

Synod press release
With photo of Bishop Coyne

For immediate release
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Bishop Coyne to convene first Roman Catholic Diocese synod in Vermont since 1962

BURLINGTON—Burlington Bishop Christopher J. Coyne has announced plans to convene the first diocesan synod in Vermont since 1962.

Its purpose is to establish a pastoral plan for the immediate future of the Catholic Church in Vermont and to establish particular laws and policies to do so. This will be at least a yearlong project and is “a serious undertaking by the Church,” he said. “It is not a simple convening of meetings.”

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington serves a population of 118,000 Catholics. There are 42 active priests, 49 permanent deacons, and 40 religious ministering in 73 parishes and 23 missions. The diocese includes 14 Catholic Schools (including St. Therese Digital Academy) and a catechetical system with an estimated 4,700 students. Through Vermont Catholic Charities’ social services and homes for the aged, the Diocese of Burlington assisted more than 10,000 Vermonters last year.

The bishop will serve as the convener and presider, and membership of the synod will contain both ex-officio members of the clergy and laity as well as representatives of religious communities, lay fraternities and at-large representation such as young people, parents and minority communities.

Before the sessions of the synod are convened – the bishop hopes that will be next spring -- all of the members of the Catholic community will be invited to participate in a preparation process in which they will be asked to pray, to listen, to learn and to discern what the future pastoral plan for spreading the “good news” of the Church in Vermont should be. This will take place on the parish level, the deanery (regional) level and the diocesan level. It will include personal meetings but could also make use of new digital and social media means of communication.

After this work of preparation is completed, the bishop will convene the synod to meet in the necessary sessions to complete the work of discernment and planning and to then enact the policies, laws and directives to carry out that plan in the Vermont Church. “I will seek input from all. I will listen to all. And I will discern with you all,” he said.

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