

Archdiocese of Cape Town

Diocesan Synod 2007

Emerging Themes

Following your input into the Synod Preliminary Questionnaire, the Synod Preparatory Commission has identified eight major themes so far.

All Catholics are now invited to make constructive comments where you can, (comment to your strengths), either after having discussed them in groups or alternatively responding as an individual and to answer this 'Emerging Themes' booklet as follows:

1. Read through these themes carefully
2. Identify in more detail the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese for each of these themes
3. Make constructive proposals for the Synod Agenda which will lead to resolutions taken and being implemented for the future.

This is the opportunity to dream a little, to ensure a living Church in Christ into the future and to pass on to our children. To help you to further reflect on the themes and consider these matters in greater detail we provide below a vision based on Scripture and Vatican II:

- ❖ A Church built on our personal relationship with Christ
- ❖ A Church whose nature it is to be a communion of sisters and brothers
- ❖ A Church imbued with a spirit of humble service
- ❖ A Church committed to evangelization
- ❖ A Church rooted in collaborative ministry
- ❖ A Church which values the family
- ❖ A Church which recognizes the unique role of young people
- ❖ A Church which fosters justice and peace
- ❖ A Church which promotes unity among the followers of Jesus and an outreach to other faiths/religions

THIS IS THE FIRST SYNOD ever to be held in CAPE TOWN. Matters agreed upon at the Synod and accepted by the Archbishop will have a daily impact on our whole Catholic Community for years to come. For many of us this will be a unique opportunity for us to actively participate in such a profound event. So be assured it WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

However, it will require prayer by us all, careful listening, sharing needs and opinions and the active participation by all Parishes, groups, organisations and members of the Archdiocese.

The following major themes emerged from the detailed analysis of the questionnaires that you kindly completed and submitted to the Synod Preparatory Commission.

1. *Youth*
2. *Evangelisation*
3. *Catechetics*
4. *Ongoing formation of adults*
5. *Being Church and Relationship*
6. *Organisation / Leadership / Communication*
7. *Mission and Ministry of Church*
8. *Family*

Please note that the above list is NOT in any particular order of priority.

Described on the pages that follow is firstly what is meant by each of these above themes. It is very important that we communicate simply and clearly.

A few general introductory questions are shown under each theme heading to get you thinking about each of them. We then give some feedback from the preliminary questionnaire and then pose some questions. Please give some time to reflect and think about each in some detail since it is essential that we now share your opinions, concerns, needs and aspirations for each.

Please refer to the Question number you are answering i.e. Question 1 replies would refer to Youth. ***You may identify further themes in your deliberations in which case we look forward to your contributions.***

If you have any questions, what so ever, about anything to do with this booklet, its contents and how to complete the questions please do not hesitate to contact Coral Fisher at the Chancery at telephone number 021 462 2417; Fax 021 461 9330 or e-mail apc@catholic-ct.org.za

Alternatively if you wish to obtain more information about the forthcoming Synod, the role of a Synod in the Church and Archdiocese and members of the Preparatory Commission who are available either via the phone, or in person or email to answer any of your questions please visit www.catholic-ct.org.za

QUESTION 1

YOUTH

The youth are the future of the Church and Society. In a noisy and fragmented world our youth are vulnerable to distraction and moving away. How can we bring them and keep them with Christ more effectively in this ‘modern world?’

Feedback from Synod Preliminary Questionnaire:

- *Get the Youth more involved/Build up Catholic Schools/Youth Choirs/Our Youth are Patronized by Adults and not empowered ;*
- *Attract youngsters, bands, talks, show 'em it's funky. Also get youth more involved. They are the future.*

We now invite you to identify in more detail the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese with regard to this question:

What would you want of a permanent paid leader of the Youth for each Deanery to facilitate all Youth Matters? What will they do? How will they do it? What successful youth projects do you know about that should be repeated elsewhere? What role do parents have with the youth? **More?**

QUESTION 2

EVANGELISATION

How can we each exercise our Christian responsibility of bringing people to Christ in our daily lives? What more should the Church be doing? What help or training does the laity and clergy need to evangelise?

Feedback from Synod Preliminary Questionnaire:

- *Return to the Dignity without Banjo's;*
- *More Deacons & Extra-ordinary Ministers Of Holy Communion;*
- *Faith Renewal Bible Study/Rosary Groups/Prayer Cells/Parish Retreats*

We now invite you to identify in more detail the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese with regard to this theme?

How do we draw people to participate in the ministries of the Church? What form of Bible Study Groups do we want? Who would you like to lead your Parish Retreats? Speaking about the “Dignity of the Mass”, what is it about the Mass is celebrated would you like to change? Do you need training how to evangelize in your daily lives? What does evangelizing mean in practical terms? What are the obstacles in your community that hamper the Church’s work of evangelization? What ‘successes’ has your community had with evangelization that could be shared with other communities? **More?**

QUESTION 3

CATECHETICS

How do we prepare and educate our children to have a relationship with Christ and be active members of the Church?

Feedback from Synod Preliminary Questionnaire:

- *Basic knowledge: Personal relationship with Jesus*
- *Uniformity in training, policies and content*

We now invite you to identify in more detail the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese in regard to this theme.

“Parents are the first teachers of their own kids in the ways of faith” (Baptism ritual). Would you like to be involved in your child’s catechism? How can the teaching of catechism in the parishes of our archdiocese be improved? **More?**

QUESTION 4

ONGOING FORMATION

How do adult members of the Church continue to grow in their relationship with Christ? What more should the Church be doing? How can the laity help fellow Catholics in their on going journey in faith?

Feedback from Synod Preliminary Questionnaire:

- *Efficacy of Lectures/Homilies; Adult Formation (RCIA)*

We now invite you to identify in more detail the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese in regard to this theme?

Are there enough appropriate opportunities for formative and growth-giving activities among adults? What role do prayer and small cell groups have to play? How can more laity be encouraged to join the various Parish ministries? Are our courses advertised enough and spoken about with enthusiasm? **More?**

QUESTION 5

BEING CHURCH AND RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN CHURCH

How can we all create greater unity and reinforce relationships within our various communities and in the Archdiocese as a whole? How can we all feel a greater part of the whole Diocesan Church family? How can we truly become a communion of sisters and brothers?

Feedback from Synod Preliminary Questionnaire:

- *Why are some Catholics no longer coming to Mass/no longer practicing their faith?*
- *Address behaviour while Mass is in progress; more of Afrikaans;*
- *Family Problem focus;*
- *DVD's of Miracle Stories to be made available;*
- *Socialise - Tea after Mass*

We now invite you to identify in more detail the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese with regard to this question

How can the Church address family problems? What can the parish priest and Pastoral Councils do to address family problems? Would you like to be visited in your home by your priest or deacon? What can your parish/priest do to further inter-group relationships? Do most of us truly understand the meaning of ‘being Church together’ and what this means in our daily living? If not would you like to know? Why have you not joined a parish group or ministry? What inhibits you from doing so? If there are barriers let us work together to remove them? **More?**

QUESTION 6

ORGANISATION / LEADERSHIP / COMMUNICATION

How can we better organize things in the Church and Archdiocese? How can leadership in Church matters be improved, if at all? How can all the many areas of communication be improved? Do we support our priests and members of orders properly? What more needs to be done and by whom?

Feedback from Synod Preliminary Questionnaire:

- *Vibrant Gospel Music prior to Mass;*
- *Spiritual Dancing/Solo Singing;*
- *Home to all Mankind; Promote Unity in the Church and amongst the different cultures;*
- *Vocations and training of priests*
- *Fundraising*
- *Maintenance of churches, church property etc*
- *Helping the poor, widows and orphans*

We now invite you to identify in more detail the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese in this question:

Get out of the Dark Ages – Stiff and starchy – are we alive – get charismatic? Involve more professional laity to reduce organizational burden on priests? Employ professional media experts to represent the Church and its teachings? Deployment of modern communication technology for teaching etc? Leadership training among lay ministries, especially Pastoral Council Members? Greater clarity about all the complementary roles within the Archdiocese i.e. Bishops/Priests, Priests/Priests and Priests/Laity? Why laity need to get involved? Is the Church equipment and furniture all it could be or are we lacking in some areas? **More?**

QUESTION 7

MISSION AND MINISTRY OF CHURCH

Do we all share a common vision and mission for the Church in Cape Town? If not, why not? Furthermore what do you think this mission should be?

Feedback from Synod Preliminary Questionnaire:

- *Vocal in Africa/Poverty Relief;*
- *More Laity involvement;*
- *Outspoken & Visible on the Political Front;*
- *More Inclusive Homosexuals/Divorcees/Single Parents'*
- *The Church is not visible among those people who are NOT Catholic. Until recently, when the media were told otherwise, the only Archbishop in Cape Town was the Anglican Archbishop (the term he is now addressed as). Our Archbishop is not there when the Church needs to be represented in the general community. There should be a much greater display of the Catholic Church at all public functions where a cross section of the City is gathered. We want to be proud of our Church and its leaders and a public presence will go a long way towards accomplishing this.'*

We now invite you to identify in more detail the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese in this question:

How can the Archbishop become more public on issues of importance to Cape Town? How can all of us keep abreast of developments and represent our Church properly to non Catholics? What responsibility does each of us have in this regard? How well has the Church handled the recent case of sexual abuse? **More?**

QUESTION 8

FAMILY LIVING AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Social issues include poverty, unemployment, alcohol, drugs, HIV/AIDS – the context within which many Catholics live family life. Family is a crucial element of the Church, the living Body of Christ. Do we prepare married couples fully for the Christian vocation of marriage and the awesome responsibility of parenthood? Once married what support needs to be regularly provided?

Feedback from Synod Preliminary Questionnaire:

- *Marriage and Family living; Parenting skills?*
- *Marriage/Divorce/Annulments?*

We now invite you to identify in more detail the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese in this question:

Can we broaden counselling to include such occasions as young married couples at Baptism? How can the needs of busy young married couples be better served? What special services do you think could be provided by the Church e.g. members of laity providing confidential advisory services, financial advice, child counselling and so forth? Is there a need for confidential drug abuse, HIV/AIDS services? Should the Church be doing more for poverty relief, alcohol abuse? Should rather family matters be represented on all Parish Councils in future? Should the Church be taking such a firm stand on contraception? Should there be more options for divorced/remarried couples and non Catholics with respect to the Eucharist and has homosexuality no place in the Church? **More?**

There were a number of comments and concerns put forward by Catholics around issues on which the Synod does not have any jurisdiction to pass any resolutions: e.g.

- The regulation of enforced celibacy, why is marriage not optional for a man who wishes to serve God as a priest?
- The role of women in the Church, they feel marginalized and yet form a major part of the Church membership
- The desire of some women to be deacons and/or priests

It is proposed that these concerns will be put before the Archbishop for his attention but they will not form part of the Synod Agenda.

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We greatly appreciate your time and willingness to complete this questionnaire. Immediately when they are all returned to the Preparatory Commission a detailed analysis will be carried out and a summary will be drawn up. This will be shown on the Synod Website and the results will also be circulated to all parishes to keep you fully abreast of progress.

On completion of the consultation questionnaire, please indicate which Parish you are from and if you represent a Group, what Group that is, viz. The Parish Pastoral Council, Care Group, etc.