

Diocese of the Central States
17th Synod, October 17, 2024
Bishop Ordinary Report

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- I. Presiding Bishop Sutton, Archdeacon Thompson, Diocesan clergy and wives, lay delegates and invited guests, it is wonderful to be together here in Mason, Ohio to conduct our 17th diocesan synod. Thank you, Trinity REC for hosting this year's synod and for the help your parish, vestry, and especially Dss. Michelle Caldwell and Fr. Jeff Hubbard have so graciously provided.
 - A. We conducted last year's synod via Zoom to avoid the cost of attending our diocesan synod just 4 months after attending the REC General Council in Charleston, SC. It was a good, practical, economical decision, but it's also good and even better to be talking, laughing, planning and praying in-person together again!
- II. Welcome Presiding Bp Sutton. It is an honor and joy to have you with us this morning. A few weeks ago the Diocese of MidAmerica recognized Bp. Sutton's 25 years of episcopal ministry in the REC at their synod banquet. Janice and I were able to attend...with 25 years of episcopal ministry and 25 years of ordained ministry before that, it was a wonderful and well-deserved celebration honoring Bp. Ray and Susan's half-century of service to our Lord and His Church. Congratulations!
- III. Welcome fellow diocesan clergy and wives. I am grateful for your friendship, prayers, and partnership in this honored and blessed Gospel ministry.

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- IV. Welcome lay delegates...on behalf of all diocesan clergy, thank-you for supporting **our** work and for the gifts you bring to our parishes and ministry, and a personal thank-you from me for caring for the needs, both ministerial and personal, of our clergy families and for your concern for their well-being as they labor in God's harvest.
- V. A special welcome this year to our Coadjutor candidates and your wives! This is a particularly significant synod in the history of our diocese and we are grateful you are a part of it. All of our members are thankful to you for your years of ministry in Christ's Church and especially for your willingness to stand as a candidate for diocesan coadjutor.
- VI. And welcome guests, we are glad to have you with us. If you have questions, I hope we can answer them. Please know of our appreciation for you and of our desire to join hands with you in serving our Lord however we can.
- VII. I will complete my fifth year as Ordinary in December, and I am particularly grateful to the all the clergy and members of the Diocese of the Central States for the ongoing trust you have placed in me and for the many expressions of prayer and encouragement I have received from you over the past year. Please continue to pray for Janice and me and for our diocese as we move forward in ministering in our Central States region. Dear

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St. Augustine's admonition is ever inspiring for us: *Always add, always walk, always proceed; never stand still, nor go back or deviate from the path; he that stands still does not proceed; he that goes back does not continue; **he revolts that deviates from his task**; it is better to creep forward than to move aside from the way.* (paraphrase from the words of St. Augustine)

VIII. I have divided my activities report for the past 12 months into three sections: DCS, REC, ACNA.

IX. First and longest the Diocese of the Central States. Again, this is our 17th synod, and there are currently 21 parishes and missions in our diocese covering eight states with at least one parish in seven of the eight...and we're still waiting for West Virginia!

A. As I've said before, among other things, I regard this position of Bishop Ordinary as a common denominator, uniting our parishes and clergy spread out over such a broad geographic area. Despite the distance, it is important for me that we continue to develop a sense of working **together** as RE clergymen and parishes wherever, whenever, and however we can. I therefore plan to continue to visit each parish at least once between annual synods to maintain our connection and help us move forward as well as develop a working and personal relationship with the rectors and other clergy within the diocese.

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- B. In my role as Ordinary, I made 36 diocesan visits over the last twelve month term. Of those, 19 were Episcopal visits, and I have always appreciated the warm and gracious welcome I have received each time. I conducted **109** confirmations during those visits! I conducted 59 Confirmations last term and 71 the year before that, so...109...very encouraging! For some real perspective...I conducted 11 confirmations in my first nine months as Ordinary in the 2020 Covid days leading up to the 2020 October synod! So, 11 in 2020 to 109 in 2024! Despite the COVID speed-bump...or maybe Sierra Madre mountain range is a better description..so despite encountering the COVID Sierra Madre range, our diocese is growing...our network of influence is increasing...our trajectory is upward...people are being added to our fellowship day by day!
- C. I also made 17 other visits within the diocese for various meetings, some combined with scheduled Episcopal visits. These included *conducting four ordinations (Dcn. Dave Heng, Trinity Evansville, IN and Presbyters Fr. Bill Barto Holy Trinity, Chantilly, VA; Fr. Jameson Overton Christ Our Hope, Westpoint, TN; and Fr. Tim Kline, Christ Redeemer Owensboro, KY)...
- *Instituting 2 clergymen as new rectors for diocesan parishes: Fr. Jeffrey Hubbard Trinity, Mason, OH and Fr. Aaron Rowley All Saints, Raleigh, NC...*receiving a new parish, St. Luke's Maysville, KY...*setting apart Shelly Fleming as deaconess at

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Holy Trinity Chantilly, VA...*and presiding at the wedding of our own diocesan administrative secretary, Mary Bailey to Nick Kozel right here at Trinity Mason!

- D. Regarding St. Luke's, Maysville, KY the parish came to us from the ACNA International Diocese which dissolved in June. Our own Fr. Chris Beckham served as supply priest there for many years and as priest-in-charge from February 2022. We are delighted to receive our second Kentucky parish!
- E. After discussions with one of our parishes, St Andrew's Anglican, Asheboro, NC, Dcn. Stewart Fitzpatrick Deacon-in-Charge, it seemed best for me to approve their request to merge with All Souls Anglican, Asheboro, an APA parish. It was a difficult decision for St. Andrew's and me but the APA parish had a longer history in the community and owned their building so combining the two small congregations offered hope for more effective ministry to the Asheboro community.
- F. Overall our parishes continue to grow. Our average Sunday attendance (ASA) as a diocese has grown from 575 during the COVID decline in 2020 to 682 in 2021, to 753 in 2022 and 915 in 2023. That's a 22% increase from 2022-23 and nearly 60% increase since the Covid decline. I'm confident, based upon my interactions with rectors and parishes, that 2024 will likewise reflect an increase. I have hoped that our ASA would

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exceed 1,000 before I retire, and I'm confident that we will reach that goal and more. So keep up the good work... baptizing and making disciples!

- G. Those ASA statistics, by the way, are based upon our annual parish reports to ACNA. Our diocesan reporting record was just shy of 100% last year. Rectors please keep good records and complete the annual reports. They do provide valuable information for use in evaluating the condition of our diocese.
- H. Regarding Confirmation, clergy please continue to promote Confirmation in your parishes and prepare people to be confirmed. I have attempted to likewise espouse the importance of Confirmation in our diocese. We certainly want our parishes to grow and add new members but just as importantly we want to turn that harvest brought to our barns into bread for the life of the world. Confirmation is an important part of our bread-making/disciple-making efforts. It is the opportunity every individual has to personally interact with the bishop, his episcopal office and as a result with the historic Church. The Church and her bishops, through the laying on of hands communicate the very real connection...that very personal touch...each generation of believers and each individual believer has with Jesus, the Holy Spirit and His Church through the ages...and the unique place and spirit-empowered function they have as a result.

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- I. We have two Convocations in our diocese, Ohio Valley and Piedmont. The Convocation structure provides another avenue for clergy to interact and strategize concerning their shared ministry region and to encourage one another. The Piedmont Convocation holds a quarterly half-day clericus and the Ohio Valley holds a bi-annual overnight clericus. I encourage clergy from each region to plan on attending these refreshing and edifying gatherings of fellow clergy from your geographic region.

- J. Regarding diocesan clergy, 2 new rectors in our diocese: Rev. Jeff Hubbard of Trinity Mason, OH along with his wife Jodi and daughter Juniper came to us from Detroit where Fr. Jeff served as Rector of Mariners' Church within the Mid-America Diocese, and Rev. Aaron Rowley, of All Saints Anglican in Raleigh, NC along with his wife Kelsey and their children came to us from an ACNA parish in Ohio where Fr. Aaron served as an assistant priest. He assumed the position at All Saints Raleigh after our beloved Fr. Ian MacGregor retired in June. Fr. Ian served the parish in Raleigh for over 20 years...Fr. Ian and Cam's tireless devotion to our Lord and His people has left a legacy of faithfulness, kindness and grace for the next generation of clergy and laymen to build upon...Fr. Ian and Cam are here...if they would please stand for a round of applause and appreciation. I haven't let Fr. Ian get too far away from us! At

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my request, he has agreed to serve as our diocesan liaison for the ACNA Lilly Grant and Clergy Financial Wellness Initiative. He'll provide some information later this morning.

1. Another important transition among clergy was the move of Fr. Eric Parker, his wife Aubrey and family to Leesburg, Va to begin serving as Assistant Priest at Church of Our Saviour, Fr. Jonathan Kell serves as Rector there. Fr. Eric is a welcome addition to the ministry team since the Leesburg parish has experienced significant numerical growth over the past few years. Fr. Eric is also teaching classes at RE seminary at their new location in Orelan, PA outside of Philadelphia.
2. And more clergy news hot off the press: within the last month, Fr. Damien Grout and wife Jolie accepted the call as vicar for St. Paul's Anglican Lexington, VA. Fr. Damien begun conducting services there last month. I understand they have already had an adult Baptism, and they are preparing several new attendees for confirmation. Fr. Damien will also complete an MA degree in counseling from Liberty University in 2025.
3. All rector positions in the diocese are now filled...praise God!
4. I also received 5 new postulants, Lukas Stock, All Saints, Lynchburg, VA; Noah Elkins, Christ Redeemer, Owensboro,

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KY; Thomas Caucutt, St. John's, Chelsea, AL, and Andrew Kuniholm and Sean Reeves, Christ Our Saviour, Leesburg, VA. A number of them are with us for this week's synod. Our postulants wear a clerical collar with a black line on the front...be sure to greet them and encourage them in their studies and express your appreciation and prayers for them as they navigate the discernment process for ordained ministry.

5. So, there are currently 32 active presbyters, 4 deacons, 7 postulants (Jameson Lowery & Lukas Stock examined yesterday), and 3 deaconesses for a total of 46 individuals (ordained, set-apart, and postulants) resident within our diocese. By my calculations, among these individuals there are 7 in their 70's; 12 in their 60's; 12 in their 50's; 5 in their 40's; and 10 in their 20's and 30's. I think that is a pretty good range of ages, especially with 33% of the total (1/3)... falling in the 49 and under range. We emphasized praying for more laborers in the harvest, and God is answering our prayers! Remember to pray: Increase of Ministry: p. 60.
- a) It is also important to note that there are 9 retired clergy resident within our diocese. Three of these have been able to assist with ministry activities in various ways, some regularly, others as needs have arisen over the past year.

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- K. Regarding Church Planting, we currently have two active REC 100 church plants. Trinity Anglican in Connersville, IN will receive REC 100 support through 2024. Over the past year, the rector there, Fr. Richard Tarsitano and family, experienced some difficult days. Fr. Richard's mother Sally, an active and vital member of the church plant, passed away in September 2023. Their infant daughter Elsie passed away in February and daughter Madeline was hospitalized with a serious illness shortly thereafter. Madeline's condition and prognosis have since greatly improved, and this beloved, young, hard-working clergy family has persevered. Our diocese has reached out and prayed, and especially noteworthy, the nascent (nay-sent) church plant rose to provide invaluable comfort and care of all sorts during those difficult days. I confirmed 15 individuals there in April! It was a joyous and uplifting day for the parish.
1. Our other church plant, Darke County Mission in Ansonia, Ohio, Fr. Andrew Costa, church planter, began in December 2023 and has made steady progress. They recently applied to receive an REC 100 grant, the application is still in process. I confirmed 2 adults there in April. Fr. Andrew's buoyant and ever-helpful ways have been a refreshing addition to our diocese.
 2. Church of the Redeemer in Owensboro, KY currently receives an REC 100 revitalization grant from our diocese.

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This will continue through the end of the year. I confirmed 11 there a month ago and ordained Fr. Tim Kline as presbyter the same weekend. The atmosphere was joyous, inspiring and invigorating. Kudos to Fr. David Goodwin and his wife Joyce who persevered and prayed when the mission had all but shut down several years ago.

3. The hope for a church plant in Johnson City, Tn remains. I visited the group there in May. They were prayerful and hopeful for the work to take shape, and last month I received the good news from Fr. Tony Melton that a church planter is now being prepared to lead the effort.

- L. Regarding Church Schools: There are now three schools located our diocese: Dominion Academy, a ministry of Christ the King, Dayton, OH; Hunter Classical School, an REC diocesan school in Richmond, VA, and New Covenant School in Lynchburg, VA which is governed by an independent board and maintains an affiliation with the REC through our Diocese. By all accounts these schools are doing well. St. George's Classical School in Lexington, VA which began 2 years ago as a DCS diocesan school is no longer operating as such. The name of the school has been changed, and it is not affiliated with our diocese. Fr. Eric Parker had the difficult task of leading the school, staff and families through the transition which he accomplished with wisdom and grace.

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1. Adn. Thompson will have further details on church growth, church plants, and schools in his Canon Missioner report.

M. Regarding other diocesan activities:

1. The upcoming election was certainly the most important issue of the past term. I had many interactions with our elected committee members via zoom and in-person.
 - a) Standing Committee: The entire Standing Committee is to be especially commended for all the work they have invested in preparing for our election during this term. The details are too numerous to mention...suffice it to say, there were many calls, texts and emails exchanged in providing a smooth and orderly process leading up to today's election...and this was in addition to the normal demands placed upon the Standing Committee. I especially recognize Fr. Josiah Jones, President of the Standing Committee who worked tirelessly in leading this group over the past twelve months. Fr. Josiah and Committee members, please stand for an expression of our appreciation!
 - b) Board of Trustees: Fr. David Goodwin, current chair, Fr. Ken Mills, treasurer. This committee ably and faithfully performs the all-important task of managing and

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stewarding our diocesan finances to the glory of God.

Thank you everyone!

2. I also had interaction with the various appointed committees regarding diocesan issues. All members have faithfully contributed their time and insights for the well-being of our diocese.
 - a) One notable change, I appointed Fr. Bill Barto as Chairman of our Committee on Constitutions and Canons. He replaces Fr. Paul Edgerton who served faithfully as Chair for several years and was instrumental in producing our current Child Protection Policy among other Committee accomplishments. Thank you, Fr. Paul! Fr. Paul will continue on as a member of this committee.
3. While we're on constitutional/legal matters, I also appointed Fr. Bill Barto as Diocesan Chancellor in May. Fr. Bill has already provided helpful legal counsel to me and other clergy within the diocese. He also served as an advisor for a committee charged with reviewing and improving ACNA Canons, and currently serves on an advisory committee for the REC C&C committee. Recently and through Fr. Bill's efforts, registration of the national Church (REC) with the IRS was corrected in their directory of tax-exempt organizations bringing all REC member dioceses within that tax-exempt

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status. Fr. Bill's participation in these various church committees and legal matters, along with his years of experience as an attorney and judge, made his appointment as Chancellor a timely and important one. Thank you dear Brother Bill for your willingness to serve!

- a) And another note of appreciation: Dan Bell had served as our diocesan Chancellor since 2020. I am grateful for his counsel over the past five years. Dan's clear thinking and insights were invaluable, especially as we faced some trying and difficult issues within the diocese. Thank you, Dan for serving so willingly and faithfully as our Chancellor for the past five years.
- 4. I value the camaraderie and working relationship I have with both our elected and appointed committees. Each group will present their reports today.
- 5. I am also in regular communication with Archdeacon Scot Thompson. As I'm sure you know by now, his insights, counsel and friendship are invaluable to me. Adn. Thompson also had a significant role in planning for our election. Thank you, dear Fr. Scott and Mary Jane!
- 6. I also would like to thank our deaconesses Michelle Caldwell and Teresa Johnson who are always accommodating to my requests for assistance with diocesan needs and issues. And

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this year we have added another deaconess to the mix, Dss. Shelley Fleming, Holy Trinity, Chantilly, VA! I was honored to preside at the setting apart service for Dss. Shelley in May. It was concurrent with the ordination of Fr. Bill Barto to the presbyterate...a glorious day for another growing congregation. Dss. Shelley has been an integral part of the growth and maturity of the Holy Trinity parish for many years.

7. Our administrative Secretary, 'Mary Bailey now **Kozel**' has provided invaluable and superior service to me and our Diocese. Mary assists me with the various administrative tasks of the Diocese. As part of her administrative tasks this term, Mary produced a new Baptismal Certificate and assembled bottles of anointing oil, both are available at the registration table. Thank you dearest Mary Kozel
8. Finally, with the help of my dear wife, Janice, I began a monthly diocesan newsletter in May, "By Way of DCS." It offers a glimpse of our various parishes through pictures and updates primarily from my Episcopal visits.

X. Next section: REC relations...

- A. Council of Bishops: I participated in two half-day REC Bishop's meetings via zoom, as well as two other bishop's meetings to discuss specific issues. I am in regular communication with Bp. Sutton and the other REC Bishops. Our working

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relationships are superb. Whenever we are together, attending various meetings in-person, we make it a point to have some time together and update one another on our diocesan work. Please continue pray for us!

1. Also regarding our Council of Bishops, I attended and participated in 2 services of consecration. One for Bp. Charles Camlin DMA suffragan, the other for Bp. John Boonzaaijer, REC Missionary Bishop (here with us). The election today and eventual consecration of **our** coadjutor will make 9 active REC Bishops, two of those are planning to retire: +Gillin 12/24 and me by either 12/25 or 12/26.
 - a) Some encouraging news: Bp. Bill Jenkins is recovering for complications related to a surgery to repair an aortic aneurysm. After some tense moments, he is recovering and his prognosis is positive.
- B. REC General Council: I serve as Vice-president of the General Council and as a member of the General Committee. I participated in the bi-annual General Committee Meetings via zoom as well related sub-committee zoom meetings and calls.
 - a) Our diocese is hosting the REC General Council in June 2026 in Richmond, VA. That's a change from our original plans to host the Council in Washington DC. Richmond is a better fit all around. Adn. Thompson has been working

will Cn. Jason Grote in making preliminary arrangements.

Stay tuned for details.

- C. I serve as VP for the Board of Foreign Missions and took part in two committee meetings via zoom as well as several related meetings called to address specific issues. Canon Boonzaaijer is with us and will give a BFM report tomorrow morning.
- D. I also serve on a committee with Bp. Banek and Bp. Hill producing a paper addressing Critical Race Theory. The paper has gone through several revisions and should be completed for Bishops' review this month.
- E. I'm delighted Bp. Sutton is with us. He will provide his insights and an update on our beloved REC during tonight's banquet.

XI. Last section: ACNA relations

- A. I participated in three zoom meetings, the annual in-person week-long Bishops meeting and the in-person, weeklong ACNA Bishops Conclave. I also attended the ACNA Provincial Council meetings in June. As you know, at the Bishops Conclave, Bp. Steve Wood, Bp of the Diocese of the Carolinas, was elected as Archbishop of the ACNA House of Bishops replacing Abp. Foley Beach who completed ten years in that position this past June. I plan to attend the Investiture of Abp. Wood later this month in Charleston, SC.

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B. Regarding our ongoing membership within the ACNA, the REC bishops agree that we should maintain our association and role within the ACNA House of Bishops. As members of the House, we have a “place at the table” with other traditional Anglicans and the opportunity to maintain our witness and influence within that body. The Women’s ordination issues remain. Our sub-jurisdiction status within the ACNA allows us to maintain our settled, male-only clergy stance while developing healthy relationships with other like-minded Anglicans.

XII. In conclusion, I especially thank my wife, Janice for her constant patience, encouragement, and love. Since her retirement from teaching, she has been able to travel with me some which has been a blessing to me and by all accounts to all the parishes we have visited over the past term.

XIII. I do have some additional thoughts, an “Election Meditation,” which I’ll present before our election this afternoon.

XIV. Respectfully submitted,

+Peter Manto

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