



Archdiocese of Philadelphia:

Synod on Synodality

Local Synodal Session Summary Form



By hosting a local synodal session, St. Norbert was asked to submit a summary of the themes shared from those who participated to be included in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia submission, which will be sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by June 30, 2022. We submitted our summary on May 25th, before the June 1st deadline, for inclusion within the archdiocesan summary.

St. Norbert held two listening sessions (May 17th & May 21st) as well as reached out to our Homebound population through individual conversations. All in all, 48 individuals participated – **Thank You!**

The report we sent to the Archdiocese is copied below in full. We were asked to use a ‘bullet-point’ format to capture themes and particular quotes. A repeated theme is indicated by the number within the parentheses.

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

Question 1: What fills you with joy about the Church?

- The Eucharist (8)
- Beauty of the Liturgy (7)
- Universality of the Church (4)
- Prayer/devotion (4)
- The community of believers, fellowship (4)
- Reliability of Church teaching (3)
- The experience of acceptance and forgiveness (3)
- Good preaching (3)
- Pope Francis as the "conscience of the world" (3)
- Small group experiences (2)
- Reliability of Sacred Scripture (2)
- The unbroken Tradition passed down from the apostles (2)

Notable Quote: "The Pope exemplifies humility, inclusivity, compassion, encouraging us to understand those who are not like us--we are all God's children."

"The Eucharist orients us to our ultimate end."

Question 2: What concerns do you have about the Church?

- Clericalism (6)
- Divisiveness (5)
- The exodus of young people (5)
- Inequitable role of women (5)
- Long term sustainability of the Church (4)
- Timid defense of Church teaching in the face of cultural pressure (4)
- Encroaching moral relativism (3)
- Poor catechesis (3)
- Sex-abuse crisis & related complicity within Church (3)

Notable Quote: "Women can be astronauts, run major corporations, but they can't be ordained."

Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church

Question 3: In what ways or moments has the Church encouraged you to speak up? How does the Church listen to you or hears what you are saying?

- The Church generally does not encourage parishioners to speak up (5)
- The present synod is an opportunity for people to speak out (4)
- Opportunities to speak out include surveys, parish meetings, parish council (3)
- When parishioners do provide feedback, there is often no follow-up (3)
- Some priests are approachable and encouraging of dialogue (2)
- Small groups provide a place for people to be heard (2)
- Be present to people in times of need, crisis, loss (2)
- When people do engage, provide feedback (2)

Notable Quotes: "If you do speak up, nobody follows up. It goes into a black hole."
"We don't really know if the Church hears what we're saying, because we don't hear the results or hear what they're doing with what we say."

Question 4: How can the Church create greater opportunities for people to be heard?

- Engage with/provide regular listening sessions with pastor and parish council (3)
- When people engage, provide feedback loops (3)
- More information sharing/updates on parish activities and ministries (3)
- Provide opportunities for parishioners to share their stories at mass (2)

Notable Quote: "The exodus from the Church could be mitigated or reversed by listening to those who exited. One way would be to form an outreach to fallen away Catholics. Actively encourage them to come to a small group seminar designed to listen to their views and be prepared to respond with compassion and truth."

Topic 3: Accompaniment/Journey

Question 5: How can the Church help you and others to grow in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with the Church?

- Lifelong catechesis, including sacramental preparation and adult formation (7)
- Continued emphasis on small groups (5)
- Emphasize God's love/mercy, not sin and doctrine (2)
- Create more opportunities for fellowship (2)
- Reach out to young people (2)
- Reach out to poor (2)

Notable Quotes: "Primary message to the faithful is God's love, not sin."
"Find ways to engage with the poor...not just do for them."

Question 6: What can the Church do to support people on their faith journeys?

- Provide opportunities for fellowship (3)
- Continued support for small groups (2)
- Appeal to younger people/start engaging sooner (2)
- Reach out to people with compassion who are marginalized/suffering (2)
- Engage with poor (2)

Notable Quotes:

"Survey the parish to learn how many Catholics today can tell what is the doctrine on the Real Presence, etc. Based upon the survey results, hold parish seminars with experts on the need for enlightenment using the catechism and its relation to scripture as the source... We have the truth--let's stick to it."

"Church needs a more inclusive approach to women, LGBT community, contraception... More empathy toward real issues, problems, challenges of people (even abortion/pro-life issues, i.e., supporting children from unplanned pregnancies)."



The “Synod on Synodality: Communion, Participation, & 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).

For more context and information on the Synod, [find it here!](#)