

Synod survey merits serious attention

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

In a couple of hours, I'll be leaving for Corning to participate in our annual convocation of the priests of our diocese. Before I leave I want, by means of this column, to ask a favor of you. The favor I ask is that you take some time to fill out the survey form I sent to you last week.

The survey is designed to help us identify the basic themes that will be developed throughout our diocesan synod. We are committed to hearing the people to the very best of our ability all through this process. At this beginning stage your thoughtful voice can help us to establish some strong foundations for our work.

I receive a fair number of surveys of this kind and, although filling them out is not my favorite activity, I try to be responsive to them because I realize that necessary and helpful information can be derived from them.

I already have handed in my own completed form to the Synod Office. It was fun to do this survey because it is of such immediate interest to me personally and to our diocese. Now I look forward with intense interest to what you — and thousands

of others like you from all corners of our diocese — will identify as the themes around which we should focus our energies for the coming years.

You will notice on the last page of the form that we would like to have the completed form arrive at our Synod Office — 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624 — by April 26, 1991. You may mail your completed form directly to that address or return it to your pastor, who in turn will forward it to the Synod Office.

May I tag a second request onto the first? You will notice that you received two copies of the survey form. We sent two forms in each envelope with the hope that you might offer the extra form to someone we may have missed. We are all well-aware that some of our Catholic neighbors are not actively engaged in the everyday life of the church. And, I suppose, we all have Catholic friends who for whatever reason have some hard feelings toward the church.

Would you kindly, in your own good way, indicate to such a person that his or her thoughts and concerns are very important to us, and invite him or her to fill out

the extra form? It would strengthen our synod a great deal and would be, I hope, an expression of interest and affection to these good friends.

It's rare that I use this space to put you to work. But I do so now to indicate 1) the importance I attach to the synod and 2) the importance of your participation in this journey together. If every reader of the *Catholic Courier* filled out a form and invited one other person to do the same, we would have a wonderfully solid base upon which to establish our work.

Let me conclude this piece by offering the prayer I am asking all in our diocese to make their own, so that we may enjoy the guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout our synod:

Loving and gracious God,
open our minds,
inspire our wills,
guide our actions,
draw us into one
and support our Faith.
Give your people the grace
to discover your gentle love
in one another,
and in this discovery,
help us discern your will.



When we struggle, help us to be hopeful.
When we speak, inspire us to be kind.
When we decide, grant us patience and understanding.
When we pray, create peace within us.
In all we do, help us to renew your church.

Thank you. Peace to all.

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