



Catholic Diocese of Victoria

Office of the Bishop

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Pentecost 2023

Dear People of God,

At the first Pentecost, the fire of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, igniting their hearts and their lives with joy, thrusting them outwards into a profound encounter with the world and all creation.

In our days we can see the Holy Spirit still at work in the world, and in a very special way in the journey of Synod 2021-2024. The whole People of God have been called to walk together as the Holy Spirit helps us to discern the Lord's will for his Church. In the results of Synod 2021-2024 so far, a recurring theme is joy – the joy of our faith, and the joy of having opportunities for sharing, listening, and discernment in a space of encounter and mutual listening that incorporates the gifts of all the baptized.

As Synod 2021-2024 continues its journey, I am pleased to announce the establishment of a Diocesan Permanent Pastoral Synod (DPPS) here in the Diocese of Victoria. The DPPS will allow us to continue our journey on the road of Communion, Participation, and Mission, and help us to “enlarge the space of our tent” (Isa 54.2), as Pope Francis has challenged us to do.

From Pentecost Sunday, May 28, 2023, until Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024, each pastor/pastoral administrator with their parish will be asked to choose one or two Local Listening Facilitators. These people will be provided with training and guidance in the skills of listening and creating safe environments to ensure healthy dialogue.

Near the Feast of Christ the King, November 24, 2024, a Local Listening Facilitator from each parish will meet in plenary, in person and/or online, with the Bishop's Advisory Council and the Priests' Council to discern a set of questions to be explored. Over the following months, the Local Listening Facilitators will hold Listening Circles in their parishes and the wider community to discuss the questions that were chosen.

During the time of Pentecost 2025, a Local Listening Facilitator from each parish will meet in plenary with all clergy, pastoral administrators, and Diocesan leadership committees: the Bishop's Advisory Council; the Diocesan Finance Committee; the Diocesan Liturgical Commission; the Diocesan Health Care Committee; and the Island Catholic School Board. The group will listen and reflect on the results of the local Listening Circles, and the results of this meeting will inform planning and actions at both the Parish and the Diocesan level. The DPPS cycle will then begin again with another Local Listening Facilitator plenary before Advent 2025.

I am inspired by the wisdom that has been shared in Synod 2021-2024 so far, and am confident the Holy Spirit will guide and direct us as we establish a Diocesan Permanent Pastoral Synod in the Diocese of Victoria. I pray the DPPS will unite us in a true communion and inspire us to participation in the mission of Christ:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Lk 4:18-19)

Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Most Reverend Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria