the Church forward.

## Saint Spotlight

## Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux never left her convent and sadly didn't live a long life, but she still became one of the most popular saints in modern history, the patron saint of missionaries, and only the third woman to be named a Doctor of the Church.

Thérèse was born into a very faith-filled family, and Jesus was the center of her life from a very early age. Sadly, when she was four, her mother died, and Thérèse was raised by her older sisters.

Thérèse knew she wanted to become a nun when her older sister, Pauline, joined the Carmelite convent at Lisieux. Although she was considered too young to enter a monastery, that didn't stop Thérèse. She first asked her bishop for permission to become a nun. When he told her to wait for God's timing, she went to Pope Leo XIII. The Holy



Father granted her permission to join the Carmelite convent at Lisieux, which Thérèse did just after turning 15.

Thérèse originally hoped to live out her vocation as a missionary, but this was not possible because the order she joined was cloistered. So she looked for another way to bear witness to Christ. She decided that she would do everything with love. It didn't matter if she was washing dishes or cleaning floors, Thérèse promised Jesus she would do everything with love to glorify Him. This became known as her "Little Way." By living her "Little Way," Thérèse shared Jesus' love with the world.

Thérèse spent the rest of her life bearing witness to Christ in all she did. In 1897, when she was 24 years old, she died from tuberculosis. She became a saint in 1925, and her feast day is October 1.

## Formation for Life in Christ

On the first page of this newsletter, we began to learn about the Synod 21-24. In this section, we'll explore more about this event and what it means to live what Pope Francis calls "synodality."

The word "synod" means "journeying together." It describes a Church that walks in faith and shares the Gospel message together. As Pope Francis said in his address at the Cathedral of San Rufino, Assisi, on October 4, 2013, "...I think this is truly the most wonderful experience we can have: to belong to a people walking, journeying through history together with their Lord who walks among us! We are not alone, we do not walk alone. We are part of the one flock of Christ that walks together," (no. 2). Through our baptism, all believers are united with one another and are called to live in communion.

To live "synodality," then, is to live in a way where we are always listening to one another and are open to the voice of the Holy Spirit, as was mentioned on the first page. These acts of listening, of "synodality," are part of who the Church is (Pope Francis, Rome, September 18, 2021). We, as Church, are always meant to be growing in faith, to continue to journey toward Christ. As Pope Francis says in that same address in Rome on September 18, 2021,

"The journey that began with the first Apostles...has continued ever since. Once the Church stops, she is no longer Church, but a lovely pious association, for she keeps the Holy Spirit in a cage." Simply stated, "synodality" is a way for Christians to express who they are and who they are becoming through the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Commission on Spirituality Sub-Group: Spirituality for synodality, *Towards a Spirituality of Synodality*).

The goal of the Synod 21-24 is to



encourage the Church and all of its members to commit to moving forward in the spirit of

"synodality." It aims to make this idea of walking and listening together the normal way of how we do ministry and mission in the Church, so that we can spread the Gospel throughout the world.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux shows us how we can live out the goals of the Synod 21-24 in our daily lives: by doing little things with great love. In this month's video, we'll learn more about Saint Thérèse. How does she inspire you to live a missionary life?

## Celebrating the Mystery

In Baptism, we become part of the community of believers. Through the Eucharist, we are strengthened to live as part of this community and to be the presence of Christ to the world.

The Eucharist joins all Catholics, and helps us to live in unity with one another and with all our neighbors. By the grace of the Eucharist, we are able to grow in likeness of Jesus Christ, and are better able to bear witness to the Gospel. When we receive the Eucharist, we are given the strength to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world, to care for, listen to, and offer welcome and charity to others. It is easy to see, then, why the Eucharist is highlighted in the Synod 21-24 documents. It helps sustain the Church and enables it to live in synodality.

### Teaching Prayer

Do you want to participate in the Synod 21-24? We can all participate in the synod process through prayer. The Synod 21-24 has an official prayer called the Adsumus prayer. This prayer is what the Second Vatican Council prayed before every session. The Synod 21-24 uses a modified version of this same prayer to ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance in discerning a way forward for the Church. To pray the Adsumus prayer, [Click Here>>](#).

## Saint Thérèse of Lisieux [Click Here>>](#)



- ✚ What little things can you do with great love in your daily life?
- ✚ How does living according to Saint Thérèse's "little way" help us share the good news of Jesus Christ?

- ✚ How does St. Thérèse of Lisieux inspire you to be a better listener to God and in your own parish community?