

# The Catholic Spirit

August 13, 2020 • Newspaper of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis [thecatholicspirit.com](http://thecatholicspirit.com)

## THE CHURCH PREPARES

**19 Prayer and Listening Events. 11 focus events.  
8,173 participants. 35,026 comments.**

**Last year, Archbishop Bernard Hebda called for the archdiocese to embrace becoming a ‘listening Church’ in preparation for an archdiocesan Synod.** From September 2019 to March 2020, thousands of Catholics shared what was on their hearts and minds when it comes to their parishes and the Church, and listened to what others had to say. Archbishop Hebda listened, too, and also tasked a team to code and analyze the information received. **After prayerful discernment and consultation, the archbishop has determined which topics deserve a deeper dive as the local Church looks to its future.**

**A**t the beginning of May, I shared with you that I was poring over the input that had been gathered at the 2019-2020 Pre-Synod Prayer and Listening Events and through the Disciple Maker Index survey. Not surprisingly, your feedback was superb and really insightful. Thank you! I was happy to learn that so many of you share my assessment that there are many indicators of vibrancy in our archdiocese, but we could be strengthened and enriched by a Synod process that would intensively address a limited number of targeted areas.

Having reviewed your comments, I am now pleased to announce that the 2022 Archdiocesan Synod will focus on three areas: 1) Forming parishes that are in the service of evangelization; 2) Forming missionary disciples who know Jesus’ love and respond to his call; and 3) Forming youth and young adults in and for a Church that is always young.

For those of you who participated in the Synod prayer and listening events, the three focus areas chosen should not be surprising: We heard those three broad themes as priorities time and again. There was an awareness that we would be a stronger Church if we would focus our time and attention on these three areas in the next five years, giving us a foundation for addressing more vigorously some of the other areas of concern that surfaced at the prayer and listening events.



— Archbishop Bernard Hebda

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## FOCUS AREAS

## This present moment

By Archbishop Bernard Hebda

While the terminology might be contemporary, the underlying issues of our three focus areas are challenges that the Church has faced from the day of the Ascension: How are we to go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them what Christ had taught, and remembering that Christ would be with us always?

Archbishop John Ireland, who led our archdiocese from 1884 until his death in 1918, understood the fundamental importance of the great commission given by Christ to the Apostles in Matthew 28, and had the first few words inscribed in Latin above the entrance of our Cathedral to remind us always of that mission. Coming more than a century after the completion of the Cathedral, the Archdiocesan Synod is our contemporary response to that mission and challenge.

I wonder, however, if Archbishop Ireland could have imagined just how great the challenge would be in 2020. He died just before the 1918 flu pandemic began to take its toll. While it fell to him to lead a largely uneducated and immigrant Church in an era when Catholics were sometimes seen as un-American and faced significant prejudices, his experience of the Church had been primarily one of great growth, as reflected in his ability to build contemporaneously the Cathedral and Basilica, two of the most magnificent Churches in our country. Today's circumstances (an archdiocese emerging from bankruptcy and scandal, showing a decline in Mass attendance and financial support, now exacerbated by COVID-19, as well as significant reduction in the numbers of baptisms and weddings) would have been outside his wildest imagining. He would likewise be shocked, I suspect, to see the steady rise in the percentage of Americans, particularly young Americans, who indicate that they have no religious affiliation. He would surely share in our tears as we witness the ongoing effects of racism, or recognize the ways in which violence, addiction and abuse have impacted so many of our families and communities.

There is no question that we live in an age in which the need for personal conversion and institutional renewal is great. It is in moments such as these that the Church has the opportunity to return to her roots and allow the power of Christ to shine through our weakness. Because of the potential for renewal, I feel blessed to be in this archdiocese precisely at this time.

In addressing the challenges before us, I realize that I have human resources available to me that Archbishop Ireland could never have imagined. Thanks to his ground-breaking vision for our archdiocese, and the teaching of the

## Focus areas: A deeper dive

Archbishop Hebda is particularly looking forward to hearing responses to the following questions.

## 1 Forming parishes that are at the service of evangelization.

## 1. Welcoming parishes

What can we do to make parishes more welcoming and accessible? Are there those who feel excluded from parish life? How can we address them? What have we learned from livestreaming parish events to build inclusion?

## 2. Collaboration in parish ministry

How can we promote a greater sense of ownership of parish activities? How do we call forth the gifts that God has given us to strengthen our parishes? How should parishioners be involved in setting a vision for the parish? How does a parish regularly assess its performance? How can a community provide for continuity when clergy and staff regularly change?

## 3. Liturgy and the Sunday experience

What needs to happen for Sunday liturgies to more completely satisfy spiritual needs and send us forth for service? How should we address the needs of multicultural, multilingual communities at Mass? Are there ways to create an Archdiocesan liturgical identity so that we feel at home in any one of our parishes? What would be important components of that identity?

## 4. Parishes as "central driving force" of evangelization

How do we foster the "pastoral conversion" of parishes to more fully serve the Church's evangelizing mission? How can parishes train parishioners to be evangelizers, especially in homes and neighborhoods? What are parish practices that have worked in bringing Catholics back to the Church or in attracting new members?

## 5. Bringing the implications of the Gospel into our communities

How can parishes be instruments of Christ's healing? How do we transform parishes to be attentive to the needs of others and to engage in the work of justice and racial equality?

## 2 Forming missionary disciples who know Jesus' love and respond to his call.

## 1. Personally encountering Jesus

What resources and experiences facilitate the personal encounter with Christ that is at the heart of missionary discipleship? What are concrete ways that our Church can credibly proclaim the core message of our faith (the "kerygma") in ways that lead to real conversion?

Second Vatican Council that confirmed his instincts, we have extraordinarily creative lay leadership in this local Church. There's a remarkable foundation of collaboration between clergy and laity that gives me great hope.

Think of the now national impact that the Jeremiah Program has had on young moms and their children, or the hope provided to families in search of affordable housing in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa because of CommonBond Communities. Take a moment to imagine the number of teenagers around our country who have had their faith renewed because of NET Ministries, or university students who have encountered Christ on college campuses because of Saint Paul's Outreach. I'm the envy of my brother bishops when I speak about the Catechetical Institute or pull out photos of the new Dorothy Day Place, or talk about the impact that the Aim

Higher Foundation and Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (CSCOE) have had on stabilizing enrollment in our Catholic schools. We're getting inquiries all the time from around the country about Extreme Faith Camp, the Seven Sisters Apostolate, the Chesterton Schools Network, Women in the New Evangelization (WINE), the Catholic Watchmen men's apostolate, the Cana Family Institute and the Catholic Community Foundation of Minnesota. That all of those initiatives arose in this archdiocese speaks volumes about the types of passionate Catholic problem-solvers who have been nurtured in this local Church.

When I reflect on the phenomenal response that we received when we asked the priests and faithful of the archdiocese to come together for the Prayer and Listening Events, I know that those creative problem-solvers are still out there, and I become excited to think

## 2. Tools to foster discipleship

How can we offer meaningful life-long formation for discipleship? What are useful resources and experiences for learning how to pray, especially with sacred Scripture? What retreat experiences have borne fruit? How can we encourage faith-sharing in small groups? How can we encourage mentoring in the life of virtue and accompaniment at difficult moments?

## 3. Enhancing adult formation

How can we promote a deepening in our understanding of the content of our faith? How can we more effectively meet the need for adult faith formation?

## 4. Fostering the universal call to holiness

How do we deepen our understanding of the family as the domestic Church and our appreciation of marriage as a path for lifelong sanctification? How can the Church better accompany couples in living out their vocation throughout their marriage? How can we be more responsive to the spiritual needs of those who are single, separated or divorced, or widowed?

## 5. Joyful service as a Gospel imperative

How do we strengthen the tie between discipleship, love for neighbor and joyful service? How can we encourage individuals to manifest their faith in their works? How can we promote a greater sensitivity and response to the needs of others?

## 3 Forming youth and young adults in and for a Church that is always young.

## 1. Supporting parents as primary educators

How can we better assist parents in forming children as disciples who know and love Jesus and his Church?

## 2. Helping the young encounter Jesus

How do we give pre-teens a personal encounter with Jesus that fosters spiritual growth? How about teenagers? How should we teach them to pray or help them grow in virtue?

## 3. Education at the service of encountering Christ

How can Catholic schools and religious education programs more effectively facilitate a relationship with Jesus? Do our sacramental preparation programs open young hearts to God's grace and call?

## 4. Ministry to millennials

How can we minister more effectively to college-age Catholics and single young adults? How about young married couples and young families?

## 5. Rethinking structures of young adult ministry

What should be the role of peer ministry and young adult leadership in this apostolate? Is there a need for a more regionalized approach? What are avenues for developing young leadership and opening Church structures to the insights of young adults? How can we better use social media to nourish young adults?

about what might emerge from the next steps of the Synod process. The focus areas might seem somewhat predictable, but I am anticipating bold proposals for concrete action. My hope is that through the Synod process we will together be able to discern new and creative responses to a few issues that have challenged, and continue to challenge, this local Church. Even in an era marked by COVID-19 and limited financial resources, the potential is boundless when we all put our heads and hearts together and allow the Holy Spirit to lead.

While the first phase of our process was focused on casting the net broadly to see what was on the minds and hearts of the faithful and thereby determine the topics for our Synod, the next phase needs to be more focused and go deeper. In particular, the 2021 deanery and parish consultations will focus on how we can take action to address those topics. At the deanery level next January

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## YEAR TWO: THE CHURCH PREPARES

## JUNE

Mass marks the beginning of Year 2

## AUGUST

Archbishop Hebda announces Synod focus areas

## SEPTEMBER

Praying with Scripture virtual series begins Sept. 13

## OCTOBER

Healing and Hope virtual retreat begins Oct. 18

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Faith and Culture series  
Deanery Consultation occurs over four Saturdays in social-distanced environment

## FEBRUARY

Lent: Synod at Home

## SPRING

Live events on the Focus Areas

## JUNE

Year 3 begins

## SEPTEMBER

Parish Consultation with Small Group Process begins

## JUNE

Synod Assembly takes place  
Pentecost weekend

## NOVEMBER

Archbishop Hebda releases pastoral plan



## YEAR THREE: THE CHURCH ENGAGES



## How we got here

Standing in front of hundreds of Catholics in St. Peter in Mendota in June 2019, Archbishop Bernard Hebda prayed for the Holy Spirit to guide the Synod process he was launching in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. “I look at our local Church and see it crying out to be molded, to be renewed, to be refreshed,” he said. “I’m confident that that’s the Lord’s desire for us. I’m confident that he will send his Holy Spirit upon us if we ask him.”

That Mass officially launched a multi-year Synod process designed to involve every Catholic in the archdiocese. A few months later, at St. Victoria in Victoria, Archbishop Hebda and a team of volunteers and archdiocesan staff kicked off the first of 19 Prayer and Listening Events for the general population of Catholics in the archdiocese.

Over the course of seven months, more than 8,000 Catholics gathered together in parishes across the archdiocese to reflect on what is working well in the archdiocese, and what pastoral challenges and opportunities lie ahead. Archbishop Hebda attended each of those three-hour events, and Auxiliary Bishop Andrew Cozzens attended most. Eleven additional events focused on targeted groups, such as college students, parish staff members and youth.

The Prayer and Listening Events dedicated the first hour-and-a-half to prayer and reflection, with a talk from Archbishop Hebda about his vision for the Synod. That was followed by small-group table discussions and an opportunity for some participants to share their reflections, concerns and ideas with the archbishop and all gathered.

In addition to English, some events also included speakers and materials using Spanish, Vietnamese, Polish and American Sign Language. Although the final scheduled open Prayer and Listening Event in March was canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions, the 19 open events and 11 focus events yielded more than 35,000 comments.

From January to April, teams of volunteers transcribed handwritten comments, translated non-English comments, organized comments into 20 categories with 144 subtopics, and then analyzed the data and presented it to Archbishop Hebda. Along with results from the Disciple Maker Index Survey, which Catholics in the archdiocese had the opportunity to complete in February, and the materials prepared for the local bishops’ ad limina visit to Rome in January, Archbishop Hebda discerned three topic areas to narrow the focus of the next phase of the Synod: 1) Forming parishes that are in the service of evangelization, 2) Forming

missionary disciples who know Jesus’ love and respond to his call, and 3) Forming youth and young adults in and for a Church that is always young.

Therese Coons, Synod director, said that the feedback Archbishop Hebda received from the Prayer and Listening Events was invaluable.

“Archbishop Hebda’s vision for the Synod — to draw on the gifts of the faithful to discern and establish clear pastoral priorities — starts with a ‘listening Church,’ listening to each other and to the Holy Spirit, with the disposition of heart that we all have something to learn,” said Coons, a parishioner of St. Anne in Hamel. “The Prayer and Listening Events were designed to provide an opportunity to listen to each other, and Archbishop Hebda was at all 30 events, personally listening.”

She said that Synod leaders were grateful that more than 8,000 people took three hours of time to come together for the good of the local Church. “They prayed together, they listened with respect to each other — even when different viewpoints were held — and shared their wisdom by giving feedback,” she said. “It was heartening to see so many people who care about the future of our local Church.”

Bishop Cozzens, chair of the Synod Executive Committee, said that he was impressed by participants’ engagement and the depth of passion they expressed. He feared that the sessions might feel like a political caucus, but was heartened that instead it was a forum for people to share on a deeper level their desires for their faith and the life of the local Church, he said.

The reason for that is prayer, Bishop Cozzens said. “All along, the goal of the Synod process is to let the Holy Spirit lead,” he said, “and since we wanted the Holy Spirit to lead, we knew that we needed to give the Holy Spirit prominence. And we needed to give a chance for people to listen to the Holy Spirit. And so many people did comment on the beauty of that prayer time, and they were surprised how beautiful it was that the Holy Spirit did show up when we gave them time to pray.”

On May 31, Archbishop Hebda celebrated Pentecost Mass at the Cathedral of St. Paul, the first public Mass he celebrated after public worship resumed in Minnesota during the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that it felt “just like yesterday” that he had celebrated last year’s Pentecost Mass in Mendota opening the pre-Synod process.

“We give ourselves to the Holy Spirit this evening,” the archbishop said at this year’s Mass, “that he might use us to do great things in this local Church.”

— Maria Wiering

## ‘AN OPEN PROCESS’

Father Joseph Bambenek, Synod assistant director, emphasized how important it was for Archbishop Hebda to hear from Catholics throughout the archdiocese, not just people who regularly have a role in parish or archdiocesan decision-making, during the Prayer and Listening Events.

“The goal was to have an open process where there were no ‘insiders,’ but everyone could engage in mutual listening,” he said. “It reaffirmed how many faithful, thoughtful, prayerful, dedicated and talented people are in our Church.”

In Faribault, Sister Kathleen Hayes, a staff member at Divine Mercy, collaborated with nearby Bethlehem Academy theology teachers to encourage high school students to attend a Prayer and Listening Event the parish hosted in October. She wanted them to know that their voice was important, and that they have a place in the Church at large — a point she illustrated with a musical analogy. “They’re part of an orchestra, they’re not part of a band,” said Sister Hayes, 78, a Sinsinawa Dominican who is also one of Divine Mercy’s Synod parish ambassadors. “A band only has certain kinds of instruments. Orchestra brings it all in.”

Loralean Jordan, 51, a former youth minister at St. Peter Claver in St. Paul, said she attended the January listening session at her parish out of curiosity. “I know what’s in my heart and I know what’s on my mind in regards to the archdiocese, but being able to hear and see what other people are thinking” was important, she said. It was also meaningful for her to be heard “to express myself and charge the Church to listen to me as a member.”

Jordan was among those randomly selected — through a lottery — to share her thoughts with Archbishop Hebda following the small-group discussion, and she spoke in front of a packed church about the need for culturally-appropriate youth ministry.

And while concerns about youth and young people finding their place in the Church was mentioned at every Prayer and Listening Event, it was far from the only dominant topic. Synod Executive Committee member Sheryl Moran volunteered at most Prayer and Listening Events and helped with the data organization and analysis. Comments touched on every facet of the life of the Church, with some participants expressing very strong, but polar opposite, views, she said.

The events were “a great opportunity for us just to gather together as a Church, especially following the sex abuse crisis, and to be able to listen to one another and to start to heal,” said Moran, 57, a member of Our Lady of Grace in Edina. “And I think Archbishop Hebda gave such a great example of how to listen.”

The Synod’s director, Therese Coons, was surprised by how much joy came from witnessing the small group discussions, “seeing so many people come together at discussion tables sharing what was on their hearts and minds, and listening with respect to one another, even when they held differing viewpoints.”

“It was a joy, inspiring and hope-filled,” she said. “It was a privilege to be part of, and an experience I will not forget.”

<<2A and February, consultations will focus on how we can take action to address those topics. At the deanery level next January and February, we will be brainstorming, trying to surface concrete options for action that are particularly tailored to our archdiocese as we enter the third decade of this century. At the more extensive parish gatherings, scheduled for September and October of 2021, we will go deeper, evaluating and prioritizing those options in a way that will facilitate decision-making at the actual Synod Assembly at Pentecost in 2022.

While it is hard to imagine, we are going to need even greater involvement moving forward. I hope that those of you who experienced the beauty and power of coming together to ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and then respectfully sharing ideas will engage others to participate in the Synod process. It’s going to be most fruitful if we are able to have broad participation when we finally get together for our parish consultation with small groups in the Fall of 2021.

I remain committed to making good use of your time and ideas. The parish consultations will concretely determine what will be presented to the Synod delegates when we formally come

together on Pentecost weekend in 2022. It will be that experience, based on your insights and discussion, that will inspire and give form to the post-Synodal pastoral letter that I will be issuing later that year on the Solemnity of Christ the King, and ultimately determine our concrete pastoral priorities in the three focus areas.

The pandemic may have required us to change our timeline, but I am already recognizing some blessings that will come from the change of schedule and from what we have learned about online engagement in the last few months. I am grateful that we will now have the time to lay some more groundwork for our Synod by offering targeted opportunities for virtual participation and enrichment.

The multi-week opportunities (see sidebar on page 4A) are reflective of the feedback that we received at the prayer and listening events concerning your desire to grow in prayer, your recognition of a need for greater healing in the archdiocese, your thirst for a better understanding of Church teaching in a few targeted areas and your desire to have the Synod strengthen even the bonds you share at home. While they will be offered serially over the next six months so that someone could theoretically participate

in all of them, they are being designed so that they would be beneficial even for those desiring to participate in only a single offering.

We are also profiting from the extended timeline to take a look at our internal processes at the central offices of the archdiocese. With the help of a talented team of expert consultants who are assisting us at no cost, we are working to make sure that the archdiocese is going to be organizationally prepared to respond effectively to whatever priorities emerge from the Synod. I am delighted that we now have more time to sharpen our institutional effectiveness and determine how best we can use the human and limited financial resources at our disposal.

There are two areas, however, where the postponement of the Synod has made it a less favorable means for providing feedback. I had initially hoped that the Synod would help us to provide criteria for evaluating the ongoing vitality of individual parishes for strategic planning purposes. I had also anticipated a fruitful discussion of how our parishes are expected to financially support the archdiocese, particularly in relationship to the funding of Catholic schools and ministries that cross parish boundaries (e.g., Latino ministry). Given the financial

pressures that have accompanied the coronavirus, it now seems prudent to accelerate those discussions. With that in mind, the Archdiocesan Finance Council and Corporate Board has already put together an ad hoc committee to study the funding questions. As for the parish vitality issue, I will be establishing a joint committee of the Presbyteral Council and Lay Advisory Board to work with our Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning group on this matter. As the work progresses in both of those areas, I will make sure that we have opportunities for broad discussion and comment.

All in all, however, the Synod remains a top priority for the archdiocese and I continue to anticipate great fruit from your generous participation. In the short term, I hope that you will join me in participating in the virtual programming scheduled for this fall and winter, that you will say yes if your pastor asks you to represent your parish in the deanery consultation, that you will plan to participate in the parish consultations in fall 2021, that you will begin to educate yourselves in each of the three focus areas, and that you will continue to pray that the Synod will bear good fruit in this local Church. Come Holy Spirit, enkindle in our hearts the fire of your love.

# What's next Year 2: The Church Prepares

The Prayer and Listening Events wrapped up just as Minnesota's officials began addressing the spread of the novel coronavirus in the state. Due to pandemic-related restrictions and uncertainty around in-person gatherings, Synod leaders decided in April to reorganize the Synod process and extend the timeline by a year. Instead of culminating in a Synod Assembly weekend in spring 2021, as originally planned, that event will be held in June 2022, with Archbishop Bernard Hebda planning to release a pastoral plan informed by the Synod later that year.

The extended timeline allows for the Synod to unfold in three phases: the first year (2019/2020) being The Church Listens; this upcoming year (2020/2021) being The Church Prepares, and the third year (2021/2022) being The Church Engages.

In this upcoming year of preparation, the Synod team is offering two series in the fall, and three in the winter/spring. The series will start in September with a five-week virtual series on praying with Scripture taught by Archbishop Hebda and Bishop Andrew Cozzens, followed by a five-week virtual retreat beginning in October on healing and hope (see sidebar). The catechetical series this winter is designed to engage important topics that surfaced during the Prayer and Listening Events, including the dignity of women, sexuality and the family, and the nature of the priesthood. The Synod at Home initiative during Lent 2021 will engage individuals, couples and families in a Synod process for their lives. The year will close with live events in the spring (assuming they are safe) on the focus areas.

Archdiocesan leaders acknowledge that people's lives — and, for many, their relationship to their parish and Church — have changed during the pandemic. While the pandemic required Synod leaders to extend the process, Father Joseph Bambenek, the Synod's assistant director, sees the new timeline as a blessing in disguise, "one of many ways in which the Holy Spirit has taken our plans and made them better."

"This year of preparation will allow us to be even more open to how the Holy Spirit wants to work through the process," he said. "The biggest downside is that the archbishop and all of us involved are looking forward to the implementation of what comes out of the Synod to address the situation the Church faces. The process is important,

but the ultimate fruit is what will determine the success or not of the Synod. So the year delay means a year delay in reaping the fruit."

Therese Coons, Synod director, hopes that people who participated in the Prayer and Listening Events feel inspired to continue their involvement with the Synod process. "The success in meeting the goal of the Synod — to set clear pastoral priorities in a way that promotes greater unity and leads us to more vigorous proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ — depends on the faithful being involved and sharing their wisdom," she said.

"The Prayer and Listening Events were a first step, and an important step, but there are more important steps in the process that will benefit from (Catholics') involvement," Coons added. "We hope they participate in the Year 2 opportunities. Most importantly, we hope they join in the small group discussions at their parish fall 2021 in the Parish Consultation Process."

The Parish Consultation with Small Group Process will take place in the fall of 2021 and consist of parish-based small groups diving deeper into the focus areas Archbishop Hebda has just announced. Even though that process is a year away, Father Bambenek encourages Catholics to begin praying about the focus areas now, observing how their own parish currently engages the topics, and discerning what best practices might look like.

Prior to the Parish Consultation Process, some parish representatives will gather in January or February within their deaneries — a geographic grouping of parishes — to discuss the focus areas. Trained facilitators and scribes will assist those small group discussions, which will inform the Parish Consultation Process later in the year, Coons said.

The Parish Consultation Process will then inform the Synod Assembly, which will take place with about 500 participants Pentecost weekend, June 3-5, 2022.

"An important part of a Synod — why the archbishop has chosen to chart the path ahead through this vehicle — is that he believes in the importance of being a Listening Church, following the leadership of our Holy Father, Pope Francis," Father Bambenek said. "That has not always been the leadership style in the archdiocese, and it takes time to grow in skill and even in the trust necessary for Year 3 and beyond to be fruitful."

"The ultimate goal of the Synod," he added, "is to help us as God's people grow in unity in Christ and to develop a spiritual strategic plan to more vigorously proclaim the Gospel in our place and time."

— Maria Wiering

## PRAYER AND LISTENING EVENTS SITES

St. Victoria, Victoria • St. Michael, St. Michael • Guardian Angels, Oakdale • Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Paul • St. Peter, Forest Lake • Divine Mercy, Faribault • St. Wenceslaus, New Prague • All Saints, Lakeville • St. Anne-St. Joseph Hien, Minneapolis • Holy Cross, Minneapolis • St. Peter Claver, St. Paul • Pax Christi, Eden Prairie • St. Stephen, Minneapolis • Providence Academy, Plymouth • Lumen Christi, St. Paul • St. Stephen, Anoka • Our Lady of Grace, Edina • St. Pius V, Cannon Falls • Transfiguration, Oakdale

## Synod at a glance: A brief overview

Synods are gatherings of Church leaders to address particular topics in the Church. The best-known form of this is the Synod of Bishops, a meeting of bishops from around the world to discern a topic, such as the recent synods in Rome on the family in 2014 and 2015, and on young people in 2018. On the diocesan level, a Synod is a coming together of the local Church, and they're intended to be held on a regular basis. Even though diocesan synods have a long history in the Church, the archdiocese of St. Paul has not held a synod since the late 1930s. Last year, Archbishop Bernard Hebda called for an archdiocesan Synod to help him discern and address the most pressing needs of the local Church. He stressed his desire for the archdiocese to be a "listening Church" — to hear and respond to the needs of the faithful — and the responsibility of the faithful to share their

needs with their bishops. He appointed a Synod Executive Team, which developed a multi-year pre-Synod process leading up to the Synod Assembly, planned for Pentecost weekend, June 3-5, 2022. Then Archbishop Hebda will prepare a pastoral plan for the archdiocese, which he expects to release Nov. 20, 2022, the feast of Christ the King. While the Synod Assembly will include about 500 representatives, the pre-synod process seeks to engage the entire local Church. Already, more than 8,000 Catholics participated in the Prayer and Listening Events held September 2019 to March 2020, and more opportunities lie ahead for Catholics to continue their involvement or get involved in the pre-Synod process, especially the parish consultation process, which will take place through small groups in the fall of 2021. Learn more at [ARCHSPM.ORG/SYNOD](http://ARCHSPM.ORG/SYNOD).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE SERIES • SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2020

This five-part virtual series on praying with Scripture will offer practical tools for growing in holiness, drawing upon the rich tradition of the Catholic Church. Archbishop Hebda and Bishop Cozzens will teach the fundamentals of praying with Scripture and explain how to use a Prayer Companion resource to enrich your prayer experience. Participants can watch at their convenience with family, friends or on their own. This series begins Sept. 13.

### HEALING AND HOPE SERIES • OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2020

This five-part virtual retreat will ground each person in his or her fundamental identity as a beloved child of God. Yet, each person has experienced wounds that bind. This retreat will explore how to unbind these knots through the intercession of Our Lady, Undoer of Knots, and open these wounds to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The aim is for participants to better understand how encountering Jesus' love and mercy brings healing and hope. This series begins Oct. 18.

### FAITH AND CULTURE SERIES • JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2021

Inspired by the thousands of participants at the Prayer and Listening Events, this series will connect their stories to the story of the Church. It will explore:

- ▶ The sources of Catholic teaching (Scripture, tradition and magisterium)
- ▶ The Church's teaching on sexual morality and the family
- ▶ The Church's understanding on the dignity of women
- ▶ The priesthood (both the baptized and ordained)

### SYNOD AT HOME: GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER • LENT 2021

In the Synod process, the Church is taking time to listen to one another, pray and discuss in order to determine priorities. These steps are important for every home, too. The Synod at Home will give local Catholics the structure and tools for walking through this process together. Individuals, couples and families will find their faith and relationships strengthened by this Synod at Home.

## Volunteer-driven process

Behind the scenes of the past and upcoming pre-Synod events are dedicated staff and hundreds of volunteers who have generously given their time to ensure each phase of the process runs smoothly and achieves its goal.

**SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** Nineteen people serve on the Synod Executive Committee. Bishop Andrew Cozzens serves as the committee's chair. Visit [ARCHSPM.ORG/SYNOD](http://ARCHSPM.ORG/SYNOD) to see the full Executive Committee membership.

**SYNOD PRAYER TEAM** Twenty-six people who have committed significant time in prayer praying for the Holy Spirit to guide participants, the Executive Committee and Archbishop Hebda, as well as for the local Church.

**PARISH AMBASSADORS** Catholics who represent each parish and are trained to understand the Synod process so they can assist their pastor and fellow parishioners through each phase. Last year, members of the Synod executive team held 13 live trainings, attended by approximately 1,800 ambassadors.

**PRAYER AND LISTENING EVENT VOLUNTEERS** Numerous individuals and groups who assisted in the work of the first year Prayer and Listening events. At each of the 19 open Prayer and Listening events, a team of about 20 volunteers

from various groups across the archdiocese staffed the events. Others translated feedback into English and entered the feedback into an Excel spreadsheet so it could be analyzed by the Data Analysis team.

**DMI PARISH POINT PEOPLE:** One pastor-appointed parishioner served as the information and communications hub regarding the Disciple Maker Index, a 70-question survey that was administered in each parish in February 2020. The Point People are now collaborating with parish leaders to understand and communicate their individual parish's results.

**PARISH DEANERY REPRESENTATIVES** Up to 10 pastor-appointed parishioners who will represent their parish at the Deanery Consultation in 2021.

**PARISH SMALL GROUP PROCESS MANAGERS** Two people who, in collaboration with their pastor, will manage the small group process at their parish fall 2021.

**SYNOD ASSEMBLY MEMBERS** Two pastor-nominated parishioners who will represent their parish at the Synod Assembly June 2022.

**FACILITATORS AND SCRIBES** Parishioners who are trained to facilitate and provide feedback at parishes during the Parish Consultation with Small Group process. Another team of trained facilitators and scribes will assist with table discussion at the Deanery Consultation and Synod Assembly.