

**Synod Prayer Service**  
**On the feast of the Visitation, May 31, 2023**



Leader: O Lord, open my lips.

R: **And my mouth will proclaim your praise.**

**Psalm 131** (*read antiphonally*)

A O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor haughty my eyes.

I have not gone after things too great nor marvels beyond me.

B Truly I have set my soul in silence and peace.

As a child has rest in its mother's arms, even so my soul.

A O Israel, hope in the Lord both now and for ever.

B Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

All **As it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.**

**Scripture Reading**  
*Luke 1:39-45*

**The Magnificat**, with quotes from Synod documents and intercessions

*(A few seconds of silence will follow each intercession, or the second intercession when there are two together.)*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

“Gratitude is a gift of the Holy Spirit, which is essential for authentic discernment.” (NS p. 13)

*May we always proclaim our gratitude to God in all that we do. **Lord, hear our prayer.***

***Silence (10-15 seconds)***

For he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

“We must acknowledge, however, that the ongoing work before us includes making efforts to listen more effectively to those from whom we have not heard, including many who have been relegated to the margins of our communities, society and Church.....Synodality is an ongoing effort, and we must learn how better to encourage participation in the future.” (FD p. 2, *letter from Bishops*)

“More space needs to be opened for [women], especially at decision-making tables. The Church in North America was encouraged to ‘recognize, discern, and promote the role of women...so that they may have a greater presence in the Church.’” (FD19)

*May women in our Church be valued and recognized for the gifts and talents with which they serve others. **Lord, hear our prayer.***

***silence***

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

“The responsibility of ministry is not just for priests, but for each baptized person. This is a real space where we can allow women and some of the more marginalized folks in the Church to really take up leadership roles.” (FD18)

“All people are called to mission and have something important to contribute to the life of the Church and the world. This is our opportunity to go out and share with others.” (FD35)

*May we rejoice in the diversity of our Church and strive to welcome and honor those who are different from ourselves. **Lord, hear our prayer.***

*May we take up the responsibilities of our baptismal call and consciously share in the mission of the Church. **Lord, hear our prayer.***

***silence***

The Almighty has done great things for me, And holy is his Name.

“A deeper formation allows us to present the beauty of our faith, rather than a list of rules....How do we go about becoming a people that have a disposition of listening, of being synodal, of putting listening first?” (FD 22)

“Jesus Christ is at the center of the tent... The Eucharist is the center of our lives... The center of our faith is the person of Jesus Christ...Jesus is the center pole of the tent that we must never lose sight of in what we do.” (FD23)

*May we strive to truly hear and understand the voices of others with whom we disagree. **Lord, hear our prayer.***

*In this Year of the Eucharist, may we see Christ in others and treasure the gift of the Eucharist in our own lives. **Lord, hear our prayer.***

***silence***

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.

“The gifts of young people are not always fully appreciated by older generations. We should appreciate the creativity and ingenuity of young people.” (FD 20)

“The value of simply listening is a clear message of the Synod process. People must be able to speak honestly on even the most controversial topics without fear of rejection. We must be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things.

*May we truly appreciate and encourage the gifts that young people and young adults bring to our Church. **Lord, hear our prayer.***

***silence***

He has shown the strength of his arm, He has scattered the proud in their conceit.

“...as we all come – broken and sinful – to the Church, everyone must feel welcomed and at home.” (FD36)

“We need to examine the way in which certain teachings are presented, to demonstrate that we can be faithful to God without giving the impression that we are qualified to pass judgment on other people.” (NS p. 13)

*May we be humble in our thoughts and actions, trying our best to be accepting and welcoming of others without judgement or an inflated sense of our own worth. Lord, hear our prayer.*

***silence***

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, And has lifted up the lowly.

“...by our common baptism we are each called by God and gifted by God with dignity. This common baptism places us in communion with Christ and one another.” (FD13)

“The sin and crime of sexual abuse has eroded not only trust in the hierarchy and the moral integrity of the Church, but also created a culture of fear that keeps people from entering into relationship with one another and thus from experiencing the sense of belonging and connectedness for which they yearn.” (NS p.5)

*May our patient listening and our love of God help us to reach out to others who suffer due to hate, prejudice and injustice. Lord, hear our prayer.*

***silence***

He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich he has sent away empty.

“Caring for people is a good way to welcome them in...Many recognized that the Church is at its best when walking alongside those forced to the margins of our society.” (FD33)

We are called to accompany marginalized people. How can we give the truth with compassion and get rid of the fear that parishioners have to go out and evangelize?” (FD34)

“The Church needs to help parishioners understand the connection between Catholic social teaching and outreach beyond the border of the parish.” (NS p. 10)

*May we prayerfully and graciously reach out to serve those who hunger for food, shelter, justice and dignity. Lord, hear our prayer.*

***silence***

He has come to the help of his servant Israel For he has remembered his promise of mercy, The promise he made to our fathers, To Abraham and his children forever.

“We have learned that we can learn from listening. We hope this will continue! This is an empowering way to reach out and to attend to places of hurt.” (FD9)

“We are called to act co-responsibly in a synodal fashion, not to wait until we know how to do everything perfectly, but to walk together as imperfect people.” (FD17)

*May our hearts, our homes and our Churches be safe places for the wounded and the broken. Lord, hear our prayer.*

***silence***

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, And to the Holy Spirit, As it was in the beginning, is now, And will be forever. Amen.

“The Holy Spirit is at work! This is only the beginning; we don’t know where the Holy Spirit is taking us. We are coming to a deeper understanding of what it means to be Catholic.” (FD1)

“...trust in the Holy Spirit is crucial for the fruitfulness of the Synod....We must allow the Holy Spirit to take the lead to guide us where we are meant to go!” (FD11)

“Listening brings forth the impetus toward healing our enduring wounds, and enhancing our healthy communion and participation, which is vital for living out our mission.” (NS p. 13)

*May we embrace the Spirit and allow that Spirit to lead us to a deeper understanding of what it means to be Catholic and what it means to truly love one another. Lord, hear our prayer.*

***silence***

Reflection on Mary and the Synod Process (from the homily of the service from India)

A Moment of Silence (*about 30 -40 seconds*)

## Closing Prayer

Let us pray to our mother, Mary, and ask that she accompany us and lift us up on our Synod journey.

Hail Mary, full of grace.....now and at the hour of our death.

Let us pray.

God of all goodness and wisdom,

We humbly bring our prayers to you.

Grant that, inspired by your Holy Spirit, and the faithfulness of our mother Mary,

We may embrace the Synod process and strive to bring it to fruition.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Closing Song

### Mary, First among Believers

1. Mary, first among believers, Trusting in the angel's word,  
You consented, and, conceiving, Brought to birth the Son of God.  
Mother now of all believers, Give our fragile faith increase.  
May we, trusting in God's promise,  
Doubts and useless fears release.
  
2. Mary, first among disciples, List'ning, learning, from your Son.  
You held dear his words and actions, Pond'ring each, forgetting none.  
Mother now of all disciples, Help us listen day by day;  
Open to the Spirit's prompting, Help us follow Jesus' way.

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Quotes interspersed with the *Magnificat* are taken from two Synod Documents:  
The National Synthesis of the People of God in the United States of America for the Diocesan Phase of  
the 2021-20232 Synod (NS)  
North American Final Document for the Continental Stage of the 2021-2024 Synod. (FD)