

SYNODAL SYNTHESIS

Archdiocese of San Francisco



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PREPARED BY



Catholic Leadership
INSTITUTE

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Encountering the People of God: Approach and Methodology

Approach

The Archdiocese of San Francisco invited Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI) to facilitate a multifaceted consultative and feedback gathering approach as an impartial third-party. Feedback was gathered in three ways:

1. CLI's *Disciple Maker Index* (DMI) Survey
2. 9 Facilitated Virtual Listening Session via Zoom
3. 16 In-Person Listening Sessions hosted at parishes spread across the Archdiocese.

All feedback was collected in a consultative manner emphasizing open, honest listening and discussion. A dedicated webpage for background, educational, and invitational purposes was created by the Archdiocese for the general public. Additionally a separate website served as a resource page for parishes, including a communication plan with messaging templates and other useful marketing materials to drive participation.

The Sessions and Survey focused on three topics:

- Joys and Concerns about the Church from the people of God
- Listening Aspect of the Church
- Accompaniment/Journey

Methodology

1. The process was grounded in Prayer and Scripture

Prayer (e.g., *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus, Prayer to the Holy Spirit and spontaneous prayer*) was a cornerstone of the experience. Virtual and In-Person Sessions all incorporated prayer throughout. The Archbishop provided Acts 4:8-12 for the Scripture reflection time that preceded the topic discussions. This allowed participants to center their reflections on their relationship with Jesus Christ as well as get to know each other and set a tone of sharing and listening.

2. Facilitated consultative sessions

CLI Leadership Consultants (LCs) facilitated the virtual and in-person sessions. Instructions were provided to each participant encouraging open listening and discussion. Volunteer Scribes recorded their small group feedback/experience and then passed their notes to the LCs for synthesis and incorporation into the Final Report.

3. *Disciple Maker Index* (DMI) Survey – An additional method of giving voice

All parishes were invited to participate in the DMI. The survey was made available in 20 languages, online, on paper, and in braille. It was provided through the Archdiocese and promoted within the parishes. The survey's purpose was to get a sense of where participants are in their faith journey and how they believe parishes are accompanying them. Demographics are self-identified and are helpful in seeing the scope of diversity and how well distinct groups within communities are being served.

A Time of Sharing: Findings

As expected and is customary, the DMI Survey gathered data from a significantly greater number of participants. **12,530** parishioners participated in the survey, while **603** people participated in the listening sessions. The listening sessions were conducted both online and regionally throughout the Archdiocese.

Demographics

Participant demographics were collected in two ways: 1) Self-Selected by those who completed the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) and 2) Observation of the Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI) Leadership Consultants (LCs) who facilitated Listening Sessions.

While many people provided their insights and opinions, the **demographics were not particularly diverse**. Most of the **attendees of the listening sessions** were from the Baby Boomer generation (82% were over age 50) with a few Gen Xers (15% aged 31-50). Almost no Millennials participated (< 3%) and there were very few parents with school-age children.

The **survey responses were similar** with 84% of respondents being over the age of 45. The gender composition of the groups was exactly the same with 67% of both participants and respondents being female and 33% answering as male. Caucasian participants also dominated the listening sessions, constituting 62%, and for the survey, 54%.

DMI

Of the 12,530 respondents, most voluntarily provided demographic information, the percentages are as follows:

Ethnicity/Race		9789 Responses	
Black or African American			1%
Hispanic or Latino			15%
Asian American			22%
Caucasian			54%

Age		9835 Responses	
Under 18			2%
18-25			1%
26-35			3%
36-45			10%
46-55			16%
56-65			21%
66-75			24%
Over 75			23%

Sex		9724 Responses	
Male			33%
Female			67%

Listening Sessions

603 attended the 25 listening sessions. The percentages are as follows:

Ethnicity/Race		Age	
Black or African American	3%	30 & Under	3%
Hispanic or Latino	20%	31-50	15%
Asian American	14%	51-70	63%
Caucasian	62%	71 & Over	19%
Other	1%		

Sex	
Male	33%
Female	67%

Executive Summary and Key Learnings on Guiding Topics

A variety of perspectives and opinions were offered by both survey respondents and listening session participants. This diversity of feedback revealed **four primary themes**. A synopsis of these themes and how they were emphasized by participants in the survey and listening sessions is provided below.

The responses and corresponding analysis of the aforementioned three primary Topics follow in the body of this report. It begins on page 4.

Theme #1 - Faith, Catechesis, and Evangelization

In the sessions, people primarily spoke most of Jesus, the riches of the Catholic Faith, and their love for being part of the universal Church. They found joy in the living presence of Christ in the Church, in the celebration of the Mass and the universality of the liturgy, in their participation in and the availability of the Sacraments (especially during the pandemic), the gift of Sacred Scripture, and their sense of belonging to a parish community with a common identity.

These themes were echoed in the survey results, where over 75% of people responded that they agree or strongly agree about belief in the Resurrection, the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, that Scripture is the Word of God, and in Jesus' moral teachings. One participant remarked, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone – sometimes we don't appreciate our faith, but Jesus is the foundation of everything. This is the joy."

Closely related to the preceding was an expressed desire for ongoing catechetical formation, discipleship development, and spiritual direction. The people of the Archdiocese are hungry to learn more about the faith they love so dearly and about how to share the Gospel with others. Parents want to learn how to better form their children at home, and individuals shared that they want to know how to share their story with others and accompany others on their journeys of faith.

People consistently asked for spiritual direction, Bible studies and small faith sharing groups, adult faith formation, retreat opportunities, and to hear from outside presenters and speakers on faith topics. One participant shared, "If you don't know (the faith), you can't live it or defend it."

The survey indicates that there is room for parishes to improve in these areas. Less than 20% of respondents strongly agreed that their parish fosters their spiritual growth through small groups, retreats, or Bible study, and only 26% strongly agreed that their parish forms them as a disciple. With regard to evangelization, only 30% of respondents indicated that they share the story of Jesus with people at least once each month, and 25% of respondents answered in the same way about sharing their own personal story.

Theme #2 - Belonging to a Community

Another touchpoint for participants is the **delight they find in the Church** being a place to both be community and serve the community. In every session, both virtual and in-person, appreciation was voiced for the opportunity to come together to discuss faith and the Church. The Chinese language session, in particular, appeared to represent a tightly-knit community, and much of their hope and happiness with the Church appears to originate from that community.

There was a genuine desire for a **continuation of small group gatherings,** with opportunities to share not only faith but lives with one another. This hunger for gatherings is not surprising given that less than 50% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their parish helps them grow their faith by connecting them with a small group. There is thus a wonderful opportunity to help parishioners build community. Some participants marveled at the sessions' format, with one declaring, "I don't remember a time when fellow Christians could get together like this."

Theme #3 - Journeying Together in Faith

Participants generally voiced **support for the Synod and the Synodal process.** A desire for continued public sessions and dialogues beyond the Synod was clear. At the same time, there was agreement among participants that the People of God do not feel listened to by the institutional Church. In contrast, though, most people shared that their individual pastors do listen to them.

One participant recalled how they felt cared for when the 2018 revelations concerning the clergy abuse crisis surfaced, and Archbishop Cordileone personally conducted listening sessions throughout the Archdiocese. In addition, people expressed a desire to listen to the needs of others, not just those who may be disenfranchised in a larger social context but also those who are struggling to be heard in the Church.

There is a hunger for transparency and continued dialogue, but many **participants were skeptical that any action may result from this sharing**. There was a **perception** that previous listening efforts, both public forums and discussions as well as surveys, were undertaken yet there was no change - or if there was resulting action, it did not consider the feedback from the listening efforts. One participant shared, “We can be our own worst obstacle when we refuse to listen, learn and understand.”

Theme #4 - Church Teachings

Division on the Church’s teaching on social and other issues was present. While most participants expressed their assent to the Church’s authoritative teachings and expressed a desire for help in becoming more conversant in these teachings, there were instances of others who questioned the Church around care for creation, the ordination of women and married men, same-sex marriage, the care of LGBTQ+ peoples, and the authority of the pope. There was restlessness from people across the spectrum. A number of individuals expressed their apprehension with where the Church is at the current time.

By comparison, over three-quarters of the survey respondents stated they believe in Jesus’ moral teachings for their lives as taught by the Church. **A key takeaway is that people desire to have a safe place to ask questions about and struggle with these issues, as well as to learn about the underlying theology and how to explain Church teaching to others.** They have a desire for accompaniment and clarity.

Topics - Responses and Corresponding Analysis

The preparatory document for the diocesan synodal process called for consultation on the People of God regarding “journeying together” in the local church, guided by the Holy Spirit. Three Topics were identified around this instruction, and the following section provides a review of the findings. Within each, the responses and findings are divided into feedback from the Listening Sessions, the DMI Survey, and a corresponding Summary.

Topic 1 – Joys & Concerns about the Church from the People of God

➤ *What fills you with joy about the Church?*

Listening Sessions

One person shared that his/her group “...discussed the meaning of joy...not just a feeling but something that drives you to action and draws other in.” This joy is also captured by a participant who stated, “I know in my heart that the fundamental message of the Church could cure all the ills of the world if we could live it in a meaningful way.”

- Participants mentioned the living presence of Christ, the universality of the Mass, the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, the Sacred Scripture, and clergy who relate and collaborate well with the laity.
- Community, Christian fellowship, a sense of belonging, and a common identity were often noted as manifesting a profound sense of healing, comfort, peace, and support.

- Works of charity by the Church bring joy as an active expression of Christ’s love for others.
- Many respondents articulated appreciation for Pope Francis as well as the opportunity to participate in the synodal process.
- Teens noted the sense of community, identity, and belonging they experience in the Church.

Disciple Maker Index Survey (DMI) Insights

Where participants find joy:

- 81% agree or strongly agree that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ.
- 83% agree or strongly agree that Scripture is the Word of God.
- 81% agree or strongly agree that they would recommend their parish to a friend.
- 83% attend Mass at least weekly.
- 82% take time for individual prayer at least weekly.
- 74% agree or strongly agree that their parish provides opportunities for them to serve those in need.
- 70% agree or strongly agree with the teaching authority of the Church.
- 71% believe that the Church is critical to their relationship with God.
- 77% agree or strongly agree with Jesus’ moral teachings for their lives as taught by the Church.
- 65% agree or strongly agree that the Church provides a community to support them and/or their families in times of need.

Feedback indicating opportunities for action:

- Only 39% participate in some other Catholic devotions on a weekly basis.
- Only 35% volunteer for some kind of service on a monthly basis.
- Only 36% pray with someone on a weekly basis.
- Only 13% participate in a parish social event on a monthly basis.

➤ *What concerns do you have about the Church?*

Listening Sessions

Discussions about concerns with the Church were earnest. A number of worries were voiced. One was particularly poignant: “Church is too often in its head, not its heart.” They clarified that the Church cannot just be about rules, but about people living the example of Christ. Another remarked, “We can be our own worst obstacle when we refuse to listen, learn, and understand.”

- Some participants spoke about a lack of communication at various levels of the Church, which has created confusion.
- Some respondents perceive that Church authorities disagree with each other and offer contradictory messages. Understandably, laity can sometimes feel lost in the middle.
- A possible demographic division in the clergy was noted. Some older priests were described as out of touch, while some younger priests were characterized as exhibiting clericalism.
- Some attendees expressed cynicism for the synodal process, though they nonetheless participated due to a care and commitment for their Church.
- There were some who noted a sense of unease around the Church’s moral teachings on human sexuality, especially for those who experience same-sex attraction.
- Teens expressed frustration with the Church hierarchy for not addressing issues pertinent to them, including mental illness, healthy ways of facing temptation, and sexual assault.

Disciple Maker Index Survey (DMI) Insights

Alignment with synodal sessions:

- 52% agree or strongly agree that the community is involved in decisions that affect the future of the parish.

Areas in which concerns are being well-addressed in the Archdiocese:

- 76% agree or strongly agree that they would recommend their pastor to a friend.
- 66% agree or strongly agree that they are provided transparent information about parish finances.
- 82% agree or strongly agree that their parish makes them feel welcomed and accepted.
- 83% agree or strongly agree that information about their parish is available and easy to find.
- 72% agree or strongly agree that their parish communicates effectively through online platforms.

Summary of Joys and Concerns Theme (Topic 1)

There is consistency between what was heard in the listening sessions and survey feedback concerning the **joy people feel regarding tenets of the faith and their belief**. It is thus surprising that only 39% of survey respondents participate in some other Catholic devotions on a weekly basis.

Another **identified joy was serving others**. While people stated the importance of serving others and the survey data reveals that parishes provide parishioners sufficient opportunities to serve, only 35% of respondents participate in service at least monthly. In addition, session participants repeatedly expressed the value they place on and joy they find in community, but the survey data reveals that only 13% of respondents participate in parish social events at least monthly.

In the synodal sessions, **concerns were voiced about communication and transparency from Church authorities**. These concerns do not appear to be reflected in the survey data, at least at a parish level, as the majority of respondents had good things to say about their pastor and the way their parish communicates and shares information. One area of agreement between the sessions and the survey data is that respondents do not feel the community is involved in making decisions about the future of the parish.

Topic 2 – The Church’s Ability to Listen

- *In what ways or moments has the Church encouraged you to speak up?*
- *How does the Church listen to you or hear what you are saying?*

Listening Sessions

In the sessions, enthusiasm for the synodal process was evident and the **importance of listening was underscored**. “When my priest listens to me, I feel the Church listens,” one person shared. Another remarked, “The Synod has given us a voice we have not had before.”

- There was a notable desire for accessible and engaging clergy who are good listeners.
- Some remarked that the synodal process was a refreshing opportunity to share their thoughts. Appreciation was also noted for small faith groups, “townhalls,” and survey opportunities the Church has offered.
- Parish finance and pastoral councils were cited as important consultative and collaborative structures.
- Some participants expressed discouragement due to a perception that they have spoken up previously, but in their judgment, if the parish priest disagrees or it is in conflict with the Archbishop, nothing concrete transpires.

- Teens praised their youth ministers who are approachable, welcoming, and meet them where they are.

Disciple Maker Index Survey (DMI) Insights

- 66% agree or strongly agree that their parish provides transparent information about their parish's finances.
- 76% agree or strongly agree that they would recommend their pastor to a friend.

➤ *How can the Church create greater opportunities for people to be heard?*

Listening Sessions

Participants agreed that the Church needs to create more of these listening opportunities but had difficulty identifying practical ideas on how to do so. “There do not seem to be vehicles or structures for communication,” someone reflected.

- Participants suggested more listening opportunities and transparency.
- Some recommended a need to build trust through open communication, as well as seeking and honoring feedback from the laity. **Pastoral councils** were, as noted previously, **highlighted as a valuable yet sometimes underutilized forum** in which to do so.
- Teen participants appreciated these listening sessions as a way to engage in honest dialogue. They also expressed a desire for inclusion in conversations that relate to the whole parish.

Disciple Maker Index Survey (DMI) Insights

Evidence of effective listening in the Archdiocese:

- 60% agree or strongly agree that their parish follows up when they express interest in becoming more involved.
- 83% agree or strongly agree that information about their parish is available and easy to find.
- 72% agree or strongly agree that their parish communicates effectively through online platforms.

Opportunities for more effective listening:

- Only 52% agree or strongly agree that they are involved in decisions that affect the future of the parish.

Summary of the Church's Ability to Listen (Topic 2)

There was significant overlap between the themes that surfaced at the listening sessions between the first and second topics. Alignment was present between the survey results and the synodal session regarding the listening aspect of the Church. In the sessions, people identified **finance and pastoral councils as well as accessible clergy as key factors** in their feeling heard.

The survey indicates alignment in that parishioners feel their parishes are transparent with financial data and that **they would recommend their pastors** to others. In the listening sessions, participants expressed a desire for their parishes to ask for more feedback for parish planning. This was reflected in the survey, where only 52% of participants believe they are involved in parish decisions.

Topic 3 – Accompaniment/Journey

➤ *How can the Church help you and others to grow in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with the Church?*

Listening Sessions

- Some participants expressed a need for the Church to help facilitate a reconciliation in their relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church.
- There is a deep desire for catechetical formation, Scripture study, small group faith sharing, spiritual direction, retreats, and discipleship training.
- There was a genuine appreciation for the Church's embrace of technology, which enabled parishioners to remain connected with their respective parishes, experience Mass, share their faith, and remain in virtual contact during the COVID-19 shutdown.
- Teens named mounting social media pressures, broken families, depression, self-image issues, and sexual assault as some of their greatest challenges. They value their youth ministers and hope for a greater investment in youth ministry. They believe those individuals are vital in helping them in aspects of their personal lives they find most formidable.

Disciple Maker Index Survey (DMI) Insights

Alignment with synodal sessions:

- 74% agree or strongly agree that the preaching at Mass helps them grow spiritually.
- 73% agree or strongly agree that their parish offers vibrant and engaging Sunday Masses
- 64% feel that their parish helps them grow spiritually by forming them as a disciple of Jesus.
- 57% feel that their parish equips them to share the story of Jesus.
- 55% feel that their parish equips them to have confident conversations on Church teaching.

Opportunities for further accompaniment by the Church:

- Only 48% agree or strongly agree that their parish connects them with a small faith-sharing group.
- Only 44% feel that their parish equips them to share their personal witness story.
- 67% have never experienced pastoral counseling or spiritual direction.
- 69% have never experienced a retreat.
- 84% have never invited a man to consider a vocation to the priesthood.
- 80% have never invited another person to consider a vocation to religious life.
- Only 46% agree or strongly agree that their parish teaches them to read and pray with the Bible.

➤ *What can the Church do to support people on their faith journeys?*

Listening Sessions

- Participants expressed the desire for a culture of **hospitality and accompaniment for the laity**, even asking for training in how to create an environment of personal encounter where people are met where they are in their individual faith journeys.
- Teen participants seem keenly aware of dominant issues in the secular culture. They **desire to be engaged and listened to on these topics** and are disappointed when these issues are not mentioned at church. As previously noted, this group appealed for more investment in youth ministry.

Disciple Maker Index Survey (DMI) Insights

Instances where people are supported on their faith journeys:

- 74% agree or strongly agree that preaching and homilies help connect their faith with their everyday lives.
- 72% agree or strongly agree that the Church helps them recognize God working in their lives.
- 63% agree or strongly agree that their parish helps them develop a personal prayer life that connects them with God.

Opportunities for additional support of people on their faith journeys:

- Only 50% agree or strongly agree that their parish provides high-quality events and other opportunities to which they can invite others.
- Only 46% agree or strongly agree that their parish provides retreats, workshops, and other resources to help them figure out their lives' purpose.
- Only 22% invite someone else to Mass on a monthly basis.
- Only 15% invite someone else to a parish activity on a monthly basis.

Summary of Accompaniment/Journey Theme (Topic 3)

In the listening sessions, participants expressed their need for accompaniment from the Church and further formation as disciples. They asked for assistance in navigating the difficulties they face in life, and they desire the Church to be walking alongside them as they do it. While feedback from the survey indicates that people feel they are well-served by the Sunday liturgy and how their parish helps them to recognize God's work in their lives, they desire to be taught how to be more hospitable as a parish community, on Sundays and by inviting others to participate in the life of the Church.

The survey indicates that parishes need to do a better job providing opportunities for formation, spiritual direction, and retreats, so that people are equipped to invite and evangelize others.

Leadership Consultant Impressions on the Synodal Sessions

The following are remarks from the four facilitators of the sessions about their experiences:

In-Person Sessions:

- A seminarian assigned to the parish participated. Originally from Africa, he seemed to be truly listening and engaged. His presence gave a special dynamic to his breakout group.
- A white male in his 70's, shared how much he connects with the Latin Rite and his dislike of the recent sanctuary renovation, which seemed to take away from that rite. Although he shared that he was not sure if he would stay for the session, he was observed sitting with two primary Spanish speakers and taking diligent notes. He sincerely seemed to value their comments and read back his notes for accuracy. This was a real moment of grace.
- Two sisters in their 70's/80's shared about their active membership in Legatus and other similar organizations. They seemed to come with specific thoughts and ideas on the needed direction of the Church. After a break, when it was time for listening/sharing time, two others from the table had moved to a different group. The sisters seemed frustrated by this, and one was apprehensive about continuing. Conversation among the remaining members turned to the possibility that they were pressing a viewpoint, not allowing for opposing opinions, and perhaps not truly listening. They seemed to acknowledge the possibility but did not appear ready to look beyond their ecclesiology.

- During the scripture reflection sharing, a woman (40's) was dominating the time with a women's rights position. The group listened respectfully to her, and during the break a deacon who was co-leading the session offered his thoughts. As the topic listening/sharing portion began, a man (40's) at her table took a leadership position. He asked the table to begin with something positive. He recognized the woman's agenda and lovingly offered a way to balance the discussion and demonstrate a synodal spirit.
- A mother and son attended two in-person sessions at the Cathedral. They identified themselves as Filipino and seemed to be homeless. The room recognized and welcomed them although they stayed at their own table. The mother shared a violent incident that happened to her mom in the Philippines and began to cry. At the end of the session, she provided a full listening form with themes and ideas that very much tied to the rest of the room. This seemed to be a forum and moment where she felt engaged.

Virtual Sessions:

- An individual had his camera turned off and the breakout members asked to see him. He responded in a matter of fact and non-hostile way, "I am here to listen." There were many Virtual Sessions where several cameras were turned off – even after numerous invitations to turn them on.
- A young man who was the scribe for his breakout group kept having challenges with his internet connection. As a result, he kept getting disconnected from his group. He persisted using different technology and creative means. When he sent in his report, he said that it was important that he support and honor his breakout group, his community. His commitment to the process and sharing the voice of his community members was inspiring.

Both Virtual and In-Person Sessions:

- At many of the sessions, there was at least one person who strongly voiced skepticism about whether the feedback would truly reach the Holy See. Many wanted to know what was being said at other tables/sessions. One asked who was on the committee at the Holy See that would review the final report. Some were critical of the DMI survey questions, opining that the survey questions did not seem directed to the synod and its intent.
- At all sessions, appreciation was voiced for the opportunity to come together and talk about faith and the Church. There was a definite desire for continuation of these types of forums – a nod to small faith sharing groups and further transparency.

Next Steps

Parishes of the Archdiocese of San Francisco are encouraged to use their *Disciple Maker Index* (DMI) Survey Data as the starting point for pastoral planning. CLI is conducting webinars for pastors and volunteers on how to access and navigate the many reports coming from this important feedback, how to identify priorities based on the data, how to create goals, and how to communicate results to parishioners.

This will equip parishes to work with their leadership teams (e.g., pastoral council, finance council) to address the expressed desires and concerns that both the survey results and the listening sessions have yielded. The consultative model provided by this synodal process will greatly support this planning effort. These pastoral plans will be important and tangible outcomes of the synodal process at the local level.

The priests of the Archdiocese are gathering for a convocation in September. There, they will review this data as a group both in aggregate and by deanery in order to coordinate responses to the expressed desires and concerns that surfaced in this synodal process.

Appendix

Experience Participation & Design – A Time of Inclusive Dialogue

Consultative Materials – Participant Handout (front) (in Spanish as well)



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

Welcome!

The Holy Father has called us to engage in this global dialogue at this particular moment in the Church's life for a very specific reason. It is not to solve one specific issue or revise a piece of doctrine. It is to regain our ability to listen, to demonstrate the interdependence of our respective journeys of faith, and to remind us that the Holy Spirit is "at work in every place and time." (from *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*) The "Synod on Synodality: Communion, Participation, and Mission" is a two-year process of listening and dialogue beginning in 2021 and concluding in 2023.

Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: "It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium." This journey, which follows in the wake of the Church's "renewal" proposed by the Second Vatican Council, is both a gift and a task: by journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through her experience which processes can help her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open herself to mission. (Courtesy of USCCB).

Fundamental questions for consultation of the People of God:

1. How is this "journeying together" happening today in your local Church?
2. What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"? (*Preparatory Document, 26*)

Our Time Together

- Welcome, Opening Prayer, and Overview
- Scriptural Reflection
- Synodal Dialogue
 - Topic 1: Joys and Concerns
 - Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church
 - Topic 3: Accompaniment and Journey
- Closing Prayer

Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance
lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together
to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever.
Amen.

For more information about the Synod, visit
<https://www.synod.va/en.html>

Synodal Timeline



As we enter into this sacred time together, please help us to honor the spirit of synodality, by embracing and modeling the following norms to ensure a fruitful experience:

- **We are here to enter into prayerful, serene listening.** Avoid debate or argument or jumping in with your thought, rather ensure others have time to finish their thought and allow for some silence so that you can really process their offering.
- **We are here to share our respective journeys of faith.** Avoid advocating for programs, policies, procedures, rather focus on reflecting back on your journey and looking forward to the future with hope.
- **We are here to receive and honor the stories of others.** Avoid repeating specifics of what you've heard outside of the session, rather share the fruits and challenges of the overall experience of synodality.
- **We are here to discern the will of the Holy Spirit.** Avoid trying to persuade or pressure others into your will, rather listen for common threads and profound insights.

Scripture Reflection Activity

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning good deeds done to a cripple, by what means this man has been healed, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well. This is the stone which was rejected by the builders, but which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:8-12)

Questions for Scripture Reflection Activity:

What experiences in your faith journey does this Scripture call to mind? Some ways that you can approach this question:

- What joys or sorrows do they provide?
- What obstacles or wounds are brought to light?
- What hope is found?

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the hearts of your faithful.
In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Questions for Consultation

Topic 1: Joys and Concerns about the Church from the people of God

- What fills you with joy about the Church?
- What concerns do you have about the Church?

Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church

- In what ways or moments has the Church encouraged you to speak up? How does the Church listen to you or hear what you are saying?
- How can the Church create greater opportunities for people to be heard?

Topic 3: Accompaniment/Journey

- How can the Church help you and others to grow in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with the Church?
- What can the Church do to support people on their faith journeys?



Scribe Instructions for Synodal Consultative Sessions

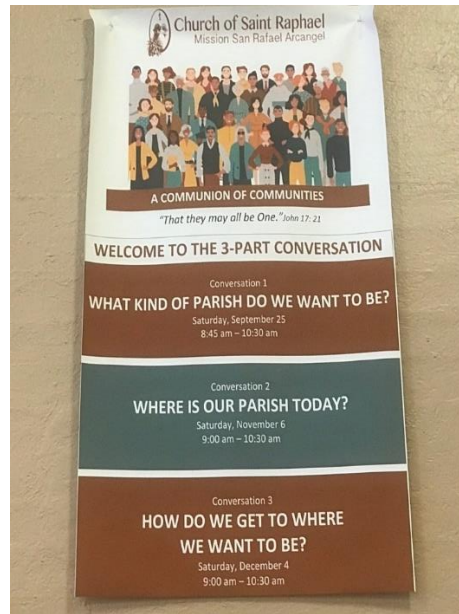
Thank you for agreeing to serve as a scribe for your small group. Your role is to help capture themes, topics, questions, and recommendations from your group.

Please use the “Scribe Form for Synodal Sessions” to capture what your group shares.

When taking notes, please keep in mind the following:

- Use the provided note-taking handout.
- Please write as legibly as possible.
- Listen for themes and key words; you do not have to write every word that is shared. Bullet points will be especially useful.
- If a word or idea is repeated, you can place a hashtag (#) next to it to indicate the repetition.
- If someone offers a moving comment or articulates an idea particularly well, please record that in your notes.
- Be sure to indicate the areas in which there is agreement in the group as well as the areas where group members have different opinions.

Photos



St. Raphael – Pastoral Planning Banner – in the Synodal Space



St Augustine Parish Synodal Session Participants – They requested the photo



Consultative Session – St. Matthew



Consultative Session – St. Pius

