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Synod members begin 'final approach'



Dan Meloy | The Michigan Catholic

A synod member looks over the materials presented Sept. 24 during a gathering of synod members in the archdiocese's Northeast Region at St. Isidore Parish in Macomb. The regional gathering, which will be followed by three others in the archdiocese's Northwest, South and Central regions, was the first opportunity for synod members to gather together to pray, listen and ask questions about the specific themes and topics to be discussed at the synod itself in November.

Meeting for first time, members begin 'hard work' of preparing for archdiocese-wide gathering

DAN MELOY
The Michigan Catholic

MACOMB — After months of meetings, dialogue gatherings, conferences and homilies, Synod 16 is starting to take shape.

St. Isidore Parish in Macomb hosted the first of four regional gatherings of synod members Sept. 24, where approximately 120 of the synod's nearly 400 members heard reports and got a first look at the structure and propositions to be discussed at the archdiocese-wide gathering.

Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron began the day with a few brief remarks to the synod members as they begin the "final approach" to Synod 16, which will take place Nov. 18-20 at the Westin Book Cadillac hotel in downtown Detroit.

The northeast regional meeting,

which will be followed in the coming weeks by regional gatherings of synod members in the archdiocese's northwest, south and central regions, was the first opportunity for synod members to pray, reflect and prepare together before the synod event itself unfolds in November.

"St. Paul didn't say, 'Be smart, and make sure we have a good branding formula,'" Auxiliary Bishop Michael J. Byrnes told the synod members. "He said, 'Pray, have strength, and know Jesus has plans for us.' Something has to change; we know that. But only in confidence in Jesus can we do all that God desires us to do."

During the gathering, synod members learned what the synod itself will look like, including the propositions and vision statements members will be asked to

Archbishop: Mass for Pardon will be 'public moment of repentance'

MIKE STECHSCHULTE
The Michigan Catholic

DETROIT — As the entire Archdiocese of Detroit gathers this fall to discuss ways to better share Christ's saving message with the people of southeast Michigan, an important part of the gathering will be the honest acknowledgment that, to this point, the Catholic Church in Metro Detroit could have done better.

In order to improve each and every Catholic's ability to share Christ, it's first necessary to "acknowledge that we have, indeed, been held back from fulfilling our mission as disciples of Christ," Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron said in a recent letter to parishes.



Archbishop
Vigneron

To do that, Archbishop Vigneron announced that he will preside over the first-ever archdiocesan Mass for Pardon at 7 p.m. Oct. 7 at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

"Before this November's Synod, I felt it important that we deeply and seriously reflect on the sinfulness that has kept us as a People of God apart from our Lord, and repent for this," the archbishop wrote. During the Mass, "I will come personally before God to repent on behalf of the Archdiocese for the sins committed over the generations by our bishops, our priests, our lay ministers, our institutions, and all the faithful — sins which, all too often, have become embedded in our church-culture."

The historic Mass will be modeled on the worldwide "Day of Forgiveness" led by Pope St. John Paul II during Jubilee 2000, and will be "a cornerstone in our local observance of the



consider in relation to the synod's four themes: individuals, families, parishes and Archdiocesan Central Services.

"The most profound thing we can offer Detroit is the Gospel of Jesus Christ to communities that are struggling," Bishop Byrnes said. "God wants to stretch our hearts today and all days throughout the archdiocese. So we can do the hard work, the civic engagement. So expect more from God, expect more for what He can do for our communities."

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