

## SYNOD UPDATES from Jim Newman and John Norton

From October 25th to the 27th, 300 delegates from 133 parishes in the Archdiocese of Hartford, as well as various religious orders, met at the Farmington Marriott to discuss how the Archdiocese can more effectively proclaim the Gospel message in our local Church in Connecticut. We listened to different speakers who emphasized the laity's role in evangelizing to those who are minimally involved with or fallen away from the Church and were reminded that it is every Christian's duty to spread the Gospel to those they come in contact with, in their communities, workplaces, and among their family and friends. The delegates also met in small groups to debate proposed ideas and had an hour and a half Q&A session with Archbishop Blair. My personal takeaway is that the Archbishop fully understands the challenges we face in proclaiming the Gospel in a world that has forgotten – and can even be hostile to – Christ's message. I was emboldened by the other Synod attendees and their enthusiasm and zeal for their faith. And I look forward to passing on what I learned during my time there to our Parish. The Synod will not conclude until Pentecost Sunday 2020, and there is much work to do compiling all that was discussed, but the key event was the Synod gathering. I will be discussing with Fr. Joe in the coming weeks how best to communicate my experience to the Parish.

-Jim Newman

The last weekend in October was the culmination of meetings for the 2020 Grow & Go Synod. I was impressed and inspired by the lay keynote speakers—ordinary people living an extraordinary mission. The crux of the meetings was centered around four themes: 1) Encountering Christ—Ongoing Conversion; 2) Becoming Missionary Disciples; 3) Sent On Mission; 4) Collaborating In The Local Church. Superficially, these need no explanation; they are things we as Catholics should be doing anyway. Deeper in the breakout sessions we were able to dissect and unpack them while we dialogued about the best means of applying these themes as individuals, families, parishes, and as an archdiocese as a whole. We need to reach and meet the needs of the one as well as the many. Some takeaways: We have an archdiocese that cares about us; we have leadership in an archbishop who is not afraid to tackle the hard questions head-on while looking you straight in the eye; we have many priests, religious, clergy, and laity in our church family who are, along with us, disgusted at the abuses in the church; and there is a growing movement of evangelization rising up. We need Catholics who know their identity in Christ and are not afraid to live what they believe. We all have questions that need answers. It is my hope that these answers precede action, and not just fall to the floor to be collected and stored away for someday. Now is the time for action; today is the day. We have to remember the solution is in the mirror.

- John Norton