



ADVENT WEEK 3: CELEBRATE

“The Synod offers us the opportunity to become a listening Church, to break out of our routine and pause from our pastoral concerns in order to stop and listen.” Pope Francis

Opening Prayer

Lord we pray,

*May our synodal preparations inspire people to dream about the church we are called to be,
to make hopes flourish, stimulate trust,
to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships,
to learn from one another, to build bridges,
to enlighten minds and restore strength to our hands for our common mission.
We trust in your Spirit who journeys with us.*

Philippians 4: 4-7

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone; the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Time for prayer and silent meditation (you may wish to light a candle)

Reflection

“The Lord walks with us! How often we forget this fundamental truth of being a disciple. The Lord does not stand aloof. He is completely present to them. He is open to encounter. Nothing leaves Jesus indifferent; everything is of concern to him. Encountering faces, meeting eyes, sharing each person’s history. That is the closeness that Jesus embodies. He knows that someone’s life can be changed by a single encounter. Jesus did not hurry along or keep looking at his watch to get things over. He was always at the service of the person he was with, listening to what he or she had to say. We too are called to take time to encounter the Lord and one another.” Bishop Mark O’Toole

THEMES FOR REFLECTION

In exploring the themes below participants are invited to:

- Listen actively and without judgment to the Holy Spirit and to others
- Pay attention not only to the words, but also to the tone and feelings of the speaker
- Listen actively to yourself, mindful of your own thoughts and feelings as you speak

How do I celebrate the presence of God in His Word and in the Sacraments?

How do the Word and the Sacraments inspire my most important decisions?

Does the liturgy of the Church inspire a deeper encounter with the risen Lord?

How does our parish celebrate the Word?

How do prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and direct our parish “journeying together”?

How does our parish support a full Catholic life and Mission – evangelization, catechesis, formation, liturgy and social action?

How does the Church celebrate journeying together?

How does the wider Church promote everyone’s active participation?



The next step will be for the facilitator/scribe to share the group’s reflections with the Synodal working group. But this process doesn’t end there. This listening process will become part of a longer-term shift in the way we walk together as Christians and helps us grow in faith as individuals and as a Church.