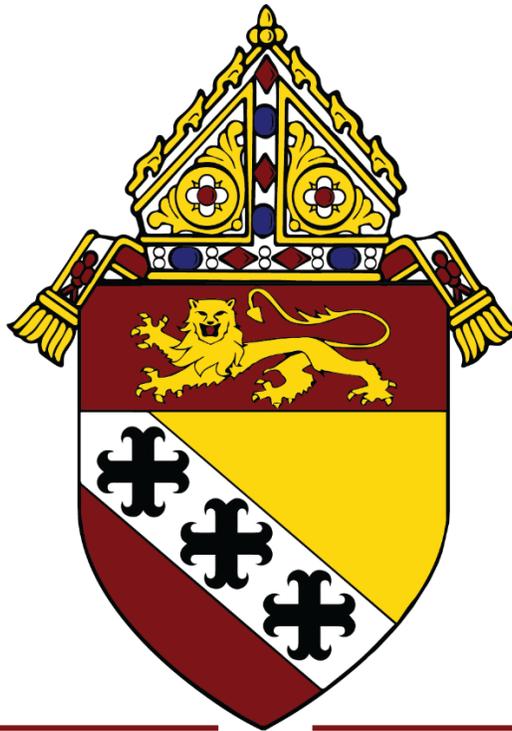


Synod on Synodality — Diocesan Synthesis



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON

Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS, DD
Bishop of Charleston

Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo, DD
2021-2022 Synod Ordinary

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BACKGROUND

When it was founded in 1820, the Diocese of Charleston comprised three states — North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. For short periods of its early history, it also included Haiti (where Bishop John England reportedly ordained the first cleric of color) and the Bahamas. Today, it encompasses all of South Carolina.

Catholics have been a significant minority in this state. In Colonial days, they were proscribed from many privileges of ordinary citizenship. Religious freedom has, thus, been an important value to the people of this state and, to their credit, they have managed ecumenical and interreligious cooperation despite occasional local waves of prejudice. At present, Catholics are estimated to make up 5 to 10% of the state's population. Many denominations, free churches, and non-Christian groups are represented, as are the unchurched or inactive.

The Diocese of Charleston has seen tremendous growth in its Catholic membership. This has been partially occasioned by significant conversions to the faith, including among clergy from Episcopalian and Lutheran traditions. Several priests and permanent deacons have also converted. Aside from conversion, much of the growth in the Catholic population can be attributed to two sources: 1) an influx of retirees from the U.S. Northeast and upper Midwest; 2) immigration from Central and South America. Therefore, the diocese has created an office of Hispanic ministry, celebrated many intercultural events, and begun printing the monthly diocesan magazine in two languages.

There are also pockets of Filipino, Vietnamese, Nigerian, Polish, and Portuguese-speaking Catholics, and thus, one can find parishes in various locations where Masses are occasionally celebrated in languages of these peoples. Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo, bishop of the diocese since 2009, led efforts to create and expand Catholic parishes, missions, schools, and services to an increasingly multicultural population. The appointment of Haitian-born Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS, as bishop of Charleston marks the Vatican's recognition of the diversity of the diocese.

The diocese has and continues to confront a legacy of slavery and of racism, and instituted new initiatives after the infamous murders of nine church members, including the pastor, of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston in 2015. These initiatives at parishes, schools, and ecumenical and interfaith groups have championed interracial understanding, inclusion, and such keystones of Catholic social teaching as solidarity, options for the poor, and promotion of the common good.

PROCESS OF THE CONSULTATION

Upon receiving notice of Pope Francis' initiative, to culminate in the Synod on Synodality, Bishop Guglielmo charged Sister Kathleen Adamski, OSF, Associate Director of the Office of Spirituality and Formation for Ministry, with designing and leading the process of consultation in the diocese.

In August 2021, an executive committee was formed and with their collective insights, a survey — which could be taken online or in person — was devised and additional questions reserved for in-person listening sessions. The materials for the consultation were released on September 7, 2021, and published on the diocesan website, www.charlestondiocese.org. Deans of the seven deaneries were invited to host presentations, and several parishes, religious communities, youth, campus, young adult organizations, and ministerial offices and groups were invited to participate.

The bishop officially opened the Synod with Mass on Sunday, October 17, 2021, at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Charleston. He filmed an encouraging explanatory video, and diocesan media promoted

participation. Some parishes offered explanations and invitations in their bulletins or included the intentions of the Synod in the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.

The committee realized at the start of this work that COVID-19 and its impact might influence or alter the participation of Catholics throughout the state. The restrictions of the virus and its variants, the fear of attending large gatherings and other factors, influenced the overall response to the listening sessions. It also has been clear that “synod” and “synodality” were terms unfamiliar to Catholics in the pews. While explanations were offered across diocesan media and in some parish presentations, the purpose and importance of the exercises (listening sessions and surveys) often eluded the faithful.

However, by the conclusion of the process, nearly 4,000 people responded to the surveys, counting those taken in person or mailed in, those completed online, and those returned in English and Spanish. There have been nearly 85 listening sessions with over 1,000 participants. For perspective, it is important to note that the diocese includes 94 parishes, 21 mission churches, 33 Catholic schools, two Catholic hospitals, one Catholic-associated hospital, seven Catholic Charities offices, five Immigration Legal Services offices, a Catholic maternity home, and active campus ministries at secular and religious-affiliated colleges and universities. Parishes and missions reported a total of 199,543 Catholics registered in the diocese as of the 2020-2021 fiscal year report. There is anecdotal evidence that several Spanish-speaking Catholics, plus those who spend parts of the year elsewhere, participate regularly without officially belonging to a local parish.

Women and men religious were among the most responsive to the invitation to participate in the synodal process, and significant numbers of them participated in surveys and listening sessions. Certain parishes had impressive turnouts and responses, while others had little or no participation. What came through strongly was that participation came most based on pastors and faith leaders who actively promoted this initiative. For example, one parish in the Rock Hill Deanery hosted five listening sessions. A bicultural parish in the Myrtle Beach Deanery had 15 sessions. The Office of Ethnic Ministries held repeated sessions for African Americans and Asian-Pacific Islanders. The Office of Hispanic Ministries either hosted or promoted 11 listening sessions in which Hispanic communities, including those speaking the Mayan languages of Q’anjob’al and Chuj, participated. Two Spanish-language meetings in Greenville drew a combined total of 400 participants. Other parishes and groups had minimal participation. The response from parishes, ministerial offices and lay associations was proportional to the amount of emphasis and effort given by its leadership.

EXPERIENCE OF THE CONSULTATION

The experience of the consultation was mixed in its level of involvement. By mid-April 2022, responses were based on participation of 2.4% of registered Catholics in South Carolina. Some responses suggested that the process breathed new life into the Catholic community with the potential of new evangelization, while others suggested the process would not leading to meaningful, actionable work.

With the mixed views and the consistent and inconsistent profiles of the diocese, survey responses still garnered common themes. (*See Appendix A*)

English-speaking (80.1%) and Spanish-speaking (80.6%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their parishes or mission churches welcomed and involved their parishioners and had many activities and groups into which they could enter.

A similarly high percentage found their parish liturgies vibrant and the offerings for faith formation and devotional activities numerous (82% English-speaking, 83.4% Spanish-speaking). A significant number responded that they felt that people were aware of the baptismal call to evangelize in everyday life (74.8%

English-speaking, 78.5% Spanish-speaking). Understanding stewardship as a way of life was noted by many as something they had internalized (75% English-speaking, 81% Spanish-speaking).

It seems appropriate to note that those who responded to the surveys seem, anecdotally, to have been typically active parishioners. Somewhat fewer responded that they felt there were parish efforts to attract youth, young adults, widowed, divorced, and/or minorities (59.9% English-speaking, 65.7% Spanish-speaking). Fewer still, among English-speakers (33%), stated that their parish had ways to reach the less active or inactive. Nearly double that number of Spanish-speakers, however (63.5%), said there were specific ways their communities extended invitations to the community.

There were discrepancies in responses of language groups. For example, responses varied when it came to Catholic engagement with the larger community. On the matter of Catholic social teaching, 72.5% of English-speaking respondents answered that they were aware and 78.2% of Spanish-speaking respondents indicated the same. However, on questions about dialogue with others on matters of race, immigration, human rights, and the environment, only 51.2% of English-speakers responding said that they were encouraged to be actively engaged, while 75.3% of Spanish-speakers said they received encouragement from their parishes or the diocese. Spanish-speaking Catholics were not asked about ecumenical and interreligious engagement (due to an oversight), but only 49.4% of English-speakers indicated that they were encouraged to be involved.

Other gaps in perception of parish actions and consultations were evident. While 71.7% of Spanish-speakers responded that they had input on parish decisions about projects and activities, only 48.3% of English-speakers did. A little more than half of English-speakers (52.7%) stated that fellow parishioners were open to change and were likely to feel that their involvement made a difference. Only 42.9% of them observed that their fellow parishioners knew the meaning of discernment, and 54.1% responded that parish leaders and clergy were open to the Holy Spirit and willing to engage others in discernment. The response on these questions from Spanish speakers was distinctly different — 73.3% answered that parishioners were open to formation and change and said they make a difference. When asked about discernment and openness to the Holy Spirit, 64.8% responded that their members are attuned, and 72% stated that their pastors were similarly attuned and willing to engage others in the discernment processes.

African American respondents (all of them English-speaking) were most positive in their responses to questions about the vibrancy of parish liturgies (76.7% strongly agreeing or agreeing), awareness of their baptismal call to evangelize (73.8% strongly agreeing or agreeing) and confidence that their fellow parishioners understood stewardship as a way of life (75.2% strongly agreeing or agreeing). They were less likely to feel that their parishes attempted to reach youth and the marginalized (only 40% with some degree of agreement) or those who have become less active or inactive (only 25.6% strongly agreeing or agreeing). While a number answered they were aware of Catholic social teaching (68.5% strongly agreeing or agreeing), fewer than half responded that their parishes and the diocese encouraged involvement in social justice activities or interfaith civic projects (44.6% agreeing on the former, 41.5% on the latter). Slightly more than half (52.7%) agreed that clergy and parish leaders engaged with others in discernment, but far fewer agreed that they were consulted in decision making and pastoral planning (only 31.8% agreeing). They also responded that there was a gap between the clergy's openness to discernment and their fellow parishioners' understanding of what constitutes discernment (38.8%). The findings suggests that perceptions of being outsiders or "other" persists among a significant number of Black Catholics in the diocese.

Finally, it should be noted that there was a wide variation among those responding "Not Sure" to questions on the survey. The greatest level of assurance was evident in statements regarding liturgy, parish activities, and stewardship, where "Not Sure" was in 3-7% of responses. The statements to which respondents were most likely to respond "Not Sure" pertained to care for the marginalized, outreach, ecumenical involvement, discernment, and general openness to the Holy Spirit (in some cases, 20-30% indicated they were not sure).

The responses to Listening Sessions were shared among the committee. Four major themes resulted from the sessions, though not all comments could be placed in a category or included in this synthesis. (*See Appendix B*)

MAJOR THEMES

1. Communication

Media

Over the past two years, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, respondents shared that social media was most effective in keeping parishioners connected to their parish. Responses included that Mass being livestreamed was appreciated. Other tools mentioned as beneficial included: Flocknote, FORMED, Scripture reflections, videos, on-line retreats, webinars, online meetings which included chat rooms, and e-mails sent from the diocese and its ministries. Parish bulletins, in print form, continue to be seen as a vital way to connect, particularly with those who are not adept at electronic media.

Some respondents shared that mailing surveys to parishioners or using flyers or bulletin board announcements would help keep people up to date with parish activities. Respondents noted they valued parish leadership communication, formally and informally, by having social events and person-to-person contact to build relationships. There was recurring emphasis on personal contact — particularly to connect with elderly and homebound but also to encourage youth and young adult participation in parish life. Respondents also suggested having town hall meetings periodically to communicate in person concerning parish events.

There seems to be a sincere desire to have more opportunities and occasions for Spanish- and English-speaking populations to connect so that parishes are seen as united communities of faith, even though there are language and cultural differences.

The Pulpit/ Ambo

Respondents throughout the process emphasized how important it is to have pastors, parish administrators, and deacons calling attention to opportunities for participation and faith formation. Respondents answered that activities will be prioritized when promoted from the pulpit, including internal (inter- and intra-parish) and external (civic, ecumenical) events.

The Diocese

Participants stated a need to have more collaboration and understanding between key councils of the parish — financial and pastoral — along with persons who have special expertise and diocesan leadership. Some commented that policies are made and distributed when, at times, members of various parishes could be involved or consulted in setting policy.

2. Governance

Parish Councils

The role of Parish Councils came up continually in listening sessions. In some parishes, members are invited to recommend names for the council. Some respondents said there had been a custom of having those recommended for council make presentations as to why they wish to serve and what gifts they might bring. While there have been cases in which parishioners voted for parish council members, changes in pastors often means changes in procedures. Some respondents said they would like to have their voices heard rather than wait to see who is appointed by a pastor. Participants also said that various ethnic and age groups could

be better represented on their parish councils. This observation was especially noted in listening sessions with Hispanic communities.

Other matters noted:

- parish councils having annual retreats and formation on Church issues
- succession planning and how it's done
- parish councils reflecting the notion of synodality
- making parishioners aware of these councils and their memberships
- reinstating or reestablishing councils as very beneficial to the community
- parish councils presenting the needs and desires of the parish as an effective way to establish relationships between parish leadership and parishioners.

Clergy

A second issue in parish governance concerned how the spiritual leader of the parish relates to the finance council, parish (pastoral) council and the members of the parish in leadership style. For example, a pastor choosing the members of a pastoral council and not including parishioners in the process can be seen as not wanting collaboration with the members.

Participants said they appreciate when a pastor's homilies give the meaning of the Scriptures and demonstrate applying it to daily life and events in the world. Members stated they want to hear more about papal encyclicals, social justice, and issues of equality. Respondents said they want to be challenged by the pastor on how to apply what they receive at Mass, how they can help in the life of the parish and bring their faith into the larger community. One suggestion was that pastors present a spiritual gifts inventory to parishioners and recommend ways to act on the findings.

The presence of the priest at parish social events and his interest in the lives of the parishioners was mentioned by many participants. They said where his interest is evident, it is vastly appreciated, but some reported remoteness or disinterest on the part of their pastor. In some instances, people said there is not a viable option for them to voice concerns to parish leadership. Parishioners desire a collaborative relationship with their pastor, and, even where the terms are not familiar, they indicated they would welcome applying collegiality, subsidiarity, and conflict resolution in the parish setting.

Respondents stated that pastors need to develop more effective ways to get to know their flock, especially in a large parish. When a pastor or administrator is serving a parish with multiple mission churches, parishioners said they appreciate when the priest finds ways to bring these groups together.

Also worthy of note: though the Diocese of Charleston was among the first in the United States to ordain permanent deacons, many Catholics do not realize that deacons have received the sacrament of Holy Orders and are ordained members of the clergy.

3. Evangelization

Formation

While evangelization has received much emphasis from our most recent popes and bishops, many respondents restricted their notions of evangelization to parish catechetical programs, Catholic schools, and youth and young adult ministry. However, there is a clear trend in responses that Catholics want to be more effective evangelizers. Thus, many participants have expressed a desire to learn tools of evangelization. For some, evangelization is an underused term. Respondents suggested that workshops on evangelization and training for interested parishioners would be welcome.

Providing avenues for people to hear direct testimony of faith journeys and development from others in ministry has been suggested. Taking five minutes either before or after Mass might facilitate this sharing. Talking about RCIA, Engaged Encounter, women's or men's Bible study, Alpha, Christ Renews His Parish, and other programs can help parishioners get concrete understanding of missionary discipleship. Also, parish town-hall meetings (repeatedly mentioned), and regular faith-sharing were cited as opportunities to promote an evangelical spirit.

Welcoming and Outreach

Participants acknowledged a need for better ways to welcome new members, young adults, and families into the life of the parish. One suggestion is volunteer system can be set up to reach out to those who leave the parish or becomes inactive or in need of special support. In this way, evangelization becomes personalized, a need frequently mentioned in surveys and listening sessions.

Hispanic Catholic respondents emphasized the importance of encounter and invitation — in terms of sustaining active members — for drawing in Spanish-speaking Catholics with little churchgoing experience and inviting Spanish-speakers belonging to other Christian denominations. Along with all other responding groups, the Hispanic community noted the leadership of pastors and those ministering as priests and deacons as vital to faith development, and the diocesan School of Faith (*Escuela de la fe*) has offered beneficial faith formation. Also expressed was great concern for ongoing formation and involvement of youth and young adults.

The African American participants expressed the desire to continue to be involved in activities such as camp meetings, projects devoted to saving souls, serving as street-corner disciples, and conducting missions. Evangelization in this community is a special focus of Black History Month (February), Juneteenth (June), Soul Fest (August), and Black Catholic History Month (November). Respondents noted that it is important to continue and honor the few (now integrated) historically African American parishes.

On another matter, the diocese has formed some policies and pastoral practices for youth who experience same-sex attraction or deem themselves transgender. It also has had an active Courage ministry, for adults with same-sex attraction, plus EnCourage, for Catholic families of members with same-sex attraction. However, there seems to be little awareness of these programs. Some respondents noted a need to reach out more deliberately to the LGBTQ+ community.

One of the troubling findings from the surveys and listening sessions is that a notable number — including the most active Catholics — do not perceive their parishes as prioritizing outreach to people and populations on the margins. Participants said they seek leadership and guidance to be more hospitable and welcoming.

4. Women in the Church

In several listening sessions, participants said that women ought to have more leadership roles at the Vatican, in the diocese and in parishes.

Women Religious

Women religious number over 90 statewide. In listening sessions, many expressed a need to have an avenue to gather for support and discuss key issues in the Church. Since several women are ministering in rural areas, they noted the lack of opportunity for spiritual and intellectual formation. There is no Catholic university or seminary in South Carolina, thus women religious rely on their efforts and collaboration for enrichment and challenge. Some consecrated women suggested the diocese could sponsor a weekend for sharing of ministries, education, and mutual support, especially to those in remote areas or whose first language is not English.

Another note from listening sessions is that the talents of women in the diocese have been underutilized, specifically the talents of women with professional training, experience in education, administration, business, various service industries, plus advanced degrees in theology, spirituality, and ministry. Respondents appreciated the leadership which women and women's groups have provided in many initiatives and indicated that this practice should continue and expand.

Altar Servers and Others

Pope Francis moved to recognize and officially install adults, male and female, as catechists and acolytes, modifying Canon 230 of the Code of Canon Law. Women are leaders of several diocesan departments, parish offices, Catholic schools, and outreach centers. Parishes and mission churches have women and girls who participate in liturgical and ministerial roles as lectors, altar servers, directors of religious education and more. It should be noted that a few parishes reserve serving at the altar to males, and the reasons vary. Some respondents said females should be welcomed to serve in every parish.

CURRENT REALITY: LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

There is much enthusiasm expressed for the life of the Church and for active participation in its liturgies and mission. Among the "lights" evident from listening sessions and surveys is the leadership which laity have shown historically and still show in the Diocese of Charleston. Participants said their parish liturgical life is reverent and inspiring, and several noted the variety of activities to found in many churches. Respondents stated considerable respect for clergy, especially for priests, along with an expectation that their leadership provides the impetus to serve and to grow in the faith. There is a clear trend for personal connection and closer collaboration with priests.

Among the "shadows" is the response from laity that they have little influence on the larger parish and the local church (diocese). While some are empowered in their circles of influence, many are disconnected from decisions in the rectory and chancery. There was consistent expression of need for more effective and deliberate outreach to youth and those on the margins, plus ecumenical outreach and on social issues such as racial justice, immigration reform, and care for the environment. Especially noted has been a dearth of formation in Catholic social teaching.

Some expressed concern that the clergy sex abuse scandal has not been sufficiently confronted, with its residue among the explanations suggested for attrition in parish attendance.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Holy Father's vision for the Church of the 21st century is one of synodality so that Church leaders and members "walk together." New methods of collaboration of laity and clergy will invigorate the present and help shape the future, where each member's specific vocation and purpose is valued. This radical equality in the "common priesthood of the faithful," received at baptism, needs to be revitalized in every aspect of the Church or it will miss the giftedness and gifts of all, especially of the laity and those groups that experience exclusion or marginalization from Church life. Survey respondents and listening session participants stated that the process of synodality can continue and find new forms if the Church discerns the movement of the Holy Spirit locally, nationally, and globally.

Key points that emerged at listening sessions and in surveys may serve as a guide or directional avenue. The following recommendations are hereby given to Bishops Fabre and Guglielmo and to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

- Parish leaders are called to intensify efforts to communicate with parishioners, specifically via more personal contact. This can be done through various means: social events after Mass, where the parish team gets to know members; regular town hall meetings so parishioners may share in advancing the parish mission and vision, and how they are implemented; more frequent formal and informal gatherings whereby parishioners feel ownership and inclusion in the life of the church. Collegiality among pastor, parish leadership and the people in the pews in appropriate decision-making is valued.
- Though parish or pastoral councils are not canonically required by each parish, parishioners have a sincere desire to have finance and pastoral councils who can report to them. Participants expressed the desire to have some input regarding who is chosen for these councils (parish councils in particular), citing the value of regular retreats and training for those leadership positions.
- Parishioners prize and seek clergy who will share their spirituality through homilies that explain the Scriptures well and how to apply these readings to daily life and contemporary situations.
- To meet the needs of the future Church, many respondents do not question the need for spreading the Good News or evangelization, but believe they need training regarding best practices and methods to do so. While some may not be comfortable giving witness to how a personal relationship with God transforms, the establishment of a diocesan evangelization initiative could work with and train parishes on formation and action. This would require allocation of funds and personnel on the part of the diocese.
- In response to the recommendations and example Pope Francis, leadership positions for women in the Church and for members of minority groups need to be strengthened. The Diocese of Charleston has worked diligently in training over 200 deacons, opened master's level courses to women in lay ministry, and trained hundreds for ministry in the Office of Hispanic Ministry program *Escuela de la fe* (school of faith), but more can be done to equip lay ecclesial ministers. This, too, would require allocation of funds from the diocese.
- Additional initiatives need to be made to inform Catholics of the Church's history of social teaching, plus education on Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to form intentional disciples. Such formation can shape participation in the civic community and engagement in projects to advance the common good of society and creation.

These findings are presented in hopes that the local Church and the universal Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and Our Blessed Mother, will face the present with courage, confident in a future full of hope in the Savior, Jesus Christ.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey for the Synod on Synodality

Results: **April 25, 2022**

Total Respondents: **3,981**

1) Our parish has many groups and activities that allow parishioners and newcomers to feel welcome and involved in a community of faith.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
1404	1765	479	117	190

2) Our parish planning includes ways to reach and attract youth, young adults, singles, members of minority communities, widows/widowers, divorced and has found ways to foster their inclusion.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
756	1617	822	236	531

3) We also have specific ways to reach out to those who are not active or have become less active in our parish.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
345	963	1154	324	1175

4) We are aware of Catholic social teaching and Church position on moral and spiritual matters. As Catholics, we are encouraged to voice our views about life issues, social concerns, quality education, family, immigration, the environment and other issues that might be important topics in the news or our local community.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
1010	1860	544	210	334

5) Our parish offers vibrant liturgies and encourages parishioners to serve in a variety of liturgical ministries such as lectors, acolytes, musicians, cantors and choirs, ushers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Our spiritual formation is further reflected in devotions, retreats, and days of recollections.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
1490	1763	396	149	167

6) At our parish, people are aware of their baptismal call to reach out in faith to evangelize in their everyday lives as Jesus did.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
907	2057	471	105	421

7) Our parish, along with the Diocese, alerts members to possibilities for dialogue by respectful listening and sharing of ideas and values that have to do with race, religion, human rights, immigration, the economy, conflict resolution and the environment.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
614	1411	862	257	808

8) Our parish encourages members to become involved in conversation and special civic projects with members of other faith communities to support interfaith relations and to maximize cooperation on causes to support the common good.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
562	1389	980	242	773

9) In our parish, we have learned how to gather input from members and to help build consensus so that decisions about scheduling, projects, parish activities, and local priorities are not simply seen as “top-down” decisions.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
544	1356	887	329	837

10) We feel we are consulted in diocesan decisions to seek new ways to involve parishioners, to seek assistance and ideas from beyond our local community so that people have a real sense of ownership in what happens to them.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
316	971	1262	445	957

11) Our parishioners listen to the action and impulses of the Holy Spirit and have received some instruction on the difference between decision-making in the corporate or political mode and genuine discernment.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
395	1300	854	243	1158

12) Parish leaders and clergy seem open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, welcome it when parishioners come forth with ideas that seem Spirit-led, and find means to engage other members of the faith community in consideration and deliberation through communal discernment.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
616	1518	603	213	993

13) Members of our parish are open to appropriate change and are committed to on-going formation, not only personal but communal. Members have a sense that their voice and their participation make a difference, and many are eager to be even more involved.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
486	1599	838	253	777

14) Our parishioners understand that Stewardship, embraced as a way of life, increases our awareness of how God draws us to Himself and how He is making life-giving connections with us.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
906	2065	355	111	522

Appendix B: Encuesta para el Sínodo sobre la Sinodalidad

Resultados: **25 de abril de 2022**

Total de Participantes: **641**

01) Nuestra parroquia tiene muchos grupos y actividades que permiten a los feligreses y a los recién llegados sentirse bienvenidos e involucrados en una comunidad de fe.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
273	245	86	19	18

02) Nuestra planificación parroquial incluye formas de llegar y atraer a los jóvenes, a los adultos jóvenes, a los solteros, a los miembros de comunidades minoritarias, a los viudos/viudas, a los divorciados, y ha encontrado formas de fomentar su inclusión.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
190	235	131	41	47

03) También tenemos formas específicas de llegar a los que no son activos o se han vuelto menos activos en nuestra parroquia.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
156	253	146	35	53

04) Conocemos la doctrina social católica y la posición de la Iglesia en materia moral y espiritual. Como católicos, se nos anima a expresar nuestros puntos de vista sobre cuestiones relacionadas con la vida, las preocupaciones sociales, la educación de calidad, la familia, la inmigración, el medio ambiente y otras cuestiones que puedan ser temas importantes en las noticias o en nuestra comunidad local.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
192	307	75	23	43

05) Nuestra parroquia ofrece liturgias vibrantes y anima a los feligreses a servir en una variedad de ministerios litúrgicos como lectores, acólitos, músicos, cantores y coros, ujieres, ministros extraordinarios de la Eucaristía. Nuestra formación espiritual se refleja además en las devociones, retiros y jornadas de recogimiento.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
268	267	64	20	23

06) En nuestra parroquia, las personas son conscientes de su llamada bautismal a salir al encuentro de la fe para evangelizar en su vida cotidiana como hizo Jesús.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
210	295	78	21	38

07) Nuestra parroquia, junto con la Diócesis, alerta a los miembros sobre las posibilidades de diálogo mediante la escucha respetuosa y el intercambio de ideas y valores que tienen que ver con la raza, la religión, los derechos humanos, la inmigración, la economía, la resolución de conflictos y el medio ambiente.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
184	300	83	17	59

09) En nuestra parroquia, hemos aprendido a recabar la opinión de los miembros y a ayudar a crear un consenso para que las decisiones sobre la programación, los proyectos, las actividades parroquiales y las prioridades locales no se vean simplemente como decisiones “de arriba abajo”.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
167	294	95	22	66

10) Sentimos que se nos consulta en las decisiones diocesanas para buscar nuevas formas de implicar a los feligreses, para buscar ayuda e ideas más allá de nuestra comunidad local, de modo que la gente tenga un verdadero sentido de propiedad en lo que les ocurre.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
154	264	114	36	76

11) Nuestros feligreses escuchan la acción y los impulsos del Espíritu Santo y han recibido alguna instrucción sobre la diferencia entre la toma de decisiones de modo corporativo o político y el auténtico discernimiento.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
138	274	105	24	97

12) Los líderes parroquiales y el clero parecen estar abiertos a los impulsos del Espíritu Santo, acogen con agrado que los feligreses aporten ideas que parezcan dirigidas por el Espíritu, y encuentran los medios para implicar a otros miembros de la comunidad de fe en la consideración y deliberación a través del discernimiento comunitario.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
179	281	76	30	74

13) Los miembros de nuestra parroquia están abiertos a un cambio adecuado y se comprometen a una formación continua, no sólo personal sino comunitaria. Los miembros tienen la sensación de que su voz y su participación marcan la diferencia, y muchos están deseosos de participar aún más.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
177	294	89	22	59

14) Nuestros feligreses entienden que la Corresponsabilidad, abrazada como una forma de vida, aumenta nuestra conciencia de cómo Dios nos atrae hacia Él y de cómo establece conexiones vivificantes con nosotros.

Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No estoy seguro
206	315	62	14	49

Appendix C: Listening Session Guide

Prayer

Introduction by Facilitator

Everyone here today has come because you are heavily invested in your Catholic faith. Our Church has asked us to take a long, hard look at how we can maximize the participation in our parish and diocesan projects and plans, our religious activities and our outreach to the world around us. We are on a mission to build stronger and stronger communities as we proclaim and live the Gospel.

Our discussion topics touch on many of the concerns raised by the Vatican as it prepares for what is called the Synod on Synodality. As we can see from our Bishop's introduction, we are invited to look at the areas of Communion (being sacramental people and functioning as one Body), Participation, and Mission.

We will be sharing our insights and ideas on six general topics. Small group facilitators will be summarizing your contributions. We will send these to our Bishop, and diocesan officials will then compile our major insights and send them to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, who then compile a report for the Vatican. Meanwhile, we are also surveying Catholics across the state on related topics. All of our insights and inspirations count. What we are doing in these listening sessions is for the benefit of the whole People of God and for the whole general public—our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Discussion Topics

1. In our parish, how are we effectively reaching out and including our parishioners? Are there some additional ways that we need to adopt to communicate with more people and invite their active participation?

Main ideas

- A.
- B.
- C.

2. How can we intentionally gain insights and ideas from people in our parish or local community who at times may seem to be on the fringes? What demographic groups should we reach out more to?

Main ideas

- A.
- B.
- C.

3. Liturgical ministries, outreach to the homebound, religious education, and services to the poor always seem to need additional volunteers. How can we challenge people to get involved in these and other vital parish ministries? What training might be needed?

Main ideas

- A.
- B.
- C.

4. How does our parish evangelize? How can we evangelize better? How can we reach those that are not members of our parish and make Jesus real and personal? What fruits of our efforts do we see?

Main ideas:

- A.
- B.
- C.

5. Every diocese is being asked by Pope Francis to establish a “Laudato Si’ Action Platform.” Do we have people in our parish or local community who can contribute skills when we are considering renovations, building projects or in the care for our parish property? How knowledgeable are we of environmental issues in the areas around us? What deliberate actions can we take so that we “Care for Our Common Home”?

Main ideas:

- A.
- B.
- C.

6. “Synodality” asks us to be energetic and involved ambassadors of our faith by active listening and sharing of insights to advance Jesus’ mission in the world. How can our parishioners become more aware of how much their faith and insights count—and need to be heard?

Main ideas:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Approved by Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo, Bishop of Charleston — October 12, 2021

Appendix D: South Carolina Listening Sessions

2021 LISTENING SESSIONS

November 1 through December 31, 2021 (English/Spanish)
St. James Conway, 15 Listening Sessions

November 3, 2021 (English)
Assembly Hall, Diocese of Charleston Pastoral Center

November 7, 2021 (Spanish)
San Sebastian, Greenville

November 2021 (Carbojal Guatemalan)
San Sebastian Mission, Greenville

November 9, 2021
Immaculate Conception Church, Goose Creek
St. Anne Church (English), Rock Hill
Mepkin Abbey (Ecumenical Group – Closed Session), Moncks Corner
The Oratory (Religious Group – Closed Session), Fort Mill

November 10, 2021 (English)
St. Anne Church, Rock Hill
St. Gregory the Great Church, Bluffton
Precious Blood of Christ Church, Pawleys Island with St. Michael the Archangel Church, Murrells Inlet

November 11, 2021
St. Catherine of Siena Church (Spanish), Lancaster
Office of Native American Ministry (Zoom – Open Session)

November 12, 2021 (Spanish)
St. Thomas the Apostle Church, North Charleston

November 14, 2021
St. John the Beloved Church, Summerville
St. Anthony of Padua Church, Greenville

November 16, 2021
Blessed Sacrament Church, Charleston
Immaculate Conception Church, Goose Creek

November 17, 2021 (English)
Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Charleston
Religious Sisters' Congregations (Zoom Session), Statewide

November 17, 2021 (English)
St. Mary Help of Christians Church, Aiken

November 18, 2021 (English)
St. Mary Church, Greenville

November 20, 2021

Office of Black Catholics (Open Session)

November 21, 2021 (Spanish/English)

Our Lady of the Hills Church, Columbia

November 23, 2021

Immaculate Conception Church, Goose Creek

November 30, 2021

Immaculate Conception Church, Goose Creek

November 2021 – Additional Sessions

St. Mary Church, Greenville

St. Mary Magdalene Church (English/Spanish), Simpsonville

Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, North Myrtle Beach

St. Mary Help of Christian Church, Aiken

December 1, 2021

St. Mary Magdalene Church (Spanish), Simpsonville

St. Philip Neri, Fort Mill

St. Andrew Church, Myrtle Beach

December 3, 2021

St. Francis by the Sea Church, Hilton Head

Carter May Home Senior Living (online session), Charleston

December 3-6, 2021

St. Joseph Church, Columbia

December 5, 2021 (English)

St. Philip Neri, Fort Mill

December 7, 2021

St. Philip Benizi Church, Moncks Corner with Our Lady of Peace Mission, Bonneau

December 13, 2021

St. Philip Benizi Church (Knights of Columbus Group), Moncks Corner

December 2021 – Additional Sessions

St. Philip Benizi Church, Moncks Corner

2022 LISTENING SESSIONS

January 11, 2022 (English/Spanish)

St. John Neuman Church, Columbia

January 26, 2022

Divine Savior Church, York (5 sessions)

January 2022 – Additional Sessions

St. Anthony Church, Florence

February 2, 2022 (Spanish)

Divine Saviour Church, York

February 13, 2022 (English/Spanish)

St. Peter's Minor Basilica, Columbia

February 20, 2022

St. Ann Church, Florence

February 22, 2022

St. Andrew Church, Clemson

February 28, 2022

St. Andrew Church, Clemson

February 2022 – Additional Sessions

St. Joseph Church, Chester

St. Mary Church, Rock Hill

Holy Trinity Church (Spanish), Orangeburg

Office of Young Adult Ministry (Young Adult Group), Charleston

Office of Young Adult Ministry (Young Adult Group), Columbia

Aiken (Spanish)

March 9, 2022 (English)

Divine Savior Church, York

March 10, 2022

Office of Ethnic Ministries (Black Catholics, Zoom Session)

March 13, 2022 (Vietnamese)

Our Lady of La Vang Church, Greenville

March 16, 2022 (Spanish)

Divine Saviour Church, York

March 2022

St. Patrick Church, Charleston

Approximate Listening Sessions as of April 30, 2022: **85**

We thank pastors who mailed the survey to parishioners for completion.

Appendix E: Synod Process and General Overview on Diversity

Process

The Diocesan Synod Committee consisted of the coordinator, Sister Kathleen Adamski, OSF, department heads and representatives from various offices, including the offices of Ethnic Ministries and Hispanic Ministries. The committee developed a 14-question survey and published it online, with paper copies available in parishes, plus posters with QR code links directed to the online survey. Over 4,000 surveys were completed and over 85 listening sessions were held throughout the state. Languages available for survey included English and Spanish with translation options on the website for other languages.

Direct emails were sent to individuals, leaders, and priests on the diocesan database, and to the Ethnic Ministries mailing list to invite members to listening sessions for Black Catholics and Native Americans. A direct email was sent to Asian and Pacific Islanders inviting them to participate. Directions were included for obtaining the online survey in various languages.

The draft 10-page final report consists of data collected from all ethnic groups with a special emphasis on white and Hispanic populations. The largest age group participating was 46-60; second largest 31-45. The largest ethnic group participation was white followed by Hispanic. Note that some Hispanic youth may have taken the survey in English.

Synod Participation: Diversity Findings

African American/Black Catholics

Four percent (130) of the estimated number (4,000) of African American and Black Catholics in the Diocese of Charleston participated in the survey. Ethnic Ministries/Office of Black Catholics hosted two virtual listening sessions. Three historically African American parishes hosted in-person listening sessions (at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Greenville, St. Martin de Porres Church in Columbia, and St. Patrick Church in Charleston), with an estimated number of participants of 160. Synod participation was 4% of the overall number, and the third largest level of participation by ethnic group.

Native American Catholics

Ten percent of Native Americans (14) in the diocese (140) participated in the survey. The Office of Ethnic Ministries hosted one Native American Ministry virtual listening session. Synod participation was .004% of the overall number.

Hispanic/Latino Catholics

The Office of Hispanic Ministries hosted six listening sessions in which eight Hispanic communities, including two Mayan communities, participated. Two of the meetings had over 400 people attend. This notable participation was attributed to the energy of the pastors and the director of the Office of Hispanic Ministries.

Asian and Pacific Islander Catholics

Three percent of the participants were Asian and Pacific Islanders. One email went out to over 150 Vietnamese leaders and others inviting them to take the survey in Vietnamese, with instructions on how to receive the translation and to share with their community. One email was distributed to all Asian and Pacific Islander leaders and others inviting them to take the survey with instructions on how to obtain the survey in various languages.

Chart 1: Participant Comparison by Ethnic Groups

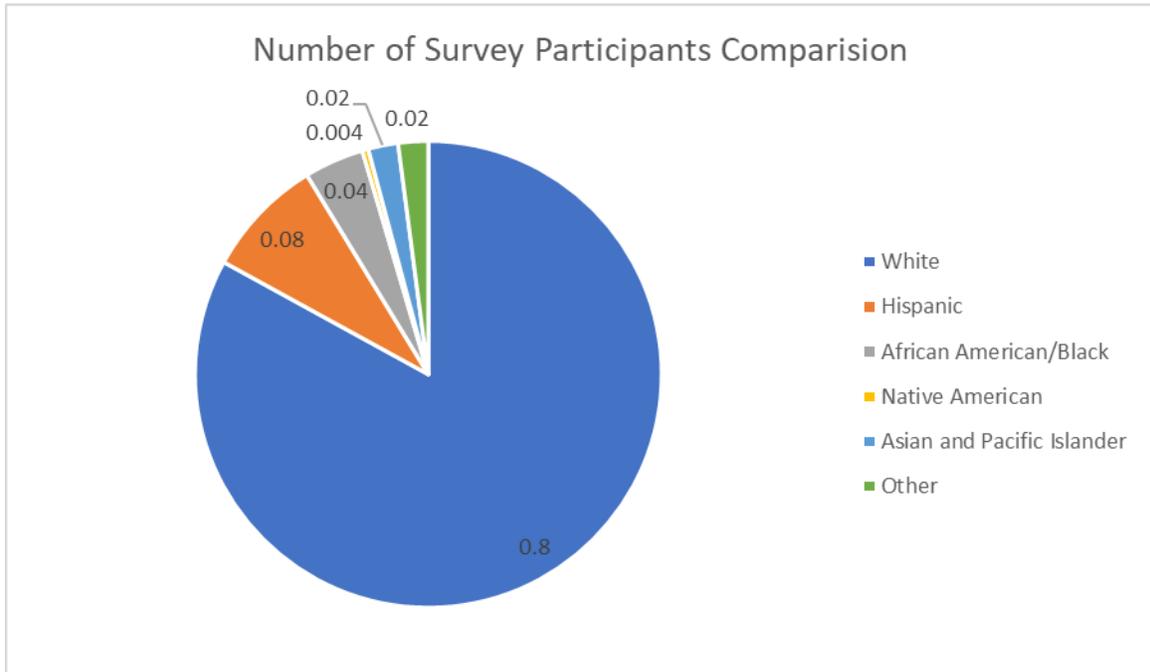
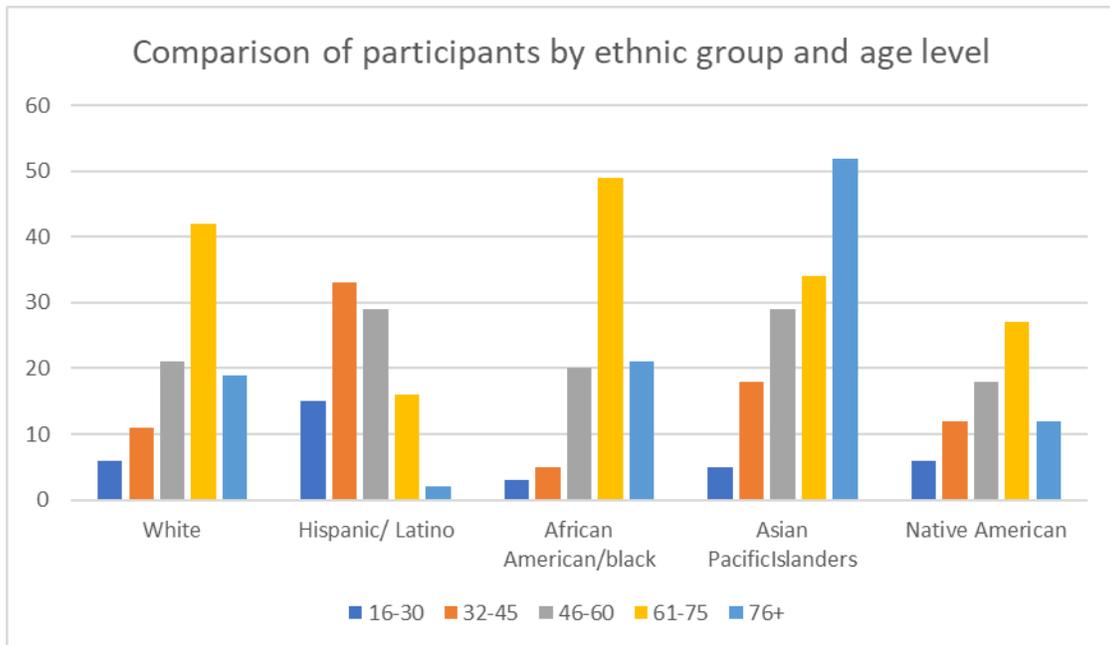


Chart 2: Participant Comparison by Ethnic Groups, Ages



Survey Findings: In Relationship to Age, Survey Results and Ethnic Groups

Hispanic Catholics had a significant number of participants who were teens and young adults. African Americans had the lowest number of teens and young adults. Asian and Pacific Islanders had the largest number of participants over age 76. White and African American/Black participants largest age groups were 61-75 years of age.

African American/Black participants answered similarly to general survey results except for Question #2, “Our parish planning includes ways to reach and attract youth, young adults, singles, members of minority communities, widows/widowers, divorced and has found ways to foster their inclusion.” Most participants in the group disagreed with this statement. Overall survey results agreed with Question #2.

Asian and Pacific Islander participants answered similarly to general survey results except for Question #3, “We have specific ways to reach out to those who are not active or have become less active in our parish.” The majority of Asian and Pacific Islanders agreed with this statement. Overall survey results disagreed with Question #3.

Native American participants answered similarly to general survey results except for Question #10, “We feel we are consulted in diocesan decisions to seek new ways to involve parishioners, to seek assistance and ideas from beyond our local community so that people have a real sense of ownership in what happens to them.” Most Native American participants agreed with the statement. Overall survey results disagreed with Question #10. Native American Ministry is one of the newest in the diocese, thus the community is invited for sharing and decision making about the ministry.

Listening Session Findings: Topics of Concern, Suggestions, Ideas for New Ministries

1. The need to eliminate racial discrimination and stand up for all social/moral justice issues.
2. Continue virtual Mass to keep the infirm, elderly and shut-in connected. Programs to reach out to the infirm and shut-in and those who have not returned to Church since COVID-19.
3. Women’s issues in the Church. Females should be allowed to serve at Mass for the bishop and/or special diocesan events.
4. Find ways to reach the 18-35 age demographic and identify their needs from an ethnic perspective.
5. Establish better communication initiatives through technology and outreach ministry.
6. Transportation ministry is needed. Resources for the ministry need to be allocated.
7. Reinvigorate and make people aware of the special ministries and outreach for Hispanic, Black, Native American and all ethnicities, plus LBGTQ+.
8. Better homilies that relate to the lives of the people, especially noted by African Americans.
9. Address the political divide by emphasizing the Catholic Church’s teaching on issues.
10. Address and avoid conflicts between parishioners and priests when making presbyteral assignments. Include parishioners in the process.
11. Define and assign roles for parish council members. Meetings should be open to all parishioners. Allow for suggestions to initiate a parish pastoral plan and follow up with results.
12. Support Black Catholic evangelization by prioritizing and supporting the mission of historically African American parishes and schools for the community.
13. Offer grief counseling.
14. Allow liturgical music that is conducive to the ethnic community being served and/or evangelized.
15. Create and support social activities to promote stronger bonds with parishioners and local communities.

16. Continue efforts to make the Church more welcoming. Put fliers of welcome and invitation in hotels, coffee shops, and restaurants.
17. Provide educational resources on environmental issues and protection of the Earth (*Laudato si*).
18. People need people. Create opportunities for parents with children to meet other parents and children in a ministry of their own.
19. More funds and support are needed to help struggling parishes, especially those meeting the needs of ethnic communities.
20. Ministry and better outreach to our ethnic college students especially those attending historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

Appendix F: Findings on Hispanic/Latino Community Participation

Among all Hispanics registered as Catholics in South Carolina (39,698), only 495 Hispanics participated in a listening session, or 1.4% of the overall surveys. A higher number of Hispanic participants was expected but due to several varying reasons, it was not possible to reach more parishioners.

The Office of Hispanic Ministry conducted 6 listening sessions, eight Hispanic communities participated, and among them, two were indigenous Mayan communities. (*See Appendix D for list of Listening Sessions*)

Appendix G: Testimonials from Listening Sessions

- The listening session after our Saturday night vigil Mass was a great experience. I think it is a useful exercise for any parish that is curious about the status and overall vitality of their community. – *(Urban parish)*
- We had a full room of various ages including a 15-year-old student who served as a scribe. Our pastor was present [and] participating, as he gave the prayer and rotated from table to table in the listening session. We had a great team of about 15 members organizing the plans and sessions. *(African American parish)*
- Consecrated religious women, specifically, thought the Holy Father’s vision of Synodality has long been coming and were very excited to share their thoughts and feelings about the questions. We hope that the Church continues to offer women positions in parishes, dioceses and the Vatican since a women’s perspective is so crucial in discerning the movement of the Spirit.
- I sensed that many people were truly listening to each other which was a welcome exercise in honest communication.
- At our parish, members in the listening sessions came up with “action items” which will help to continue the discussion of this Synod.
- It was an honor to share my perspective on journeying together into the future of the Catholic Church. Thank you, bishops, and Pope Francis for valuing my perspective and input. / *Fue un honor compartir mi perspectiva sobre el viaje juntos hacia el futuro de la Iglesia Católica. Gracias, Obispos y Papa Francisco por valorar mi perspectiva y consejos.*
- One of our parish-team members suggested that we do a follow-up town hall for the church and distribute copies. At the town hall, we should select some initiatives to undertake through Parish Council with a report of progress on development within a specific period.
- One deacon shared that some of their parishioners felt that the church is doing fine, and we should not be concerned about changing doctrines or dogma.
- The women of the parish are doing most of the work but don’t get recognition or representation. More women leaders are speaking out. Women need to play a *bigger role* in the Church. At the least, they should be welcomed as deacons as they did in the early Church.

- Now that we have completed our Synod listening sessions, how [can] we continue the conversation? We had an excellent group of Team Leaders and Scribes and they are now asking for a Town Hall Session to share with church members and especially those who could not be present.
- Those parish members who participated were appreciative of the opportunity and took the challenge to participate in something totally new very seriously. All their input was offered in the spirit of charity and truth, and with the intention of improving parish life.

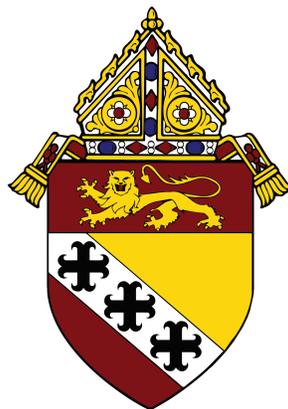
Appendix H: Executive Committee

Michael F. Acquilano, Secretary of Communications and Public Affairs
 Sister Kathleen Adamski, OSF, MA, MS, Associate Director of the Office of Spirituality and Formation for Ministry, *Synod Coordinator, Writer of Synod Synthesis*
 Rev. Msgr. D. Anthony Droze, Vicar General, *Advisor*
 Rev. William C. Frei, Parochial Vicar, Chaplain
 Brian Kelsch, Theology Teacher, *Ad Hoc*
 Michael Martocchio, Ph.D., Secretary of Evangelization
 Kathleen Merritt, Director of the Office of Black Catholics and Native American Catholics
 Kathleen Schmugge, Senior Director of Social Ministries
 Sister Pamela Smith, SSCM, PhD, Director of the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, *Writer of Synod Synthesis*
 Gustavo Valdez, MTS, DMin, Director of the Office of Hispanic Ministries
 Deacon Thomas Whalen, Diaconate Board
 Deacon Jerry White, Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries

The Diocese of Charleston was recognized by the *Leadership Roundtable* for its early work on the Synod, along with select dioceses across the United States, thus executive committee members received calls from Africa plus around the country seeking assistance and guidance in the process for the Synod on Synodality.

Thank you

A special thank you to all members of the team who spent countless hours meeting or leading listening sessions, to support staff and those individuals who wrote special programs for various religious education programs and high-school students. A special thank you to the Secretariat of Communications and Public Affairs for their grace in accepting the many Synod requests in addition to their regular workload. This Synod would not have been possible without the cooperation and collaboration of so many faithful lay Catholics, religious women and men, and clergy who accepted this task with grace and gave the endeavor a future full of hope.



Diocese *of* Charleston

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