

Preparation for Synod growing steadily

Preparation for Synod 2007 is progressing steadily, moving one step at a time.

From October 2006 to January 2007 many parish groups and communities generously responded to the Preparatory Commission's invitation to send suggestions and comments on the Emerging Themes booklet (i.e. eight themes extracted from responses to the questionnaire distributed by the Synod Preparatory Commission).

The Synod Preparatory Commission gives special thanks to all parish priests, members of religious communities, parish pastoral councils, ministry groups and individual members of the laity for the time and trouble taken to prepare and submit such a rich array of prayerful and thoughtful feedback. It is deeply appreciated.

Throughout the summer holidays and to the end of February 2007, a dedicated analysis team worked hard to compile a draft Summary of Responses to the Emerging Themes booklet.

Some 43 parishes out of a total of 73 responded. This is a 57% parish response rate. This, we believe, is a fair representation of the archdiocese as a whole and compares favourably with responses received by other dioceses that have held synods. Responses were from all deaneries, some members of religious congregations and parish priests – that together proved a spread of feedback from across the constituencies of the archdiocese. Each and every response has been carefully and respectfully reviewed and is reflected in the summaries shown in the report.

On the basis of this summary, four members of the Preparatory Commission (Fr Sean Cahill OFM Cap, Fr Frank de Gouveia, Fr Hugh O'Connor and Sr Iona Mackenzie ISSM) drew up the various chapters of a Reflection Paper which will initiate thinking and promote discussion prior to the synod. At a special deanery session (described below, for the selection of delegates), this Reflection Paper will be presented.

So, what is the next step in our preparation for the synod, scheduled to take place at Springfield Convent School in six months time?

Selecting Delegates to the Synod

We invite each of the eight deaneries to arrange for a special deanery session during the month of May, in order to select 8, 9 or 10 delegates, depending on the number of parishes in the deanery.

Although there will be a facilitator present to conduct the selection process, it will remain the responsibility of the deanery to ensure that the delegates chosen do represent:

All parishes; Various age groups; Both genders

Language groups: English, Afrikaans, Xhosa

A variety of parishioners (e.g. not only PPC members, but also parents of young families, youth, etc.).

Openness to the Holy Spirit is a pre requisite in both this time of preparation and during the synod itself. We desire to truly listen to the Spirit speaking to us as Church in this Archdiocese of Cape Town – truly open our spirits, hearts and minds to the grace of spiritual renewal through a deeper love and consecration to service.

So that the synod may be blessed, let us unite in praying for the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit upon the event. The following prayer, in three languages, is proposed.

Sr Alma Kohler, HC

Synod Preparatory Commission