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### Let Our Voices Be Heard: The 9th General Synod for the Archdiocese of New Orleans

By Deacon Larry Oney & Dr. Dereck Rovaris, Sr.

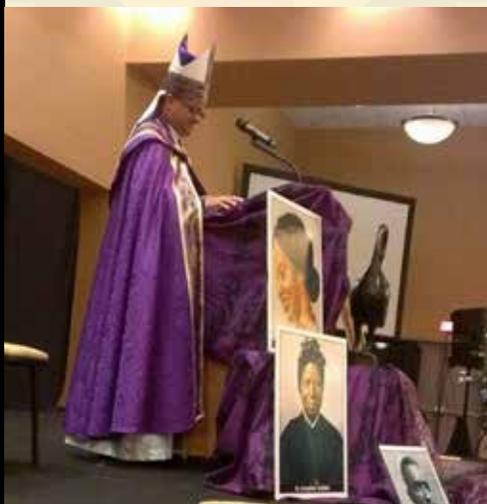
When Archbishop Aymond asked us to prayerfully consider his invitation to serve on the Leadership Team for the Ninth General Synod of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, we were interested to find out more. A synod is a gathering of the local church to listen together to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and this is a time the archbishop calls his people together in order to reflect on God's vision and priorities for us as a local church. Through this process, we as an archdiocese hope to identify priorities, goals for each priority and a unifying message to clarify and ground those priorities. The Synod Leadership Team is tasked with prayerfully and purposefully discerning God's vision and priorities for our local church for the next several years.

We knew that this was a work of great importance. This was not a rubber-stamping of a wish list, but a thoughtful discernment of the needs of our community. It was convening for the whole community of this Archdiocese. There are many who are in need—physically, financially, mentally and spiritually. We are a community in need! This synod's theme, "Answering God's Call ~ Following God's Lead", says it all. Much like members of the Leadership Team have answered the call, other members of the archdiocese have been asked to answer the call via the various consultative sessions.



We, as Catholic-Christians, have a responsibility to participate fully in the New Evangelization process. Sharing our hope in Jesus Christ with ourselves and others, helping others discern their purpose, and coming together in community are essential if we are to participate in the building of the Kingdom of God! Every voice should be heard! We want to be some of those voices that represent many diverse groups. It is important that we share our needs with the Archbishop during this Synod and participate in the discernment of which direction our

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Bishop Shelton Fabre shares inspiration at the SANKOFA Day of Reflection, March 2014.

#### The Office of Black Catholic Ministries

OBCM identifies and fosters the rich diversity of the Black Catholic community, particularly in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Our mission is to evangelize, highlight, enhance and celebrate the contributions of the Black Catholic community as it shares its gifts in the Church and society.

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## Welcome, My Brothers

A Message from  
Archbishop Gregory Aymond

On June 11-13, my brother bishops will gather here in New Orleans for the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Spring General Assembly. This is a time for us to share, pray together and discuss issues relevant to our people of faith. Some of the items on the agenda are Marriage and Economy, New Evangelization and Poverty, as well as various other topics.

The Gospel of Christ and the teachings of his Church guide the work of the USCCB. The work of the Conference is rooted in three general mission goals and organized into three key areas of responsibility:

- To act collaboratively and consistently on vital issues confronting the Church and society
- To foster communion with the Church in other nations, within the Church universal, under the leadership of its supreme pastor, the Roman Pontiff
- To offer appropriate assistance to each bishop in fulfilling his particular ministry in the local Church

**We will begin our time together with an opening mass celebrated by our president, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, on June 11th at 4:30 p.m. Mass will take place at St. Louis Cathedral and all are invited to attend to share in this celebration.**

This General Assembly is an exciting time to share the diverse gifts of our archdiocese. We have a unique and vibrant Catholic history here in New Orleans and this is a wonderful opportunity for my brother bishops to be here. I ask that you pray for our time together as we pray for all the people of God we are called to serve as well.

*"Stand up straight and realize who you are, that you tower over your circumstances. You are a child of God. Stand up straight." - Maya Angelou*



GospelFest, September 2013

II Chronicles 7:14

# U-CITY UNITED IN PRAYER

Mercedes Superdome

## 1ST DAY OF EVERY MONTH

Exterior Concourse of Mercedes Benz Superdome  
Free Parking @ Garage 6 • Meet @ Gate C

**6AM - 7AM**  
**Everyone Invited!**

## Let your voice be heard!

Synod Consultative Sessions. All are invited to attend!

June 5, 2014 7pm – 9pm

St. Joan of Arc Parish  
529 W 5th St.  
LaPlace, LA 70068

June 16, 2014 7pm – 9pm

St. Rita Parish  
2729 Lowerline St.  
New Orleans, LA 70125

June 18, 2014 7pm – 9pm

Holy Spirit Parish  
6201 Stratford Pl.  
New Orleans, LA 70131

June 19, 2014 7pm – 9pm

St. Mary of the Angels Parish  
3501 N Miro St.  
New Orleans, LA 70117

June 23, 2014 7pm – 9pm

Our Lady of Prompt Succor  
Parish, 2320 Paris Road  
Chalmette, LA 70043

August 2, 2014 1pm- 3:30pm

Synod Consultative Session for  
Youth Followed by Mass with  
Archbishop Aymond  
Camp Abbey  
77002 K C Camp Rd.  
Covington, LA 70435

August 18, 2014 7pm –9pm

St. Pius X Parish  
6666 Spanish Fort Blvd.  
New Orleans, LA 70124

August 19, 2014 7pm –9pm

Mary, Queen of Peace Parish  
1501 W Causeway Approach,  
Mandeville, LA 70471

August 21, 2014 7pm –9pm

Visitation of Our Lady Parish  
3500 Ames Blvd.  
Marrero, LA 70072

August 26, 2014 7pm –9pm

St. Philip Neri Parish  
6500 Kawanee Ave.  
Metairie, LA 70003

September 4, 2014  
7pm –9pm

Synod Consultative Session  
for Young Adults  
Holy Name of Jesus Parish  
6325 Cromwell Pl.  
New Orleans, LA 70118

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archdiocese will move in the next few years. We all need to take advantage of the opportunity to be heard.

The Leadership Team's job is to evaluate the contributions from the consultative sessions. It is our impassioned desire that we will be able to hear and evaluate all the many "voices" we have in our archdiocese - not just the loudest, not just the wealthiest, not just the most educated, or the most involved. It is our prayer that ALL voices will be heard and our discernment will be able to reflect the thoughts and needs of the entire archdiocese.

More information about the 9th General Synod can be found at <http://synod.arch-no.org/>



*Deacon Larry Oney (left) and Dr. Dereck Rovaris, Sr. (right) are members of the Synod Leadership Team. Deacon Oney is a permanent Deacon for the Archdiocese of New Orleans and is assigned to St. Louis Cathedral. He is also an author and international speaker. Dr. Dereck Rovaris Sr. is LSU Vice Provost for Diversity and is a parishioner at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church.*

## Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant

This Spring, I lost another one of my spiritual mentors, Sr. Eva Regina Martin SSF, or Sr. Eva as she was affectionately known. This has been a very challenging year with the loss of my Pastor, Fr. Michael Jacques SSE, back in June and now Sr. Eva. She will be missed by many. Her gift of love and life blessed many generations.

Sr. Eva knew me from my younger days when I was a little more "troublesome." She and several of her Sisters of the Holy Family often joked about the "miracle" I turned out to be now that I work for the church. She was one of the people who convinced me to consider graduate school for ministry. I remember the day she first brought up the idea. I was visiting Xavier University's Institute for Black Catholic Studies (IBCS) office (to flirt with one of the ladies that worked nearby). While I was there, Sr. Eva walked in and asked what I was doing after I finished my undergrad at Loyola.

"I think Fr. Mike wants me to work at St. Peter Claver as the youth minister," I replied.



"I'll probably go to graduate school at Loyola too."

Sr. Eva's response was, "Well, you are coming to the Institute, too, and Fr. Mike is going to pay for it." She then added, "This is great news!" before I could even respond. Before I knew it, I had an IBCS brochure and application in my hand.

That is how Sr. Eva operated. She worked out of faith and love. She was proud of her heritage, her religious community and she was also proud of being Catholic. She inspired many and advocated for many more. Her legacy of love will be felt by generations to come. My thoughts and prayers go to my spiritual mother and the gift she was to so many.

Sr. Eva, you will be missed, but I know that you are smiling down on us as you join with Mother Henriette Delille,

Mrs. Sophie Aramburo and Fr. Mike. I pray that we are able to continue the work you started in our parishes and schools and honor your legacy.

I would also add that we continue her legacy by participating in the Archdiocese's 9th General Synod so that our voices can be heard and all of us can make sure our challenges, gifts and contributions are included as we move forward as an Archdiocese. Visit <http://synod.arch-no.org/> for more info on how you can get involved.



Ansel Augustine, MPS  
Director of the Office of Black Catholic Ministries



Black Saints Celebration, November 2013



Youth and Young Adult Revival, March 2014



ARCHDIOCESE OF  
**NEW ORLEANS**

Office of Black Catholic Ministries

7887 Walmsley Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125-3496



## Upcoming Events with the Office of Black Catholic Ministries

For more information or to get involved, contact us (504) 861-6207 or [bcatholics@arch-no.org](mailto:bcatholics@arch-no.org)

**JUNE 6, 2014**

Day of prayer and fasting for protection from  
hurricanes and other disasters

**JUNE 11, 2014**

Special Mass for USCCB Spring Meeting  
St. Louis Cathedral - 4:30 p.m.  
All are invited to attend!

**JUNE 11-15, 2014**

Lyke Conference  
Doubletree Hotel New Orleans  
300 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70130  
[www.lykeconference.org](http://www.lykeconference.org)

**JUNE 30 - JULY 19, 2014**

Institute for Black Catholic Studies  
at Xavier University of Louisiana  
[www.xula.edu/ibcs](http://www.xula.edu/ibcs)

**JULY 20, 2014**

Black & Indian Mission Fund  
Second Collection at all Masses

**SAVE  
THE DATES!**

**SEPTEMBER 13  
GOSPELFEST**

**NOVEMBER 15  
Black Saints  
Celebration**

