

**Pastoral Letter**  
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**Bishop of the Diocese of Saint-Hyacinthe**  
**April 2026 - [ecdsh.org](http://ecdsh.org)**



*May the Word  
resound in our lives*

A path for mission  
in service to the proclamation

## Pastorals Letters

- +What Kind of Christian for What Kind of Hope? Here and Now! (2025)
- +Called to Bear Witness Together (2024)
- +Standing Up for You (2021)
- +In Your Immense Tenderness (2021)
- +In Times of Crisis, Let Us Dare to Hope (2020)
- +Even Darkness Is Not Darkness for You (2020)
- +To You, Missionary Disciples (2018)

## And also

- +Renew in yourself the hope for the life of the world

**Access online**



**Dear beloved brothers and sisters,**

Next September, we will hold a major missionary assembly in Quebec entitled *He Urges Us to Proclaim the Gospel*. On this occasion, I wish to share with you my reflections on the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus and the synodal process currently underway at the invitation of the late Pope Francis [1], which continues under Pope Leo XIV.

In the final document of the XVIth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *\*Towards a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission\**, the synodal fathers and mothers affirm that *synodality is not an end in itself: it is oriented toward the mission that Christ entrusted to the Church in the Spirit. Evangelization is “the essential mission of the Church; it is the Church’s own grace and vocation, her very identity. (...) Synodality and mission are intimately linked: mission illuminates synodality, and synodality impels mission.* [2]

In the Church, we do not walk alone toward the Kingdom of God. As members of our Diocese of Saint-Hyacinthe [3], let us walk together to make known the joy of the Gospel to our contemporaries. *Our mission is to proclaim the Kingdom of God, offering to every person, without exception, the mercy and love of the Father* [4]

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[1] For practical reasons, the notes referred to in the text are included at the end of the document.



“Walking together” expresses the very nature of our Catholic Church as the People of God journeying in the footsteps of Jesus, the apostles, the seventy-two disciples, and the first Christian communities: *They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers* (Acts 2:42).

This shared journey strengthens the credibility of the proclamation of salvation. It bears witness to a community united in the diversity of its members, its history, its gifts, its charisms, its talents, its ministries, and its many commitments. *The gifts of grace are varied, but it is the same Spirit. The ministries are varied, but it is the same Lord. The activities are varied, but it is the same God who works in all and through all. To each is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good* (1 Cor 12:4–7).

The synodal Church is the Church on mission. The proclamation of the Gospel cannot be separated from the way we treat one another and work together in concrete ways, guided by the Holy Spirit, as we proclaim the Gospel in the heart of the world.

Through this synodal journey undertaken in recent years in the footsteps of the Second Vatican Council, our Church bears witness that it lives within itself what it preaches: communion and reconciliation in Jesus Christ, *the way, the truth, and the life* (Jn 14:6), leaving no one by the wayside.

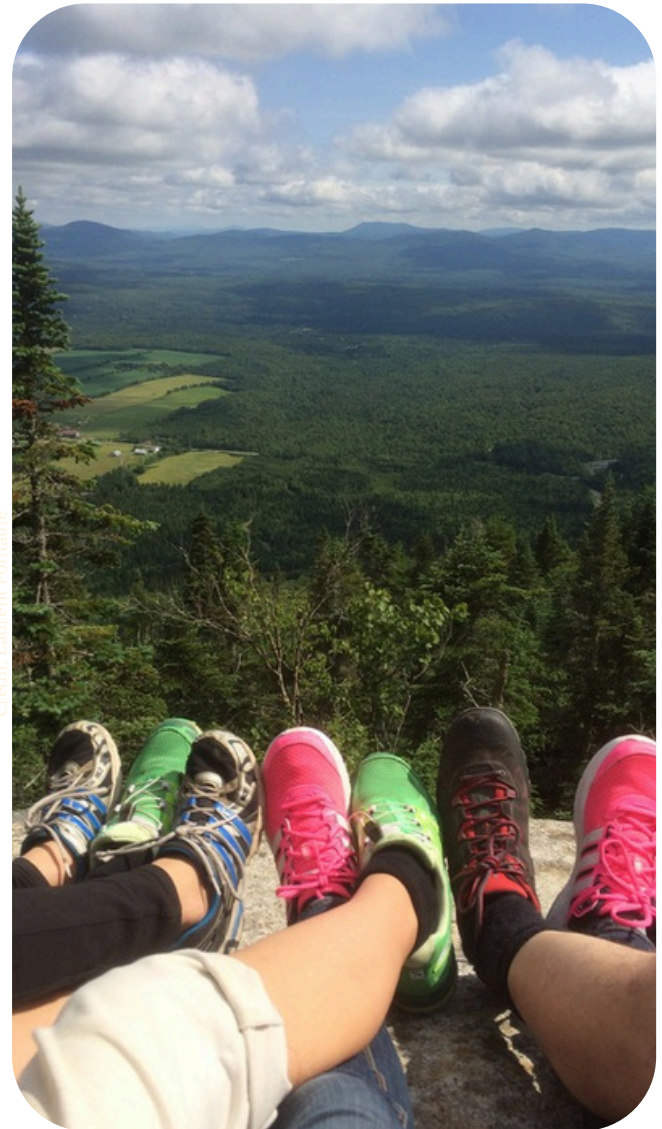
*“Walking together” expresses the very nature of our Catholic Church as the People of God journeying in the footsteps of Jesus...*



We live in a secularized and pluralistic world that is transforming our human relationships. Through the proliferation and myriad possibilities offered by new communication technologies and artificial intelligence, we can quickly become overwhelmed by all manner of discourse, opinions, testimonies, thoughts, ideas, philosophies, religions, and life choices. The Christian faith is not an automatic inheritance as it once was in some of our families and societies.

The encounter between evangelical preaching—the proclamation of salvation—and synodality—*walking together*—presents a major challenge for our Christian communities, which are experiencing pivotal moments in the current global, national, and local conte

The spirit of synodality invites us to live a pastoral dynamic of sharing. It calls us to a bold ecclesial way of life. Let us not be afraid to offer the Word of God proclaimed by Jesus Christ as a meaningful gift for daily life. *Go! Make disciples of all nations: baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And I am with you*



Credit: Laurent Fontaine

*always, even to the end of the age* (Mt 28:19–20).

This synodal approach is not a form of isolation, nor is it a mere slogan or a passing fad. It is a way of deepening our Christian roots, as well as a process of life, conversion, and renewal for the entire Church—our vast, multifaceted family called to walk together.

In some respects, we experience a kind of paradox during our liturgical celebrations, catechesis, and moments of teaching.

***On one side, there is a person speaking, and on the other, there is an assembly listening. Shouldn't the spirit of synodality influence the way we convey our messages and teachings from the Gospel?  
The stakes are high!***

How can we ensure that our sermons, teachings, and catechesis are not merely a kind of speech directed at the people, but rather a voice springing from the heart of the People of God on the move, so that *we may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world* (Mt 5:13-14)?

Let us explore how this synodal dynamic lived out in our diocesan Church is challenging some of our habits.

I suggest four paths:

- 1. Co-responsibility in proclamation;**
- 2. Listening and dialogue;**
- 3. The hospitality of languages;**
- 4. Our prophetic commitment.**



*Jubilee of Youth, held in Rome in 2025*

# 1. Co-responsible in proclamation

## *From the Isolated Pulpit to the Shared Word*

Traditionally, preaching is entrusted to an ordained minister—a deacon, priest, or bishop. In many of our Christian communities, catechesis is entrusted to trained and commissioned pastoral workers, sometimes assisted by generous volunteers.

The paradox of preachers and catechists is that they find themselves

alone before a congregation called to be active participants. Yet the synodal approach practiced in recent years highlights that every baptized person is an active agent of evangelization. Therefore, how can we “break” this kind of isolation experienced by preachers and catechists in order to reflect the Body of Christ, which is the Church on its journey?

## *The Baptismal Foundation*

Synodality takes root in baptism. The Holy Spirit is given to all. Tradition speaks of the *sensus fidei*, *the instinct for the truth of the Gospel, not to be confused with public opinion.* [5] Thus, understanding the Gospel is not reserved for some sort of elite. The preacher or catechist is not the one who possesses the truth. Their mission

is to help the members of our Christian communities welcome and understand what the Holy Spirit is saying to them in God’s Today: “*Let anyone who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches*” (Rev 2 and 3).

Preaching and catechesis are not about seizing power. They are a service to the community, a sharing of our faith,



*Every baptized person is an active participant in evangelization*

the fruit of our inner life. How can they avoid being isolated acts and instead become an expression of the Church on the move? How can we integrate diverse and inclusive voices into the preparation and reception of the message?

A sermon, a teaching, or a catechesis that does not involve the shared responsibility of the People of God on the move—laypeople and clergy together—risks becoming a purely intellectual or emotional exercise

disconnected from the Church's true mission.

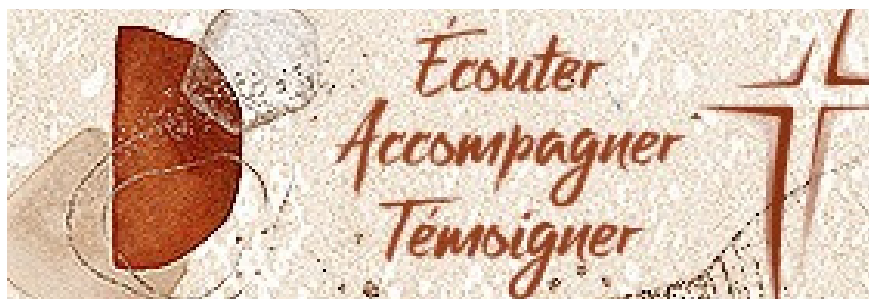
Therefore, would it not be appropriate to move from a passive audience to a community of missionary disciples in action? Let us live out the common priesthood of the baptized: understanding and proclaiming the Word, in communion of heart, spirit, and of mind. Preachers and catechists alike are called to be facilitators of the encounter between the Word of God and concrete daily life.

## 2. Listening and Dialogue

### ***A spirituality of listening, the Church reaching out***

Synodality calls for our words not to be a kind of didactic monologue disconnected from the reality of daily life. The proclamation of the Word of God should be the fruit of prior listening and a spiritual dialogue based on the lives of our brothers and sisters in humanity.

*Listening, an essential component of all aspects of the Church's life, [6] is a vital part of preaching and teaching. By listening to our brothers and sisters, we participate in the attitude with which God, in Jesus Christ, comes to meet each person. [7]*



In the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus approaches them. He walks alongside them without revealing who he is. Jesus asks them, “*What are you discussing as you walk along?*” (Luke 24:17). Jesus gives them a space to speak so that they can express their sadness, their disappointment, their “overwhelming emotions.” Cleopas and the other disciple pour out everything that is on their hearts: Jesus’ death, the failure of their hopes, their confusion in the face of the empty tomb. Jesus does not interrupt. He listens to their interpretation of the events. It is only after listening to them that Jesus speaks up to reinterpret their own story in the light of the Scriptures. Jesus does not change the facts. Jesus changes their perspective on the events.

Before ascending the pulpit of truth, as our elders in the faith used to say, preachers must descend into the realities of daily life in their local community. Pope Leo XIV emphasizes how important it is *to truly know the community where one is called to serve* [8].

At the Second Vatican Council, the council fathers affirmed: *The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially*



The Disciples of Emmaus,  
a painting by Brother Charbel  
of the Cistercian Abbey of Rougemont

*those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.* [9]

Our preaching, our teaching, and our catechesis require an ear attuned to the sorrows, the precariousness, the questions, and the challenges, but also to the hopes and joys of the life of the People of God on the move.

It is crucial that we learn ever more to listen in order to enter into dialogue. It is through mutual listening that the Holy Spirit will show us how to speak to the heart of today’s world, reaching even the farthest existential peripheries of humanity.

## ***The Transmission of the Word of God***

How do our teachings, catechesis, and sermons in our parishes and communities allow themselves to be shaped by the experiences, sufferings, joys, doubts, and questions of the members of our Christian communities?

Our various teachings must not merely explain the Holy Scriptures. They must also be able to interpret everyday human life in the light of those Scriptures.

I am delighted that, in many of our Christian communities, there are Bible study and faith-sharing groups that nourish their reflections and daily lives in the light of God's Word. I am thinking of the members of the Cursillo teams, the young adults in "Bible and Pizza," the couples in the Notre-Dame teams, the Alpha groups, the participants in the "Evangelization of the Depths" group, as well as the centuries-old richness of *lectio divina* received from the monastic tradition and lived out in small sharing groups. *No one can walk the path of authentic spirituality alone.* [10]



**To allow ourselves to be touched  
by one another's experiences,  
sufferings, joys, doubts,  
and questions**

On certain occasions, there is feedback on homilies to see how the message is received and lived out in daily life. Why not incorporate questions received via email or heard during conversations with brothers and sisters when preparing our talks? Let us dare to respond to the longings of the members of our Christian communities!

# 3. The Hospitality of Languages

## *At the heart of our “plural” world*

A synodal Church recognizes that the Gospel takes root in diverse cultures. Preaching, as well as our teaching and catechesis, cannot be uniform or rigid. They should take into account the various languages of our time—digital, artistic, social, literary, and so on.

The Gospel is universal. Evangelizing in a synodal manner calls for diversity across urban, rural, youth, intellectual,

popular, and artistic cultures, without seeking to standardize.

Let us be mindful in our choice of vocabulary and theological expression so as to reach all

segments of our communities, even those on the peripheries. The use of certain theological terms can, in some of our pastoral settings, act as a barrier. The challenge, then, is to translate them into everyday language, just as Jesus did in his time with his parables drawn from daily life.



Credit: Laurent Fontaine



Credit: Laurent Fontaine



Credit: CECR St-Hyacinthe

## *A Polyphonic Vision*



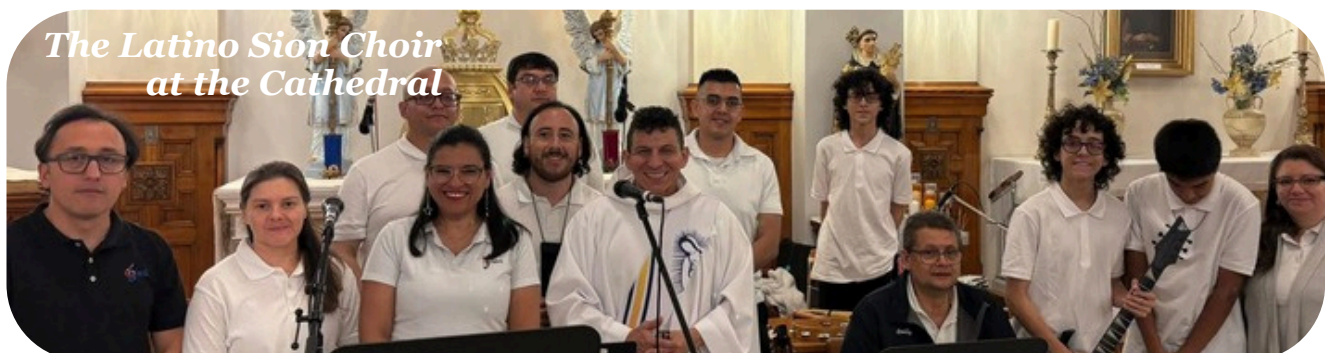
Let us dare to offer sermons, teachings, and catechesis that respect the cultural diversity of our local communities without betraying the profound unity of the Gospel message. Let us rejoice in welcoming into our Christian communities new brothers and sisters in the faith, as well as fellow *fidei donum* priests from different continents! Let us joyfully welcome the catechumens and those newly baptized at Easter! [11] What do we learn from one another?

New digital communication tools are evolving rapidly. *The possibilities of the internet are reshaping relationships, connections, and boundaries.* [12] It is a true emerging mission field where we can reach many brothers and sisters in humanity. Let us dare to take our place there. Let us dare to

create spaces for respectful dialogue and encounter by engaging in social media ourselves, so that we may be words of hope, healing, support, and meaning.

In a synodal Church, the proclamation of the Gospel can, on occasion, take other forms, such as the witness of a couple's life, the interpretation of a work of art, or, at times, a well-guided moment of meditative silence.

Let us value the different sensibilities that exist within our Christian communities—young people, seniors, couples, families, people in precarious situations, and others—in our various teachings, catechesis, and public speaking.



# 4. Our prophetic commitment

## *The Signs of the Times*

The synodal evangelizer will not be content to repeat abstract truths. He will strive to help the local community discern God's presence in the current events of the world and their own living environment, to see the spiritual significance of what is unfolding before them, here and now.

Let us learn to constantly read the signs of the times, the opportune moment, the time of God's action. Our preaching, teachings, and catechesis will thus become a kind of compass that helps us grasp the current challenges facing our respective communities as we confront the ethical, spiritual, social, cultural, and other issues before us.

The Bible is not a text of the past. It is a powerful force that has been active from generation to generation for centuries. The aim of all our presentations will be to help the community reflect on what the Lord is asking of us in the face of the challenges of life in our couples and families, in the face of the ecological crisis, in the face of migration issues, in the face of the isolation of so many people in our cities and villages, and in the face of the cry of the poor.



In this regard, Pope Leo XIV writes that *the condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church.* [13]

Let us allow the Word of God to take root in concrete commitments at the heart of the realities of our world today—commitments to justice, peace, the care of creation, and more—by living a life of brotherhood, solidarity, and simplicity. This is a collective prophetic mission in today's world.

## *A message that sets things in motion*

For example, why not conclude our homilies, as well as our various teachings and catechesis, with a question or an open-ended reflection for the week? Could a successful homily not end with a sort of “*Let’s go,*” since it will equip our brothers and sisters with tools to bear witness in their workplaces, in their families, and in their various engagements at the heart of the surrounding society?

Synodality is a way of being Church that requires the Word of God to circulate and radiate horizontally among all members of the people of God on the move. The challenge is not to speak better. Let us walk together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to joyfully proclaim the Gospel to all cultures present at the heart of our parishes.



Dear beloved brothers and sisters, preaching, teaching, and catechesis are acts of humility for the one who speaks. They are acts of boldness for the baptized members of our communities who listen. Evangelical preaching in the spirit of synodality is not a loss of authority for the person who teaches. It is an expansion of grace for those who listen and welcome it. To preach, teach, and catechize in a synodal manner is to accept that the Word of God is too vast to be confined to a single voice.

It means recognizing that the Holy Spirit speaks just as much through the tears of a marginalized person, through the cry of a poor person welcomed into our Saint-Joseph haltes in Iberville, Granby, and Saint-Hyacinthe, the questions of



a young person searching for meaning who is staying in the upper room of Rougemont Abbey, a teenager spending a weekend of renewal at a Myriam-Bethléem youth camp in Mont-Saint-Hilaire, the life challenges of a member of the Christian Workers' Movement, of a prisoner incarcerated in the Sorel or Cowansville prison, or the life

experience of an elder, than through the precious books of theology, spirituality, and exegesis...

Here lies a challenge to be met in the *integral, ongoing, and shared formation* [14] of missionary disciples, with a view to passing on this “gold mine” to future generations.

## **As a closing thought: let us be signs of hope**

**Let us discover and awaken the gifts and charisms that God places in each and every one of us, inspiring the boldness and desire to put them into action, thus becoming witnesses to grace at work.**

**A criterion for the success of synodal evangelization is not measured by the speaker's eloquence, but by the community's ability to rise up and say with one heart and one soul: *this is what we have understood, and this is how we will live it together!***

**All those who love Jesus Christ, passionate about sharing the joy of the Gospel, may our hearts be modeled on his; may our words not be walls that separate the knowledgeable from the ignorant; may they be bridges that allow every baptized person to become, in turn, a bearer and leaven of hope in a world that is currently undergoing a grave crisis of despair.**

**Let us entrust to God's heart all the present and future dimensions of our diocesan life as well as those of our local Christian communities. Let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of *the Church*, *to teach us to be a people of missionary disciples walking together: a synodal Church* [15]. Let us go forth, together with the support of Blessed Louis Zéphirin Moreau, united in God's immense tenderness!**

**+ Christian Rodembourg**

## Notes

[1] Let us recall that in our diocese, more than 1,000 people participated in this synodal process initiated by Pope Francis, and that 100 reports were submitted to the diocesan synodal team, enabling the finalization of our summary document.

[2] For a Synodal Church, #32

[3] The members of the Diocesan and Missionary Pastoral Council are tasked with assisting the bishop in receiving and implementing the fruits of the synodal process experienced in recent years within the Church. I thank them for their fraternal service.

[4] Toward a Synodal Church, #140

[5] Ibid., #22

[6] Ibid., #78

[7] Ibid., #51

[8] Vatican, Paul VI Hall, February 19, 2026

[9] Gaudium et Spes, # 1

[10] Toward a Synodal Church, # 43

[11] This year, about thirty young adults will be baptized at Easter in our diocese.

[12] For a Synodal Church, # 11

[13] Dilexi Te, # 9

[14] For a Synodal Church, # 143

[15] Ibid., # 155

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