

Synod on Synodality Update

Office of the Chancellor

March 25, 2022



Walking Together on the Synodal Path

Listening Session Reports

Many parishes, schools and other organizations have finished their listening sessions and are submitting their synthesized reports online at <https://www.rcan.org/reporting-your-listening-session>. The information and comments are very comprehensive and will contribute to the report we send to the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), to be included in the report to the Vatican Synod Committee. Please have your reports synthesized and uploaded to the reporting pages **by April 15**.

Some Things You are Saying

There is a positive feeling about the listening session process and the need to continue this process at all levels of parish life. Parishioners and other groups feel that this is a great opportunity to get to know each other, hear what others are thinking and experiencing, and that they are making a contribution to the Church by being the body of Christ. The listening session reports will be valuable for parishes as they continue to look ahead and plan ways to reach out, welcome and engage all. Here are a few highlights so far:

Evangelization and Outreach

- Parishes need to find ways to get people back, build community, and engage people
- Better outreach to those on peripheries; marginalized
- Social Justice/service outreach: refugees, health clinics, food pantry, homebound

Welcome

- Need to welcome all people
- Fear of not being welcome

Faith Formation

- Concerns about Youth
- Concerns about Faith Formation for Young adults – especially those married with children; single (Gen Y & Z)
- Concerns about Mass: how to help people understand and engage people in the meaning of Mass and sacraments
- Concerns about stronger faith formation for children

Participation by Laity

- Amplify voices of the laity: decision making
- Generational differences, not being listened to by administration, people need to speak up for what they believe
- Lay collaboration and a voice in the leadership of the Church.

Parishes in General

Community Building

- Need for Community building events
- Discussion/Collaboration/Sharing/Celebrations in deaneries or other
- Have parishes come together for Small Christian Communities, Bible Study, book clubs, etc.
- Accompaniment for people during key life moments: birth, baptism, sacraments, celebrations, funerals

- Welcome the gifts of youth; allow them to be part of the parish ministries, activities, councils, etc.
- More ecumenical and inter-faith discussions

Communication

- Communicate what Archdiocese has available for parish needs: spiritual ed., faith formation, retreats, training...
- Communication: pastors to help laity hear from RCAN: Jersey Catholic; Rejoice in the Lord, RCAN website; communications to staff, as well as other Catholic news sources.

Stay tuned for more...

Catholic Schools

Our Catholic high schools have been having their listening sessions and sending in their reports. Union Catholic was featured in Jersey Catholic and on the local Patch. <https://jerseycatholic.org/high-school-students-explore-their-relationship-with-the-church/>.

One of the questions that posed to students in the high schools was: **If you could sit down with Pope Francis, what would you tell him about young people today? And what are some challenges youth are facing today?** Here are a few synthesized responses from various high schools:

- Mental Health (67%)
- Peer pressure (33%)
- Church pressure (33%) (Different Morals)
- Sexuality (33%)
- General feelings of being unwelcome (33%)
- LGBTQ+ Rejection and judgement (33%)
- Drugs (33%)
- Negative effects of social media (33%)
- Ministry to youth is repetitive and unappealing (33%)
- Parent Pressure (17%)
- Gender inequality & Misogyny (17%)

Another questions was: **What is the best thing you have participated in that helped deepen your faith or helped engage you in your faith?**

- Spiritual retreats (100%)
- Milestone Sacraments such as First Holy Communion and Confirmation (50%)
- Regular participation in the sacraments (33%)
- Days of Reflection (33%)
- Studying at a Catholic school
- Class prayer and daily school morning prayer as a community
- Service opportunities
- Family prayer (which increased due to the pandemic)
- Youth group
- Being treated respectfully and on the same level by counselors

Religious Institutes

The religious of the Archdiocese are also holding listening sessions within their congregations. Many congregations have also included their associates as part of the listening sessions and, like other groups, are excited to have the conversations and contribute to building a stronger Church. We are looking forward to their reports and ideas.

Thank you for all you are doing to be a part of the Synod on Synodality.