



Archbishop of Wellington

PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

8 December 2016

To All Parishes and Religious Houses of the Archdiocese of Wellington

The Bishop's Decree Convoking the Synod

Pope Francis has given the Church inspirational documents to take us into the future. He personally inspires us and is admired by Catholic, other Christians and many people of other faiths. His leadership challenges us to think about what we are doing to be a Church which goes out of itself and is of service to the world around us. I have therefore decided to consult the whole diocese about our future.

I have already consulted with the Council of Priests, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council and others and have decided to call another Synod for the Archdiocese of Wellington. I will be writing a Pastoral Letter entitled "Go You are Sent." This letter will convoke a Diocesan Synod, the first since 2006.

The actual meaning of the word "Synod" is "journeying together". It is a long established practice in the Church to use this term for decisive meetings at significant times where members of the Church come together to review one or more issues and make decisions. Fifty years after the Second Vatican Council and in view both of the multiple challenges facing us as well as the opportunities the contemporary cultural changes afford us, we are at a significant moment in the history of our Diocese. There is clear duty on us to discern carefully together what the Spirit is saying to the Church in Wellington and agree on common goals and actions for the coming years.

In convoking the Synod I am mindful of Pope Francis' desire that we advance along the path of what he calls 'a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are'. We owe this to future generations and to the wider society that we want to serve. Pope Francis explains what he means by pastoral and missionary conversion when he writes "Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says, 'we have always done it this way'." It means being bold and creative in the task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in our Diocesan community with its various parish and ecclesial, religious and social communities.

As we set out towards the Synod, we entrust our journey to Mary on this Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the mother and first disciple of Jesus. Her journey of faith is a model for all Christians. She reminds us to be attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. She knows better than any of us where, in God's grace and mercy, our journey is ultimately heading – eternal life in the new heaven and new earth that God is preparing for us.

In preparation for this diocesan-wide consultation, over several months and, in virtue of canons 460 to 468 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the *Instruction on Diocesan Synods* (March 19, 1997), I hereby

Decree the convocation of the V Synod for the Archdiocese of Wellington

Go you are Sent

22 September 2017 – 24 September 2017

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John A. Cardinal Dew". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "A".

John A Cardinal Dew
Archbishop of Wellington