



SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

Diocesan Synthesis



ARCHDIOCESE
of NEWARK

His Eminence Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, CSsR
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INTRODUCTION

The following report summarizes many hours of listening and dialogue. It is offered in response to the invitation of Pope Francis to dioceses throughout the world to engage in a synodal process of listening to the Word of God and one another, encounter with the person of Jesus Christ, and discernment of God's will for the Church.

Listed below are a brief history of this Local Church and a description of the Synod consultation process with salient points and recommendations summarized to help readers of this report understand what participants in this multi-faceted process said. With this in mind, readers of this report are encouraged to ask themselves whether any important points have been missed in this summary and, if so, to share this information with archdiocesan or parish leaders. In this way, it is hoped that the "walking together" envisioned by this Synod will continue beyond this effort and become our way of "being Church" here in the Archdiocese of Newark.

History

The Diocese of Newark was established in 1853 through a Papal Brief of Pope Pius IX and included the entire state of New Jersey. Until that time, northern New Jersey had been a part of the Archdiocese of New York and southern New Jersey was a part of the Diocese of Philadelphia. The first parish in Newark, St. John's on Mulberry Street, had been established in 1828. The first Ordinary of the Diocese of Newark was Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, a nephew of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. He established both Immaculate Conception Seminary and Seton Hall College in 1856, naming the college in honor of his aunt.

The first division of the Diocese was in 1881 when the Diocese of Trenton was created to serve 14 counties of South and Central New Jersey. A second division came in 1937 with the creation of the Diocese of Paterson incorporating Passaic, Morris, and Sussex counties. This established the current territory of the Archdiocese of Newark, which includes Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Union counties. Later, the Diocese of Camden (1937) and the Diocese of Metuchen (1981) were formed.

On December 10, 1937, the Diocese of Newark was elevated to the rank of Archdiocese. Archbishop Thomas J. Walsh, who had served as Bishop of Newark since 1928, was installed as its first archbishop on April 27, 1938.

At the time of its foundation in 1853, St. Patrick's Pro-Cathedral in Newark served as its seat. The site of the Sacred Heart Cathedral was acquired in Bishop Bayley's time, but construction did not begin until 1899 under the third Bishop of Newark, Winand M. Wigger. The Cathedral was completed in 1954 as the Archdiocese was celebrating its centennial year, and was elevated to the status of a basilica by Pope John Paul II during his visit in 1995.

Today, the Archdiocese of Newark serves 1.3 million Catholics in the four counties of Bergen, Hudson, Union, and Essex.

History from the Archdiocesan Archives



PROCESS OF THE CONSULTATION

Pope Francis has issued an invitation to the whole Church to gather and listen to the Holy Spirit in prayer, listening, and discernment to forge a way forward for the twenty-first century. In particular, he has invited all into a process of *Synodality*, a way of continually gathering all to participate in listening and sharing. The goal of synodality is to find ways to connect the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, to the everyday lives of people. All of the information culled from the gatherings in this consultation will be shared in ecclesiastical regions, continents, and ultimately with the Synod on Synodality in Rome in October 2023.

The people of the Archdiocese of Newark responded enthusiastically and generously to the listening sessions to aid in preparation for the Synod on Synodality 2023. Parishioners, families, marginalized persons, parents, catechists, and many others expressed appreciation to Pope Francis for the opportunity to dialogue, discern and be heard. A great diversity of people participated. Persons from many different cultures, ethnic backgrounds, age groups, and languages, joined together in prayer and small groups to listen and discern how the Holy Spirit is calling us to be the Church, the Body of Christ, reaching out to the world. Unfortunately, the Archdiocese was not able to host listening sessions with persons of other Christian churches as well as different religions, but plans to do so as the synodal process continues. And there are many other groups or persons to reach out to and communicate with in the near future.

When Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, CSSR, arrived in the Archdiocese in 2017 to serve as archbishop, he held town hall meetings in each of the 27 deaneries and heard many concerns. This synod consultation process provided the Archdiocese with an additional opportunity, not only for prayer, discernment and dialogue called for by Pope Francis, but also a way to help participants to think concretely about how to address issues on the local level. A goal for the synod listening sessions was to reach as many people as possible throughout the Archdiocese. As the synod consultation's planning team began to organize the diocesan consultations, they provided information sessions so that everyone could learn about the Synod and ways they could participate. It was hoped that parish pastoral councils, with some additional training, could facilitate the listening sessions in their respective parishes. This was very effective in gaining participation from a significant number of people. In places that did not have functioning pastoral councils, other leaders were called upon to facilitate the listening sessions.

The Archdiocesan pastoral departments also trained their leaders to assist in listening sessions in their areas: schools office, faith formation, evangelization, youth ministry and more. They crafted questions based on the two fundamental questions from the "Vademecum," a handbook that was provided to all the Church by the Synod office in Rome. Those questions were focused, appropriate for their constituents, formulated specifically to the Archdiocese. In addition, the consultation sought to understand what ways the diocesan departments could be helpful and in service to parishes and other institutions. The Office for Hispanic Ministry crafted faith sharing type questions based on the *Encuentro* model which fostered community, listening, and discernment. Responses to these questions have been integrated into this report. (For the complete summary prepared by the Office for Hispanic Ministry, see Appendix p. 22.) The feedback from all the groups that participated in this consultation process will help various

archdiocesan departments as they strive to respond to the real needs of the parishes and other archdiocesan communities.

Since there was little time to prepare before launching the synodal process, archdiocesan coordinators studied resources from other dioceses and freely shared their own. The Archdiocese was able also to assist dioceses in Europe, Latin America and Asia, and the Council for the Synod in Rome expressed its appreciation for the materials produced in Newark as well as the process that successfully reached so many in a brief time.

The Covid 19 Pandemic

The coordinators were concerned that the Covid 19 pandemic would inhibit the consultation process and that the faithful might not participate in person, which was the ideal. However, the response was wonderful: a remarkable number of people eagerly took part in prayer, listening and efforts to discern what the Holy Spirit is calling us to in the twenty-first century. Along with in-person gatherings, Zoom sessions were held to reach people who were unable to participate in person. Despite initial concerns, Zoom meetings allowed more people to participate in this process. Parishes and other institutions were challenged to get out of their comfort zones in order to connect with their members. New experiences in online communications, social media, video-taping and other digital platforms has enriched the life and mission of the Archdiocese.

Demographics

The Archdiocese of Newark is comprised of many cultures and languages. On any given weekend, the Eucharistic liturgy is celebrated in more than a dozen languages, and many more languages are spoken in the homes of the baptized. In order to reach as many of the faithful as possible, materials were prepared in multiple languages and styles. Two types of models were used: First, single listening sessions were designed to be held in parishes, religious communities, schools, religious education programs, and in groups of marginalized people. The second model was used among the Spanish-speaking communities: some 212 small groups across 43 parishes met for five sessions.

In English and language groups other than Spanish, the participants were predominantly women (65%) with a smaller participation by men (35%). In the Spanish speaking groups, approximately 62 percent were women and 38 percent were men. The age of participants of English and other language groups was predominantly middle aged and older although some youth groups also took part. Here is a breakdown of the ages of participants:

Meetings conducted in English or languages other than Spanish

Ages 56+ (58%)

Ages 40-55 (20%)

Ages 20-39+ (7%)

Younger than 20 (15%)

Meetings conducted in Spanish

Ages 75+ (5%)
Ages 56-74 (23%)
Ages 40-55 (33.5%)
Ages 26-39 (22.5%)
Ages 18-25 (9%)
Ages 14-18 (7%)

Participants and Mass attendance:

Daily or weekly (72%)
Once a month (27%)
Rarely or never (1%) – many of whom describe themselves as “former Catholics”

Beyond English and Spanish speakers, many other cultural heritages participated in listening sessions, including Portuguese, Haitian, Filipino, African American, Polish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, Nigerians, Cameroonians, Kenyans, and other African nationals. During the annual celebration of Black History Month in February, the Office for African American, African, and Caribbean Apostolate organized Mass and listening sessions in four venues to gather the greatest number of participants. These were very joyful experiences and, like all of the listening sessions, were well attended and gave the opportunity for deep sharing about the Church and their experience as Black Catholics.

Outreach to those described as marginalized or on the peripheries of Church and society were contacted through Catholic Charities, various social centers (e.g., Mercy House), and LGBTQ groups. Parishes included parents of children in religious education in listening sessions as well as the persons with disabilities, elderly, homebound and, wherever permitted, those in nursing home or senior living facilities. Interviews were also held with those incarcerated and with undocumented people.

Over 700 listening sessions were held, most in-person gatherings as well as some online. About 33 parishes developed their own online surveys to attempt to reach a larger number of people who do not participate in parish life. More than three thousand pages of reports in English were received, and fifteen hundred pages in Spanish. In total, the voices of more than 15,000 people were heard.

EXPERIENCE OF THE CONSULTATION

PREPARATION AND PROCESS

To prepare for the listening sessions, a training protocol was developed that began with information sessions. Because of the size of the Catholic population of the Newark archdiocese (1.3 million Catholics in four small counties), 28 training sessions were hosted, most in person and some via Zoom. Hundreds of priests, parish staff members, religious and laity were involved. This work was significant in laying the foundation for training by helping people understand what the synod is, what it hopes to accomplish, and how to go about gathering parishioners and others to participate. Information sessions were held for parishes, religious education directors, campus ministers, Catholic schools, Catholic Charities personnel and clients, Archdiocesan staff members, religious congregations, and other social services personnel.

Following the information sessions, facilitator training was provided for coordinators of the parish or organization hosting the listening sessions. Live and virtual training sessions were supplemented with videos available on our website. The videos explained the synodal process, described how to facilitate a listening session, and provided messages to adults and youth in English and Spanish from Cardinal Tobin. Also posted were a facilitator guidebook and listening session resources in English, Spanish, Polish, Portuguese, Chinese, French, and Korean.

All who were coordinating these sessions, as well as persons who wanted more information, availed themselves of the resources posted on the website. *RCAN.org/synod*. A method for reporting a summary from each parish and ministry was also developed to capture demographics and feedback from the many groups. All these resources demanded much preparation in the short time available for such a large task. However, because of this preparation, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, thousands of pages of synthesized input from people throughout the archdiocese are now available! Because many individuals and groups expressed similar thoughts and concerns throughout this consultation process, there is some unavoidable repetition and overlapping of ideas in this report resulting from efforts to summarize the rich sharing of all.

MAJOR THEMES

In the reports from each parish, participants in the listening sessions expressed love for their parish community and appreciation for the priests and staff members who care for and minister to all. Many expressed gratitude for being able to participate in this synodal consultation and they shared their hope that this would not be a single occasion but would become a regular feature of “being Church.”

Participants expressed an overwhelming desire to reach out and welcome all to the parish, regardless of age, cultural background, state in life, sexual identity, economic or legal status. The pandemic has disrupted the pastoral rhythm of parish communities, and it is a big factor in how the parishes have been, or have not been, reaching out. There is a concern that some parishioners who regularly attended Mass or other parish functions before the pandemic have “disappeared.” Those who are elderly or have health concerns may be afraid to return to larger crowds. Some are more comfortable with live-streamed Masses which most parishes have continued.

Hispanic Catholics who participated in this consultation process expressed particular concerns about groups of people who are “on the margins” or the periphery of parish life. In particular, they cite:

- Young people who don’t attend the parish because they do not see a place for themselves: those who do not return after receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation; those who suffer from different addictions.
- The undocumented who, if they approach the parish, are afraid to get involved in other activities.
- Those in need of material help or who are in prison.
- The elderly or sick, confined in care centers or in their homes.
- Non-practicing Catholics and those who, if they attend Mass, do not engage in any parish activities.
- Those who have distanced themselves from the Church because of the loss of faith or because they do not feel welcomed in the community.

- Those who, for reasons of work or frequent change of residence, find it difficult to be part of the parish community.

Participants most often recognized the importance of welcoming people in parishes, in religious education programs and in other pastoral ministries. They shared examples of how they welcome people into their communities and even how they are not so welcoming at times. They specifically noted some who might feel unwelcome, including those who are divorced and remarried outside of the Church, undocumented immigrants, persons from other cultures, youth, persons with disabilities, those on the margins of society and persons who identify as LGBTQ.

It is apparent from the reports received that the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting shutdowns and fear of catching the virus strongly influenced congregations in all regions of the archdiocese. Coupled with a rapidly changing culture, the rise of the “Nones” (people who claim no religious affiliation), and those who are dissatisfied with the Church, including many women, participants believe that parish life has been diminished in recent years. These and many other factors are a wake-up call for local parishes who are being encouraged to look at their successes as well as the improvements they need to make in order to develop and sustain vibrant Catholic communities.

People are happy with, and see the value of, robust ministries and activities currently in place to serve parishioners and in social service and justice areas, including communion to sick and homebound, soup kitchen and food pantry support, liturgical and catechetical ministries and more. At the same time, participants believe that there is an urgent need for ministries to be opened up to include younger people, especially by personally inviting them to participate.

Participants from the Hispanic community shared their concerns about the lack of involvement of youth in parishes. As they observed:

- Youth attendance at Sunday Mass is very low in many parishes.
- Among parishes with Hispanic ministry, very few have an organized youth group.
- Where there are youth groups, they are successful in providing formative experiences for other young people and social activities for the community.
- Many indicate that in their parishes young people are frequently invited and that their participation is promoted both in the activities organized for them, and in the different formation courses of the parish. This does not seem to happen in all parishes; some parishes never talk about it.
- In some parishes youth ministry is associated above all with the catechetical program (confirmation and post-confirmation) or with the liturgical celebrations of the community (proclaimers of the Word, acolytes or choir members). But in general, young people who participated in confirmation programs do not remain active members of the parish.
- There is a lack of leaders who organize and excite young people.
- In some parishes the existing youth group is exclusively for the apostolic group that organizes it, not open to the whole parish.

There is much concern across the Archdiocese about finding ways to engage young people in parish life. Many parishes do not have a dedicated youth group so there is concern that there are not enough opportunities for spiritual encounter that would excite and move youth to experience a personal relationship with Christ. Particularly noted were the lack of liturgical experiences

(Masses) that teens can participate in fully or that fit their style of worship. Many parishes also do not have service opportunities for youth and younger children that can help to connect youth to Catholic Social Teaching. Participants acknowledged that the Youth Ministry office of the Archdiocese plays a large role in forming youth ministers for the parishes by offering retreats, prayer, and service opportunities for Spanish and English-speaking youth. Many parishioners said they take advantage of the wonderful programs and experiences offered by the Archdiocese, but many others are not aware of what they offer.

Most reports indicate that Mass and liturgical celebrations are good because they keep the focus on Christ. There is a need expressed for better homilies that relate directly to people, including youth, in their everyday lives. Music was also cited as good, but in some cases, participants think it needs to be more contemporary. Participants spoke of the desire to have youth-type Masses with young people as planners, ministers, musicians, etc. Several comments cited the need to respect the Roman Missal of Pope John XXIII (often referred to as “the Tridentine Mass”) and those who desire to celebrate according to this form.

In English-speaking groups, two different opinions regarding Church teaching were expressed by participants in the various listening sessions. Some voiced their opinion that some areas of Church doctrine and regulations are out of sync with modern times, especially regarding divorce, annulment, birth control and conception, IVF, LGBTQ issues and the ordination of women as deacons and priests. Others believe that Church doctrine should be changed. Participants stated that they often felt that the Church (especially bishops) gives mixed messages regarding these issues, and this leads to confusion. Many suggested, that the catechism should be updated to reflect changes in doctrine and regulations that no longer apply in today’s world.

KEY THEMES IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

1. PARISH COMMUNITY: WELCOME, HOSPITALITY, OUTREACH (EVANGELIZATION)

The pandemic provided opportunities to find new ways to reach out to parishioners and keep them connected. Many parishes live-streamed daily as well as Sunday Masses. Parishes communicated through social media, phone calls, letters, and more. In the synod reports, the need to reach out and welcome all was a significant priority. Some of the key points raised were:

- Find ways to invite people back to the parish and build a strong community.
- Reach out to those on peripheries and those who are marginalized, which includes youth, young adults, and those with children in religious ed.
- Do a better job at welcoming all people: divorced and remarried, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities, immigrants, varied cultural groups and others in our communities. Many noted the desire to bring cultural and language groups together as one parish.
- Continue to promote social justice and social outreach. These are essential in many parishes. Ministries such as outreach to refugees, health clinics, food pantries, homebound, etc., are thriving well in many parishes, but need to seek ways to serve more people.
- Continue to recognize parish ministries and how important they are in engaging parishioners as disciples. Many parishes described the fact that it is time to invite more

people, particularly young adults and teens, to participate in formal ministries in light of their baptismal call.

- Be missionary and reach out in joy to new and estranged members.
- Encourage members to be missionary disciples, committed to the work of evangelization.
- Build vibrant communities which care for and accompany its members.

Members of the Hispanic community observed that the laity, in general, feel invited to participate actively in the mission of the Church. They feel listened to heard and encouraged to be an integral part of the life of the community, both by priests – especially in difficult times – and by lay leaders. This is often shown in:

- The welcome provided to all by the parish community, especially in welcoming new members and cordial communication.
- The constant invitation to participate in any of the parish ministries/groups or parish activities. Creating spaces for participation, both in the liturgy and in catechesis and religious formation courses and offering their talents through the different apostolic groups.
- The cordiality and enthusiasm of the lay ministers, their testimony of life and the service they render to the community.
- The warmth with which the community receives those who attend the different parish activities that unite the parish as a family. (Training courses, celebrations of the holidays and traditions of our multicultural reality, and social activities)
- In the celebration of the Eucharist, with the active participation of the members of the community in the different ministries.

However, at other times there are obstacles to feeling welcomed or feeling like they belong:

- Often there is a sense of anonymity in the parish community. Outside of Mass people do not know one another.
- Some people think that there is a lack of a welcoming attitude on the part of clergy and community members. Some parish groups are very closed and do not provide opportunity for new people with renewed ideas and charisms.
- The diversity of origins of the members of the community that, while being a positive, can also represent a challenge. Sometimes there is a lack of openness to fostering a multicultural environment. There can be ignorance and prejudice.
- Work and family obligations prevent participation in parish activities.

2. YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

There was great concern regarding youth and the need to better connect with them in order to provide opportunities that draw them into an encounter with Christ. There was a desire to engage them in multiple areas of ministry that had at one time seemed to be reserved only for older adults. For example, 400 high school and middle school age children participated in youth ministry gathered groups. Six Catholic high schools also participated in listening sessions comprising of 824 students. Some of their comments include:

- Engage youth in parish life, ministry, councils.
- Extend invitations to younger members to be part of ministerial life of the parish. Youth need to feel they are a valued part of the parish and ministries.

- Hold more listening sessions to ask them how to best reach out and welcome them into parish life.

One significant concern from youth participants in parishes and schools was the need for attention to be paid to mental health. Many young participants asked for help coping with current and pressing issues such as depression, drug addiction, suicidal feelings, bullying and peer and parent pressure.

Particularly poignant were comments from high school teens who spoke about the need for acceptance by the Church and their parishes, the feeling that they are not listened to, their struggles with mental health and social issues, and a deeper desire to know Christ. They see the Church as exclusive, not welcoming, and rule-oriented rather than following the teachings of Christ as expressed in his words and actions. On the other hand, many appreciated their parish as a source of family gathering and tradition (especially through sacraments) and parish youth groups, service opportunities, and activities.

University Students

The voices of students from the four Catholic Universities in the Archdiocese of Newark (Seton Hall University, Caldwell University, St. Peter’s University and Felician University) were heard along with students from campus ministry centers on four public and private college and university campuses which also held listening sessions. These young adults were asked slightly different questions but had many similar responses to the reflections of the high school and youth ministry students. Here are some typical examples of the questions that were asked and the students’ responses:

What do you think are the greatest challenges facing young adults today?

- Growth of relativism (among peers and ‘authority figures’ such as professors, politicians, celebrities, even some parents... how do we navigate between right and wrong?)
- “Hook up culture” – we do not know how to date.
- Loneliness/lack of sense of “belonging” (my parents are closer to the people they went to school with than I am with my peers).
- Lack of authenticity in people (social media influence again)
- Don’t know who to trust (public figures, authority figures who have let us down or proven to be untrustworthy).
- Lack of desire for “unity” – people seem to prefer only connections with like-minded people.

It is said that the fastest group growing among the category of ‘religions’ are those describing themselves as “None” – meaning they don’t consider themselves affiliated with any religion – why do you think that is happening? That people don’t affiliate with any religion? That they don’t believe in God?

- “Authority figures” (whether they be in the Church, in the world or in our families) not leading and demonstrating the importance of a life of faith.
- It’s easier to not be religious.
- Celebrity influence – our peers are heavily impacted by celebrities, and few seem remotely interested in God.

- “YOU DO YOU” – mentality has led to bullying, where you’re told to keep religious beliefs to yourself and made to feel weird for even having them.

3. FAITH FORMATION

Handing on the Faith

Faith formation for young adults and parents of children in religious education and Catholic schools was cited repeatedly. Parish leadership sees school parents as “moderately marginalized,” appearing for sacraments but having little engagement beyond that. Reports also noted that parents often express that they don’t always know how to talk to their children about faith, nor do they feel they have the ability to answer questions from the children.

Parish leaders are concerned about young adults and parents handing on the faith to their children. Faith formation for adults, like youth, needs to be focused and intentional about what young adults are asking for. Many say that “they don’t even know what they don’t know!” Parish leaders believe that the emphasis on formation should include opportunities to know Christ personally through retreat-like encounters and “instruction” in what the faith teaches. Those who experience the RCIA process and Small Christian Communities, see these small group, Scripture focused, methods as ways to engage young adults. They believe that faith formation for all ages needs to be reimaged.

Participants said that faith formation should be focused on discipleship using multiple methods: a strong Baptism program, retreats for busy people, interesting lectures, small groups, bible study and other ways to engage people and form lasting community that keep people connected to the parish.

Participants also observed that there is a need to have more adult faith formation and catechesis. Many noted that there is often a lack of spiritual formation for all members of the community. In addition, there is also ignorance or misunderstanding about the doctrine of the Church. Most parishes do not have a dedicated director and therefore adult faith formation becomes an afterthought. Consequently, there are concerns about faith formation for young adults and adults, particularly those married with children or those who are single and are part of Generations Y & Z.

The Eucharistic Celebration

Participants noted that even prior to the pandemic, Mass attendance had been declining for decades. The practice of attending the Sunday Eucharist via live streaming at home has compounded what studies suggest is a lack of deep understanding of the Mass and the Eucharist. Participants say that formation in the meaning of the Mass is critical. Creative ways need to be developed to draw people in to understand the meaning of Mass and sacraments. There was a perception among some participants that the Mass is “boring,” and not relevant to their everyday lives. It was also stated that homilies need to be more relevant to the time and current realities of the world and speak to those who are present.

Faith Formation for Children

There were also concerns expressed about the need for better faith formation for children in parishes. The fact that young adults and parents are not knowledgeable about the faith, including Catholic Social teaching and sacred Scripture, is troubling to many. There is a sense that some formation programs are guilty of “dumbing down the faith” rather than providing good pedagogy supplemented by active engagement in Catholic liturgical prayers and practice. Several reports suggested that the Vatican needs to develop a universal catechetical program. Also noted was a desire to have a clearer understanding of what the Church teaches about controversial issues, e.g., what is fixed dogma versus rules that can be changed.

Catholic School Education

There is a long, strong tradition of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Newark. This includes diocesan grammar schools, high schools, and private schools and universities run by religious congregations. Reports reflected the value of Catholic school education and there were many comments and much sadness regarding Catholic school closings. Parishes with closed schools cited a loss of community and the ability to form children in the Faith more adequately than what religious education programs alone have been able to accomplish.

Many participants believe that closing schools hurts faith formation and the parish community. Also, there is a real concern about the future of Catholic grammar schools in the Archdiocese. Suggestions were made to re-open schools in some parishes and that there needs to be a better plan for consolidation and preservation of Catholic school education with proper funding in order to keep schools thriving.

4. PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Role of the Laity

The role of the laity is an issue that was discussed in nearly every report. Most participants indicated that it is time for lay ministry to be formally accepted ceremonially, following the example of processes that Pope Francis has recently put in place for catechists, lectors, and acolytes. Participants expressed their conviction that the laity needs to be listened to especially by clergy in their parishes and by the hierarchy.

Some acknowledged that many, but not all of the parishes of the Archdiocese, have women in significant roles as staff members. This includes parish business administrators, pastoral ministers, heads of ministries, roles on parish pastoral and finance councils, and as parish trustees. Others noted that in the Archdiocesan offices, the Chancellor is a woman, women are

superintendents of Catholic schools, heads of the Catechetical Office, business managers, and other key positions and are members of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. Many are aware that these positions are not new to the Archdiocese, but participants believe that the average parishioner is not aware of these roles or of the synodal processes that have been part of the fabric of the Archdiocese of Newark for over fifty years. Participants say it is time to feature these roles through better communication on a diocesan level. Some believe this is an opportune time for other positions to be created, such as Parish Life Coordinators (Canon 517 §2) as in other parts of the country.

Comments by participants included:

- Amplify voices of the laity: especially in parish decision making.
- Respect generational differences: younger laity feel they are not being listened to by their parish administration.
- Intentionally invite people into ministry. Some reports suggested that parish ministries seem closed and do not welcome new and younger parishioners into the ministries.
- Create an environment where lay people feel they can speak boldly, sharing their concerns, needs and opinions.
- Foster collaboration among the laity and clergy so that the laity feel like their voice is being heard.
- Provide skill training for clergy for to learn how to appreciate and collaborate with laity.
- Promote the formation of those called to the different ministries. (catechists, readers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.)

Participants say that there is a need to develop lay leadership formation and training in the Archdiocese. Many think there also needs to be a deeper understanding of the theological concept of “baptismal calling” among ordinary Catholics. Some suggested that a way to start would be to help laity understand their gifts and talents and to train them in how to use them in service in the parish community.

Participants from the Hispanic community noted the following regarding the role of the laity:

- In some parishes there is not an attitude of listening. There is an impression that the opinion of the laity is not valued. Young people suffer the most from an absence of listening and the feeling that there is no room for them.
- Many participants indicate that there is little or no participation of the laity in decision-making. How are decisions made and who makes those decisions?
 - The perception of many is that priests decide everything.
 - Participation appears to be even more limited for the Hispanic community.
 - It is dependent on the attitude of the pastor and his openness to the participation of the laity and to different cultures.
- At times, some of the laity participate in decision-making, especially in parishes where the Parish Pastoral Council already exists.
- Not all parishes have an active Parish Pastoral Council.
- At times the members of the council are not representative of the parish community. There is a lack of diversity and Hispanic representation in the Pastoral Council of a parish may be limited.

- As the laity is invited to participate in leadership of the parish, it will be necessary to support their development as leaders and therefore, offer training; assist parishioners to understand their gifts and talents and how they may be used in service for the Church.
- Administrative staff at some parishes demonstrate a negative attitude toward the laity.
- At times out of respect, Hispanics or members of other cultural groups may defer to clergy and thus, they may not ask questions or respond to an invitation to lead.
- Clericalism
- The laity at times has a lack of motivation, enthusiasm, and commitment to its own responsibilities in service to the community.

Women in Church Leadership

The role of women in Church leadership was a topic of great interest in the listening sessions. Participants from more than 90 percent of parishes expressed a strong desire to see a greater role for women in Church leadership on every level. Participants in nearly every parish said that it is time for women to be ordained as deacons and priests. These ideas were very strongly accompanied by an underlying sense of frustration. Many believe that the fact that women are not ordained as deacons or priests shows severe inequality, and a lack of respect for the dignity of women. Younger generations may find this situation to be unacceptable. Some expressed privately that they don't know how to answer the questions asked by their children as to why women are not ordained. They believe that the Church is out of touch today.

In addition, participants who are Spanish speaking affirmed the current levels of engagement of women in parish life while noting that they have little influence in decisions regarding their parish community and the larger Church.

5. GOVERNANCE

Participants recognize that the role of laity is not merely to participate in ministries and activities of parish life, but also to have a role in the governance of parishes. Participants were deeply concerned with the declining number of clergy and religious. Many cited the desire to participate in decision-making in areas that affect the parish.

To accomplish this, many participants urge the Church to:

- Offer more education and training in leadership.
- Improve the participation of women and young people as leaders in the Church Universal.
- Decrease clericalism.
- Increased inculturation.
- Continue to make the social doctrine of the Church an essential part of evangelization.
- Intensify a Missionary Vocation Ministry. In many communities, there is a need to regenerate hope in priests, practicing Christian families, teachers and all those who deal with young people in order to awaken a greater number of vocations.
- Develop a vocational plan in the archdiocese to address the issue of decreasing and aging clergy.

- Allow the administrative functions of the churches to be in the hands of lay people, deacons or religious, so that priests devote more time to pastoral care, nurturing spirituality, and evangelization.
- Greater presence of diocesan leaders within the communities. Beyond communiqués and informative papers, people want to see the clergy together with the people.
- Strengthen in parish communities the sense of belonging to their Church and their faith because if people feel like they belong, they participate and will want to take ownership.
- Promote scholarships for theological formation of the laity.

Finance and Parish Pastoral Councils

Most parishes have working finance councils but not all have functioning parish pastoral councils. There is some confusion expressed among participants about parishes having or not having pastoral councils. Some acknowledge that the Archdiocese has been concentrating on training and nurturing these councils for the past three years even through the pandemic. However, in many reports there is a call for better understanding of the role of the council, what they do, how members are chosen, skill training for the pastor to best utilize the councils, and how to communicate better with the parish.

Additional comments from the Hispanic community suggested the following ways to strengthen parishes:

- As this synodal process of listening is an example, provide periodic opportunities for the laity to participate in conversations about the needs and potential changes in pastoral direction of the parish.
- Create more opportunities for the formation of leaders and the laity in general.
- Have a pastoral project that works for the unity of the different ethnic groups of the Archdiocese.
- Improve communication among the various offices of the Archdiocese and parishes regarding the ministerial programs they offer, such as support groups, health, migration, education, among others. Councils should have a better understanding of the relationship between the Archdiocese and the parish.
- Provide more sessions when the Cardinal and the auxiliary bishops can listen to the laity.
- Support finance councils to help them improve the budget and provide economic resources for parishes.
- Raise awareness of the resources available to the Archdiocese.
- Provide for opportunities for parishes and their councils to network and share ideas.
- Form a Council of Laity within the Archdiocese representing each parish, to be the bridge of communication between the parish community and the Archdiocese.

Clergy

Parishioners were generally favorable toward their pastors and priests. They appreciate their hard work and pastoral care. Many reports suggested the need for better, more relevant homilies that speak to all members of the congregation. Participants also expressed a need for pastors to listen to their people regularly, appreciate and utilize their skills and gifts, and include them in decision making in multiple ways. The days of what many describe as a culture of “pray, pay, and obey” are long gone, and this attitude is no longer satisfactory. Reports from diverse parishes in the Archdiocese also cited clericalism, especially among younger priests, as a deterrent in parishes.

Another area of concern was a division between the members of the Neo-Catechumenal Way and other parishioners. Some parishioners believe that they are not cared for as well, or are not given as many opportunities, as the members of Neo groups.

Although many priests participated in listening sessions held in their parishes, priests serving in the archdiocese were also invited to attend listening sessions specifically designed for them. Unfortunately, these were generally not well attended. Seventy priests out of a possible six hundred attended. Generally, the priests who participated feel that there is not unity in the presbyterate, they are not journeying together and there is little interaction or collaboration among priests from neighboring parishes. They feel that the deanery structure is not effective because it depends on the dean to build a sense of collaboration. However, having regional bishops has facilitated a better sense of journeying together by being accessible and available to the priests and parishes. Many participants cited the need for a better relationship with the archbishop.

Another clergy listening session was held at the Redemptoris Mater Seminary (RM) where the priests of the Neo-Catechumenal Way gather once a week. Thirty-four priests were in attendance.

Observations from the listening sessions with priests included:

- Many of the priests from RM see a very big division within the presbyterate and a limited exposure to other priests. They believe the diversity of the clergy should be a richness, not a hindrance. They recommend having more frequent, smaller convocations for clergy to know each other better.
- Working together on the social justice issues and ministry of the Church would be a strength.
- Participants asked: Are there rights for a priest who is accused? Many believe this is not the case now, and they see this as unfair.
- Many observed that, at times, the institutional Church challenges and disappoints them.
- Participants say that parishioners need to be consulted more. The Church needs to be open to the realities of this generation, unafraid to use new language when talking about our faith and our relationship with Christ.
- Many observe that the Archdiocese needs greater diversity in its leadership, including women, people of color, and Hispanics.
- There was a strong feeling that in recent years the Archdiocesan Annual Appeal has put too much pressure on pastors.
- Participants recommended providing more assistance for inner city parishes, sharing resources, renewing the New Energies process, ensuring more equal distribution of finances, and asking wealthier parishes to share resources with poorer ones.

Sex Abuse Scandal

Participants offered comments about the effects of the sex abuse scandal. They cited a broken sense of trust in the hierarchy, and that church leadership should have responded more quickly. Parishioners are concerned about how their funds are being used, and they fear that the money they contribute is being used for settlements paid to victims or for lawyers' fees.

Among the clergy, there was a feeling that there are no clergy rights anymore, that the Dallas Charter is unjust, and that the Archdiocese must show that priests matter as persons. Some said that there are priests "on leave" who have lingered in a kind of limbo status for years with no resolution. Priests say that even when the accusations are perceived to be absurd, the accused priests are taken out of ministry and their faculties are removed. Clergy participants said that this has caused very low morale and a defeatist attitude among the priests.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Many reports reflected a lack of communication within the parish and from the archdiocese. Participants also cited a lack of knowledge of Vatican statements as well as diocesan news. Communication from pastors to parishioners regarding availability of programs, opportunities for learning, and Church news in general is not strong. Many participants say that:

- Pastors should utilize RCAN email and communications.
- The pastor and parish staff should inform the laity about all the news and resources from the archdiocese, the Vatican, and many Catholic news sources. For example, JerseyCatholic.org, a news service from the archdiocese that features news, announcements, statements by Cardinal Tobin, the bishops of New Jersey and more, needs to be promoted. A few parishes have a communications staff person and effective websites, but many have neither.
- Parishes must use multiple methods to communicate.
- The use of social media to give information about events happening in the parishes should become standard.
- More two-way communication between the archdiocese and the parishioners is needed. The archdiocese should design an efficient and effective way to proactively solicit ideas and input from various parishes. The archdiocese should offer more ongoing ways for dialogue between the archdiocese and the parishes and really listen to the needs/issues of the parish.
- Parishes should become more tech savvy, with better use of IT and social media to get information across to parishioners and secular media. The diocese could help parishes with training and set up help.

Members of the Hispanic community offered the following suggestions for improving communications:

- Promote an attitude of constant listening to the changing needs of the community.
- Respect all cultures and language groups. The language barrier can hinder communication. A priest who does not speak the same language as his parishioners or who does not appreciate the traditions of a culture can alienate the clergy from the

community. Many participants applaud the effort made by some non-Hispanic priests to speak Spanish.

- Celebrate diversity.
- Seriously consider inculturation as essential to all evangelization efforts.
- Facilitate communication and unity between the different apostolic groups of the parish.
- Continue to transmit the Mass through social media in order to maintain communion and affection with those who cannot attend church for different reasons.
- Establish a dialogue with other Christians or non-believers.
- Publicize more effectively what services and assistance is offered by the archdiocese.
- Include more Spanish on the parish websites.
- Initiate or maintain communication with those alienated from the Church. Many of the participants indicated that they do not see a clear concern for meeting personally with those who have left their parishes.
- Make use of media to announce the Good News.

RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS

Seven religious congregations centered in the Archdiocese held congregational listening sessions. These included two contemplative groups, one group of religious brothers and the rest apostolic sisters along with their associates. Members of other congregations took part in parish or institutional listening sessions.

The responses of the religious mirrored the responses of parishes and other groups who held listening sessions. For example, they mentioned their ongoing collaboration with religious congregations in the Archdiocese and elsewhere as a model.

Participants from religious congregations believe that the Holy Spirit is asking the church to pay attention to the following:

- Develop a deeper understanding of the baptismal call and commitment of all the baptized as disciples.
- Become more inclusive and be welcoming to all.
- Allow women to preach from the pulpit.
- Consider the ordination of women as priests and deacons.
- Recognize the gifts of women and include them in administrative positions.

Many also think that the following issues are “holding the Church back”:

- Limited roles for women in pastoral and administrative settings.
- Clericalism and the perception that the status of the laity, especially women, is below that of priests.
- Lack of participation in decision making.
- Lack of inclusivity of the people of God, especially women, in every area of Church life.

A particular question focused on the religious was, “What do you think Pope Francis most needs to hear from Women and Men Religious?” Respondents said:

- Place more emphasis on the needs and pain of people.
- Examine models of inclusivity in the Church.
- Expand the role of women in ministry, including in the Curia.

- End clericalism and the sense of entitlement.
- Let the un-ordained who are prepared, preach from the pulpit.
- Ordain women as deacons and priests.

The bishops of New Jersey and major superiors of religious congregations with personnel working in the five dioceses, met to discuss the synod as a group and held a listening session. They spoke about issues in the Church, the relationship of religious superiors and the bishops and how they could mutually support and collaborate with each other. The participants agreed that this annual meeting forges great relationships and is a good model for collaboration and respect.

THE ARCHDIOCESE

Participants were asked how staff from the Archdiocese could be more helpful in carrying out the Church's mission. The overwhelming response was the desire for training for councils, lay leadership, reaching out and involving youth, skills for collaboration among parishes, skill training and homiletics for priests and deacons, women in prominent and decision-making roles in diocese and parishes, training on how to reach out to welcome and invite new people and those who have left because of the pandemic or sex abuse scandals. Participants also expressed appreciation for the support and training they do receive.

The religious congregations were also asked, "How can the Archdiocese of Newark and your Religious Institute work together to grow more collaboratively and support each other?" Some ideas expressed were to:

- Learn from the experiences and efforts of organizations such as the LCWR and "stand" with them in their fight for women and their rights throughout the world.
- Share resources on education for climate change, racism, human trafficking, and a commitment to *Laudato Si'* with the Archdiocese.
- Continue to be a visible presence in places of economic disadvantage through the parishes and schools.
- Find ways to LIVE the documents of the Church that are already in existence and use them as formational teaching tools in parishes so that the laity are better informed of what the Church teaches and supports.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, desires to have all the members of the Church journey together in faith and unity. The Synod Consultation Process, with its emphasis on synodality, prayer, listening, and discernment of all with the Holy Spirit, has ignited a sense of community and provided a way to discern together. It is hoped that the listening session reports will foster collaboration and the use of all the members' gifts as a regular part of Church life. Some recommendations for continuing the synodal journey in the Archdiocese of Newark frequently suggested by participants are:

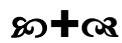
- Provide significant formation regarding “the priesthood of the laity” and how each person is called to be a disciple of Christ through baptism for members of the laity and Church leaders. The listening sessions showed that many parishioners are more focused on their local concerns rather than on global issues. These parishioners would benefit from hearing more news about the Church, having access to recent Vatican and archdiocesan reports and pastoral letters (adult faith formation). Pastors and parish staff members, school and campus leaders can facilitate “lifelong learning” by gathering groups to read, study and reflect on the great number of resources available to know more about the faith and contemporary issues the Church is speaking to. For example, parishioners can be invited to come together for Small Christian Communities, Bible Study, books, and journal studies, etc. on parish or deanery levels.
- Help parishioners who are unsure about how to reach out to the margins: the poor, former Catholics, unchurched, younger generations, and others. Training is needed in ways to gently reach out to others and invite them into the life of Christ.
- Develop lay leadership training in parish leadership, ministries and groups, social justice and outreach.
- Continue synodal processes among parishioners – to listen and make the parishes stronger so that pastors and staff members understand the needs of parishioners and the local communities.
- Foster discussion and community building events in parish, deanery, archdiocese
- Create intentional methods of accompaniment in parishes for people during key life moments: birth, baptism, sacraments, celebrations, funerals.
- Offer more ecumenical and inter-faith discussions in parish and archdiocesan settings.

Archdiocesan leaders will utilize the feedback from the listening sessions to forge the synodal path ahead and make our parishes and ministries stronger. The many needs that people have expressed have been clearly noted in this process. The challenge facing the archdiocese now is to build on the many successes that have been documented through this process, but also to offer assistance and training in various ministry areas where needs have been identified. Most participants expressed a desire to continue the synodal process through on-going opportunities to gather, pray together, listen to the Holy Spirit, share ideas, and be heard by Church leaders.

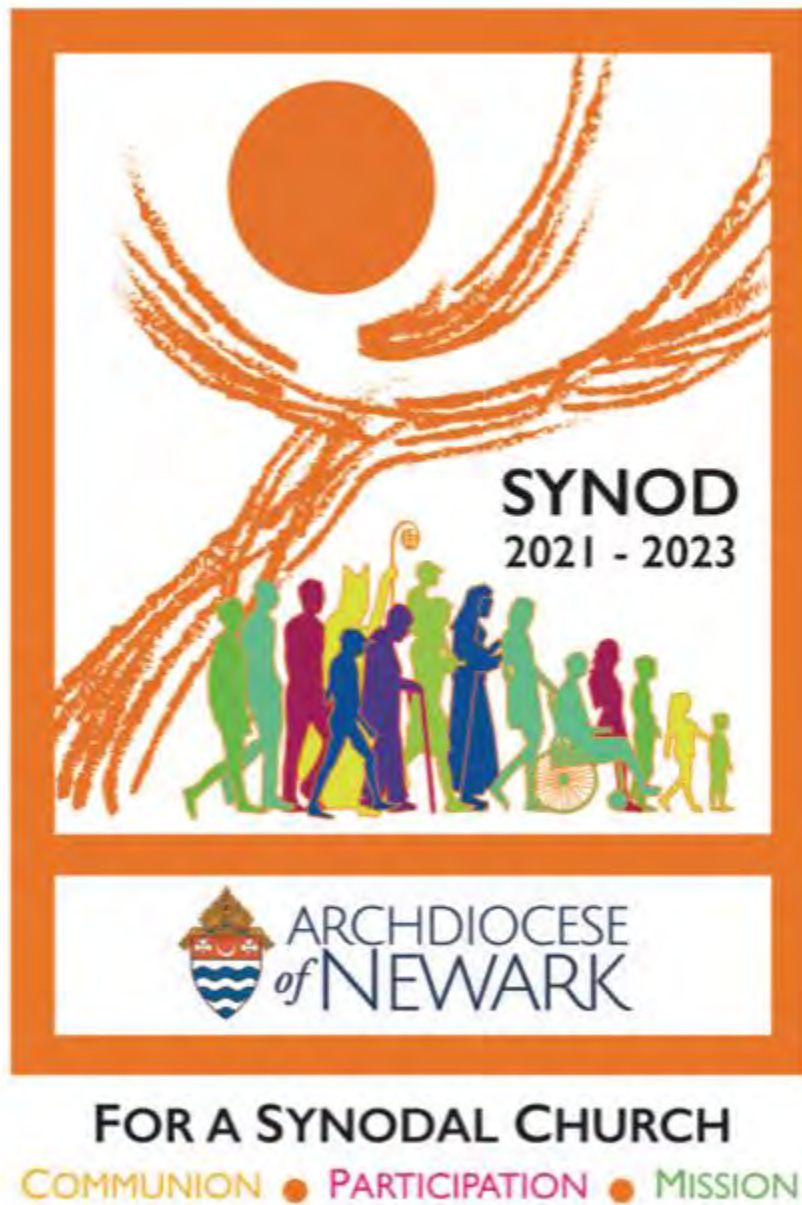
Parish pastoral councils will now embark on learning how to do pastoral planning based on what they reported through the listening session processes. Other ministries will do the same. Archdiocesan staff will also receive this feedback and use it for their planning.

The Archdiocese of Newark prays with Pope Francis, trusting in the Holy Spirit, that we all may be one (John 17:21) as the Church of Christ and may show our light to the world in unity and love.

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the intercession of our Blessed Mother, Mary, we pray that this Local Church will move forward with courage to create a future filled with hope and confidence, bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to all.



APPENDICES



INFORME SINODAL

COMUNIDAD HISPANA
ARQUIDIÓCESIS DE NEWARK

INTRODUCCIÓN

Entre otras opciones a la consulta sinodal realizadas en la Arquidiócesis de Newark, el Ministerio Hispano llevó a cabo una consulta inspirada en las preguntas presentadas por el Documento Preparatorio emanado de la Santa Sede. El material preparado en español estaba diseñado para facilitar el diálogo en pequeños grupos durante cinco semanas en las diferentes parroquias con ministerio hispano.

Se reunieron 212 pequeños grupos en cuarenta y tres parroquias de la Arquidiócesis, participando 2,361 personas, de los cuales 1,462 eran mujeres y 899 hombres. El grupo más numeroso estuvo compuesto de personas entre 40 y 55 años (33%), seguido del de 26 a 39 años (23%), del de 55 a 74 años (23%) y de los menores de 25 años (15%). El resto fueron personas mayores de 75 años. La mayoría de los grupos se reunieron en las parroquias, aunque algunos lo hicieron en casas particulares o conectándose por zoom.

El siguiente es un resumen de los informes presentados por los pequeños grupos en respuesta a las preguntas discutidas en cada reunión y de los informes parroquiales recibidos.

1. Preliminar: Grupos de personas que están en las periferias de la parroquia:

- Los jóvenes que asisten a la parroquia porque no ven allí un lugar para ellos; los que no regresan después de recibir el sacramento de la confirmación; los que sufren diferentes adicciones.
- Los indocumentados que, si se acercan a la parroquia, tienen miedo a involucrarse en otras actividades.
- Los necesitados de ayuda material o que están en prisión.
- Los ancianos o enfermos, confinados en centros de cuidados o en sus domicilios.
- Los católicos no practicantes y aquellos que, si asisten a misa, no se involucran en nada.
- Los que se han alejado de la Iglesia por la pérdida de la fe o por no sentirse acogidos en la comunidad.
- Los que por motivos de trabajo o de cambio de residencia frecuente, se les dificulta ser parte de la comunidad

2. ¿Cómo se lleva ya a cabo en su parroquia este “caminar juntos”?

- Los laicos, en general, se sienten invitados a participar activamente en la misión de la Iglesia. Se sienten escuchados y animados a ser parte integral en la vida de la comunidad, tanto por los sacerdotes –especialmente en los momentos difíciles– como por los líderes laicos. Esto se muestra en:
 - La buena acogida a todos por parte de la comunidad parroquial. En la bienvenida a los nuevos miembros y la comunicación cordial.
 - La invitación constante a participar en alguno de los ministerios/grupos de la parroquia o en las actividades parroquiales. Creando espacios para la participación, tanto en la liturgia como en la catequesis y en los cursos de formación religiosa. Ofreciendo sus talentos a través de los diferentes grupos apostólicos.

- La cordialidad y el entusiasmo de los servidores, su testimonio de vida y el servicio que prestan a la comunidad.
- El calor con que la comunidad recibe a los que asisten a las diferentes actividades parroquiales que nos unen como familia. (Cursos de formación, celebraciones de las fiestas y tradiciones de nuestra realidad multicultural. Actividades sociales)
- Hay una gran participación de la mujer en todos los aspectos de la vida parroquial y de los diferentes ministerios. (No hay ninguna mención su papel en la toma de decisiones.)
- Hay comunicación y diálogo entre los diferentes grupos étnicos que forman la parroquia.
- Tenemos celebraciones eucarísticas en distintos idiomas. En ochenta y dos parroquias de nuestra Arquidiócesis se celebra una o más misas en español cada domingo.
- Se responde a las necesidades de los más desfavorecidos y de los inmigrantes a través de las acciones sociales de la parroquia. Algunas parroquias cuentan con programas de ayuda a los inmigrantes, desde la información legal a la ayuda en las necesidades laborales. Otras, con servicios médicos a través de la parroquia.
- Algunos participan en la toma de decisiones que afectan a la comunidad parroquial, sobre todo en las parroquias donde ya existe el Consejo Pastoral.
- En la celebración de la Eucaristía, con participación activa de los miembros de la comunidad en los diferentes ministerios.
- Haciendo uso de los medios de comunicación para anunciar la Buena Nueva.

3. ¿Qué dificultades encuentran en su parroquia en este “caminar juntos”? ¿Hay algo que dificulte a los feligreses sentirse parte integral de la parroquia y hablar con valor y responsabilidad?

Aun teniendo presente lo dicho en el #2, muchos participantes en la consulta sinodal indican las siguiente:

- En algunas parroquias falta la actitud de escucha. Se provee información, pero no se valora la opinión de los laicos. Los jóvenes son los que más sufren la falta de escucha y del espacio necesarios.
- Muchos participantes indican que no han visto que en sus parroquias exista ni se promueva la participación de los laicos en la toma de decisiones, que no saben cómo se toman ni quién lo hace.
 - La percepción de muchos es que los sacerdotes son los únicos que deciden todo.
 - La participación parece ser aún más limitada para la comunidad hispana.
 - Depende mucho del párroco y su apertura a la participación de los laicos y a las diferentes culturas.
- Falta de una actitud de acogida por parte del clero y de los miembros de la comunidad. Algunos grupos parroquiales están muy cerrados y no brindan oportunidad a personas nuevas con ideas y carismas renovados.
- Falta de conocimiento personal de los otros miembros de la comunidad.
- Falta de comunicación dentro de la comunidad parroquial y hacia fuera de ella.
- Falta de formación espiritual para todos los miembros de la comunidad.
- Falta de entrenamiento para líderes.
- La actitud negativa que a veces existe en el personal administrativo de algunas parroquias.
- La diversidad de procedencias de los miembros de la comunidad que, al tiempo que es una riqueza, puede representar un reto.

- La barrera del idioma que dificulta la comunicación. No tener un sacerdote en la parroquia que hable español, la falta de conocimiento de las tradiciones y la percepción de favoritismo de un párroco alejado de una parte de su comunidad. Aplauden, sin embargo, el esfuerzo que hacen algunos sacerdotes no hispanos por hablar el español.
- Falta de representación hispana en el Consejo Pastoral de la parroquia.
- El trabajo y las obligaciones familiares que impiden la participación en actividades parroquiales.
- Falta de sentido de pertenencia a una determinada parroquia.
- La timidez característica de muchos hispanos que les impide preguntar o responder a la invitación a participar en la vida parroquial.
- Falta de apertura a un ambiente multicultural
- Desconocimiento de la doctrina de la Iglesia.
- Clericalismo
- Ausencia en muchas parroquias de un Consejo Pastoral activo.
- La falta de motivación/entusiasmo y compromiso de los laicos que no asumen responsabilidades en el servicio a la comunidad.
- El tema de los jóvenes exige una atención particular: Hay una gran preocupación sobre la realidad juvenil en las parroquias. El sentimiento general expresado es que este es un asunto prioritario en nuestra realidad pastoral.
 - La asistencia de los jóvenes a la misa dominical es muy escasa en muchas parroquias.
 - En las parroquias con ministerio hispano muy pocas cuentan con un grupo juvenil organizado.
 - Donde existen grupos juveniles, estos desarrollan un buen trabajo con experiencias formativas para otros jóvenes y actividades sociales para la comunidad.
 - Muchos indican que en sus parroquias se invita frecuentemente a los jóvenes y que se promueve su participación tanto en las actividades organizadas para ellos, como en los diferentes cursos de formación de la parroquia. Esto no parece suceder en todas las parroquias; algunos se quejan de que en la suya nunca se habla del tema.
 - En algunas parroquias el ministerio juvenil está asociado sobre todo con el programa catequesis (confirmación y post-confirmación) o con las celebraciones litúrgicas de la comunidad (proclamadores de la Palabra, acólitos o miembros del coro). Pero, en general, no se retiene a los jóvenes que participaron en los programas de confirmación.
 - Faltan líderes que organicen y entusiasmen a los jóvenes. Estos tampoco cuentan con el espacio necesario para desarrollarse.
 - En algunas parroquias el grupo juvenil existente es exclusivamente para el grupo apostólico que lo organiza, no para toda la parroquia.

3. De acuerdo a las opiniones expresadas en los grupos sinodales, ¿qué pasos deberían tomar en su parroquia para crecer en el “caminar juntos”?

- Tomar conciencia de quiénes son los que están en las periferias de la vida parroquial: los jóvenes, los indocumentados, los necesitados de ayuda material o que están en prisión, los ancianos y enfermos, los católicos no practicantes, los alejados de la Iglesia por la pérdida de la fe o porque no se sienten acogidos por la comunidad, los que no participan por motivos de trabajo o por cambio frecuente de residencia.
- Cultivar una cultura de escucha mutua entre el clero y los laicos. Robustecer estas relaciones con amor y empatía.
- Que los miembros del clero caminen entre nosotros, todos miembros del Pueblo de Dios.
- Fomentar la participación de los laicos en la misión de la Iglesia, al igual que en la toma de decisiones que afectan a la comunidad.
- Promover la participación activa de los jóvenes en todas las dimensiones de la vida parroquial y diocesana. Fortalecer la catequesis y los grupos juveniles en las parroquias, y trabajar en el discernimiento vocacional de los jóvenes.
- Extender los procesos catequísticos para que no sea solo una catequesis sacramental.
- Aumentar la preocupación por responder a las necesidades de los más necesitados.
- Despertar el sentido misionero de la iglesia en cuanto a las acciones sociales, participando con otras instituciones en el cuidado a los más necesitados. Organizar grupos de apoyo a causas sociales desde las parroquias.
- Continuar los programas de ayuda a los inmigrantes, desde la información legal a la ayuda en las necesidades laborales. Iniciar dichos programas donde no existan.
- Concientizar a los miembros de la comunidad de la obligación que todos tenemos de cuidar el medio ambiente. Formar un grupo que mantenga este interés en la comunidad. Se constata que es un capítulo pendiente en la mayoría de nuestras parroquias.
- Promover el diálogo inter-religioso encontrando puntos en común (justicia social, inmigración, medio ambiente...)
- Aumentar la información sobre cómo se toman las decisiones importantes en la parroquia.
- Mejorar los Consejos Pastorales en las parroquias donde ya funcionan y establecer, donde no existen, un Consejo Pastoral que incluya la representación de los diferentes grupos parroquiales. Muchas personas dicen desconocer si este Consejo existe en su parroquia o cuál es su función.
- Facilitar la comunicación y unidad entre los diferentes grupos apostólicos de la parroquia.
- Promover una actitud de escucha constante a las necesidades cambiantes de la comunidad.
- Fomentar la comunicación entre las personas de los diferentes grupos étnicos y culturas que integran la misma comunidad. Celebrar la diversidad.
- Establecer un diálogo –que parece muy limitado en el momento presente– con otros cristianos o personas no creyentes.
- Trabajar para que la comunidad sea
 - misionera en la acogida alegre a los nuevos miembros y a los alejados, celebrando la diversidad cultural y valorando los dones que cada persona ha recibido del Señor.
 - misionera en salida, que impulse a sus miembros a ser discípulos misioneros, en la que todos, clero y laicos, asuman el compromiso en la obra de la evangelización.
 - una parroquia que cuida de sus miembros:
 - Promoviendo el desarrollo espiritual y ofreciendo oportunidades de formación en la fe para todos los feligreses.

- Preocupándose de la formación de los jóvenes y de la creación de grupos juveniles que se entusiasmen con su misión evangelizadora.
 - Involucrándoles más para que sea mayor su participación en la Iglesia.
 - Facilitando para ellos oportunidades de formación en la fe después de recibir el sacramento de la Confirmación.
 - Grupos de orientación y discernimiento vocacional.
 - Con la celebración de la Eucaristía que nos ayude a celebrar nuestra fe y a salir al encuentro de nuestros hermanos.
 - Promoviendo la formación de los llamados a los diferentes ministerios. (Catequistas, lectores, ministros extraordinarios de la Eucaristía...)
 - Fomentando la pastoral familiar.
 - Participando en los talleres de formación que ofrece la Arquidiócesis para todas las parroquias.
 - Utilizando las redes sociales para dar información y testimonio de los eventos que suceden en la parroquia.
 - Incluyendo el español en la página web de la parroquia.
 - Que involucre más a los padres y familias en las actividades de la Iglesia
- Plantearse con seriedad la inculturación como necesidad de toda la evangelización.
 - Dar a conocer los grupos y asociaciones de la diócesis que prestan servicios y ayudas.
 - Establecer canales de diálogo y colaboración con otros cristianos y personas no creyentes. Muy pocas personas indicaron que en sus parroquias exista algún proyecto de esta índole y el diálogo suele ser llevado a cabo por iniciativa personal. Se indica que en el pasado no hemos tenido formación para este diálogo y colaboración y que a veces resulta difícil por la actitud de ataque y crítica feroz que demuestran algunos hacia nuestra Iglesia y su doctrina.
 - Iniciar o mantener la comunicación con los alejados de la Iglesia. Muchos de los participantes indicaron que no ven en sus parroquias una preocupación manifiesta por salir al encuentro personal con los que se alejaron.

4. ¿Qué pasos podemos tomar en la Arquidiócesis de Newark para crecer de una manera más unida en el futuro?

- Tomar como ejemplo este proceso sinodal de escucha y brindar oportunidades periódicas para que los laicos puedan expresar los cambios y necesidades de la Iglesia que sueñan.
- Hacer que la comunicación sea más personal y menos burocrática. Que la dimensión pastoral tenga primacía sobre la administrativa.
- Crear más espacios para la formación de líderes y de los laicos en general.
- Tener un proyecto pastoral que trabaje por la unidad de los distintos grupos étnicos de la Arquidiócesis.
- Mejorar la comunicación entre las distintas oficinas arquidiocesanas y las parroquias sobre las actividades que facilitan a través de todos los ministerios, como grupos de apoyo social, salud, migración, educación, entre otros.
- Quee haya más sesiones de escucha al pueblo por parte del Cardenal y de los obispos auxiliares.
- Elaborar un plan vocacional en la arquidiócesis. Así como contar con un mayor número de sacerdotes de habla hispana trabajando al servicio de nuestras comunidades.
- Mejorar la pastoral juvenil y familiar de toda la Arquidiócesis.
- Mejorar el presupuesto de recursos económicos para las parroquias.
- Que las oficinas diocesanas, especialmente la Catequesis ofrezcan mayores recursos al pueblo.

- Dar a conocer mejor los recursos de que dispone la Arquidiócesis para prestar servicios a familias o personas con conflictos emocionales.
- Apoyar al mantenimiento de las escuelas católicas.
- Formación de un Consejo de Laicos dentro de la Arquidiócesis que representen a cada parroquia, para que sea el puente de comunicación entre la comunidad parroquial y la Arquidiócesis.
- Cuidar que el clero sepa servir a sus fieles con compasión incansable.
- Transmitir la Santa Misa haciendo uso de las redes sociales, para mantener una comunión y afecto con quienes no pueden asistir a la iglesia por diferentes razones.

5. ¿Cómo puede la Arquidiócesis de Newark apoyarles a ustedes en sus parroquias?

- Con programas y centros de formación sobre educación en la fe, liderazgo y diferentes ministerios.
- Fortificando los lazos entre las parroquias y la Arquidiócesis con un contacto directo tanto del personal de las oficinas arquidiocesanas, como con visitas del Cardenal y de los obispos auxiliares.
- Con un plan pastoral familiar integral para las familias hispanas: Renovación de la preparación matrimonial; acompañamiento de las familias en situaciones difíciles; apoyo continuo a las parejas antes, durante y después del matrimonio.
- Ayudar para que las escuelas católicas sean más asequibles.
- Contar con más sacerdotes que hablen español.
- Retiros y Encuentros Arquidiocesanos, sobre todo juveniles.
- Cuidado pastoral de los inmigrantes y apertura y difusión de programas sociales:
 - Asistencia de abogados y consejeros profesionales
 - Acompañamiento a los jóvenes inmigrantes
 - Trabajar en la lucha sobre el racismo y la xenofobia
 - Difusión de servicios de asistencia y caridad ofrecidos por la diócesis
- Eliminar la imagen de CEO que tiene la Arquidiócesis
- Reapertura y publicación del periódico mensual en español
- Mantener un conocimiento actual de la situación socio-económica de las parroquias.

6. Pensando en la iglesia universal, ¿qué creen que es necesario para incluir a todos en las áreas de liderazgo y gobierno?

- Ofrecer más educación y entrenamiento de liderazgo.
- Mejorar la participación de mujeres y jóvenes como líderes de proyectos de la Iglesia universal.
- Disminuir el clericalismo
- Mayor inculturación
- Continuar haciendo la doctrina social de la Iglesia parte esencial de la evangelización.
- Intensificar la Pastoral Vocacional y Misionera. Urge regenerar en nuestras comunidades la esperanza en los sacerdotes, familias cristianas y religiosas, en los maestros y todos los que tratan con jóvenes para despertar mayor número de vocaciones.
- Permitir que las funciones administrativas de las iglesias estén en manos de laicos, diáconos o religiosas para que los sacerdotes dediquen mas tiempo a la evangelización.
- Mayor presencia de líderes diocesanos dentro de las comunidades. No solo a través de comunicados y papeles informativos, queremos ver al clero de la mano con el pueblo.

- Fortalecer el sentido de pertenencia a nuestra Iglesia y nuestra fe en las comunidades parroquiales.
- Promover becas de formación teológica para laicos.

NOTA:

1. En la consulta se repitió con frecuencia el hecho de que la pandemia ha interrumpido el ritmo pastoral de la comunidad, al igual que ha ofrecido la oportunidad de mostrar la generosidad de muchos miembros de nuestra comunidad eclesial.
2. Muchos expresaron agradecimiento por poder participar en esta consulta sinodal, deseando que no sea una ocasión única de escucha a los laicos y que esta sea parte de nuestra forma habitual de ser Iglesia.



SYNOD LISTENING SESSIONS

An Example for an Evening Session

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM or can be adapted to a 3 hour Morning Session



FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH
 COMMUNION • PARTICIPATION • MISSION

7:00 PM **Welcome by Pastor or Leader**
Introductions in the table groups

7:10 PM **Opening Song**
All Are Welcome (or other appropriate song)

Leader **Gathering Prayer**
Come Holy Spirit

All fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader Send forth your Spirit and they shall be re-created.
and You shall renew the face of the earth.

All O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Spirit
we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation,
through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

The Word of God **Acts 2: 1-11, 14-19**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together
And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind,
and it filled the entire house in which they were.

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire,
which parted and came to rest on each one of them.
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Scripture Reflection Question

- How have I experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in my life?

Prayer

Leader

Come Holy Spirit,
as we move into our reflection session

All

Be with us as a discerning guide to speak what is in our heart,
our experience of Church, our joys and sorrows, hopes and dreams.
May we listen carefully to each other
so that we may discern how you, Holy Spirit,
are calling us be church at this time in our history.

Leader

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All

Amen.

7:30 PM

Listening Session Process

Video by Cardinal Tobin – What is the Synod on *Synodality* - why it is important

Explanation of the process by Main Facilitator

- **Table Facilitator**

The table facilitator ensures that all participants have the opportunity to dialogue about the questions, taking care to focus on the dynamics of group sharing and listening.

- **Table Scribe**

The table scribe records key points of the conversations, and all discern what are the key themes to present to the Holy Father through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (USCCB)

- **Feedback**

A few groups may give feedback toward the end of the session.

Focus of the Synod on Synodality

How is the Holy Spirit calling us as a Church in the 21st Century?

A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”

The word “synod” traces its roots to the first centuries of the Church. Coming from Greek words meaning the “same road,” synod and synodality are expressions of the fundamental mystery of the Church: people who are gathered from every corner of the earth to be “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2,9).

---- Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, CSsR

As we begin our listening and sharing, all are invited to consider what the Holy Spirit is calling us to, what paths are being opened, and what our "inner spiritual movements" are: joy or sadness, confidence or anxiety, hope or no hope, or other.

Table Process Suggestions to Help Participants Focus

- Facilitator asks all to reflect silently for five minutes, preparing their thoughts on each question.
- Each person can share his/her ideas for a maximum of two minutes.
- All reflect silently again, then sharing for a few minutes what enlightened or resonated with them.

7:40 – 8:15 PM Core Question ONE – 45 Minutes

How is this “journeying together” happening today in your parish community, campus ministry, university, school, youth group, religious congregation, or other area of Church life that you might participate in?

Pope Francis talks about “journeying together” or “walking together” down the same road. This means that we collaborate together and share responsibility for the building up of the whole Church and our parish or other ministry through evangelization, participation in worship, social justice, councils, and governance. As you reflect on the questions below, describe about how you have or have not experienced “walking together.”

Table Discussion

- Share a few examples of ways that you have experienced this “walking together” in your parish.
What is challenging about walking together or participating fully in your parish?
- Pope Francis encourages us to reach out beyond our active parish community and observe who is in our local area. It is essential to look at who “used to be at our parish,” and who is not here, and those who might feel left out or on the margins.

How do we as a parish, reach out collectively or individually to those who are no longer participating in church? What are some ways to find out why they are not participating?

- As a result of our discussion, what are three steps we can take in our parish to grow in “walking together”?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- Where in these shared experiences do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit calling us to move forward?

8:15 – 8:35 PM Core Question TWO – 20 Minutes

How are we “walking together” as a Church, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

Table Discussion

- By our deep listening today, what actions do you hear the Holy Spirit asking our parish and the universal Church to take?

PARISH

UNIVERSAL CHURCH

- What practical steps are needed to include people in the areas of leadership, governance, and inclusion in the universal Church?

8:35 PM Local Questions – 10 Minutes

How are we “walking together” as a Church, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

Table Discussion

- How can the Archdiocese of Newark support you in your local parish?
- What are three steps we can take in our Archdiocese to grow more collaboratively for the future?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The table scribe records key points of the conversations, and all discern what are the key themes to present to the Holy Father through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (USCCB)

8:35 PM Evaluation of the Time spent together

- How has this discussion given you the opportunity to listen and express and share your own experience of your parish and the universal Church?
- What is one hope you have for the Church as we continue to grow and listen to the Holy Spirit?

8:45 PM Sending Prayer

Leader Let us take a moment of quiet as we reflect on what we have done here today...

Reader A reading from the Letter of Saint James Jas 1:21-22
Dearest brothers and sisters:
Humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you...
[and] Be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Leader Come Holy Spirit,
we ask you, that by your inspiration,
all of our prayers and actions always begin from you
and inspire others to know you more deeply.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All Amen

Leader Let us go forth sharing a sign of peace.

ORIGINAL NEWS ARTICLES AND COLUMNS

The following are original news articles and columns that appeared on the news website of the Archdiocese of Newark, [JerseyCatholic.org](https://jerseycatholic.org)

Prepared by the Office of Communications

(This content does not include syndicated CNS articles)

The synodal process: a window for dreamers

<https://jerseycatholic.org/the-synodal-process-a-window-for-dreamers>

Latest synod update: listening session reports under review

<https://jerseycatholic.org/latest-synod-update-listening-session-reports-under-review>

Felician Sisters offer their perspective at synod listening session

<https://jerseycatholic.org/felician-sisters-offer-their-perspective-at-synod-listening-session>



[COLUMNS](#) [TOP STORIES](#)

Archdiocese of Newark walking together on the synodal path

Sister Donna Ciangio, O.P. • March 1, 2022

Listening sessions Listening Sessions have been going very well with parishes, youth groups, ministries, parish catechetical leaders and catechists, parents, Catholic school students, religious institutes, and more. The African American, African ... [LEARN MORE](#)

Synod on Synodality • [Edit](#)



[COLUMNS](#) [LOCAL](#) [TOP STORIES](#)

Most Blessed Sacrament holds synod listening sessions with students

Father John Job • April 20, 2022

Pope Francis announced the 16th Ordinary Synod of Bishops, which will take place in 2023 in Rome. The Holy Father's theme for the synod is for a Synodal Church: Communion, ... [LEARN MORE](#)

Archdiocese • Parish • Schools • Synod on Synodality • [Edit](#)

Most Blessed Sacrament holds synod listening sessions with students

<https://jerseycatholic.org/most-blessed-sacrament-holds-synod-listening-sessions-with-students>

Latest synod update: what people are saying at listening sessions

<https://jerseycatholic.org/latest-synod-update-what-people-are-saying-at-listening-sessions>

Synod: high school students explore their relationship with the Church

<https://jerseycatholic.org/high-school-students-explore-their-relationship-with-the-church>

Synod: effective catechesis helping families journey together in new way

<https://jerseycatholic.org/effective-catechesis-helping-families-journey-together-in-new-way>

Archdiocese of Newark walking together on the synodal path

<https://jerseycatholic.org/archdiocese-of-newark-continues-walking-together-on-the-synodal-path>

Synodality and ecumenism require walking together, say cardinals

<https://jerseycatholic.org/synodality-and-ecumenism-require-walking-together-say-cardinals>

The Synod: A great opportunity for change in the Church

<https://jerseycatholic.org/the-synod-a-great-opportunity-for-change-in-the-church>

The Synod process continues in the Archdiocese of Newark

<https://jerseycatholic.org/the-synod-process-continues-in-the-archdiocese-of-newark>

Massive synod outreach to New Jersey Catholics underway

<https://jerseycatholic.org/massive-synod-outreach-to-new-jersey-catholics-underway>

Cardinal Tobin: The opportunities and risks of our synodal journey

<https://jerseycatholic.org/cardinal-tobin-the-opportunities-and-risks-of-our-synodal-journey>

Newark begins synodal journey with Catholics around the world

<https://jerseycatholic.org/newark-begins-synodal-journey-with-catholics-around-the-world>

Synod 2021 2023
For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Sínodo 2021 2023
Por una Iglesia sinodal

[COLUMNS](#) [TOP STORIES](#)

We are all called to walk this synodal path
Deacon Asterio Velasco • October 15, 2021

On Sunday, Oct. 17, the bells of Newark's Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart will ring with joy calling us to the celebration of the Eucharist presided over by Cardinal ... [LEARN MORE](#)

[Reflections](#) • [Synod on Synodality](#) • [Edit](#)

[ARCHIDIÓCESIS](#) [ESPAÑOL](#) [TOP STORIES](#)

Todos estamos llamados a recorrer este camino sinodal
Díacono Asterio Velasco • October 12, 2021

El próximo domingo, 17 de octubre, repicarán con alegría las campanas de la Catedral de Newark llamándonos a todos a la celebración de la Eucaristía presidida por nuestro Arzobispo, el ... [LEARN MORE](#)

[Sínodo 2023](#) • [Edit](#)

We are all called to walk this synodal path

<https://jerseycatholic.org/we-are-all-called-to-walk-this-synodal-path>

Cardinal Tobin introduces ‘synod on synodality’ to faithful of the Archdiocese in new letter

<https://jerseycatholic.org/cardinal-tobin-introduces-synod-on-synodality-to-faithful-of-the-archdiocese-in-new-letter>

Synodality: clergy and laity walking together

<https://jerseycatholic.org/synodality-clergy-and-laity-walking-together>

Cardinal Tobin reflects on the term ‘synodality’ in latest edition of Rejoice in the Lord

<https://jerseycatholic.org/cardinal-tobin-reflects-on-the-term-synodality-in-latest-edition-of-rejoice-in-the-lord>

We are challenged to be spirit-filled evangelizers

<https://jerseycatholic.org/we-are-challenged-to-be-spirit-filled-evangelizers>

Black Catholics and diversity celebrated at special Mass

<https://jerseycatholic.org/black-catholics-and-diversity-celebrated-at-special-mass>

ESPAÑOL

Se está llevando a cabo un acercamiento masivo del sínodo a los católicos de Nueva Jersey

<https://jerseycatholic.org/se-esta-llevando-a-cabo-un-acercamiento-masivo-del-sinodo-a-los-catolicos-de-nueva-jersey>

Newark comienza viaje sinodal con católicos de todo el mundo

<https://jerseycatholic.org/newark-comienza-viaje-sinodal-con-catolicos-de-todo-el-mundo>

El cardenal Tobin presenta el ‘sínodo sobre sinodalidad’ a los fieles de la Arquidiócesis en una nueva carta

<https://jerseycatholic.org/el-cardenal-tobin-presenta-el-sinodo-sobre-sinodalidad-a-los-fieles-de-la-arquidiocesis-en-una-nueva-carta>

Todos estamos llamados a recorrer este camino sinodal

<https://jerseycatholic.org/todos-estamos-llamados-a-recorrer-este-camino-sinodal>

El proceso sinodal: una ventana para soñadores

<https://jerseycatholic.org/el-proceso-sinodal-una-ventana-para-sonadores>

Sinodalidad: clero y laicos caminando juntos

<https://jerseycatholic.org/sinodalidad-clero-y-laicos-caminando-juntos>

La Cuaresma representa un tiempo de esperanza y renacimiento

<https://jerseycatholic.org/la-cuaresma-representa-un-tiempo-de-esperanza-y-renacimiento>

El sínodo: una gran oportunidad de cambio en la Iglesia

<https://jerseycatholic.org/el-sinodo-una-gran-oportunidad-de-cambio-en-la-iglesia>

Todos estamos llamados a participar en el Sínodo

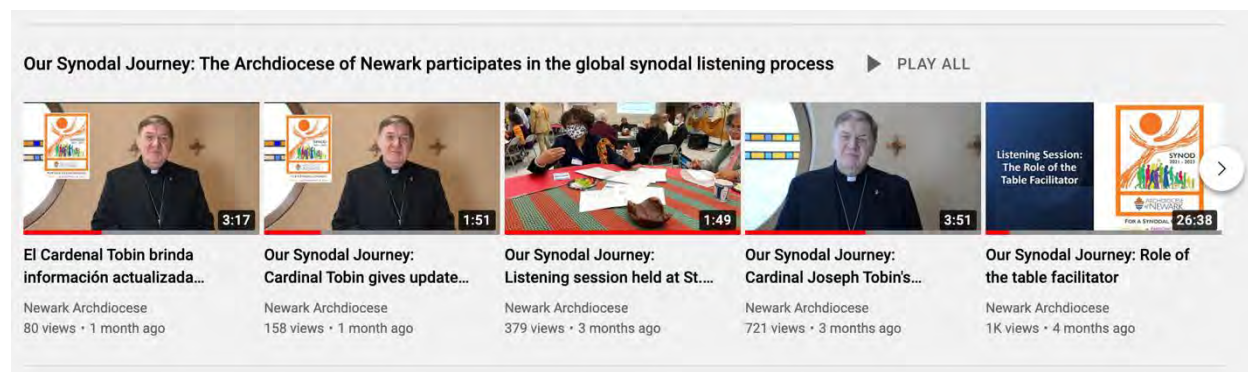
<https://jerseycatholic.org/todos-estamos-llamados-a-participar-en-el-sinodo>

Todos somos discípulos misioneros en salida

<https://jerseycatholic.org/todos-somos-discipulos-misioneros-en-salida>

ORIGINAL VIDEO CONTENT

YouTube playlist: Our Synodal Journey: The Archdiocese of Newark participates in the global synodal listening process: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLayZD2vilZAv5ym5oWdgLsVHt18qtggqD>



Playlist includes the following:

Our Synodal Journey: Cardinal Tobin gives update on local synod effort

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ck_Ce57ZePM&list=PLayZD2vilZAv5ym5oWdgLsVHt18qtggqD&index=3&t=25s

El Cardenal Tobin brinda información actualizada sobre el esfuerzo del sínodo local

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rA3Vxa_9Sg&list=PLayZD2vilZAv5ym5oWdgLsVHt18qtggqD&index=2&t=10s





ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK SYNOD COORDINATING TEAM

His Eminence Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, CSsR, Archbishop of Newark
Most Rev. Manuel Cruz, Regional Bishop of Essex County
Most Rev. Elias Lorenzo, OSB, Regional Bishop of Union County
Most Rev. Michael Saporito, Regional Bishop of Bergen County
Most Rev. Gregory Studerus, Regional Bishop of Hudson County
Very Rev. John Chadwick, Vicar General
Sr. Donna L. Ciangio, OP, Chancellor
Mr. Lawrence Boland, Chief Operating Officer
Fr. Bismarck Chau, Rector, Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart
Deacon Asterio Velasco, Director of Hispanic Ministry
Ms. Milissa Else, Assistant Coordinator for Parish Strategies

Archdiocesan Offices

Maria Margiotta, Director, Office of Communications
Jai Agnish, Office of Communications
Barbara Dolan, Superintendent of Schools
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Joanne DePasquale-Parent, Associate Director of Adult and Family Catechesis
Thomas Conboy, Director, Office for Youth & Young Adult Ministry
Richard Donovan, Associate Director for Events and Training, Office for Youth & Young Adult Ministry
Sr. Patricia M. Wormann, OP, Delegate for Religious
Robert Evers, Office of Worship
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Fr. John Gordon, Secretary, Office of Evangelization
Dr. Ann Masters, Director, Pastoral Ministry with Persons with Disabilities
Rev. Emeka Okwuosa, SDV, Coordinator for African American, African and Caribbean
Apostolate with Sonja Garland and Rashaan Garland
Sr. Dong Hong Marie Zhang, CSSF, Chinese Catholic Apostolate
Cheryl Riley, Director, Mercy House
Annette Miller, Coordinator, Mercy House
John Westervelt, Director, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark
Maria Biancheri, Senior Grants Specialist, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark
Rev. Joseph D'Amico, Ministry to the Incarcerated
Kathleen Dodds, DA, Assistant to the Chancellor
Rev. Robert P. McLaughlin, MSW, PhD, Statistical Analysis
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