



Diocese of Hamilton  
*St. Catherine of Siena Parish*  
You are Rewarded According to the Measure of Your Love

## Praying Our Future Synod Body

### 1. Beginnings

Father Mark Gatto is establishing a Synod Body in the parish to oversee and guide a parish process of prayer, reflection, and listening to all parishioners and the community, as we enter our new church. This follows the lead of Pope Francis, who has called for the church to embrace a synodal approach. Synod simply means “Walking Together.” Our Synod Body will assist our parish in truly Walking Together.

### 2. Mandate

The Saint Catherine of Siena Synod Body will prayerfully reflect together and oversee listening to all people and groups in our parish and community. They will advise and support the Saint Catherine of Siena pastoral team through ongoing monitoring/reporting, collaboration and education. They will be rooted in Catholic Social Teachings. In particular, in the parish they will provide direction for inclusion, critical social justice, and anti-racism education. The goal will be to form a truly welcoming and hospitable parish that reaches out to the entire community.

### 3. Specific Responsibilities

- planning for future of our parish as we enter the new church building and facility
- connect our parish to the Universal Synod planned by Pope Francis from 2021 to 2023
- review issues of inclusion and hospitality within our parish
- examine our parish response to community concerns rooted in Catholic Social Teachings: ie. Residential schools and Indigenous peoples, racism, poverty, homelessness, etc.
- look at ecumenical relations with other neighbouring Christian churches and inter-religious relations with other religious groups in our area
- arrange for regular listening sessions within the parish to engage as many parishioners as possible.

#### **4. Reports To**

The Pastor and parish pastoral team. The Council Chair will also present to the Saint Catherine of Siena parish community, as needed.

#### **5. Composition**

The Saint Catherine of Siena Synod Body will consist of 8 to 10 parishioners selected by the parish pastoral team following a nomination process. One member will be selected as Chair of the Body: the Synod Body will then form a number of councils to assist them in engaging the entire community, as they see necessary:

These are meant to comprise a diverse and inclusive membership.

Council 1 - One such council will include staff and students from the Catholic elementary and high schools connected to our parish.

Council 2 - Another council will include representatives of our various parish organizations.

#### **Synod Body Members and Council Member Qualifications:**

- i. Represent lived experience of racism and/or professional/academic/cultural expertise in inclusion and anti-racism work;
- ii. Demonstrate the ability to develop and maintain strong collaborative relationships;
- iii. Understand the range of human and civil rights issues and the historical origins of systemic racism;
- iv. Are open to supporting people and communities towards meaningful, positive change;
- v. Have personal and/or professional community connections that can inform the council's work; and,
- vi. Are experienced in supporting or leading inclusion and anti-racism initiatives.

#### **6. Resources**

Support from the Saint Catherine of Siena staff and other relevant community partners and expertise (ie. Indigenous Elders, social service organizations, etc.)

#### **7. Quorum**

Greater than 50 per cent of voting members.

## **8. Chair**

The chairperson is appointed by the Pastor in the inaugural year and subsequently elected by the Saint Catherine of Siena Synod Body.

## **9. Meetings**

The Synod Body will meet monthly or at a frequency as determined appropriate by the Pastor and members. Meetings will aim to balance transparency with creating a brave, safe, and trusting environment. Meeting minutes will be made available in bi-annual or quarterly reports for the Saint Catherine parish community.

## **10. Amendments to Terms of Reference**

The above-mentioned items for the Terms of Reference should be reviewed and amended as necessary every three years.