

# Delegates engender enthusiasm

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

It was a great and joyful experience on Saturday to visit five of our regional synod gatherings. The combination of a mid-afternoon celebration at St. Ann's Home and some questionable winter road conditions limited me that day to Monroe County, but I do think that the visits gave me a good sense of what was happening in this most recent stage of our synod journey.

Much impressed me deeply during those morning and early-afternoon hours. I think of the wonderful gifts of the people who gathered on Saturday. As I talked with people before and between the work sessions and visited tables during the gatherings, I had a strong sense of the gospel story of the loaves and fishes. People graciously, generously offered the gifts they brought and the Lord multiplied them in the sharing.

A second strong impression I took away from the Saturday experience was the diversity among our people. Bankers and students were present along with teenagers and folks of much longer life experience; men and women religious; laity and priests; the divorced, widowed and separated; African Americans and Asian Americans; Polish, Puerto Rican and Italian folks; gays, lesbian and straight people. There were men and women who had



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## LONG THE WAY

left the church and returned. There were new members of our community. And also present were those for whom our church has been an important reality for all of their years.

Thirdly, I was touched by the ability of our synod delegates to speak honestly and simply to one another; and by their willingness to hear and respect what other persons said, even if they may not have agreed with their point of view. Coupled with this was what I judged to be the ability to lovingly criticize our church and its structures when they seem not to be as true to the Gospel as we might like them to be.

Fourthly, I would mention the level of enthusiasm among our synod delegates. I clearly perceived a high level of engagement in the groups that I visited. And since Saturday afternoon a number of people I have met have put themselves out to tell me that they were charged up by their experience.

I will tell you that even a few days later, I am still enthused by what I saw and heard on Saturday. It all makes me eager for the second round of our synod activity to be held during Lent. And it makes me more excited than ever about our General Synod to be held on the first weekend in October. I can only imagine the power and beauty of all of our synod delegates gathered at the convention center on that occasion.

In the meantime, we are working on forming our Implementation Committee. We would like to have that in place as soon as reasonably possible so that we will be well prepared to receive and move the synod recommendations as fruitfully and efficiently as we possibly can.

Please continue to pray that God will bless us all in this special moment in our diocese's history. And, when you have the opportunity, thank and encourage delegates to our synod. In sharing their gifts, good faith and much time they offer us a precious service.

Peace to all.

### Notice to readers

As is our custom, the *Courier* will not publish an issue on Dec. 31, the last Thursday in December. After next week's annual Christmas Issue, the next edition will be published on Jan. 7, 1993.

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St. Athanasius

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