



Love One Another

October 15, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There are times within the life of a family where everyone must gather together to address an issue or a problem that affects the entire clan. Sometimes, it's the illness of a parent or grandparent that demands everyone's attention and resources. Other times, it might be an important decision like moving to a new city because of a change in job or the purchase of a new home. I've even heard of stories about the first child in a family to attend college receiving advice from all the family members as to where he or she should go, weighing the options and seeking the wisdom from people who love and care about him or her. The family's collective advice provides a level of comfort and support in decision making.

At the recent Pallium lecture, Cardinal Timothy Dolan offered a new model for our Church. It was the model of "family." If we use that model, then we as a family will be coming together to address important issues and problems which demand the attention and resources of all of us. This family coming together is our Archdiocesan Synod.

A Synod is a prayerful planning process, albeit a very important one to decide the future of our Church in southeastern Wisconsin. You are a member of this Catholic family by virtue of your baptism and membership in the parish life of the archdiocese.

All the parishes in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee are being asked to hold a parish reflection session to prayerfully discern and discuss God's call during this time of preparation. A morning or evening reflection is a time to slow down in the midst of a hectic pace and reconnect with God by reflecting on His Word. Coming together as parishioners can strengthen each of us to live authentically in our relationships by witnessing the faith. The upcoming reflection session will offer a special opportunity to experience the beauty of the Church and the role of discipleship that we are each called to fulfill through our own particular gifts.

You might ask, "Why should I spend my time at a parish reflection session?" First, it's a unique opportunity to join your brothers and sisters in Christ as we envision the future of the archdiocese, looking forward with a sense of greater hope for the Church in the next 10 or 15 years. Second, it's a witness of your love for the Church and a testimony to the power of prayer. We believe that prayer makes a difference and prayer must be at the foundation of our Synod. The old adage is true that the family that prays together stays together.

Third, it is a means to confront the challenges facing the parish and the archdiocese (i.e. evangelization, ministry to youth, stewardship, catechesis, etc.). Fourth, it provides an opportunity to voice our priorities. Your input will be part of creating the future, not just for your parish, but for the entire archdiocese. As a family, we will reflect on how to use our energy and resources. Fifth, we build our sense of unity with the parish and the archdiocese by demonstrating our response to the “call” to assist in determining our future direction.

The Year of Faith declared by Pope Benedict XVI comes to a close next month; however, the work of faith continues. Consider attending your parish reflection session. The family needs your support and wisdom. It’s an important time for all of us. Please watch “The Beauty of the Catholic Church” video on our website by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/SynodVideos>. This video is a wonderful reminder of the great gift we have received from God. Also, pray for the Synod and let your participation declare that you LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Alive in faith,

Most Reverend Jerome E. Listecki
Archbishop of Milwaukee