



## Synod on Synodality Listening Session – Convener Feedback to Archdiocese

Date of Session April 19, 2022

Location of Session Epiphany Catholic Church

Estimated No. of Attendees 60

Person Completing Form Jay Stuart & Tracy Squyres

### #1

#### **Describe the listening session experience (attendees' attentiveness, engagement, openness, etc.).**

- The Conveners chose to explore the themes of *Listening & Forming Ourselves in Synodality* using the questions provided in the Convener's Guide.
- Most of the comments associated with Questions #2-6 in this document are direct quotes from the Scribes within our small groups at the Listening Session.
- The people who attended were intentional about showing up; they clearly wanted to be involved in our parish's listening session.
- Some attendees were so enthusiastic that they expressed an interest in participating in additional listening sessions.
- The process worked well to ensure there was engagement at each of the break-out sessions; as the convenors walked around the space, it was evident that there were rich conversations happening at each table.
- Attendees came with a sincere openness, even though some expressed concern about the way the process was being managed.
- Everyone in attendance had a deep desire to be heard.

### #2

#### **Highlight frequently cited points that generated energy or struck a particular chord with attendees.**

- Desire for more small group meetings / discussions/ conversations
- Deep mistrust of the church hierarchy in the U.S., including the USCCB, which appears to be out of touch with our current time
- Concern for the youth / young people losing touch with their spirituality / the Church as a result of our modern culture. There is a feeling that the Church has failed our adult children, more than the children left the Church. The Church's approach to discernment feels irrelevant to many, especially the youth and young adults. Therefore they leave.
- Our culture makes it difficult to be open to others and for people to put themselves in other's shoes.
- People are not being fed from the pulpit; adults want support groups, homilies that speak to contemporary life. It's hard to listen if the concerns I have in my life, in the world, don't connect with the Church and are rarely addressed. I have a hard time listening if I can't buy into what they're saying, if it doesn't make sense to me or I can't relate it to my life.

- Listening is facilitated by skill in knowing how to suspend assumptions and how to express oneself in a way that allows them to be heard, small groups which help us grow, time to hear people's stories, intergenerational sharing.
- Sometimes we ignore individuals or whole groups because of our limited scope and experience, not "rubbing shoulders" with "people on the margins" or particular specific groups (groups of a certain age, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, gender identification, etc.)

### #3

#### **Describe less-frequently cited points that attendees found inspiring or that introduced new perspectives.**

- Our Church is capable of becoming more modern as evidenced by women being allowed in certain higher positions beginning in June, 2022.
- There is something inherently good about the Roman Catholic Church that merits our perseverance and loyalty.
- The mission of the Church is to put the Beatitudes into practice and follow Jesus.
- The Catholic Church is in agreement with most other Christian denominations on the basics, and we need to keep reaching out to them even though we don't feel like they necessarily reciprocate.
- We need to hear more women's voices in the Church – the voice of the Spirit is not heard from 50% of its members. Provide more opportunities for women within the Church. Show greater respect for women and their abilities within the hierarchy of the Church. What happened to the women who were active servants of the church in the 70's & 80's- they were discriminated against. Women are doing a lot of the grunt work of the Church but not getting a lot of credit.
- The Diaconate should be open to women. Provide opportunities for educated, Catholic women to again be able to give the homily during weekly Masses.
- There is a trend to the male clerical traditions of pre-Vatican II which do not reflect the truth of the Church. The male hierarchical structure of the Catholic church excludes many people. The male leaders do a disservice to minority members of our church (women, people of color)

### #4

#### **Provide examples of diversity of views and opinions that were shared by attendees.**

- In our country, there are so many contrary, difficult voices that clash with God's message of compassion and tolerance
- The voices that I ignore are the voices of those in the church who are insisting everything is alright, that there is no major dissent in the church
- I don't know what truth is anymore; there is a war on truth. I feel like I have to find my own truth, to interpret what is right and true.
- It's difficult to listen when we seem to live in parallel worlds separate from those who don't share our experiences and opinions
- If you have compassion for others, you also have to take care of yourself
- The way we are raised and our exposure to minorities (or lack of) indelibly shapes our mindset
- As long as I think there isn't a problem, and think that I'm not biased, then there is no problem, and I won't listen to the other (white privilege).
- Voices that are ignored: young people who feel estranged from the Church despite years of Catholic schooling, divorced, gay, women, "conservatives," voices that challenge us (e.g. those advocating for climate action), voices that ignore science.

## #5

### Highlight any pertinent, unique feedback that was shared by attendees.

- The COVID pandemic and politics have driven a wedge between people and have interfered with our ability to be compassionate toward those who think differently.
- There's been an explosion of knowledge in the last century, but wisdom has not followed suit at the same pace.
- Sacrament of Holy Communion should not be weaponized against politicians who don't "toe the line".
- If we remain silent, we are complicit
- Again, if we had to summarize all the comments regarding engagement, we would all remind ourselves and one another that "relationship/s is/are messy!" It takes time and patience and commitment to return again and again.
- Have additional discussion groups focused on service to others and current community issues. Integrating faith within these dialogue sessions.
- Invite more young people into these discussions by reaching out to the local high schools both public and private.
- When we react first, make assumptions of the other's judgment, we can't even agree to disagree. It is so important to be able to communicate with others that are different - yet we're challenged by multiple ways of understanding the world, different life experiences, different understandings of truth and the reality of science and facts.

## #6

### Share additional observations, comments, or input that you feel could add to our learnings in this Synod listening phase.

- This process provided an opportunity to become acquainted with other community members.
- Hoping with this process, some unheard voices may get to be heard, transcending the hierarchy directly to Pope Francis.
- The concept of the Synodal Process will need to be explained in a variety of ways just like anyone advertises a new product. One needs to understand what this synodal way is and why it is important now, why it hasn't been utilized for the past 200 years, and how it will make our Church better.
- Listen to all ideas and opinions as all have value.
- We need more opportunities to listen to the community who cares to come (sessions like this)... and help foster beneficial change. "Town Meetings" that are more than gripe sessions, with a good process that helps people to communicate their concerns and hopes in a respectful way that build rather than damages community
- What facilitates our listening are skills in knowing how to suspend assumptions and how to express oneself in a way that allows one to be heard, small groups which help us to grow, time to hear people's stories, and to learn from intergenerational sharing.

Return this form as soon as possible after your listening session(s). The form can be turned in online by going to [www.archlou.org/Feedback-Archdiocese](http://www.archlou.org/Feedback-Archdiocese). You also may email the form to Tink Guthrie at [tguthrie@archlou.org](mailto:tguthrie@archlou.org) or mail it to Tink Guthrie, Archdiocese of Louisville, 3940 Poplar Level Road, 40213-1463. All forms must be returned by June 1, 2022.