

For Immediate Release
Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington
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In April 2017, Burlington Bishop Christopher J. Coyne 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,” said Bishop Coyne. “It is not a simple convening of meetings.”

Before the sessions of the synod are convened, all of the members of the Catholic community will be invited to participate in parish listening sessions scheduled from mid-November through January in parishes around the state. Participants will be asked to share their thoughts on these three questions:

1. As the Catholic Church in Vermont, what are we doing well?
2. What are we doing that we should be doing better?
3. What are we not doing that we should be doing?

“My encouragement to all of you is to take the time to come to your parish’s listening session, to listen to others and to share your own ideas about the work of the Church,” said Bishop Coyne. “Also, encourage others—maybe your neighbors, maybe your family who don’t often attend Church—to be part of it as well, because those are folks that we need to hear too.”

For more information about a parish listening session in your community please contact your local church.

Vermont Catholics will also be invited to attend regional listening sessions with Bishop Coyne (locations and dates to be announced).

Additional parish sessions are anticipated in the summer of 2018. These will include personal meetings but could also make use of digital communication.

After preparatory meetings are completed, the bishop will convene the synod in the fall of 2018 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. 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.

“I will seek input from all. I will listen to all. And I will discern with you all,” he said.

To learn more about the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington Synod or for current updates, visit: www.vermontcatholic.org/synod.

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 20 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.

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