



DIOCESE OF PEMBROKE

284 TRAFALGAR ROAD
PEMBROKE, ONTARIO K8A 5A8

September 26, 2025
Feast of the Canadian Martyrs

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

September often seems like the beginning of a new year. Children, youth and young adults go back to school. Summer holidays wind down. Parishes begin once again to prepare for the months ahead with new energy and hope.

In my last letter in June for the Solemnity of Pentecost, I thanked you for your participation in the first phase of our synodal process – *Embracing the Future with Hope*. We have received with gratitude almost all the parish profiles for our 55 parishes and missions. After consultation with the Council of Priests, I appointed the Steering Committee to help us begin the second phase. Members of the Steering Committee include:

Lorne Keon, Fr. Lukas Časta, Mark Searson, John Espadero, Elizabeth Burchat, Sr. Fay Edmonds, Fr. Ryan Holly, Margaret Maloney, Fr. Michael Smith, Matthew Schooley, Fr. Réal Ouellette, Fr. Scott Murray, and Bishop Michael Brehl.

Several other members will be appointed soon. The role of the Steering Committee is to help prepare the process which will ensure the participation of every parish and of the whole Diocese in the discernment of our pastoral plan.

The Steering Committee has already begun to prepare a synthesis of the Parish Profiles, and a questionnaire to guide the next steps, reflection and dialogue as we prepare for our Diocesan Synod. In October and November, the Steering Committee will continue its work. In December, we will meet with all the priests of the Diocese in our Priests' Study Days.

It is my hope to write you once again in January to outline the second phase of our process which will begin with the New Year. Thank you for your prayer, patience and participation as we continue our journey on this synodal path, listening to one another and guided by the Holy Spirit.

As you know, I continue to visit the parishes and missions in the Diocese. These visits, together with reading the parish profiles you prepared, have deepened my knowledge and my love for the Diocese of Pembroke. Thank you for your hospitality and welcome. During these visits, I have experienced so many signs of hope throughout the Diocese.

Although we have some very serious challenges ahead of us, I am also confident that we have the faith and resources to respond to them in creative ways. As we go forward, we will need to face some more urgent situations, and together with the people most directly affected, take decisions. Our goal is to build up vibrant communities of faith, hope and love, filled with the Spirit of Jesus, and committed to pass on the faith we have received to the generations which will follow us. This is possible if we make this journey of hope together!

Let us continue to pray for one another, and for the Diocese. Building on our rich history and tradition, may we build up vibrant faith communities and embrace the future with hope! May God continue to guide us through the light and grace of the Holy Spirit as we walk together with Jesus and with one another.

In Christ our Redeemer and Mary our Mother,

+ Michael Brehl, C.S.R.

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Bishop of Pembroke