



10 TOP TAKEAWAYS

FROM THE SYNTHESIS REPORT AND WHY THEY MATTER

By Peter Jesserer Smith OSV News

The Synod on Synodality's first session at the Vatican has concluded, with its results wrapped

up in a 41-page "half-time report" for the entire Church to digest, reflect on, and or which to give feedback ahead of the **synod's final session** in Rome next October.

The report, a synthesis of the Oct. 4-29 meeting, is fundamentally an instrument for discernment, and it is designed to elicit further reflection and response from the whole Church. The synod's next session in Rome will have the task of making decisions about what concrete proposals to present before the pope. Ultimately, the pope will decide what to implement coming out of the Synod on Synodality.

The following are 10 takeaways about the synod's synthesis report, with why it matters for Catholics in parishes and what happens next.

1. Synodality is about the Church's evangelizing mission, and baptism is why synodal governance matters.

The synod relates that "synodality is ordered to mission," recognizing that the Church's members—with diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures—

share the "common grace of baptism." The synod's themes of "communion, participation, mission" are the hallmarks for how the entire people of God in a synodal Church—the laity, consecrated

to develop it into real processes and structures.

Part of that is figuring out how decisions are made in the Church in a way that is faithful to its nature—

including discerning how episcopal collegiality is exercised in a synodal Church—because the Church's members have "differentiated co-responsibility for the common mission of evangelization."

The synod's "conversations in the Spirit"—an experience of listening and sharing in the light of faith, and seeking God's will in an authentically evangelical atmosphere—is recognized as a helpful tool in this regard.

2. The synod calls for formation in "authentic discipleship," united by the Eucharist and nourished by the Word.

The synod stresses that all the Church's members are called to be "all disciples, all missionaries" who have the "responsibility of demonstrating and transmitting the love and tenderness of God to a wounded humanity." In other words, living discipleship is at the heart of being Catholic.

The synod suggested deepening the notion that a "mature exercise of the 'sensus fidei' requires not only reception of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9...



SYNOD ON SYNODALITY—The Most Rev. Edward M. Rice, Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, processes into Mass in St. Mary Cathedral, Cape Girardeau. The Church's members have "differentiated co-responsibility for the common mission of evangelization." The **synod** stresses that all the Church's members are called to be "all disciples, all missionaries" who have the "responsibility of demonstrating and transmitting the love and tenderness of God to a wounded humanity." In other words, living discipleship is at the heart of being Catholic.

(Photo by Bruce Stidham/The Mirror)

religious, deacons, and priests with the bishops united with the pope—relate to each other and live together the call to holiness, proclaiming Jesus Christ's good news to the world.

The synod explicitly says its work is rooted in the Church's dynamic and living tradition in the context of the Second Vatican Council's teaching. But the synod also recognizes much remains to be done to clarify what "synodality" means, and

A REFLECTION ON THE 16TH SYNOD OF BISHOPS by Bishop Emeritus John J. Leibrecht

Recently in Rome, our Catholic church engaged in important discussions which started October 4 and concluded October 29. Here is some background to those discussions.

Toward the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, Pope Paul VI issued a decree establishing a new body in the Church named the Synod of Bishops. Its purpose is to have bishops serve as close advisors to the pope on matters needing attention since the Council. The recent assembly in Rome, convened by Pope Francis, is the 16th ordinary meeting of a Synod of Bishops.

Topics at the Synod were identified through world-wide convocations of bishops, laity, and religious held during the past two years. One such topic is the role of women in the Church's ministry and decision-making. Another topic is the relationship of the Church with Catholics that feel marginalized by the Church, including LGBTQ+ Catholics. Possible new structures within the Church to help her better fulfill her mission may also be discussed.

These and other topics will lead to ideas and recommendations for discussion and discernment during the coming year prior to the next Synod in October 2024.

The Synod has 365 voting members most of whom, of course, are bishops from countries around the world. Pope Francis has invited 70 members of the laity and vowed religious to participate in the Synod and, for

the first time, have a vote.

Following the **2024 Synod of Bishops in Rome** with its thinking and recommendations, Pope Francis has open to him one of two actions. He may accept the Synod's work as part of the Church's teaching and practices, or use the Synod's work as a resource to compose a summary document of his own. Internationally, some within the Church have applauded Pope Francis for calling the 16th Synod of Bishops with its past two years of world-wide consultations, and their 2023 and 2024 meetings in Rome. Others are critical and concerned about possible confusion regarding Church teachings and practices. The present mixture of hopes and concerns have been present previously throughout the Church's 2,000 years of history.

Pope Francis said the Synod is not to be a "television show," but a prayerful experience of Christ's disciples coming together to assist the Church in her continuing mission. Several briefings were provided to the media during the course of the Synod.

Personally, I have been praying to and trusting in the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit at the Synod. I recall the Pentecost event in the gospels where the Holy Spirit emboldened fearful apostles to go forth preaching the good news of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ. It is that Spirit I ask to be with us now. Join Bishop Rice and myself through prayer and trust in the Holy Spirit.

Bishop John Leibrecht served as the Fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, October 1984-January 2008. He resides in Springfield and is most generous in his continued presence and service to the Church of Southern Missouri, as its Bishop Emeritus.

The next issue of **The Mirror** will be **November 24, 2023**. Sign up to receive the diocesan newspaper via Email in digital format: Contact Debbie Thompson at (417) 866-0841, or Email: dthompson@dioscg.org.





COME, AND YOU WILL SEE

Bp. Edward M. Rice

May our gaze be ever on the poor & most vulnerable among us

I offer a special word of thanks to the schools in the Cape Girardeau area that collected donations for the All Schools Mass held Oct. 10 in Notre Dame Regional High School. Altogether, \$1,458 was collected to support LifeHouse in Cape Girardeau.

At a recent pro-life gathering in Cape Girardeau, the speaker hailed the fact that Missouri is a “pro-life state.” This is the third time I’ve heard that comment made and I’m getting a little nervous. We cannot be lulled into a false sense of security. The forces promoting abortion are focusing their efforts on petitions to amend Missouri’s constitution. While each of the 11 initiative petitions varies in its scope, any amendment to the state constitution involving a pro-abortion initiative would be devastating to life.

The 11 initiative petitions would amend Missouri’s constitution to provide in part: that the government shall not deny or infringe upon a person’s fundamental right to reproductive freedom, which entails the right to make and carry out decisions about all matters relating to reproductive healthcare, including but not limited to prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, birth control, abortion care, miscarriage care, and respectful birthing conditions.

In addition, each petition would provide in this or very similar language that: no person shall be penalized,

prosecuted, or otherwise subjected to adverse action based on their actual, potential, perceived, or alleged pregnancy outcomes, including but not limited to miscarriage, still birth, or abortion. Nor shall any person assisting a person in exercising their right to reproductive freedom would that person’s consent be penalized, prosecuted, or otherwise subjected to adverse action for doing so.

The 11 petitions vary in other ways. Some would allow Missouri to require parental consent before an abortion while others would not. Some would allow restrictions on government funding of abortion, while others would not. Some purport to restrict abortion after 24 weeks of pregnancy or after viability, while others do not, but only as long as the government does not deny or restrict abortion “to protect the life or physical or mental health of the pregnant person.”

How should we respond? Again, we cannot think that the issue is said and done. I think we can learn from the mistakes made in Kansas. We need to rally our troops. I envision our parishes being centers for voter registration to get out the Catholic vote. We need to study the language of these initiative petitions, so we clearly know what they are proposing and for what we are voting. It’s not just abortion at this point. It’s also about parental consent and government funding.

The difficulty is that we do not know which of these 11 initiative petitions to amend Missouri’s constitution will actually move forward. But the reality is this: we cannot rest on what has been done in the past. This truly is a battle for life. Depending on the proposal, Missouri could become a state with extreme abortion. Depending on which proposal, we know that even the most basic medical and safety protections will be removed. Depending on the proposal, late-term abortions will be allowed



MOUNTAINTOP HOMES FOR VETERANS—Bishop Edward M. Rice and other dignitaries turned the dirt on the 11.4 acres which will soon be Mountaintop Homes, in Mount Vernon, for mixed-income families, and homeless/at-risk veterans. Undertaken by O’Reilly Development Company, LLC, the project is in partnership with Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri, which will provide an on-site Housing Resource Coordinator, who will provide support services, and case management. As is his custom, Bishop Rice planted a Miraculous Medal in the ground and, along with the staff and board members of Catholic Charities, the Hail Mary was prayed, asking Our Lady’s blessings on the project and upon all those who will be served at Mountaintop Homes. Additional information about this important ministry will be in the next edition of *The Mirror*. (Photo by Deacon Rob Huff/The Mirror)

2023 theme: **“Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor” (Tob 4:7).** As the Diocese’s charitable apostolate, Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri makes certain that our gaze is ever-steady on the poor and most vulnerable among us. Offering more than just a one-time hand out, Catholic Charities works one-on-one with individuals and families to provide the help and hope they need to achieve long-term success. Each year, thousands of people are assisted through the many programs and services of Catholic Charities, due in large part to the goodness and generosity of donors such as yourself.

I am proud of the work Catholic Charities

provides in the name of all Catholics across southern Missouri.

Every family deserves a home, every veteran deserves restored pride, and every homeless mother deserves a new beginning. As we look to this Thanksgiving, let us recall our many gifts and blessings. Then, sacrificially and prayerfully, make a gift to Catholic Charities. Together, through your generosity, we will continue to *Reach Out, Provide Hope, and Change Lives.*

O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine.

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for virtually any reason. Depending on the proposal, parental consent will be removed. Depending on the amendment, taxpayers would be forced to pay for elective abortions, including late-term abortions. The November 2024 election cycle is going to be ugly, a battle, but it is a battle worth fighting because it is the battle for life.

BISHOP’S COLLECTION FOR CATHOLIC CHARITIES

You’ll notice in the center of this edition of the diocesan newspaper, details surrounding the **2023 Bishop’s Collection for Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri**,

the annual collection for the important charitable arm of my ministry.


Each year, the weekend before Thanksgiving, we have the opportunity to come together as a Catholic community and put our faith into action through the annual **Bishop’s Collection for Catholic Charities, November 18-19**, this year. This date also coincides with the Seventh World Day of the Poor, established by Pope Francis. The




15TH

ANNIVERSARY

CONGRATULATIONS



Fr. Audrey Troya Toloza




Fr. Audrey Troya Toloza will celebrate the 15th anniversary of his priesthood ordination on Nov. 23. He is Parochial Vicar for St. Canera Parish, Neosho, and Nativity of Our Lord Mission Church in Noel.

Happy Anniversary, Fr. Toloza!



“Let us pray for the eternal repose of our family and friends who have passed away. May they rest in peace. Amen.”

—BISHOP EDWARD M. RICE



November

PRAYER INTENTION



VEN Y VERÁS

Obispo Edward M. Rice

Que nuestra mirada se dirija siempre a los pobres y más vulnerables entre nosotros

O frezco unas palabras especiales de agradecimiento a las escuelas de la zona de Cape Girardeau que recaudaron donaciones para la Misa de Todas las Escuelas celebrada el 10 de octubre en la Escuela Secundaria Regional Notre Dame. En total, se recaudaron \$1458 dólares para apoyar a LifeHouse en Cape Girardeau.

En una reciente reunión provida en Cape Girardeau, el orador celebró el hecho de que Missouri sea un “estado provida”. Es la tercera vez que oigo ese comentario y me pone un poco nervioso. No podemos dejarnos llevar por una falsa sensación de seguridad. Las fuerzas que promueven el aborto están centrando sus esfuerzos en peticiones para enmendar la Constitución de Missouri. Aunque cada una de las 11 peticiones de iniciativa varía en su alcance, cualquier enmienda a la constitución estatal que implique una iniciativa proaborto sería devastadora para la vida.

Las 11 peticiones de iniciativa enmendarían la Constitución de Missouri para establecer en parte: que el gobierno no negará ni infringirá el derecho fundamental de una persona a la libertad reproductiva, que implica el derecho a tomar y llevar a cabo decisiones sobre todos los asuntos relacionados con la atención médica reproductiva, incluidos, entre otros, la atención prenatal, el parto, la atención posparto, el control de la natalidad, los servicios de aborto, la atención al aborto espontáneo y las condiciones de parto respetuosas.

Además, cada petición establecería en este o en un lenguaje muy similar que: ninguna persona será penalizada, procesada o sometida a cualquier otro tipo de acción adversa basada en sus resultados de embarazo reales, potenciales, percibidos o alegados, incluyendo, pero no limitado a aborto

espontáneo, mortinato o aborto provocado. Tampoco se penalizará, perseguirá o someterá a cualquier otra acción adversa a ninguna persona que ayude a otra a ejercer su derecho a la libertad reproductiva con el consentimiento de dicha persona.

Las 11 peticiones varían en otros aspectos. Algunas permitirían a Missouri exigir el consentimiento paterno antes de abortar, mientras que otras no. Algunas permitirían restricciones a la financiación del aborto por parte del gobierno, mientras que otros no. Algunas pretenden restringir el aborto después de las 24 semanas de embarazo o después de la viabilidad, mientras que otras no, pero sólo mientras el gobierno no niegue o restrinja el aborto “para proteger la vida o la salud física o mental de la persona embarazada”.

¿Cómo debemos responder? Una vez más, no podemos pensar que el asunto está resuelto. Creo que podemos aprender de los errores cometidos en Kansas. Tenemos que reunir a nuestras tropas. Imagino nuestras parroquias como centros de inscripción de votantes para conseguir el voto católico. Necesitamos estudiar el lenguaje de estas peticiones de iniciativa, para que sepamos claramente lo que proponen y para qué votamos. A estas alturas no se trata sólo del aborto. También tiene que ver con el consentimiento paterno y la financiación pública.

La dificultad radica en que no sabemos cuál de estas 11 peticiones de iniciativa para modificar la Constitución de Missouri saldrá realmente adelante. Pero la realidad es esta: no podemos quedarnos tranquilos con lo que se ha hecho en el pasado. Esta es realmente una batalla por la vida. Según la propuesta, Missouri podría convertirse en un estado con aborto extremo. Según cuál sea la propuesta, sabemos que se

eliminarán incluso las protecciones médicas y de seguridad más básicas. Según la propuesta, se permitirán los abortos tardíos por prácticamente cualquier motivo. Según la propuesta, se eliminará el consentimiento paterno. Según la enmienda, los contribuyentes se verían obligados a pagar los abortos electivos, incluidos los abortos tardíos. El ciclo electoral de noviembre de 2024 va a ser horrible, una batalla, pero es una batalla que merece la pena librar porque es la batalla por la vida.

COLECTA DEL OBISPO PARA CARIDADES CATÓLICAS

Notarán en el centro de esta edición del periódico diocesano, detalles en torno a la **Colecta del Obispo 2023 para Caridades Católicas del sur de Missouri**, la colecta anual para el importante brazo caritativo de mi ministerio.

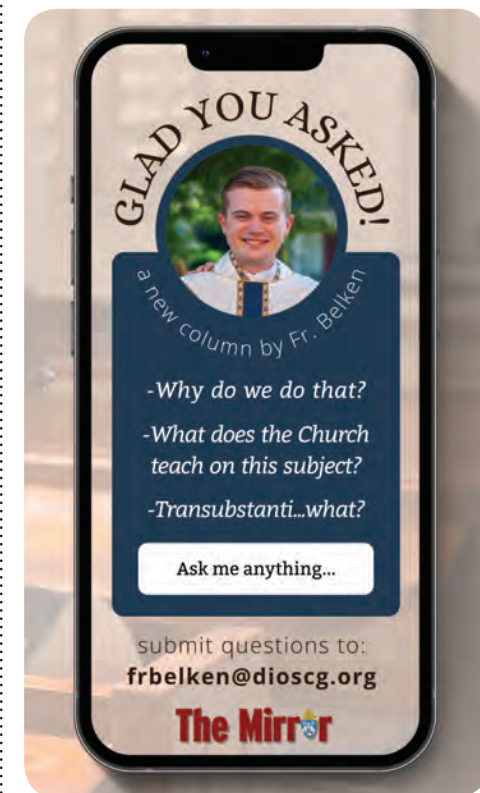
Cada año, el fin de semana anterior al Día de Acción de Gracias, tenemos la oportunidad de reunirnos como comunidad católica y poner nuestra fe en acción a través de la **Colecta anual del Obispo para Caridades Católicas, los días 18 y 19 de noviembre**, este año. Esta fecha coincide también con la VII Jornada Mundial de los Pobres, instaurada por el Papa Francisco. El tema de 2023: **“No apartes tu rostro del pobre” (Tob 4:7)**. Como apostolado caritativo de la diócesis, Caridades Católicas del sur de Missouri se asegura de que nuestra mirada esté siempre fija en los pobres y los más vulnerables de entre nosotros. Caridades Católicas, que ofrece algo más que una simple ayuda puntual, trabaja individualmente con personas y familias para proporcionarles la ayuda y la esperanza que necesitan para alcanzar el éxito a largo plazo. Cada año, miles de personas reciben ayuda a través de los numerosos programas y

servicios de Caridades Católicas, debido en gran parte a la bondad y generosidad de donantes como ustedes.

Estoy orgulloso del trabajo que Caridades Católicas realiza en nombre de todos los católicos del sur de Missouri.

Todas las familias merecen un hogar, todos los veteranos merecen recuperar su orgullo y todas las madres sin techo merecen un nuevo comienzo. En este Día de Acción de Gracias, recordemos nuestros muchos dones y bendiciones. Luego, con sacrificio y oración, hagan una donación a Caridades Católicas. Juntos, a través de su generosidad, continuaremos *ayudando, brindando esperanza y cambiando vidas*.

“Oh Sacramento Santísimo, Oh Sacramento Divino, toda la alabanza y toda la acción de gracias sean en cada momento tuyos”. ©TM



Another Walk Through: ‘Walking Together’

by Bishop Emeritus
John J. Leibrecht

Before his retirement in 2008 as the Fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Bishop John Leibrecht wrote a standing column in *The Mirror* entitled, “Walking Together.” At the end of each article, Bp. Leibrecht would normally share a funny story referencing his travels to the schools, or time with friends, family, or other bishops. *The Mirror* has decided to share a few of these in an ongoing series entitled, “Another walk through: ‘Walking Together.’” We hope you enjoy them.

February 23, 1990 A priest told me about an elderly woman who, after Mass, told him, “Father, your homily was the most beautiful one that I’ve ever heard!” Pleasantly surprised by her compliment, the priest thanked the lady for the kind words and continued the conversation by asking, “How are you feeling?” Cupping her hand behind her ear, the lady asked, “What did you say, Father?”

March 2, 1990 A woman was applying for a staff position at a parish. “I see your birthday is April 12,” the pastor said. “What year?” She answered, “Every year.”

March 9, 1990 “Another good thing about being a priest,” the old Irish pastor told pupils in their religion classes, “is that on birthdays and at Christmas nobody gives you ties.”

March 16, 1990 A rookie pitcher was being hit hard and in deep trouble when the manager came to the mound. “Son,” he said, “I think you’ve had enough.” The young fellow pleaded, “But I struck out this next guy the last time he was up.” “I know,” the manager said, “but that was earlier this inning.”

ALL SAINTS DAY CELEBRATION

The photo below is from Solemnity of All Saints Day Mass November 1, 2023, in Our Lady of the Cove Parish, Kimberling City. Fr. William W. Hennecke, Jr., pastor, celebrated a Mass in which the youth of the parish dressed as their favorite saint and introduced themselves to the parish. Many holy men and women were represented. (Submitted photo)



Diocesan Holiday Craft Sales & Events

Benton:

St. Denis 24th Annual Winter Wonderland Treasure Sale—
Sat., Dec. 2, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., in the Parish Center, Hwy 61.

Woodworking, quilts, homemade crafts, Christmas crafts of all kinds, religious goods, homemade chicken noodle soup, chili, desserts, cinnamon rolls, breakfast items and more. Kettle corn will be available outside. Vendors are still needed, contact Mrs. Judy Scherer at (573) 225-6327.

Leopold:

St. John PCCW Country Christmas Home Tour—Sun., Dec. 17, 1-4 p.m. Tour five beautifully decorated homes, stop by St. John Catholic Church to listen to organ music, followed by soup and cookies served next door in the cafeteria. Contact Geri Geringer at (573) 208-6445 with questions or to purchase tickets. Proceeds from this event are shared with St. John Youth Group.

Mountain Grove:

Sacred Heart Santa 5K Run & Walk—Sat., Dec. 02, 12:50 p.m. Registration forms may be picked up at the YMCA in Mountain Grove, Willow Springs, Cabool, and Seymour. Complete and return with a \$20 registration fee, register by Fri., Nov. 17 to guarantee a t-shirt and race bag. Race bib and t-shirt available for pick up on Sat., Dec. 02, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Dress in holiday garb: there will be an Ugly Sweater, Most Festive dressed, and Most Festive Dog contest. Medals & prizes will be awarded based on age groups, overall fastest runners & walkers, and to the youngest and oldest participants.

Springfield:

Sacred Heart Craft, Vendor & Cookie Sale—Fri., Dec. 1, 5-9 p.m. and Sat., Dec. 2, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 1609 N. Summit Ave. Held in conjunction with the Midtown Victorian Homes Tour, in which Sacred Heart is a stop. Many vendors, handmade jewelry, crafts and our famous cookies sold-by-the-pound. Food available for purchase both days.



Celebrate

DIOCESAN CO-PATRON WITH MASS | SAT., NOV. 18

St. Mary Cathedral, Cape Girardeau, will celebrate the Feast of St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, co-patron of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, on Sat., Nov 18 with a Mass at 8:30 a.m. followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 4:15pm. Confessions will be offered from 3:15 - 4:15pm.

SAINT ROSE PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE, sister of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, foundress of the congregation's first house in America (1818); Co-Patron of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. (Public Domain)

You're Invited to join us for

THE ANNUAL DIOCESAN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

SUNDAY, FEB. 4, 2024, 1:00 P.M. ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL, CAPE GIRARDEAU **SATURDAY, FEB. 10, 2024, 1:00 P.M. ST. AGNES CATHEDRAL, SPRINGFIELD**

Couples celebrating their 1st, 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, or 50+ anniversary anytime during 2024, please pre-register for one of the two Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Celebrations and receive a Marriage Anniversary Certificate from Bishop Rice. In addition, those celebrating their 25th or 50th anniversaries will receive an Episcopal Blessing and a special gift from Bishop Rice.

Join us for Mass with Bishop Edward M. Rice, followed by a reception with light Hors D'oeuvres, cake, and punch. These occasions enable all of us to celebrate and affirm the great gift of marriage within our communities. **Please make plans to attend!**

For us to properly prepare, we ask that couples RSVP by January 19, 2024. Register by scanning the QR code, or go to the Family Life page at dioscg.org

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NOTRE DAME TO HOST OPEN HOUSE

Cape Girardeau, MO

Notre Dame Regional High School, Cape Girardeau, will host an **Open House** on **Wed., Dec. 6**: Doors open at 6 p.m.; Open House begins at 6:30 p.m. Open Houses are designed for parents and their children in sixth through eighth grade to take a first-hand look at a one-of-a-kind high school.

Open House guests will learn about the school's mission and philosophy and see how it lives out that mission by spreading the gospel, one student at a time. The

event will begin with a program in King Hall followed by student-led tours of the school, where families will have the opportunity to meet and talk with current students, parents, faculty, and administrators.

Advanced registration is required at www.notredamehighschool.org/openhouse. ©TM

For more information contact:
Meg Garner, *Assistant Director of Advancement for Enrollment Management*
(573) 335-6772 ext. 310
meggarn@notredamecape.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Springfield—Come and be present before our Lord during **Springfield's Area Perpetual Adoration**. Hosted in Holy Trinity Chapel, there is an urgent need of Adorers on Wednesdays, 7 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. Substitutes are needed for all hours. For more information or to sign up, please contact Marilyn Gibson at (417) 224-4043. Please consider spending time with our Lord in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. **Adoration will suspend for the Thanksgiving holiday beginning Tue., Nov. 21, 8 a.m. and will resume Mon., Nov. 27, at 1 p.m.**

Springfield—**Praise & Worship Prayer Group** offers a great opportunity to come together in praise and fellowship, and is a wonderful way to learn more about our faith. This group meets every Thursday, 6:30-8 p.m., in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, located at 2200 W. Republic Rd. All are welcome to participate in a time of praise, inspired teaching, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Please join us! For more information, contact Shelly Pichler at (417) 838-2730.

Parishes and organizations are invited to submit notices of future events to be printed on a space-available basis. There is no fee.

2024 DYC

Into the Deep

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23 @ 6PM – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24 @ 5:30PM
VIETNAMESE MARTYRS RETREAT CENTER
CARTHAGE, MO

FRIDAY, APRIL 19 @ 6PM – SATURDAY, APRIL 20 @ 5:30PM
PINECREST CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER
FREDERICKTOWN, MO

All Catholic teens in 7th–12th grade are invited to DYC: Into the Deep.

DYC: INTO THE DEEP IS A CONFERENCE WITH A RETREAT FEEL LED BY YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE SHARING THEIR PERSONAL FAITH EXPERIENCE WHILE TEACHING ABOUT LIVING A LIFE IN CHRIST. TEENS WILL PARTICIPATE IN FUN GAMES, SPIRITUAL EXERCISES, PRAYER, DISCUSSION, AND MORE.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS MONDAY OF THE WEEK OF THE CONFERENCE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD-CAPE GIRARDEAU

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Protecting God's Children®
For Adults

The VIRTUS Protecting God's Children Safe Environment training for adults is available online.

Preregistration is necessary: If you are a new registrant please go to www.virtus.org and click on "first time registrant" on the left, and follow the prompts to register for Online training. Instructions for the registration process can also be found on the Child and Youth Protection Page of the diocesan Website.

www.dioscg.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Register-for-a-VIRTUS-withOnline-Option.pdf

Both in-person and online training sessions are for adults only.

Before engaging in activities involving minors and/or vulnerable adults, new volunteers or employees are required to complete the VIRTUS Protecting God's Children training for adults, submit a current Background Disclosure and Authorization Form, and read, sign and submit the annual Code of Conduct, which are available on the VIRTUS Website and the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau Child and Youth Protection Webpage: www.dioscg.org/child-youth-protection/

For more information, please contact the Office of Child and Youth Protection, childandyouthprotection@dioscg.org; or Bill Holtmeyer, billholtmeyer@dioscg.org; or Shelly Ferry, sferry@dioscg.org, (417) 866-0841.

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THE BISHOP'S COLLECTION

for Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri

NOVEMBER 18-19, 2023

The Bishop's Collection is the annual appeal for Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri. Each year, this collection takes place in commemoration of World Day of the Poor.

In his message for World Day of the Poor 2023, Pope Francis urges, "It is easy to delegate charity to others, yet the calling of every Christian is to become personally involved."

There has never been a better time to become personally involved in Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri. Your donation enables us to provide compassionate social services to the most vulnerable populations across the southernmost third of our state. *Your donation changes lives.*

As we grow closer to the weekend of Bishop's Collection, we ask that you prayerfully consider a donation to support ALL of the programs and ALL of the clients served by CCSOMO. One-time and monthly donation options are available. Would you consider a gift of \$25 a month or more for Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri? A monthly gift from your family to Catholic Charities will make a difference for all of our programs.

YOUR IMPACT AS A MONTHLY DONOR

A monthly gift supports ALL of our programs including the examples below.

\$50

could provide
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for our veterans.

\$100

could provide housing
case management for
vulnerable, low-income
families.

\$150

could provide
transportation for our
LifeHouse babies to get to
healthcare appointments.

Want more information? Contact Suzanne Cronkhite, Chief Advancement Officer, at scronkhite@ccsomo.org.

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CCSOMO provides these programs and services in the name of all Catholics.

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Developmentally Disabled Services

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At Mass on
November 18-19.



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A WORD FROM BISHOP RICE

The weekend before Thanksgiving, we have an opportunity to come together as a Catholic community to put our faith into action through the annual **Bishop's Collection for Catholic Charities, November 18-19.**

As Bishop, I am proud of the work Catholic Charities provides in the name of all Catholics across southern Missouri. As we look to Thanksgiving and the time we will spend in our homes filled with good food, family and friends, let us recall our many gifts and blessings. Then, sacrificially and prayerfully make your gift to Catholic Charities.



By
Fr. Joshua
J. Whitfield

WHAT WE BELIEVE, PART 31:

Be Baptized Every One of You

The Church is *koinonia* — an organic communion, a fellowship, a union of all: all races, all tax brackets, a communion in whom is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free person, male nor female as Paul beautifully described it (Gal 3:28). This means it's a communion transcending every human distinction.

But the Church is also a communion with God the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A communion, so to speak, both horizontal and vertical — it's communion not only with our fellow human beings but also communion with God himself. That is, the communion that is the Church is *sacramental*. It's communion both divine and human, immaterial and material. The Church is invisible, as well as visible; it has a visible structure. But its invisible structure is what's triumphant and eternal, revealed in what's materially made holy.

To stand before this communion is to stand mystically before Christ. To encounter the Church, the sacrament of Christ, is, therefore, a personal encounter. And if it's a personal encounter, this Body of Christ communicates personally; that is, Christ speaks to us, in a sense, in his body, the Church. This is how we understand Scripture, tradition and revelation. Scripture is how the Body of Christ, the Church, speaks. When we encounter Scripture, that encounter is always mystical; it's a coming into contact with the "mystery of Christ." And it's when we encounter Christ scripturally within the Body of Christ — the human and divine fellowship which is also called the Church — that we experience the event of revelation. Thus, as Catholics, our experience of the Bible is fundamentally a relational experience.

Because of this, what we're talking about really is how to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We Catholics believe that to have a personal relationship with Christ, a person must also have a relationship with him within the communion of the Church, the Body of Christ. This is where one finds the

real Jesus with whom one can have a personal relationship, which brings salvation. For we Catholics, knowing Jesus personally and scripturally, and also living within the communion of the Church cannot be separated; to separate



(Adobe Stock)

these truths is to render each false. This is a fundamental truth of Catholicism.

While Jesus, the Church, the Body of Christ, speaks to us in Scripture and tradition, so too we are communicated with: that is, *in sacrament, the Sacraments* — the sacred mysteries.

To talk about the sacraments, begin by thinking of the person you love — your wife or husband, a friend. How do you express your love? Do you simply use words? Do you simply say, "I love you"? Do you never hug, kiss, hold hands? When you express your love for another person, do you never express that love sensually? Of course, you do: you hug, kiss, hold hands and so on. Because that's what love is — it's more than words. And that, very plainly, is why we have not only Scripture, the words of God's love, but also the sacraments, the sensual expression of God's love. It's really that simple.

But how are the sacraments sensual expressions of God's love? A little basic theology is helpful here. Now the classic definition of a sacrament is simply this: A sacrament is an outward visible sign of an inward invisible grace. The sacrament of the Eucharist, for example, is an outward sign (bread and wine) or an inward invisible grace (the body and blood of Christ).

Now this is a perfectly good definition of a sacrament. But I find another definition helpful too: A sacrament is a sign, which participates in what it signifies. That is, again looking at the Eucharist, not only does the bread

and wine signify Christ's body and blood, the bread and wine actually participate in Christ's body and blood — the bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Christ. In the sacraments, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ acts by means of visible signs to "make present efficaciously the grace that they signify" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1084). A stop sign, for instance, is simply a sign that relates a message: Stop! But it's not a sign that participates in any sort of metaphysical form or being; there is no eternal being of stop-ness. A sacrament is a sign and more: it's a sign that participates in what it signifies. And this definition can be applied to all the sacraments.

Before we look at the first sacrament, baptism, consider this story: I have a friend who's a believer in Jesus but who's never been baptized. Though he's a good and faithful person, he didn't grow up in a family or community that placed much importance on baptism. What mattered more, he thought, was your heart, your faith; as long as you loved Jesus and believed in him, it didn't matter whether you went through some material ritual. The ritual is insignificant, he believed.

This is not an uncommon view. Many of our Protestant sisters and brothers think this. And it does certainly have logic and plausibility. It rightly emphasizes the priority of faith over works and over ritual. Yet, on the other hand, such a view is simply not biblical. It's actually contrary to Scripture. How so? Well, one need only read Peter's words in Acts of the Apostles where he said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). This passage comes from Pentecost, where Peter gives this instruction at the end of his first sermon — the very first apostolic sermon in Christian history. Peter had just preached the Gospel of Jesus, moving the crowd to the threshold of faith. And in response, the people ask, "What are we to do?" And this was Peter's answer: Repent and be baptized!

This, very simply, is why my friend's view is unbiblical. This is why saying the ritual of baptism isn't important is contrary to Scripture. Yes, my friend's view bears a logic and plausibility; he does have a moral point. But he can't say it's a biblical point. From day one, as we'll see, baptism has been put forward as a necessity for Christian believers. Since the very beginning, baptism was considered important, essential. That's simply the testimony of Scripture, and it's something we Catholics have always believed.

NEXT EDITION: WHAT WE BELIEVE, PART 32

What is Different about Jesus' Baptism?

Father Joshua J. Whitfield is pastor of St. Rita Catholic Community in Dallas and author of *The Crisis of Bad Preaching* (Ave Maria Press, \$17.95), and other books.

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SYNOD // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

baptism but a life lived in authentic discipleship that develops the grace of baptism.”

The synod recognizes this can help discern where the Holy Spirit is at work, as opposed to where the baptized are just advocating dominant thinking, cultural conditions, or “matters inconsistent with the Gospel.”

In this regard, the synod stresses that “the Eucharist shapes synodality,” and so the Mass should be celebrated “with an authentic sense of friendship in Christ” that reflects beauty and simplicity. The synod proposes “liturgy celebrated with authenticity is the first and fundamental school of discipleship.”

It also proposes enriching Catholic life beyond the Mass with alternative forms of liturgical prayer, as well as popular piety, particularly Marian devotion—both of which form the faithful and can also help others outside the church encounter the Lord.

3. Synodality is not about having more meetings, but it is about discerning together how to go on mission at each level of the Church.

The synod also emphasizes that synodality in the Church calls Catholics to discern intentionally as a community how Jesus is calling them to live out their mission. It’s not about self-referential meetings, but rather a style of carrying out “evangelical proclamation, service to those experiencing poverty, care for our common home, and theological research.”

The document emphasizes the need for formation, and also making spaces to receive the Church’s teaching, and discern how to act on it. The Church’s social doctrine needs to be understood by the faithful so they can build up the kingdom of God.

Synodality is about gathering the disciple community together to discern what is their mission and how Jesus is sending them on mission. Any effective structural change to make the Church’s members “co-responsible” presupposes “profound spiritual conversion,” both personal and communal, in order to carry out Jesus’ mission.

At the same time, the synod calls for further consideration on how the Church’s theology and modern developments in science can dialogue, and effective ways to do that for the Church’s discernment, particularly on complicated or controversial questions. Above all, the synod says, “Jesus’ actions, assimilated in prayer and conversion of heart, show us the way forward.”

4. A synodal Church must reflect on what formation its priests, deacons, and laity need to carry out their mission together.

The synod recognizes bishops and

priests face disproportionate burdens of responsibility for the Church’s mission. It also identifies clericalism as opposed to Jesus’ model of ministerial service, leading to “authoritarian attitudes,” and vocations stifled by privilege and power that refuse accountability.

The synod suggests extensive discussion and consideration of revising priestly formation to address this. Instead of forming priests in an “artificial environment separate from the ordinary lives of the faith,” they should develop through “close contact with the People of God and through concrete service learning experiences.”

The synod recognized there is universal agreement that priestly celibacy is “richly prophetic and a profound witness to Christ.” But it also suggested further consideration of whether it is appropriate for the Latin Church alone to continue to insist on it—the Eastern Churches (Catholic and Orthodox) have a tradition of celibate and married clergy—when there are ecclesial and cultural contexts that make it more difficult for the Church’s mission.

The synod is calling for a deepening reflection on the vocation of the deacon, “above all in the exercise of charity.”

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

The synod indicated the importance of expanding women’s access to theological formation, their inclusion in decision-making and responsibility in pastoral care and ministry, and even the exploration of new ministries where women could decisively contribute. It noted the debate over women and the diaconal ministry, and expressed openness to continuing research and examining what has been done so far.

It also touched on lay ministry and called for more creativity in how these roles are thought of and lived at the service of mission: for example, developing the ministry of lector beyond its liturgical role, such as preaching in appropriate contexts. It also envisioned possibly a lay ministry taken up by married couples to support married and family life.

5. Disciples listen to people and accompany them like Christ in whatever their personal, familial, or social situations.

The synod says “listening is the word that best expresses our experience. This is listening given and received.” Listening really is where the Church discerns the mission Jesus is calling his disciples and their particular communities.



THE CALL OF JESUS TO LIVE LIVES OF MISSION—A member of the Knights of Columbus attends a conference on Evangelization and Mission in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. The **synod** calls for formation in “authentic discipleship,” united by the Eucharist and nourished by the Word. Catholics are to discern intentionally as a community how Jesus is calling them to live out their mission, a style of carrying out “evangelical proclamation, service to those experiencing poverty, care for our common home, and theological research.” (Photo by Grace Tamburro/The Mirror)

It also emphasized the Church needs to give its closeness, listening, and accompaniment to those who feel alone in remaining faithful to the Church’s teaching on marriage and sexual ethics, as well as to those on the margins because of “their marriage status, identity, or sexuality.”

The synod suggests further consideration of the point that listening “does not mean compromising proclamation of the Gospel or endorsing any opinion or position proposed”—but rather being like Jesus, who listens and loves unconditionally to share his good news.

It also emphasized the Church needs to extend its closeness to the lonely and abandoned, the elderly, and sick.

EUCCHARISTIC HOSPITALITY

The synod document called for further discernment about “Eucharistic hospitality”—the situation of people of different churches receiving Communion—and “inter-church marriages.”

6. The Catholic Church needs strong Eastern Churches collaborating with the Latin Church.

The synod indicates it is vital for Catholics to realize that the Catholic Church is a communion of coequal sister churches—Latin Church (the biggest and headed by the pope) and 23 different Eastern Catholic Churches, all enjoying communion through their unity with

the pope. The synod calls for all Catholic communities and clergy to learn about each other and actively work together modeling “unity in diversity.”

It stresses that the Latin Church’s members (for the most part known as Roman Catholics) need to help Eastern Catholics in situations where they do not have access to their own churches to live out their traditions. The synod said “Latinization” (making Eastern churches conform to the traditions and practices of Latin churches) is “outdated.”

The synod indicated that Eastern Churches must work out their relationship to role of the pope, whose role is rooted in the Latin Church, specifically in whether his assent is needed in the selection of bishops, and the fact that Catholics of these Eastern Churches are no longer confined to traditional patriarchal territory but are now all over the world.

It proposes a permanent council of patriarchs and major archbishops to the Holy Father, and that Eastern Catholics should be adequately represented throughout the Roman Curia.

7. The synod suggests a new path for ecumenism, particularly thanks to the martyrs.

There has been a lot of discouragement about dialogue between Catholic and other Christian confessions achieving its goal of actual unity—but the synod appears to have made significant suggestions for moving ahead.

Among the proposals was that an “ecumenical martyrology” be developed, which would allow the church to commemorate Christian martyrs who share a common baptism but not the same confessional boundaries. The point has been emphasized most recently by the early 21st-century martyrdoms, such as in the Middle East, where Islamist militants killed Orthodox and Catholics for being Christians—among them the 21 Coptic Orthodox martyrs of Libya.

The synod emphasized that local churches can engage ecumenically with other churches in carrying out the work of the Gospel, and the importance of continuing to involve Christians of other churches and traditions in synodal processes “at all levels.”

Among the proposals is to find a common date for the celebration of Easter with an eye to the year 2025, the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.

EVANGELIZE THE DIGITAL REALM

8. The synod emphasizes the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10...

SYNOD // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9...

Church needs to evangelize digital spaces intentionally as a dimension of its mission.

The synod views the digital realm not as a separate field but a “crucial dimension of the Church’s witness in contemporary culture.” This means understanding digital culture in order to evangelize it and engaging the church’s younger generation -- clergy, religious and lay -- in carrying out the mission here.

The synod proposes discernment on how the Church can be involved in helping make the online world “safe” for families—noting the dangers of intimidation, disinformation, sex exploitation, and addiction—and how the Church can make the digital realm “spiritually life-giving.”

This challenges parishes and dioceses about how to engage here, especially forming and accompanying “digital missionaries” and networking them together. It also suggests creating collaborative opportunities with influencers, particularly in areas of

“human dignity, justice, and care for our common home.”

9. Sex abuse is undermining the Church’s missionary life, and the synod recognizes that a truly synodal Church needs to get this right.

The synod stated, “Sexual abuse and the abuse of power and authority continue to cry out for justice, healing, and reconciliation.” It acknowledges this synodal process has seen the Holy Spirit pour out fruits of “hope, healing, reconciliation, and restoration of trust.”

Furthermore, listening to and accompanying those who have suffered abuse in the Church have helped people feel no longer invisible. At the same time, the synod makes clear “the long journey towards reconciliation and justice” remains and requires “addressing the structural conditions that abetted such abuse” and “concrete gestures of penitence.”

A synodal Church requires a “culture of transparency,” respect for existing procedures to safeguard minors

and people when they are vulnerable, and “further structures dedicated to the prevention of abuse.” It noted bishops are in a difficult situation of reconciling their “role of father with that of judge,” and suggested exploring the possibility of giving the judicial task to another body specified in canon law.

10. The bishops must now figure out how to take these ideas to the pews for further discernment and bring that back to the synod.

The synod synthesis’ 41-pages are broken up into three sections with vital topics that truly interest and affect the entire People of God.

WHAT’S NEXT

At this point, the synod leaves it to worldwide episcopal conferences to discern the next steps to take. During the synod’s first session, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the US Archdiocese for the Military Services, who is president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB),

acknowledged that the bishops have to foster greater participation, including encouraging pastors to buy in. US participation rate in the synod’s preparatory process was 1 percent of US Catholics.

The prospect of getting this feedback within a year may seem daunting to bishops. If the document is really going to be thoroughly discerned and feedback provided within 11 months, the lay faithful will likely have to raise their voices and volunteer to work with their pastors and bishops to get it done in time for the second October session. ©OSV News

Peter Jesserer Smith is national news and features editor for OSV News.

Editor’s NOTE: The synod’s synthesis report can be found here: https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/assembly/synthesis/english/2023.10.28-ENG-Synthesis-Report_IMP.pdf or here: <https://www.synod.va/en/news/a-synodal-church-in-mission.html>.



By
Drew
Garvey

BREAKING PORNOGRAPHY, RESTORING HOPE PART VII: *Never Lose Faith, Hope, and Love*

This seven-part series had two goals: demonstrate the immoral and destructive nature of pornography, and provide hope through the Church’s teachings on the dignity of the human person, freedom, and love. Part I presented four “pillars” supporting pornography: art, business, drugs, and the Internet. Part II looked deeper into the aggressive content and effects of pornography, particularly in how it fuels prostitution and sex-trafficking. Part III presented the inherent dichotomy between pornography and all relationships, especially marriage. Part IV examined pornography addiction and recovery. Part V argued the Church is willing and able to fight pornography. Part VI attempted to correct the modern notion of freedom as a basis for breaking free from pornography.

Hopefully this series has been informative and helpful, but the end of this series is not the end of the fight against pornography. Pornography is a pervasive force that has permeated society, but do not despair. The Holy Spirit dwells within every person (1 Cor 3:16). Use God’s presence to work toward creating a porn-free world filled with faith, hope, and love.

Have faith in God and his Church, that they will bring freedom, happiness, and love. Faith cannot be forced; but it can be inspired through two means: grace from the Holy Spirit and education. Allow God’s grace to



transform your life, and learn the true teachings of the Church by reading and studying her documents and Scripture. Nurturing grace and education will transform the heart and open the mind to the truth of the Gospel: Jesus Christ saved and redeemed mankind out of love.

Faith ought to then give hope, a hope in attaining eternal life in Heaven. God desires the salvation of every person (1 Tim 2:4), and the Church works tirelessly to guide his flock. Pornography is incompatible with God’s love and his Church, no matter how difficult that can be to accept or follow. This difficulty, however, is precisely the moment when a person is called to “cross the threshold of hope,” as Pope St. John Paul II said; meaning, the demands of God will require a personal cross to be carried, but, once again, do not despair; carry your cross behind Christ’s cross, and follow him in the hopes of finding freedom, happiness, and love.

Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is the greatest act of love in human history, for it is the means by which God saved all of mankind. What then does love mean? Love means willing the good of another. It requires sacrifice, as is evident through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Love is not only sacrificial, however, in the sense of giving. It is reciprocal (giving and receiving). Love receives because that is the appropriate response to someone who gives. The Father gave his only Son to the world, and he desires us to receive his Son. This understanding of love excludes treating a person as an object for pleasure. Objects cannot freely and willingly give or receive to another; therefore, love excludes pornography.

Faith, hope, and love in the name of God are inherently and diametrically opposed to pornography. In the end, remember Pope St. John Paul II’s famous words: “Be not afraid!” Do not be afraid to break free of pornography;

do not be afraid to fight against pornography; do not be afraid to fail; instead, courageously fight every day. Move forward with God in faith, hope, and love, and rejoice in the joy and freedom that comes from a pornography-free life. ©TM

This entire series by Drew Garvey is archived on the Family Life page of the diocesan Website at www.DioSCG.org.

Drew Garvey is from Immaculate Conception Parish, in Jackson, MO. He earned his master’s in theology (MTS) from Franciscan University of Steubenville. He and his wife, Olivia, and their daughter, Etta, currently reside in Buffalo, NY. He may be reached via Email to dgarvey93@yahoo.com.



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