

Synod Evangelization Process

Father Abraham and the synod evangelization team would like to provide you with a Synod update. As those of you who were here for a Mass the weekend of June 24/25 (the Saturday Mass at Ascension and Sunday Mass at St, Bernard), you noticed a small group of parishioners come forward after the homily to be “commissioned”. Since many of you may have been wondering what the purpose is of this group of parishioners is, and you may have questions about the archdiocesan synod process, we hope the following remarks may provide more information.

Here is a statement from Archbishop Hebda that dates to the beginning of the synod process on June 6, 2019. “At this year’s Vigil of Pentecost, I will be formally announcing that our archdiocese will be embarking on a synod, our first since 1939. A synod is a formal representative assembly designed to help a bishop in his shepherding of the local Church. It is my hope that the process outlined in these pages, involving every parish in our archdiocese, will help us over the next two years to draw on the gifts that have been bestowed in such abundance on the faithful of this archdiocese to discern and establish clear pastoral priorities in a way that will both promote greater unity and lead us to a more vigorous proclamation of Jesus’ good news.”

So, a synod is an assembly that represents a cross section of the parishes in the archdiocese. The synod is to gather pastoral priorities with careful discernment and prayer, to aid the local bishop in leading his flock and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The synod process began in the fall of 2019, following the feast of Pentecost. It started with “listening sessions” that were held around the diocese. The closest one for us was in Victoria. The Archdiocese advertised the events in an attempt to invite and encourage Catholics to attend and provide input on what they thought were the needs of the local Church. The event in Victoria was well attended. One to two dozen members of Ascension and St. Bernard were part of the several hundred in attendance. Attendees were given the chance to specifically address the Archbishop, and to submit comments online at the event.

Following these listening sessions, synod staff at the archdiocese collated and combined tens of thousands of comments. There were dozens of basic categories (or propositions) for these comments. In late 2021, after a brief Covid 19 interruption, these propositions were sent back to the local parishes for review and selection. Fr Abraham selected parishioners from both parishes to meet with the trustees and JMT to review and select propositions that we felt reflected our needs and that would be offered for voting at the synod assembly held at the feast of Pentecost 2022.

Two representatives from each of our parishes were sent to the synod assembly held June 2022, and 464 voting members attended the event and reviewed 40 propositions. The top 5 vote getters were 1) Parents as primary educators 2) Adult formation 3) Education for the Mass 4) small groups 5) vibrant youth ministry. Please understand that this was not a democratic election of changes for the Archbishop to enact. The voting was in a pastoral advisory capacity for giving the Archbishop a focus area to contemplate on, much like a pastoral counsel, like the JMT, does for a local priest. The Archbishop took these results to prayer.

Last fall after much prayer, the Archbishop published his pastoral letter on the synod. "You will be my Witnesses-Gathered and Sent from the Upper Room". This pastoral letter is available on the Archdiocese of St Paul and Minneapolis website. We encourage you to read it. If you do not have access to the letter online, contact the parish office for a hard copy.

There are 3 main focus areas going forward in the document: Year 1-2023 Small groups; year 2-2024 The Mass; and year 3-2025 Parents as primary educators. Implementation of this document is already underway. Note the title of the letter - "Gathered and Sent from the Upper Room". Who was gathered and sent forth from the upper room? The 12 apostles. The Archbishop requested each pastor to choose the "12" from their parish. In our case, 6 from each parish. (From Ascension: Jeremy Gesinger, Chris George, Rita Fahey, Sue Tellers, Steve Lemmer, and Steve Helget. From St. Bernards: Doris Mielke, Patsy Quinn, Kara Wickenhauser, Andy Kleindl, Elroy Knauer, and Rob Wickenhauser). You will hear them referred to as the Synod Evangelization Team (SET). These are the parishioners you may have seen come forward after Mass to be "commissioned."

The 12 Apostles were ordinary men who were called to "take up the yoke" of their teacher Jesus. Taking up the yoke means to become like their teacher in all ways, to "take on his world view". As such, the 12 from our parishes and the 12 from each of the parishes in the archdiocese, have started to undergo deeper training to be a disciple of Jesus. We attended the Jeff Cavins "School of Discipleship" course put on by the Harry J Flynn Catechetical institute (CI), where we were challenged to understand the mind of Christ and reconfigure our lives as disciples while focusing daily on the Word of God and on the 8 virtues of love, forgiveness, humility, patience, selflessness, kindness, attentiveness and contrition for 7 weeks, followed by a 40-day challenge of daily prayer and reflection, ending with a Holy-Spirit filled gathering at Williams Arena with 2000 other apostles from around the Archdiocese.

The next steps: As laid out earlier, 2023 is The Year of the Small Group. Preparations are underway to involve you, the parishioners, in the Archbishop's Holy-Spirit-inspired vision. SET members will be contacting parishioners about potentially leading a small group. Think of this as the "72" disciples that were sent out by Jesus to do good works in His name (Luke 10:1-12) Please prayerfully consider if God is calling you to lead or participate in a small group. We encourage you to be proactive and contact us if you are interested in participating in or leading a small group. Small group composition and topics will be discerned as we go. All small groups will incorporate prayer and spreading of the Gospel message of Jesus.

We have been hearing in the Gospels the last couple of weeks about our responsibility as baptized members of the Body of Christ to participate in and to spread His word. This is our "upper room" moment and we are being sent forth. The "harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few"; and today in Matthew's gospel: "But, the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the Word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirty fold." We on behalf of the Archbishop and Fr. Abraham are asking you to be a laborer in the vineyard of Christ.

Synod Evangelization Team, and

Fr. Abraham, Pastor

Glad Days Booth

- St Bernard will have our annual booth at glad days
- Ice Cream Sundaes
- Farmers Market/Bake Sale
- Can you help—baked goods, canned goods, garden produce or work a two hour shift?
- Contact: Julie Kleindl to help serve ice cream (952)-807-3522 Parents/Kids Please Help
- Contact: Carol Hoen about your donations (952)-297-4630

Booth dates/hours

Friday July 28 Open 5pm-9pm

Sat July 29 Open 10am-9pm

Sun July 30 Open noon to 4pm-Ice cream only



- Glad Days booth is Sponsored by St Bernard Catholic United Council
- Proceeds benefit Faith formation