

**SYNODE
2020-2022**



**DIOCÈSE D'ÉVRY
CORBEIL-ESSONNES**

Acts of the synod

Pastoral letter

To the Catholics of Essonne

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good"

1 Cor. 12,7

Beloved Brothers and Sisters of God,

This Saturday, October 8, 2022, the eve of the 56th anniversary of the creation of the diocese, I promulgate the decrees of our 4th synod "Church of God in Essonne, evangelizing all with care".

We have completed our small group meetings followed by the synod assemblies during unprecedented times of health concerns, social crisis -and the fractures that they have caused- climate crisis and the war in Ukraine... In addition, we have a crisis of sexual abuse and abuse of power in the Church. These issues effect our confidence and our hope, and can lead us to withdraw into ourselves. Inner darkness and weariness can also threaten us as disciples of Christ, robbing us of our momentum, fueling resentment, and causing us to lose the joy of the Gospel.

As The Church and disciples of Jesus-Christ, we exist to live and serve the covenant of God sealed in Jesus-Christ, with all the people whom He loves. As nesting dolls represent the same reality in different sizes, so too, the Church of Christ, down to its smallest family unit, down to the personal family life of each person, is, as the Second Vatican Council says, " like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (LG1). This sign allows us to see the beginning of realization and the means which implements the project of God for all men whom He loves.

This is the sign that speaks and acts as it manifests a coherence between what we proclaim and what we live.

"If it is true that in Christ we comfort each other, if we encourage each other with love, if we are in communion in the Spirit, if we have tenderness and compassion, then, for my joy to be complete, have the same dispositions, the same love, the same feelings; seek unity. Never be scheming or vain, but have enough humility to esteem others superior to yourselves. Let each of you not be preoccupied with your own interests; also think of those of others. Have in you the dispositions that are in Christ Jesus. (Phil 2, 1-5).

It is not without reason that in the Apostolic letters of Paul, John, Peter or James, they regularly correct the first Christian communities to invite them to stay the course and rediscover the coherence of the Gospel (for example 1 Cor 3-9; Jas 2.1; Jn 4.20-21).

Like those first communities, we experience gaps between the call of Christ and how we live out that reality. These discrepancies are due to several factors: our denial, our refusal to act upon the call of the Gospel, and our withdrawal into ourselves, which in a word is sin. There are also gaps related to our human limitations, our poverty, and our fragilities, because all this treasure that is in Christ, we "carry in clay vessels" (2 Cor 4,7). There are also the gaps linked to the fact that we have not yet arrived at the goal, that we are still on the way.

Paul challenges the communities he founded to find the way of the Gospel. If Paul invites us to hold on (Phil 4,1; Rom 12), to continue on the path still to be traveled, to persevere (Rom 5, 2-3, 15, 5) and to fight the good fight (Ep 6,10-20), it is because the Apostle Paul also knows how to recognize the active faith of these young and fragile communities. He never ceases to give thanks for the work of God working within them. Paul is sure of this certainty, that "what God began in them, God will continue until its completion" (Ph 1, 1-11; 2 Cor 3,3). As for us, do we also have this view of our communities?

When Jesus sends his disciples on a mission, He sends them to say what he says and to do what he does (Lk 9:1-10; Lk 10:1-24). The Risen Christ breaths into his disciples the Holy Spirit and sends them as He himself was sent (Jn 20:21-22). In living the mission of the Church today, we always have to start afresh from Christ, the Lord of our lives:

- Begin afresh from Christ by going personally and in small fraternal teams to the Scriptures which carry the written Word of God who is Jesus Christ;
- Begin afresh from Christ to listen to him, speak to Him and with Him praying to the Father;
- Begin afresh from Christ by nourishing ourselves with His life which was given up for us. Allow Him to train us day after day learning to give our lives in love, as He has given His life to us in love.
- Begin afresh from Christ to take care of ourselves, all of humanity, and all of Creation which is our common home, fragile and sick.

It is not surprising that the suggestions, the debates, the proposals of the sessions of the Synod Assembly concern three great tasks which we must do in the life and mission of the Church and in our different communities. These three areas of service are not optional, although we are not all equally committed to them. If one is missing, our lives will not be fully whole. The three legs of a stool give full support, don't they?

Our baptism invites each of us to be Prophet, King and Priest. This invitation is to live in service of proclamation and witness (marturia), in service of charity (diaconia) and in service of praise and glory to God (liturgia):

Because He is Lord of our lives, we serve in witnessing and proclaiming Jesus who is our Lord. Just as you seek to give and share everything to your own children and relatives who are dear to you ... that allow them to live, grow and succeed in their lives, by sharing the best of yourselves; in the same way the Lord and His Gospel are this treasure (2 Cor 4,6) that we want to share because He makes us live, because He can give life by allowing us to taste that we are loved by God. It is not a question of striking it down from above in a thundering way; it is about inviting us to share and taste the One we have discovered as "the way, the truth and the life". This is the great adventure that we all have to experience as missionary disciples. We must intentionally reach out to children, teenagers and young adults. This is especially true in our diocese where nearly half the population is under 30 years old (the Decrees 4 to 8);

We are in service to little ones, the poor, the widow and the orphan. We are also in service to the sick, the foreigners, the sinners of whom the Scriptures often speak. Our concern is charity, solidarity, and love to our contemporaries and in particular we are to love those who, in one way or another, are or risk being marginalized or on the periphery of a "normal" social life. Our goal is an invitation to be given to all those I have just mentioned, both in our society and in our communities, a concern for the Gospel. (The Decrees 13 to 20) How many initiatives have been taken in Essonne by communities, services, movements or associations - and continue to be taken - because Christians do not turn a blind eye to the dysfunctions of the heart of man as of our societies, these dysfunctions which hurt the men whom God loves. Also today, this attention to social questions inevitably becomes an attention to ecological issues which obligate us. This summer, we have just experienced alerts to the urgency of acting in the face of climate change, which affects the youngest and the poorest, which forces migration and which worries the younger generations. (The Decrees 21 to 27);

We are in service of proclaiming the grace of God, and praising God, particularly in the Sunday gathering, the celebration of the sacraments, and in personal and community prayer. It is vital, for each of us and our communities, to not be overwhelmed by the area of service I have just mentioned, so that we do not become sluggish from living like electric batteries that are constantly called upon but that would never be recharged. Yes, it is vital to know how to receive ourselves from another, to receive ourselves from the Father, the Son and the Spirit, which is accomplished by listening to the Word of God, celebrating the sacraments, the presence of ordained ministers, the communion between Christian communities within a sector and a diocese (The Decrees 28 to 34).

It is critical to multiply our small communities of faith in sharing the Word of God and in supporting each other in the human adventure and that of the disciples of Christ (The Decrees 35 to 38).

Our baptism invites us into these three ways of serving. It is this three-fold way of serving in our communities that must be implemented by the Church. Each church and community, even if they are not able to fully do it, must play their part.

It is this three-fold way of serving that exercises responsibilities, authority or governance in our communities (The Decrees 1 to 3 and 39 to 44).

It is for this three-fold service, which requires quality and truth, that we must continue the work to make of our Church and its communities, a safe home (The decrees 9 to 12).

We will also keep on implementing processes for a better organization of our synod by receiving vision and ideas from the Roman synod on synodality in 2023.

Throughout the synod process, we were praying and asking the Lord: "Empower us to hear what your Spirit is saying to your people in Essonne, help us to discern and choose the way forward for our Diocesan Church in the coming years".

I invite you as families, parish teams, pastoral teams, service teams in various councils... to read, receive, pray and seek how to begin implementation of these decrees of our synod by "taking care of one another as God loves and takes care of us".

I invite you to desire this and to ask for it as a grace. "Lord when I meet my brother, when I meet his gaze, so that my judgment may remain in your light, O give me your eyes, your heart, your hands..." Let us ask Christ, the Lord of our lives, to help us listen to the deep expectations that mark the lives of our contemporaries on this land of Essonne; to look and contemplate our reality with a heart that hopes for everyone because the Lord is also present there.

I invite you, because you are members of a people of brothers and sisters, the people of God, members of a body, the body of Christ, to play your part in the service of implementing the synod guidelines for the good of all.

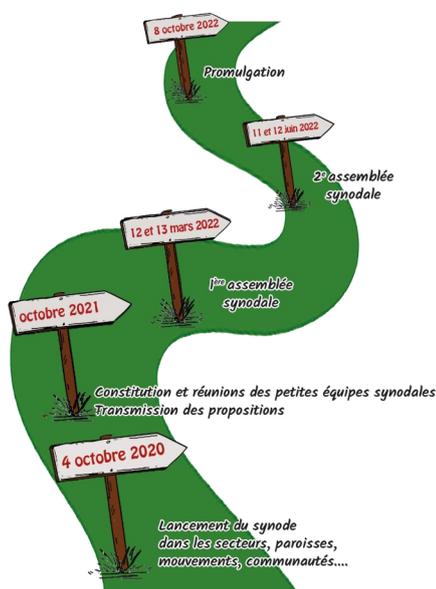
"Help me Lord to discover more and more and day after day, the place you would like to see me serve among the people of your disciples for the goodness of all" Extract from the prayer of Blessed Marcel Callo (1921-1945) given to confirmands of the diocese.

Have a good journey together following Christ Jesus in the power of the Spirit and under the good care of Our Lady.

Fraternally

+ Michel Pansard
Bishop of Evry-Corbeil-Essonnes
8 October 2022

How far we have come ...



... with 400 synod teams made up of around 2,500 people who transmitted 1,200 proposals synthesized in a synod notebook.

In the sectors, services and movements, 250 members were elected for the Synod Assembly. Thus, with the members by right, nearly 300 people worked from this notebook, discussed and amended or proposed other motions. These were submitted to a first vote of approval by the assembly. During the second session of the assembly, guidelines and decrees were put to the vote. 12 orientations with several decrees have been retained as well as a few projects (see below).

All of these decrees are collected in the book of acts of the synod "Evangelizing all with care"

They are our guiding threads for the coming years.

It is up to all of us to implement them in our pastoral places!

Overview and challenges of the promulgated

All synod documents on the diocesan website: evry.catholique.fr/synode

decrees

Be one
Church
together

"Do not stifle the Spirit or despise the gift of prophecy with contempt; test everything and hold on to what is good» 1 Thess 5, 21

Synodality is a necessary condition for the proclamation of the Gospel. It is the institutional form of fraternity, otherwise there is no possible Christian testimony today. We are all invited to a conversion so that the synodality becomes the usual mode of existence of our diocesan Church.

The decrees
D1 to D3

Give a new
impulse for
the church of
Essonne

« Let no one disregard you because you are young." 1 Tim 4,12

Youth is an important part of the population of our department. The young disciples of Christ are members of today's Church and their aspirations are to be listened to and taken into account. Without them, there is no synod conversion. We are committed to making of our Church a safe house where everyone's integrity is respected.

The decrees
D4 to D12

Live
brotherhood
take care of
one another

"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." 1 P 4,9

The diversity of life situations invites us to better implement the dynamics of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*: "welcoming, accompanying, discerning and integrating" people into our communities, with particular attention to the most isolated.

The decrees
D13 to D20

and
Take care
of the
common
home

"The love of Christ constrains us" 2 Cor 5, 14

We listen to the clamor of the earth and of the poor. The climate and social emergency, which particularly mobilizes the young generations, pushes us all to personal and collective action.

We always have to go from "doing for" to "converting with".

The decrees
D21 to D27

Unfold the
spiritual life

"They persevered in the apostles' doctrine, in common meetings, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" Ac 2, 42

We are founded on Christ and we live in the Spirit in order to welcome and communicate the joy of the Gospel.

Local initiatives should be developed to support this personal and common rootedness. Especially by the quality of our celebrations and by the development of small fraternal communities, sharing the Word of God and rereading our lives.

The decrees
D28 to D38

Carry
together
the mission
of the
Church

"Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit." 1 Corinthians, 12, 4;7

Locally, we give ourselves the means to be more attentive to the life and current events of our cities, villages, neighborhoods and their inhabitants, to adjust our presence and our pastoral proposals. The Pastoral Sector Council (CPS) sees thus its mission renewed and strengthened.

The baptized (lay people, deacons, priests, bishops) who receive a mission, exercise it in co-responsibility. For this, we promote joint training, support, exchanges and communication.

The decrees
D39 to D44

Following the debates of the Synodal Assembly, projects are to be specified and implemented:

- Proofreading and evaluation or audit of the structures put in place by the diocese and their articulations,
- The composition and functioning of the Pastoral Sector Council
- The composition and functioning of the Pastoral Diocesan Council
- The reception of the Roman synod on the synodality of 2023