

# Listening Sessions Set to Begin

## Are you ready for the synod?

By MSGR. DARIUSZ ZIELONKA

The month of April marks an important event in the life of the Church. We are preparing for the annual celebration of Palm Sunday, Holy Week and the summit of all liturgical celebrations of the year: Easter. We try to keep afresh our Lenten resolutions, go to confession, maybe squeeze into our calendar a day or a few hours that we spend on retreat or reflection.

In a similar way, our preparation for the synod requires us to make certain plans and commitments to various efforts. Last month we opened the synodal website ([www.2014synod.org](http://www.2014synod.org)) and invited you to give your input to the process. I am happy to report that the responses are coming in in good numbers, as many decided to share their comments and ideas. We need you to continue to do so!

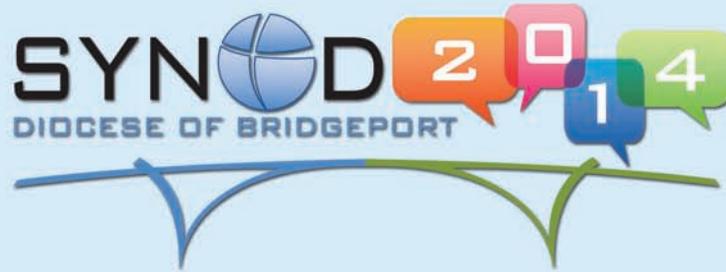
At the same time, we are getting ready for the next step, which is selection of the General Delegates to the synod. Who is a General Delegate and what is his/her role? I am glad you asked!

The General Delegates for the diocesan synod are the lay men and women, religious and clergy of the diocese who represent the general population of Fairfield County. Their role is to directly advise the bishop about the state of the diocese and present some possible solutions to the current issues. They are chosen from

different groups. We have priests, deacons and religious (both men and women), Catholic schools representatives, youth, some directors of religious education, representatives of the ecclesial movements, ethnic groups, staff of the Catholic Center and, of course, our parishes. At this time, pastors are involved in the process of selecting two General Delegates from each parish. Since each parish has a different dynamic, the process of selection is left to the discretion of the pastor and his leadership team.

While this process of selection continues throughout the diocese, we need to remember that it is not a political process but a spiritual one. The difference? The General Delegates are not running for an office. Rather they are people selected from their respective communities and groups to be the conduits of the Holy Spirit in our diocesan-wide process of discernment. They need our prayers and support. They do not need to be influenced by personal preferences and agendas, but rather see the greater good of the Church as the ultimate goal of the synod. Not an easy task!

As a matter of fact, I tend to think of General Delegates as true models of commitment and the love of the Church. There are many things that are required of a General Delegate. Please read the list to the left to learn more. ■



### Time Commitment

For a list of parishes in each Vicariate see page 21.

Attend at least one of the Listening Sessions:

**Monday, May 5**, at 7:30 pm:

Vicariate I—*Trinity High School, Stamford*

**Friday, May 16**, at 7:30 pm

Vicariate II—*St. Aloysius, New Canaan*

**Saturday, May 17**, at 1:30 pm

Youth Listening Session—*Notre Dame High School, Fairfield, attending adults MUST have completed back ground check and Virtus training. Go to [www.bridgeportdiocese.com/youth](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/youth) for details and forms.*

**Monday, June 2**, at 7:30 pm

Vicariate III—*St. Thomas, Fairfield*

**Sunday, June 8**, at 5:00 pm

Spanish Community—*The Catholic Center (in Spanish)*

**Tuesday, June 17**, at 7:30 pm

Vicariate IV—*St. Catherine, Trumbull*

**Saturday, June 21**, at 1:00 pm

Vicariate V—*Immaculate High School, Danbury*

### Attend ceremonies & general sessions of the synod:

**Opening ceremony**

Friday, September 19, 2014

**First Session**

Saturday, September 20, 2014

**Second Session** Saturday,

November 15, 2014

### Third Session

Saturday, February 7, 2015

### Fourth Session

Saturday, May 2, 2015

### Closing Session

Saturday, September 19, 2015

### Formation of the Delegates

(dates to be determined)

Attend one Formation Day (offered 3 times this summer: TBD)

One online component this summer (reading and study)

Online study/formation component after each General Session

Day of Recollection with the Bishop: March 21, 2015

Theological Reflection after the completion of the synod (TBD)

Formation lectures are provided to the delegates free of charge

### Working Knowledge of Church Teaching

Delegates should have some basic knowledge of Church doctrines and principles. No in-depth theological knowledge is required (but certainly appreciated).

Some knowledge of the current moral, legal and ethical issues the Church is struggling with.

### Communication and Other Skills

Delegate should be comfortable with public speaking and expressing clearly and concisely his or her ideas.

The language of the synod is English.

Basic knowledge of computers

and the Internet use will be required for the delegates to take the online courses.

If not done so previously, each delegate has to complete the Safe Environment Awareness Training (Virtus) and background check (via own parish). Please check the website for available training sessions dates and registration: ([www.bridgeportdiocese.com/safeenvironments/training](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/safeenvironments/training)). The last training sessions prior to synod will be offered on September 6 at 9:30 am (location TBD) and September 17 at 6:30 pm (location TBD).

### Other Requirements

A passport photo (or similar) for the synod ID badge. Electronic version is preferred, but others are also acceptable.

Working email address for communications purposes.

Access to the Internet (online study/formation classes).

As you can see, the list of requirements is rather extensive. Hence, my deepest gratitude goes to the 400+ General Delegates to the Fourth Diocesan Synod. Their role is invaluable not only on the diocesan level, but also in their parishes as liaisons.

In a few days we will journey with Jesus on his way of the cross towards his glorious Resurrection. May the joy of the risen Lord permeate our entire existence. May it touch and renew our spiritual lives, families, places of work and study. May Christ bless our preparations for the synod. Only with him we will be truly ready! ■



### ON THE COVER

**THE WAY TO EASTER**—About 20 teens from St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan portrayed biblical figures and powerfully presented meditations and songs to offer further reflection for over 150 people who came to join Christ on his journey to Calvary through the Stations of the Cross. New Canaan High School senior George Herde stepped up to play Jesus and Annelise Butler, a junior at Lauralton Hall, took on the role of Mary.

**ABOVE THE FOLD:** George Herde portrays Jesus "Being a part of it reminds me of what Lent is about and how our sacrifices are small in comparison to what they had to go through." (Photos by Chris Otis)

### CONTENTS

6 **DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY**  
Celebrating Catholic Healthcare

10 **KOLBE CATHEDRAL AT 50**  
A tradition of excellence

17 **DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET**  
An offer of Grace

18 **NEW SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP**  
Diocese makes key appointments

21 **SYNOD 2014**  
Signals major new direction

22 **ST. JAMES TEACHER HONORED**  
Colleen Simon, English teacher

24 **CINDI BIGELOW**  
To speak at Merton Breakfast

29 **THOMAS HICKS**  
On Freud and Faith

