Ground Rules for Synodal Consultations

1. This consultation is a safe place to talk – we will treat each other and what anyone says with reverence and respect.

2. One person speaks at a time and others listen attentively.

3. We all listen with an open mind.

4. Discernment means speaking, listening, and prayerfully reflecting, so we will be pausing periodically to reflect and pray.

5. Keep your comments reasonably brief, so others have time to participate.

6. We will only speak once until everyone has had an opportunity to share.

7. We will be reporting the themes and experiences that emerge in our conversations to the diocese without indicating the names of individual participants.

8. We will use the Respectful Communication Guidelines (from the USCCB):

   R: take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel, and use words that others can hear and understand

   E: use EMPATHETIC listening, not just words but also feelings being expressed, non-verbal language and silence

   S: be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles

   P: PONDER on what you hear and feel before you speak

   E: EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions

   C: keep CONFIDENTIALITY

   T: TRUST the process because we are not here to judge who is right or wrong but to experience true dialogue through sincere sharing