



Decree Convoking a Synod for the Archdiocese of Wellington in 2017

Pope Francis has given the Church inspirational documents to take us into the future. He personally inspires us and is admired by Catholics, other Christians and many people of other faiths. His leadership challenges us to think about how we can be a Church which goes out of itself and is of service to the world around us.

In the light of the challenges Pope Francis is placing before us, I have decided to convoke a Synod for the Archdiocese of Wellington in 2017. I have consulted the Council of Priests, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, and they have agreed that this is the right time for a Synod to take place.

The 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, when members of the Church come together to review issues and to make decisions. It is ten years since the 2006 Archdiocesan Synod and fifty years since the Second Vatican Council. There are multiple challenges and opportunities facing us, and we are at a significant point in the Archdiocese’s history. It is our duty to discern carefully together what the Spirit is saying to the Church in Wellington, and agree on common directions and actions for the future.

In convoking a Synod I am mindful of Pope Francis’ desire that we advance along the path of “a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are”. He explains what he means by “pastoral and missionary conversion” when he writes: “Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent action which says ‘We have always done it this way’”. It means being bold and creative in rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization and service to the world in our Archdiocese with its diverse communities. In particular, it means taking on board his message to “go out” to the wider world.

As we set out towards the Synod, we entrust our journey to Mary on this Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of the Archdiocese. She is the mother and first disciple of Jesus, and 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.

In accord with Canons 460-468 of the Code of Canon Law and the *Instruction on Diocesan Synods* (1997), I hereby decree the convocation of the fifth Synod for the Archdiocese of Wellington, to be held from 22-24 September 2017, on the theme “Go, you are sent”.

✠ John A Cardinal Dew
Archbishop of Wellington