

SYNOD REPORT

It was my privilege to represent St Olave's, along with Father Rob* and Andrewes**, at the 162nd Regular Session of Synod held on the 17th and 18th November 2023 at the Marriot Hotel, Richmond Hill, Ontario. Because of a clash with responsibilities back at the Christmas Craft Fair and Bistro, Andrewes and Rob were not able to return on the Saturday.

There was a palpable sense of joy throughout the two days that we were able to gather in person. The theme of the synod was *Cast the Net*. After a Eucharist, we were invited to discuss and give feedback on a list of twenty priorities, that were grouped under section headings; Renewing Spirituality, Inspiring Faith in Action, Reimagining Ministry and Transforming Diocesan Culture.

We were introduced to the guest speaker, The Rt. Rev. Mauricio De Andrade, Bishop of the Diocese of Brasilia. There are plans to twin the diocese of Toronto and Brasilia.

On Friday afternoon there were opportunities to attend a workshop. I attended the workshop, which was essentially a conversation, considering the question, 'How do we empower parishes to create a welcoming space for children and young families?'

The Rt. Rev. Mauricio de Andrade spoke to us after dinner, and warm connections were established.

Time was given on both the Friday and Saturday for hearing members' voices. There were long line ups at three microphones on both days. Some themes emerged, although members were encouraged to not repeat a subject that had already been covered. Strict time limits of three minutes per person were adhered to. Here we heard some of the challenges that parishes, neighbourhoods and individuals are experiencing as well as accounts of creative responses to these challenges.

Discussion and debate was wrapped around times of liturgy and worship that featured a diversity of styles from within the diocese. Technology was used to showcase a variety of grass roots initiatives.

Throughout both days, sections of time were given to voting on adjustments to canon law. On Saturday there were elections of delegates to represent the Diocese of Toronto at both Provincial Synod and General Synod. There were some frustrations caused by procedural difficulties. Heated discussion about using church property to respond to the city's housing crisis was curtailed by time restraints. The matter will be discussed further at the next synod gathering in 2025.

It was exciting to hear Bishop Andrew Absil announce the appointment of Robert Mitchell of St Olave's amongst those named as honorary canons.

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Cast the Net can be summed up:

Followers of Jesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, serve the world God loves!

Our parish is encouraged to find where and how we can live out this mission.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hutcheon

**Rev'd Canon Robert Mitchell*

***Andrewes Sissons*