



DIOCESAN SYNOD
“Building Bridges to the Future Together”
Part 2

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), a solemn and official assembly of all the bishops of the world, was convoked by Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) and charged with renewing the spirit of Catholicism in order to more effectively address the challenges of modern society. Pope John XXIII referred to the Council as a “new Pentecost.” One of the Council’s crowning achievements was the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church promulgated on November 21, 1964. Chapter Four of the Constitution titled “The Laity” assumes great significance as we approach the opening of our diocesan synod “Building Bridges to the Future Together.”

Our diocesan synod, Synod 2014, includes three stages, the Preparatory, the Synod itself and the Implementation. The Preparatory Stage is going on now and offers the opportunity for the entire Christian faithful (clergy, religious, laity) to submit input pertaining to issues currently facing the church. Lay Catholics should see this as a chance to fulfill the mission bestowed upon them by the bishops at Vatican II who spoke of the laity as “called upon to expend all their energy for the growth of the Church and its continuous sanctification.”

Input can be submitted in various ways without if preferred leaving the comfort of one’s home. Questions may be mailed directly to the Diocesan Synod Office at 238 Jewett Ave. Bridgeport, CT. 06606 or one may choose to fill out the General Input Form at www.2014synod.org/FormG. Even the following list of in person Listening Sessions are complemented with an on line site which may be accessed at www.2014synod.org/FormLS:

1. Vicariate I - Monday, May 5, 7:30 p.m., Trinity Catholic High School, Stamford
2. Vicariate II - Friday, May 16, 7:30 p.m., St. Aloysius, New Canaan
3. Youth **Only** - Saturday, May 17, 1:30 p.m., Notre Dame High School, Fairfield
4. Vicariate III - Monday, June 2, 7:30 p.m., St. Thomas, Fairfield
5. Spanish Community - Sunday, June 8, 5:00 p.m., The Catholic Center
6. Vicariate IV - Tuesday, June 17, 7:30 p.m., St. Catherine, Trumbull
7. Vicariate V - Saturday, June 21, 1:00 p.m., Immaculate High School, Danbury

For the list of parishes in each vicariate please see: www.2014synod.org/parishes

Local consultation from pastors, principals and other lay leaders is also being generated.

There will be 400+ delegates to Part II, the Synod itself, which will be convened on five Saturdays beginning September 19, 2014 and ending on September 19, 2015. Each of the 83 parishes of the diocese will have two delegates. The Parish Council and other parish lay leaders will submit to the pastor names of nominees. The pastor will select two delegates from the candidates presented to participate as General Delegates to the Synod. These lay representatives will join with priests, deacons, religious as well as representatives from Catholic Schools, Religious Education, Youth and other ecclesial movements to form the official membership of General Delegates to Synod 2014. The fruit of their labor will ultimately be revealed in the Implementation Stage, the final phase of Synod 2014.

Synod 2014 is a historical event in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Throughout the history of the church local synods have established customs and practices that influence our lives as Catholics down to the present day. The Synod of Toledo (589) introduced the “filioque” (Latin, “and the Son”) to the Nicene Creed and the clause was eventually adopted by all Latin Western Christians when professing belief in the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The Easter Synod of Rome (1050) and the Synod of Vercelli (1050) upheld the doctrine of transubstantiation when Catholic belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist was under attack. Ashes, once the sign of official public penitents, were extended to the universal church at the Synod of Benevento in 1091.

Our Catholic tradition has always espoused belief in the power of prayer. Bishop Caggiano begs the prayers of everyone for the success of Synod 2014 as we move forward “Building Bridges to the Future Together.”

Submitted by Dr. Joan M. Kelly April 7, 2014



Dr. Joan M. Kelly, a graduate of the School of Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., is on the faculty at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell and teaches at Saint John Fisher Seminary in Stamford. She is engaged with the theological formation of the diocesan candidates for the permanent diaconate and is an adjunct professor at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield.