

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

April 16, 2023

Prot. No. B 169/23

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Christ, our hope, has risen. Peace be with you.

Like Thomas in today's Gospel, surrounded by a world of doubts and uncertainties, we have experienced the Lord in our midst, and proclaim with Easter joy, "My Lord and my God!"

This past year Pope Francis invited us to participate in a global synodal process in which we shared our faith, fears, hopes, and concerns. Although the national Catholic participation rate was only slightly above 1%, the Diocese of Charlotte exceeded the national average. After prayerful discernment and having listened to the lay faithful and the clergy of the diocese, I would like to share with you six pastoral priorities moving forward.

First and foremost, I earnestly desire all to renew and anchor their lives in the Most Holy Eucharist. Busy lives bombarded by distracting and worldly messages can only truly find the peace for which they yearn in the paschal mystery.

Second, while strengthening our communion with Christ, we must in turn allow Him to strengthen the communion within our families and the Church. Unlike the secular world in which we live, the Church cannot allow herself to be fractured by partisanship. The forces that seek to divide are not greater than the Holy Spirit who unites. We must follow Our Lord who prayed at the Last Supper, "that they may be one, as we are one."

Third, as a family of faith we must inspire the youth to find their home in the Church. Inherently drawn to authenticity, it is our responsibility to speak to the meaning of a true Christian life.

Fourth, in a time of moral confusion, we must inspire lives of personal holiness highlighting the beauty of chaste love.

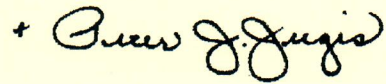
Fifth, we must learn to proclaim the faith in a digital age, that we may better evangelize a culture teeming with secular and contrary messages.

Sixth, we must meet the challenges of an ever-growing diocese. In just 50 years the Diocese of Charlotte has grown from 34,000 Catholics in 75 parishes to more than 500,000 Catholics in 92 parishes and missions spread across 46 counties.

As a diocesan family, relying upon the grace and mercy of God, I ask for your help as I shepherd the diocese to meet the challenges of our day. Finally, I entrust these pastoral priorities to the maternal care of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God, our diocesan patroness.

May the peace and joy of Easter be with you all.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis
Bishop of Charlotte

Pastoral Priorities

Six areas of focus:

(Holy Eucharist) Renew and anchor lives in the Holy Eucharist

- USCCB Eucharistic Revival pastoral initiative
- CLT Synod Listening Sessions
 - Strong sense of presence of Christ through the Mass, adoration, Holy Communion and Confession
 - Challenges include: distracted and busy lives making it difficult to pray, living in a counter culture, one which does not embrace the cross that is at the center of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

(Communion) Strengthen communion with Christ, within families, and within the Church

- CLT Synod Listening Sessions
 - Strong emphasis on the importance of family and the community of the Church
 - Challenges include: cultural and language barriers, confusion and division surrounding hot button topics such as abortion, same-sex attraction, gender, role of women in the Church, and the liturgy of the Church. These hot button issues lead the faithful to hostility and not toward charity.

(Youth) Inspire youth to find their home in the Church

- CLT Synod Listening Sessions
 - There is a clear and shared priority to reach out to the youth to help them find their place in the Church.
 - Challenges include: the need for more outreach after Confirmation, recent history of abuse combined with a lack of ecclesial unity impugns the authenticity needed to attract the youth.

(Personal Holiness) Shine light on the beauty of chaste love and personal holiness

- CLT Synod Listening Sessions
 - There is a sincere desire to draw personally closer to the Lord.
 - Challenges include: a need to address the challenges people are facing in their personal lives; the secular world is causing great moral confusion.

(Evangelization) Proclaim the Faith in the digital age

- CLT Synod Listening Sessions
 - There is a sense that we should be courageous and bold in giving witness to the Gospel, to reach out beyond the confines of a parish.
 - Challenges include: fear of social pressures, a profound tension between the faith and the world today, strong secular forces, cultural and language barriers

(Growth) Prepare for future growth

- CLT Synod Listening Sessions
 - The population of the diocese is growing, and there is a need for churches and places that can accommodate our current and future needs.