

Synodality

What an exciting time to be in our church! Pope Francis has issued an invitation to all the People of God to gather and dream together about what our Church might become, what we, the people, might become.

The global Synodal process, which began in October 2021, is happening all over the world at every level of the Church's life. Pope Francis has encouraged the entire Church to reflect on this theme that is decisive for its life and mission. He says: "It is precisely this path of Synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium. By journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through Her experience which processes can help Her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open Herself to mission."



Mary Fleig, OCD provides Introduction and Opening Prayer at our Synodality Listening Session

We have used our standing Lectio Divina process as a bridge into Synodality. We have held three Listening Sessions, each of which began with a commentary on the Sunday gospel by a theologian as a starting point for our discussions.

The issues that have been raised consistently are clear: full inclusion and a more welcoming attitude by the Church to all people, and a change in Church structures that eliminates clericalism while at the same time providing a leadership role for women.

Here are just a couple of the comments we have received:

God loves everyone without exception. Jesus witnessed to this in his words and actions. Our dream for our church is that we, lay and cleric alike, will become a welcoming community for everyone regardless of ethnicity or color or gender or sexual preference. All exclusiveness will end.

Structures that really act on the belief that women's gifts and leadership are fundamental to the Church. Put those gifts into practice in roles, structures and systems at all levels. Involve the laity in reframing those roles and structures and systems that now are patriarchal and hierarchical in form, function and decision making

The Church of the future must be more open to all and be willing to include women as a meaningful part of the hierarchical structures.

In starting our Sunday Eucharist, we have asked just a few people to comment on their experience. One woman wrote an email to us about her experience saying:

Thank you so much for inviting me to speak at Mass on the Second Sunday of Lent. It was truly an honor to receive your invitation. When I saw myself and heard myself, I had tears of happiness for my own feelings and hearing my own words. You have no idea of how much this meant to me.

I wanted to also say that your synodality meetings and the opportunities to just be heard have touched my heart and brought me closer to the Church.

Maybe nothing will come of our wishes and desires for our Church but all those attending are listening and are being given the opportunity to speak. All that you do in person and otherwise, bring people closer to our Church as well as drawing us closer to God.

Now, I have to process all of this and decide for myself what church building, here in Pittsburgh, is a good fit for me. That may take some time but you, Sisters, have given me hope.

I look forward to seeing you again in person. Know that you, Sisters, and all of the Sisters are in my daily deepest prayers. God drew me to you and I am truly blessed.

Throughout this Synodality process, people have felt heard. It is the first time anyone has ever asked for their opinions, and truly listened.

Even if nothing changes in the hierarchical structure of the church, this process has created deeper community and released energy around so many important issues affecting our Church and world today. This alone will change the Church and transform the People of God.



Maria Cimperman, RSCJ Provides Commentary at our Synodality Listening Session

Upcoming Events

Palm Sunday

Mass 9 a.m.

(In-Person or on Zoom)

Brian McDermott, SJ, Presiding



Holy Thursday

Tenebrae 8 a.m. (In-Person or on Zoom)

Mass of the Lord's Supper 5:30 p.m.

(In-Person Only)

Bruce Steggert, SJ, Presiding



Good Friday

Tenebrae 8 a.m.

(In-Person or on Zoom)

Solemn Commemoration of the Lord's Passion 3 p.m.

(In-Person Only)



Holy Saturday

Tenebrae 8 a.m.

(In-Person or on Zoom)

Easter Vigil 8:30 p.m.

(In-Person Only)

Rev Joe Muth, Presiding

Easter Sunday 11 a.m.

(In-Person or on Zoom)

Rev. Robert Leavitt, PSS, Presiding



Synodality (by Zoom) 2 p.m. ET

April 2 Sarah Kohles, OSF

Lectio Divina (by Zoom) 2 p.m. ET

April 30 Sandra Schneiders, IHM

May 14 Dianne Bergant, CSA

May 28 Sandra Schneiders, IHM

June 4 John Donahue, SJ

June 18 Brian McDermott, SJ

July 9 Dr. Bonnie Thurston

August 13 Dr. Jaime Waters

Mass

(In-Person or On Zoom)

2nd Sunday of Easter April 24 at 9 a.m.

3rd Sunday of Easter May 1 at 9 a.m.

4th Sunday of Easter May 8 at 9 a.m.

5th Sunday of Easter May 15 at 9 a.m.

6th Sunday of Easter May 22 at 9 a.m.

Ascension of the Lord May 29 at 9 a.m.

Pentecost June 5 at 9 a.m.



The Great Vigil

The Easter Vigil is the pinnacle of the church's liturgical calendar. It occurs each year on the night before the first Sunday after the first full moon occurring on or after the spring equinox. It is the vigil of Easter Sunday, the day of resurrection.

The Vigil consists of four parts: the *Service of Light* which includes the blessing of the new fire, procession with candles into the dark church and the sung Easter Proclamation. The *Liturgy of the Word* tells the story of salvation in seven Old Testament readings, a reading from Romans, the joyful Alleluia and the Gospel. *Blessing of Easter Water* follows so that there is fresh water to be used for Baptisms. The offering of bread and wine then introduces the *Eucharist*.

We invite you to come and participate in the Easter Vigil. Allow the rich signs and symbols to wash over you and draw you closer to the Risen Christ. This is truly the most holy night. "No other event has more significance than this celebration," says Father Paul Turner in his booklet, *What am I doing for Triduum this year?* "You must participate; you simply must be there. The church needs you."



Prayer + Transformation + Love

www.Baltimorecarmel.org

BALTIMORE CARMEL News



SPRING 2022



**On January 9, 2022,
the Solemnity of
The Baptism of the Lord,**
Bridget Rickard entered our
community as a Postulant. Please
keep her in your prayer.

Our hearts continue to be heavy with the overwhelming destruction and loss of life in Ukraine. As Fr. Miguel Márquez, Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites has said: "We are all Ukraine now. ... We are in deep communion with the Carmel and the people of Ukraine. We are all ONE at this moment with our lamps burning." We pray daily for the people with whom we are united.

Remembering our Festival of Learning last November, we continue to be concerned with the racism and white supremacy in our own country, and with the environmental crisis that envelopes our earth. These issues challenge our perceptions and consciences, pervade our prayer, and call us to conversion. We thank with profound appreciation Dr. Laurie Cassidy and Dr. M. Shawn Copeland, editors of *Desire, Darkness, and Hope, Theology in a Time of Impasse* (Liturgical Press, 2021), for coordinating our Learning Festival that attracted so many people and further shared Sr. Constance's writings together with additional reflections by the theologians who contributed to the volume. We are determined to continue probing in prayer and on-going life the heritage of white privilege that darkens the American soul.