



February 22, 2024

Pope Francis Sets Dates for October Synod

~ by Gerard O'Connell for AMERICA

Pope Francis has decided that the second session of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality will open on October 2 and end on October 27, the General Secretariat of the synod announced on February 17. It will be preceded by a two-date retreat on September 30 – October 1.

Contrary to expectations, the synod will in fact be more or less the same length as the first session. As already known, almost all the synod's 365 members (including women and men who are not bishops) participated in last October's synod. They will continue to focus on the theme: "For a synodal church: communion, participation and mission."



Accompanying this news, Pope Francis also issued a chirograph – that is a document directly written and signed by the pope – in which he announced the establishment of study groups to delve into some of the themes that had emerged last October in the first session of the synod. Francis did not specify which of the many themes that emerged from the first session will be subjected to the study.

A rapid glance at the 81 proposals made in the synthesis report issued at the end of last October's synod suggests that the following themes are likely to be among those discussed and researched in the study groups: the role and place of women in the church, including the question of the diaconate in general and the diaconate for women; structures of synodality at the diocesan and parish level; the updating of the Code of Canon Law. These and other issues mentioned in the document released by the synod secretariat on December 11 entitled "Towards October 2024," may require theological, canonical or pastoral input.

The latter document emphasized that next October's synod will focus on how to live synodality at all levels in the church. To read the entire account, please click [here](#)



ReligiousFormation CONFERENCE

The RFC is delighted to announce three new members of the Board of Directors who began terms in January: Fr. Carlos Medina, OSA, Sr. Michelle Stachowiak, CSSF, and Sr. Barbara Staley, MSC. The RFC is grateful that these leaders have stepped forward and agreed to serve the Conference at this important time.

Sister Barbara Staley, MSC served as the General Superior of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Cabrini Sisters) from 2014 until July 2022. During her tenure a major focus was strengthening formation for formators and establishing international coordination programs for initial formation. She has a Master's degree in Social Work from NYU and her undergraduate degree is in Special Education. She also has extensive studies in theology and administration.



Prior to Sr. Barbara's term as General Superior her apostolic ministries include founding Cabrini Ministries Swaziland. This organization was established to serve persons infected and affected by the HIV pandemic. Her primary responsibilities included establishing a comprehensive holistic orphan care program and a family service unit. Sr. Barbara also worked for ten years in Chicago, delivering care to undocumented immigrants helping them to access healthcare and social services as well as providing direct mental healthcare. Sr. Barbara worked for three years in Barcenas, Guatemala providing programs of Human Protection and Christian Formation.

Before entering the MSCs in 1988 Sr. Barbara was the administrator of a residential care facility for adults with developmental disabilities. She also was a member of the Covenant House Faith community and served as a childcare worker with homeless street children in New York City, and later served as a paraprofessional in Covenant House's legal department.

From the Guadalupe Province Vocation Team...

The following are excerpts from an article written by Sr. Michele Vincent Fisher, CSFN, that appears in the Winter 2024 issue of HORIZON, the Journal of the National Religious Vocations Conference. Sr. Michele writes about striking a healthy, hopeful balance as a vocation minister; however, her words can be helpful for all of us no matter what our vocation in life. The article will appear in installments over the next few weeks.

Strike a Healthy, Hopeful Balance

Rooted in Hope

Besides emphasizing movement, a focus on hope is also essential for balance. Hope is a little orphan with curly red hair singing, “The sun’ll come out...tomorrow! Bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow...there’ll be sun.” Hope is a caterpillar that asks, “How do I become a butterfly?” And a butterfly who responds, “When you want to fly so much that you’re willing to give up being a caterpillar!”

Wikipedia tells us that hope is an “optimistic state of mind based on an expectation of positive outcomes” and Merriam-Webster tells us that hope means “to cherish a desire with anticipation: to want something to happen or be true.” Scripture tells us that hope is a strong and confident expectation; a trust in what is yet unseen.



Striking a balance in hope is honoring the process as much as the outcome, seeing each step along the way as the way, and believing that the providence of God is always greater than our limited vistas. With this in mind, I used the letters in the word hope to share some of the elements I find helpful in striking a healthy balance in prayer,

community and family, ministry, mission, and self-care. Those elements are home, help and humor, order, outlook, peace, and expect.

Tend to your Home

Striking a healthy balance in hope begins at home. Where is your home? I am not only referring to your physical address on the GPS, but what constitutes home for you in an expansive sense of the word? When I was in full-time vocation ministry, I was grateful to live in a large community with sisters of diverse ages and ministries

and with living space for me to host small groups for retreats and activities. Hospitality was one of the defining characteristics of our home, whether it was welcoming friends and family members of our sisters, housing employees from our hospital during weather emergencies, or making room for giggling groups of high school girls for an after-school evening with the sisters. Creating and respecting healthy boundaries; inviting others into activity and prayer; and showing genuine empathy, care, and support to one another and to others made this a sacred place for me that I will forever treasure.



Even when my ministry kept me on the road, I knew that upon my arrival back home, I would be warmly welcomed and expected to pick up where I left off. The anchor of a life-giving, nurturing home life sustained me through many joys and challenges, losses, disappointments, and successes. What is the quality of your home life? Is the time you spend there quality time where you participate actively in the life of those with whom you live? Does the quality of your home life nourish you for ministry?
Next week: Help and Humor, and Order

Cabrini Shrines in the Spotlight



Julia Attaway, Executive Director of the **St. Frances Cabrini Shrine** in New York, shares that the Shrine was featured on the front page of the National Catholic Register on February 20 in an article titled "Saint Frances Cabrini Planted Roots in this Once-Remote Corner of Manhattan". The long and favorable article was a prelude to an upcoming movie review by the same reporter. Stay tuned! To access the article, please click [here](#)

JoAnn Seaman, Executive Director of the **Mother Cabrini Shrine** in Golden, CO, shares the link to an article that was published as an OpEd in the Denver Post on Sunday. JoAnn was notified last week that this article was going to happen and the Denver Post sent a photographer to the Shrine to take the photos. JoAnn thought it was very well written and would be of interest to the larger Cabrini organization, etc... To access the article please click [here](#)





A beloved Cabrini tradition during the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent is the sharing of the reflections of the Cabrini Lay Missionaries (CLMs). Once again, as we journey through this Lent, we are grateful to receive the contemplations of our CLMs.

Our reflection for the Second Sunday in Lent is offered by Melanie Paccillo.

Second Sunday of Lent

Sometimes we are not very observant. It's a fact of life. Take, for example, the last time you misplaced something. We get worked up looking around for our missing object, trying hard to locate it. Keys, pen, phone we just had. Many times, they're right under our noses, but we don't see them. Those missing glasses? They're probably on your head.

This week's Gospel is Mark's telling of the Transfiguration. Peter, James, and John go up the mountain with Jesus and see him bright and shining. They were terrified and did not know what to do. They did not understand what was going on. In the moment, they needed God to speak and tell them the obvious - "this is my beloved son, listen to him." God's plan for them, and the world, was being revealed in clear, uncertain terms.



God will always show us the way and the truth, even if we have difficulty seeing and understanding the message. During this second week of Lent, let's see ourselves as the disciples who sometimes miss what God is trying to tell us. Let's be attentive to God's perfect guidance in our lives, be it under our nose or on top of our heads with the glasses. ~ *Melanie Paccillo, CLM*

Prayer Requests

Rosanna Salcedo

Please pray for Rosanna Salcedo, an alumna of Mother Cabrini High School, who will begin treatments for a serious illness.

Sr. Lucille Souza, MSC

Kindly continue your prayers for Sr. Lucille who is still undergoing rehab at St. Cabrini Nursing Home. Please pray that she regains greater strength each day.

In Loving Memory

John Gomes

Please unite in prayer for the repose of the soul of John Gomes, the younger brother of Sr. Alfonsina Gomes, MSC. Mr. Gomes passed away unexpectedly on Monday, February 19th. Please keep the Gomes Family in your prayers at this sad time.

