



Declaration Following the 4th General Session of the Fourth Diocesan Synod, March 21, 2015

Best Practices and Models of Ministry – Responding to the Challenges

Despite a snow storm on the first day of spring, nearly 300 General Delegates, Observers, Ecumenical guests, seminarians, and Synod Commission members gathered for the 4th General Session of the Diocesan Synod at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull on March 21, 2015.

During the morning session, Delegates heard from Damien O'Connor providing an update on the responses to *Lineamenta* of the Synod of Bishops' Extraordinary General Assembly on the *Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization*. The responses provided Bishop Caggiano with a framework in which to submit the Diocese's response to the USCCB.

Eric Gallagher, Director of Youth Ministry for the Diocese of Sioux Falls, South Dakota provided a thought-provoking presentation on a new model of youth ministry – Discipleship Focused Youth Ministry – www.DiscipleshipYM.com. In his presentation, he offered an idea that is being implemented in his own Diocese of youth ministry as connecting to all four components of a teen's development – human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral.

Jim Lundholm-Eades, Director of Programs for the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management (NLRCM), outlined the Patterns of Dynamic Catholic Leadership and spoke of how leaders can be formed and the characteristics of their interactions with the people with whom they work. In his presentation, he spoke not just of clergy as being leaders, but of the necessary characteristics of the faithful.

Pete and Claudia Roux, a Synod delegate and Observer from St. John parish in Darien offered insights and best practices from a variety of models of evangelization ministry.

All three of the presentations were thought-provoking and engendered questions and feedback from the Delegates.

After lunch, Bishop Caggiano led the Delegates through a discernment of the five spiritual citations that had been identified by the Delegates. The spiritual inspiration will be the guide to help Bishop Caggiano as he prepares for the Synod pastoral letter and the Closing Mass homily. A robust theological and spiritual discussion was held on the impact of the two finalists:

- i. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. *Phil 4:13*
- ii. I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing. *John 15:5*

Ultimately, John 15:5 was discerned as the consensus choice among the Delegates, but Bishop also indicated that he has a spiritual resonance to the Philippians quote, and that theme could also find its way into the development of his homily for the Closing Mass of the Synod and the pastoral letter.

Following that discernment, Bishop Caggiano presented his ideas for the seven principles that will guide the implementation of the Synod recommendations. He acknowledged that all of these principles contain “creative tension” and are not either/or statements, but both/and statements.

1. We want to do both substantial and lasting change for the good of our diocesan life and hold on to the best of who we are and what we do in Christ.
2. We must respect the principle of subsidiarity. There is tension between what comes from above and that which comes from below. The Diocese must not take from the parishes, schools and local communities the decision-making that rightfully belongs to those communities.
3. Implementation of the Synod recommendations will take a while. There will also be periods of trial and error even when the Synod is over. We will need to renew our programs and initiatives, and create new ones where needed. However, creating a nice program is not enough. We must also practice the theology of accompaniment – what is clear is that the journey of faith of individuals must be respected. We need to be with them, one person at a time.
4. We must measure success – Accountability is the key. Both quantitative and qualitative. We must create quantitative benchmarks, but not all success is measurable. We will need to discern how we can understand the qualitative change that will happen.
5. There is a creative tension between flexibility on a local level but at the same time maintaining the communion we have in the Church, so that our practices do not become so divergent that it becomes too parochial.

6. Begin pastoral and strategic planning – We will create roadmaps that will:
 - a. Allow all our communities to be vital and vibrant
 - b. Allow our communities to address the issues this Synod has discerned as priorities.
 - c. Every level of our Diocese – the Catholic Center, Parishes, Schools and Ecclesial communities will create a roadmap.
 - d. All of us will be held accountable.
 - e. Planning will become a permanent process.
7. A spirit of collaboration needs to animate everything we do. Existing tensions need to be admitted to and healed – whether between priests and deacons, clergy and the laity and religious, and between and within the lay communities. Collaboration is more than cooperation. This spirit of collaboration will need to animate the implementation.

Bishop Caggiano's full talk outlining these principles can be found at www.2014synod.org.

The last presentation of the fourth session was a brief outline and discussion of how the Synod and the Delegates may more effectively communicate what is happening to the broader church community. Patrick Turner, Deputy Synod Director, discussed ways that the Synod Office is increasing its information output and working internally and with the Vicars to distribute information. He also offered a couple of examples that Delegates and Pastors have shared of how Synod information is reaching other parishioners.

- a. Delegates have spoken after communion and provided brief summaries of Synod activities – based on their own experience and in their own words.
- b. Delegates are breaking open the five global challenges by writing brief bulletin pieces that will run over multiple weeks.
- c. Delegates/Pastors are holding town hall meetings or parish assemblies to provide updates and receive feedback about the global challenges.

The fourth session focused on identifying best practices for several of our challenges and establishing the context for how the implementation of the Synod recommendations will occur.

The General Delegates of the Synod promulgated this summary of the Fourth Session during the Fifth General Session of the Synod on May 9, 2015.

Summary of Bishop Frank's 7 Principles for Implementation of Synod Recommendations March 21, 2015

How are we going to effect change in our Diocese and move forward in a very practical way? There are seven principles I would like to present – these are not either/or, all are statements of “and”. There is creative tension in every statement.

1. We want to do both substantial and lasting change for the good of our diocesan life and hold on to the best of who we are and what we do in Christ. We need to identify the good that is already in our midst (parish programs, ecclesial movements, are two examples), but there is also yearning for substantial and lasting change. What is the change? It is conversion – of individuals, of our communities, and of our Diocesan family.
2. There is tension between that which comes from above and that which comes from below. It is never either/or. Therefore, we must respect the principle of subsidiarity. The Diocese must not take from the parishes, schools and local communities the decision-making that rightfully belongs to those communities.
 - a. The Catholic Center (diocesan administration) needs to reform itself. The way we deliver our services and the way we interact with all of you. The Diocese needs to become more “invisible”, while parish, schools, and families become more visible.
 - b. The Diocese needs to be held accountable for those initiatives that no one parish can do on its own. There is a portion of the mission of the church that rightfully belongs only to the Diocese. An example would be the ongoing formation and training of our clergy.
 - c. Our families, parishes, schools and ecclesial communities are being called to reform too.
3. The vast majority of those in the Diocese are looking at us from far away, and that is okay for now. We will need the buy-in from every baptized. Implementation will take a while. We will begin to get people's attention when we begin to talk about the things we are imagining. There will also be periods of trial and error even when the Synod is over. We will need to renew our programs and initiatives, and create new ones where

needed. Creating a nice program is not enough. We must also practice the theology of accompaniment – what is clear is that the journey of faith of individuals must be respected. We need to be with them, one person at a time.

4. We must measure success – Accountability is the key. Both quantitative and qualitative. We must create quantitative benchmarks, but not all success is measurable. Qualitative is the story of people’s lives, which is of infinite value to Christ and should be to us. We will need to discern how we can understand the qualitative change that will happen. This will require us to create venues where we continue to share the stories of our own lives.
5. There is a creative tension between flexibility on a local level but at the same time maintaining the communion we have in the Church, so that our practices do not become so divergent that it becomes too parochial.
6. Begin pastoral and strategic planning – We will create roadmaps that will:
 - a. Allow all our communities to be vital and vibrant
 - b. Allow our communities to address the issues this Synod has discerned as priorities.
 - c. Every level of our Diocese – the Catholic Center, Parishes, Schools and Ecclesial communities will create a roadmap.
 - d. All of us will be held accountable.
 - e. Planning will become a permanent process.
7. A spirit of collaboration needs to animate everything we do. Existing tensions need to be admitted to and healed – whether between priests and deacons, clergy and the laity and religious, and between and within the lay communities. Collaboration is more than cooperation. Cooperation means all of us work together to achieve a goal. Collaboration is when we agree to do something that is needed, together looking at Christ, rather than at each other. My gifts, talents and position of authority are not in competition with yours. Christ gave to me my gifts, as he gave to you your gifts and they both serve him. This spirit of collaboration will need to animate the implementation.

Implementation will take many years. But it is important to remember that the journey is as important as the destination.