ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS P. CARROLL

Appendix C

WELCOME AND OPENING ADDRESS
ARCHDIOCESAN SYNOD, 14 - 16 MAY 2004

We have already prayed and enthroned the Word of God thus acknowledging our total dependence on God. We have been welcomed by Agnes Shea a Ngunnawal Elder. We thank her for the welcome and acknowledge the Ngunnawal people on whose traditional land we meet.

Welcome dear Sisters and Brothers to our Archdiocesan Synod. I formally welcome the members of Synod. As your Chief Pastor I have invited you from all parts of the Church of Canberra and Goulburn to come together as ***One in Christ Jesus***. Thank you for responding so generously.

Our meeting is to be a deep experience of being Church and a contribution to renewing and re-energizing the life and mission of our Church. We, lay, religious and ordained members of Christ's faithful, will represent our sister and brother Catholics throughout the length and breadth of the Archdiocese and make present, in a very real way, our Archdiocesan Church. In this gathering, we can say truthfully, ***We are the Church***.

The special identity of this, our particular Church, has been strengthened, and our ability to represent it has been enhanced, by the years of prayerful preparation as we have journeyed to this point of our formal meeting. During these days together, we will be supported by the prayer and sacrifice of those we represent.

I have prepared and recorded a Homily for all parishes this weekend. In it I say ***"In their gathering, the Synod members are conscious of their responsibility to represent you who make up our Archdiocesan Church as we seek to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to our Church at this critical time of our history. As you meet in your own parish and local community, for Mass or a Liturgy of the Word with Communion in the absence of your Priest, I ask you, again as your Chief Pastor, to be one with the Synod members and support them in your prayer and worship".***

I added in that homily ***"As you well know, the theme of our Synod is One in Christ Jesus. Pray that the Synod members will know that unity in their meeting. Your prayer will not only support them but will actually realize that very unity for the whole* of *our Church. That unity in Jesus Christ is essential if we are to be able to respond to the challenges of living our faith in the secular Australia of today and to speak the message of Christian hope to our world'***.

As we experience and seek to enrich the Communion of Faith, Hope and Love, of the particular Church of Canberra and Goulburn, we do not forget the wider Communion of our entire Catholic Church.

I welcome observers from our neighbouring Dioceses of Wagga Wagga and Wollongong and acknowledge the regretful apologies from Bathurst and Wilcannia Forbes. Your presence and support remind us of our full Communion with sister Churches throughout the world. That Communion is fulfilled and guaranteed in the Communion of the Church universal, grounded in the collegial unity of the Bishops' with the successor of Saint Peter, Pope John Paul II.

Recently, in company with my brother Bishops' from all the Dioceses of Australia, I experienced that communion and apostolic tradition at first hand as we celebrated Masses at the Tombs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul and met the Holy Father as "the head of the College of Bishops, the Vicar of Christ on earth and the pastor of the universal Church here on earth" (cic can. 331). The Apostolic Blessing he imparted to me and the people of this Archdiocese is strongly in my mind tonight and serves to confirm us in the Faith.

I welcome observers from other Christian Churches and Communities, either with us tonight or who may visit us during the weekend. Many brother and sister Christians have been praying for us and supporting us on our synodal journey. Their prayer, messages of support and the presence of some of their representatives, gives us great encouragement. It is an expression of the real, albeit imperfect communion of faith and love that we share and should sharpen the challenge to renew our enthusiasm and efforts to achieve full Christian unity in obedience to Christ's prayer that ***All might be one so that the world might believe.***

I welcome those who are here, not as Synod members, but as those who will assist us in various ways during our meeting. Your gift of service reminds us all that the Synod is to serve the good of the Church as the Church is to be the servant of all.

I welcome visitors who have come to observe and show their interest and good will. I welcome representatives of the media tonight. Your presence is a reminder of the responsibility we have, not only to fellow Catholics and other Christians, but to the whole community.

What then is a Synod? - A Diocesan Synod is defined in the law of the Church which spells out its basic purpose, structure and authority.

The Bishop, who is the only one who can call a Synod, obviously has a central role to play and it is made clear that he is the sole legislator. Members are appointed by the Bishop, but in such a way that they truly represent the whole Archdiocesan Church. They have the right to discuss freely all matters on the Agenda and to have a consultative vote. All of this means that matters discussed and voted upon must, strictly speaking, remain recommendations that await the response of the Bishop.

This may be disappointing and frustrating to some, especially as we are accustomed to democratic ways and the equal value of votes in decision making. It does however, reflect the Church's self-understanding of being an hierarchical communion. I can only assure you that I have strong convictions about the Church as the People of God, the favourite image of the Second Vatican Council and I am totally committed to respecting the equal dignity of every member of the Church and their right to participate responsibly in the life of the Church. I point out that all of the agenda items have come from the **"grassroots"** of our Church community. I would not have called a Synod and spent three years in preparation unless I was really committed to taking it seriously. If I did not I would fail in my call to servant leadership.

I would also fail in my pastoral responsibility if I did not point out some of the wider Church parameters within which a Diocesan Synod operates. As a particular Church within the Catholic Communion, we are to preserve and strengthen the unity of the

universal Church. We accept the teaching of Christ and teachings defined by the Church. We respect the teaching authority of the Church, especially that of the Holy Father and abide by the discipline of the laws that make up the universal code of the Catholic Church.

Certain questions and concerns, including some raised during synodal consultations, are beyond the competency of the local Church to resolve. Clearly, many doctrines can never be changed by any Church authority, being as they are, truths of Revelation and of Divine Law. The local Church receives these as gift and endeavors to teach them in such a way that people understand, believe and live by them.

Some teachings may be open to further development and the disciplinary laws made by the Church can be changed by the Church. Where development or change are possible, the local Church can offer its contribution but must not act unilaterally.

There are many areas of Church life of course that are within the competency of the local Church and therefore of the Synod. This is where we must concentrate our efforts.

In regard to the broader issues, the local Church can assist those facing faith or moral dilemmas by clarifying the Church's position and reasons for it, to help them understand and accept. Where this does not resolve the dilemma, the local Church must continue to welcome and support them and show pastoral care and compassion at all times.

As we gather, we have many of the trappings of a secular parliament but that is not what we are. As well as the matter of decision making authority, the spirit in which we approach our debate and voting should be very different. The secular parliamentary model is competitive and almost inevitably leads to political manipulation and power struggles. People adopt a position and try to win support for it, listen to others only to refute them and so win a majority vote which leaves winners and losers and so guarantees continuing divisions, resentment and a lack of cooperation in implementation.

In a Synod, as in any Church body, discernment of the Spirit should replace competitive debate. Especially since our 1989 Synod, this approach has more and more permeated meetings and deliberations within the Archdiocese. The approach depends on prayer, a genuine listening to others, a sensitivity to all. It encourages collaboration rather than competition. It does not exclude vigorous debate but demands Christian charity and aims at consensus rather than a majority vote. It recognizes the right of each one to make a contribution from the share of wisdom, truth and gifts of the Spirit given to each one.

Consensus does not mean that all differences have been resolved but in this Church model, means a decision with which all members can live gracefully because they see it as what the Spirit is saying to the group at this time. Thus they are ready not only to live with it, but give it wholehearted support. This is the attitude that must inspire us all on this weekend.

But why have a Synod now? Why over the past three years have we followed a programme of prayer and study, reflection and dialogue, planning and action to culminate this weekend in this formal meeting of Synod. To answer that question, I go

back to the Second Vatican Council that was such a momentous event in the life of the Church and has inspired my own pastoral vision and mission throughout the whole of my ministry as a Bishop. Although the Council took place many years ago and is ancient history to our younger generation, it remains a source of inspiration and guidance.

At the beginning of this Twenty First Century and the third millennium of Christianity, Pope John Paul could write ***"With the passing of the years, the Council documents have lost nothing of their value or brilliance'*** and he points ***"to the Council as the great grace bestowed upon the Church in the Twentieth Century. There we find a sure compass with which to take our bearings in the century now beginning".***

I see a Diocesan Synod doing for the Archdiocesan Church, what the Council set out to do for the Church universal and to do it today in 2004. In the Council, the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, reflected again who she was and what was her mission. This meant a return to the Gospel and a depthing of the best of the rich Tradition of the Church. The Council also reflected on the reality of the world of its time, to see its anguish and joys, its hopes and fears, its needs and concerns. Faithful to the teaching of Jesus and the wisdom of the Church, the Council sought also to be faithful to the experience of the human family so that the Church could dialogue with the modern world and present the Gospel in language and ways that would engage all peoples and bring to them the challenge of God's truth and justice, the healing touch of Jesus' compassion, the saving mystery of the Cross, the hope of resurrection and the freedom of being reconciled with God and united with each other in peace.

At this moment in history, we as the Church in Canberra and Goulburn, seek to know what God calls us to be and to do. We seek to understand the world, the society in which we live so that we, in our own way, and in our own time, can dialogue with our contemporaries, be in solidarity with them in joy and sorrow, listen to them, their stories and their need, and witness to the presence of Jesus alive today by the quality of love in us as individual Christians and as the community of Jesus' disciples.

Our Diocesan Synod is also timely because Pope John Paul II gave us a challenge at the close of the Jubilee 2000 celebrations and the beginning of the new millennium ***"Now is the time for each local Church to assess its fervor and find fresh enthusiasm for its spiritual and pastoral responsibilities by reflecting on what the Spirit has being saying to the People of God in this special year of Grace and indeed in the longer span of time from the Second Vatican Council to the Great Jubilee".*** I believe our Synod is a worthy response to that challenge.

Some may still ask but why have another Synod since we have already had one since the Vatican Council? My answer is to ask you to reflect on the happenings and changes in the world and the Church in the fifteen years since 1989. We are in a very different world with new challenges in the Church to be faithful to our mission and effective in our communication.

A month after the close of the 1989 Synod, the Berlin Wall fell. In following years we have seen the Gulf War, the present Iraqi conflict, the worsening of the tragedy of Palestine and Israel and many other examples of war and violence. We have seen the terrible genocide in the Balkans and in Rwanda where 800,000 people where slaughtered. We have experienced September 11, Bali and the Madrid bombings.

We live now in a world under the shadow of international terrorism and the fear and uncertainty that has brought. We have seen the growth of globalization and the greater awareness of the environment and global warming. Throughout the world we see the dilemma of millions and millions of refugees and asylum seekers and known the particular impact this has had on Australia.

Technology has transformed social communications for good and for bad. Extraordinary progress in the fields of medicine have brought great benefits but raised worrying questions about the making and taking of human life.

In these, and other ethical / political issues, the spirit of secularism has grown stronger in Australia and lessened the influence of Christianity and the Church. We think of Marriage and Family as they are lived and are affected by legislation and public policies.

We see the involvement of Australian Defence Forces throughout many parts of the world. We have argued about their involvement in war and rejoiced in their peacekeeping efforts in places such as East Timor and the Solomon Islands. Popular support for reconciliation with our Indigenous Peoples rose and declined during that period, but these brothers and sisters of ours continue to suffer great disadvantage. Rural life has continued to decline and the scourge of drought is very close to home. The City of Canberra has known the trauma of bushfires.

Within the Church we prepared for and celebrated the Great Jubilee of 2000. The Pope has called World Youth Days and World Family Days that have impacted directly on the Church in Australia and in our Archdiocese. We have rejoiced in the greater activity of Youth Ministry.

During the same time however the tragic scandal of sexual abuse by clergy, religious and Church personnel has been uncovered and widely featured in the media. Such abuse has not only brought tragedy to the abused, but has damaged the morale of clergy and people alike, discouraged vocations and diminished the moral authority of the Church in public fora

Parish Congregations and priestly numbers have continued to decline. Deacons have become a recognized group within the clergy and there has been growth in the active participation of lay people in parish and school life. Church life surveys, however, reveal a widespread confusion about truths of faith even among Church going Catholics.

Our Archdiocese has renewed its catechetical effort amongst the young by adopting ***Treasures New and Old*** as our guidelines. Many more adults are involving themselves in ongoing Faith Education and we have seen the establishment of the first two Catholic Universities in Australia.

The major report on the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church and the response of the Bishops in their Social Justice Statement have been published and are being acted upon.

In the ecumenical field, the Catholic Church became a member of the reconstituted National Council of Churches and we have celebrated some historic agreements such as that with the Lutherans on the matter of Justification. Dialogue with Jews and

Muslims and other world religions has grown apace and acquired a real sense of urgency in our present circumstances.

We could think of many many other happenings in the Church and in the world but I hope that this brief overview has convinced you that we are in a vastly different world since 1989 and that the challenges to the Church must be addressed afresh.

Has our preparation for the Synod and our agenda for this meeting reflected the reality and responded to the challenges? The next few days will help clarify the answer, but at this time, my answer would be yes and no.

In our preparation we have translated our standard of ***One in Christ Jesus*** into the ideal of being a Church committed to healing, life-giving relationships. Clearly we must live that reality in order to witness to it. Unless we witness to it, we will not effectively communicate, and offer it as a gift to others, fellow Christians, peoples of other faiths and all members of the human family.

If we are not inclusive and welcoming within the Catholic household of faith and some members do not feel that they belong, if there is diverse polarization, then we are ill equipped to invite others to join us and share the treasures of our faith. If our Church, in families, parishes, Church movements and groups, is not such a community then we cannot be ***"A sign and instrument of Communion with God and unity among all people"*** as the Vatican Council put it. Nor can we be true to the commandment of Jesus - ***Love one another as I have loved you.***

In our preparation, we did not set out to deal with the whole mission of the Church, but decided to concentrate on two major areas. ***Young People in the Life of the Church and the World*** **and** ***Women and Men in the Life of the Church and the World.*** While these include all in the Church Community, the focus is principally on the role of the lay faithful in the Church. This is to be welcomed although we must never forget the difference, co-relation and inter-dependence of the Priesthood of all the Baptized and the Priesthood of the Ordained.

As a generalization, I believe that the consultation and the agenda reflect more of ***"In the Church"*** than ***"In the World".***

I expressed this in my introduction to the Synod Agenda Book. " ***Much of the work of preparation seems to have set out to enrich the community life of the Church by strengthening participation and unity and prayer and worship, education and ministry, works of service and charity. This augurs well for renewal of life within the Church. The call of Christ however, for both young people and women and men in the Church, is to go out beyond the community to bring Jesus' truth and his love to the world especially through the daily lives of the lay faithful*** .

The internal life of the Church community must be vital and involve active participation in formal ministries and informal works of service. That inner life however is betrayed if it is not directed towards the living of one's faith in the world, the world of everyday life, in home and family, work and recreation, community life, business, politics, in business and international relations.

In order to build a civilization of love, Pope John Paul II put it very succinctly ***"Their (the lay faithful) proper vocation consists in seeking the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them to the plan of God'.***

This is where faith and life are integrated and where evangelization becomes real.

I am sure that any one of you, like myself, could name very important issues that have not appeared on the Agenda. This is partly due to the fact that participation was invited and topics were chosen by participants. As later we reflect on the Synod, we may need to learn lessons from what has not come forward, as well as building on the good work in areas that are under discussion.

The Synod of course is not an end in itself, but simply an important staging post in the continuing journey of the Pilgrim Church.

The theology and spirituality underpinning our Synod, is that of Communion. This draws all its strength and inspiration from the Communion of life and love of our three persons in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The communion within the Church must be relationships alive with faith and life-giving love. But the Triune God is a missionary communion. Jesus was sent by the Father and the Spirit was sent to continue his mission through the Community of Believers. That is why my favorite definition of a Church is The Mystery of Missionary Communion.

The Church being a mystery can be likened to a beautiful diamond that reflects light in a myriad of ways. Let me conclude my talk with one understanding of the Church that especially appeals to me. It may help to inspire and guide us as we turn to our task.

In this understanding, there are two fundamental dimensions of the one Church. The Apostolic Petrine dimension and the Marian dimension. Both are essential to an understanding of the Church of Jesus Christ. Pope John Paul II wrote ***"This Marian profile (dimension) is also, even perhaps more so, fundamental and characteristic for the Church as is the Apostolic and Petrine profile (dimension) to which it is profoundly united. The two dimensions are always complementary'.***

The Apostolic Petrine dimension is very familiar to us. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Church is founded on Peter and the Apostles and faithfully hands on the apostolic tradition. The Hierarchy, the ministry of Word and Sacrament, the living authority of teaching and governance ensure the visible unity of the Church, the orthodoxy of truth and the good order of community life. This institutional Church continues the language of the Incarnation when the Word was made flesh and became the One ***"that we have heard and we have seen with our own eyes; that we have watched and touched with our own hands".*** *(1*John *1.1)*

The Christian message must be presented by a Church confident in its sense of identity, strong in its sense of belonging, clear in its teachings and firm in its moral guidance. A Church strong in its apostolic Petrine dimension is well equipped for this task and has much to offer to an Australian society showing many signs of a hunger for meaning and a thirst for spirituality.

The strengths of the apostolic Petrine dimension however require the balance of the Marian. Without it, an almost monarchic, clericalist and even legalistic spirit can enter in. One author wrote that if the Marian dimension was denied or abandoned ***"The***

Synod Prayer – 4 38

Chapter Eight - The Voices of Our Young People 39
Catholic Commission for Young People
Catholic Youth Ministry Team
CYM Mentoring Program
Campus Ministers
Regional Youth Ministry Workers

Synod Prayer – 2 42

Chapter Nine - Archdiocesan Commission for Women 43
Establishment of Commission for Women
A Register of competent & qualified Women
Participation of Women a Financial Priority
Training of women as Lay Celebrants
Meeting of Industrial & Legal requirements
Inclusive Language Guidelines

Synod Prayer – 6 48

Chapter Ten - Ephesus House 49
Affirmation of its Establishment

Chapter Eleven - Information and Communication 51
Diocesan Communications Secretariat
Professional Media Unit

Chapter Twelve - Financial Resources 53
Building for the Common Good
Creative Solutions

Conclusion - Archbishop Francis Carroll 55

Decree of Promulgation 59

APPENDICES

A **Welcome, to Ngunnawal Country** - Agnes Shea 60
B **Our Synod Journey** - Fr Philip Buckley 61
C **Opening Address** - Archbishop Francis Carroll 70
D **Theology of Communion** - Fr John Woods 78
E **Concluding Remarks** - Archbishop Francis Carroll 83
F **Announcement of the Synod** – Lenten Pastoral Letter 2001 88
G **Call for the Synod** - with its Scriptural Signposts July 2001 92
H **Special Phrases from Sacred Scripture** – Inspiration and Guide 95
I **Synod Launch** and **Decree of Convocation** - October 2001 97
J **Setting the Course and Charting the Synod Journey** –2002 103
K **Mission Statement** 109
L **Timetable** 112
M **Meeting Procedures** 114
N **Synod Members** 117

Church becomes functionalistic, soulless, a hectic enterprise without any point of rest, estranged from its true nature by the planners and because, in this mainly masculine world all that we have is one ideology replacing another, everything becomes polemical, bitter, humourless and ultimately boring, and people in their masses run away from such a Church:. Strong words indeed, but also disquieting if one looks honestly at many aspects of the Church today and its experience of diminishment.

The Marian aspects of the Church provide the remedy and balance required. The Marian dimension is associated with Motherhood which looks to the inner life of the People of God. Learning from Mary, the emphasis is on giving birth and nurturing the Christ life of the baptized so as to lead to a maturity of faith. After all, Jesus came that we may have life and have it to the full. Mary pondered all these things in her heart. The Church must first be contemplative, prayerful and discerning before speaking or acting.

Maternal love brings an ethic of care and is shaped by compassion. A mother knows her children and includes all, without exception, in her love.

The Marian dimension means the Church knows her children and continues to love, respect and acknowledge them even when they do not acknowledge her. She will display the maternal tenderness of God even to her rebellious sons and daughters. A loving mother always has time to listen to her children. The Church must be ready to listen to her own, to other Christians and to the voice of humanity. She must especially listen to the cry of the poor and the pain of the world.

To witness to Christ and to serve in his name so as to bring about the reign of God in Australia, we as Church need both Marian and Apostolic Petrine qualities and strengths. Under the power of the Holy Spirit we need the visible leadership of Peter and the twelve, together with the loving heart of Mary. With these, we will truly become ***One in Christ Jesus.***

Synod Prayer – 4 38

Chapter Eight - The Voices of Our Young People 39
Catholic Commission for Young People
Catholic Youth Ministry Team
CYM Mentoring Program
Campus Ministers
Regional Youth Ministry Workers

Synod Prayer – 2 42

Chapter Nine - Archdiocesan Commission for Women 43
Establishment of Commission for Women
A Register of competent & qualified Women
Participation of Women a Financial Priority
Training of women as Lay Celebrants
Meeting of Industrial & Legal requirements
Inclusive Language Guidelines

Synod Prayer – 6 48

Chapter Ten - Ephesus House 49
Affirmation of its Establishment

Chapter Eleven - Information and Communication 51
Diocesan Communications Secretariat
Professional Media Unit

Chapter Twelve - Financial Resources 53
Building for the Common Good
Creative Solutions

Conclusion - Archbishop Francis Carroll 55

Decree of Promulgation 59

APPENDICES

A **Welcome, to Ngunnawal Country** - Agnes Shea 60
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E **Concluding Remarks** - Archbishop Francis Carroll 83
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J **Setting the Course and Charting the Synod Journey** –2002 103
K **Mission Statement** 109
L **Timetable** 112
M **Meeting Procedures** 114
N **Synod Members** 117

PROLOGUE

In my opening address to the Synod, I quoted Pope John Paul II in his reference to the Second Vatican Council as "***The great grace bestowed upon the Church in the Twentieth Century***"[1]. He strongly affirmed the continuing value of the Council documents to the Church as providing "***A sure compass with which to take up bearings in the century now beginning***"[2].

As our Archdiocesan Church took its bearings in 2004, I suggested the Diocesan Synod was called to be for our local Church something of what the Council was to the universal Church forty years ago.

In the light of the reality and challenges of today's world, we were called to reflect on our identity and our mission. "***At this moment in history, we as the Church of Canberra and Goulburn, seek to know what God calls us to be and to do. We seek to understand the world, the society in which we live so that we in our own way, and in our own time, can dialogue with our contemporaries, be in solidarity with them in joy and sorrow, listen to them, their stories and their need and witness to the presence of Jesus alive today, by the quality of love in us as individual Christians and as the Community of Jesus' disciples***"[3].

As the Synod members gathered in response to their Pastor's call, I assured them that as we met, supported by the prayer of our sisters and brothers, we were representing, and in a real sense, making present the local Church of Canberra and Goulburn.

I reminded them that our Communion was to draw its strength and inspiration from the Communion of life and love of our three persons in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We were to seek to hear what the Spirit was saying to our Church in the here and now of today.

While there is only one Church, Sacred Scripture and the documents of the Vatican Council give many images and descriptions of the Church, for she is like a beautiful many sided diamond that reflects light in a myriad of ways.

In my Address, I spoke of one understanding of the Church that appealed to me and that might help inspire and guide us in our synodal consultation. As I believe this understanding may also assist us in continuing the journey after our synod, I repeat my words here.

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[1] John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 57
[2] *ibid*
[3] Opening Address, *Appendix C*

Diocesan Synod 1989.
Coming Home in Christ.

Foreword

On Pentecost Sunday 1987 I called the Catholic people of the Canberra and Goulburn Archdiocese to set out on a journey of faith. We were to travel in the power of the Holy Spirit and under the special protection of Mary, Mother of the Church. We named our journey a COMING HOME IN CHRIST.

In the long process of consultation we have been a Church at prayer and in a dialogue of faith. In the formal meeting of Synod (29 September - 2 October 1989) we had a dynamic experience of being Church and building Church

The preparatory rounds of consultation led to the synodal discussions which produced a large number of resolutions in the form of proposals. As chief Pastor I have considered these and the following pages contain my response. Obviously this cannot be complete for it will take years for the Synod to unfold in the life of the Archdiocese.

In the first place I attempt a general reflection on some of the more significant aspects of the Synod process and its outcomes. We can learn much from the spirit in which we proceeded and the matters with which we dealt. Positive elements must be integrated into the ongoing life, activities and structures of our local Church. We can also learn from the deficiencies of the process and the limitations of the matters treated.

In each of the chapters corresponding to the ten Synod Commissions there is a section called *Declaration.* In these Declarations are to be found my authoritative responses to particular recommendations of the Synod. These responses have the force of *diocesan policies*, unless they are explicitly defined as *decrees*, that is, diocesan laws.

The diocesan policies range in format from decisions for action to ideals to be pursued. In whatever form, they represent the mind of the Legislator and require respectful observance.

With the decree of promulgation the Synod legally comes to an end. Its work, however, is to continue at all levels of our diocesan Church. Much is to be implemented and much has to be further developed. The vision we have glimpsed and the material we have gathered provide the basis for a pastoral plan and generate the spiritual energy for its implementation during the next decade leading to the year 2000.

As a pilgrim people we thank God for his guidance thus far and entrust ourselves unconditionally to his care for the remainder of our journey, our COMING HOME IN CHRIST.

+ Francis P. Carroll.