



Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Lord,

During the Archdiocesan phase of the 2021-2024 Universal Synod, I have had the remarkable opportunity to attend many regional listening sessions to hear the joys and concerns facing our Archdiocese as voiced by the Archdiocesan Presbyteral and Pastoral Councils, our young people, families, and the elders of our parishes. I also have had the opportunity to pray and celebrate Mass with the faithful of this wonderful Archdiocese. I am grateful for this experience, especially as our communities have been emerging from COVID.

From our parish and Archdiocesan listening sessions, I heard several themes that echoed across our parishes. The first theme was the need to focus on our parishes, to invite people back to parish life and Sunday Mass after COVID, and to welcome people back to the faith. Another theme was the desire of our people to have ongoing listening sessions, so that the joys, hopes, griefs and concerns of the community are heard, and the community can work together to support each other. A final theme was the wish that the people of this Archdiocese get to know me and the Auxiliary Bishops better. It was made clear to me that you desire to have your bishops present at your parish to celebrate life's joys, to proclaim the faith and worship, and mourn life's sorrows with you.

After taking the necessary time to pray, discern, and consult on the findings of our synodal process, I am pleased to announce our *Walking Together in Hope: A Pastoral Planning Process for Evangelization*.

This ongoing local synodal process is rooted in prayer, discernment, and guided listening sessions with the goal of revitalizing our parishes. This process was designed to follow up on the above-mentioned themes of inviting our people back to vibrant parish life.

You have my full commitment and the commitment of our three Auxiliary Bishops to be present and involved in this vital next step for our Archdiocese. You can count on us to attend one of your parish sessions for *Walking Together in Hope*.

As your Archbishop, I wish to continue to walk with you in the hope of Our Lord. I look forward to joining your parish community as we journey together on this synodal path!

Faithfully Yours in Christ,

✠Wilton Cardinal Gregory,
Archbishop of Washington