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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

On behalf of Bishop Garcia, I want to thank everyone in the Diocese who participated in the Synod in 2022. Since then, the Continental phase of the Synod has been completed.

The attached **Synod Synthesis Report** of the **Diocese of Monterey** summarizes the rich results of the Listening Sessions across our vast diocese. The People of God reflected on their faith experience in journeying together in both their joys and struggles. They also reflected on where they felt the Spirit was calling the Church as we journey into the future. About 4,000 people came together in many gatherings sharing their faith experience and discernment. The Bishop is reviewing the results contained in this Synthesis Report and will be reaching out to other consultative bodies for further discernment and prioritization. The Bishop encourages the pastors and parish leaders to continue to review the results, particularly those that sprang forth with regard to their own parishes, utilizing the insights for improvement in the life, ministry and worship in your local parishes.

Pope Francis has “extended” the worldwide Synod by one year. The Holy Father has reaffirmed the universal phase will begin with the gathering of the **XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome, October 4 – 29, 2023**. There will be an additional year for prayer, discussion, discernment, etc., and a final, second gathering of the **Synod of Bishops in October 2024, in Rome**. Bishops and others gathered from across the world will prepare a document to counsel the Pope. Pope Francis said he made this decision “in order to have a more relaxed period of discernment.” He also stated so the “fruits of the synodal process might come to full maturity, it is necessary not to be in a rush.”

Therefore, with Pope Francis’s encouragement let us continue to pray, share, discern and discuss the important wisdom that comes from the lived experience of our faith. I wish to thank the Bishop for his leadership, for the tireless work of my Synod Coordinator, Ann Ventura, and the work of all our pastors and other diocesan leaders for the efforts in our Synod. Our work continues!

May this time be one of re-dedication to our Baptismal Call to follow Jesus, to actively work for his mission in the renewal of our Church and transformation of our world.

Blessings and peace,

Deacon David R. Ford, Th.M., S.T.L.
Vice Chancellor and Director of Pastoral Ministries
Director of Ministry Formation

Synod 2021 – 2024

Synthesis Report

Diocese of Monterey



Respectfully Submitted,

to

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

and

Region XI

Most Rev. Daniel E. Garcia
Bishop of Monterey in California

Deacon David R. Ford, Th.M., S.T.L.
Vice Chancellor and Director of Pastoral Ministries
Director of Ministry Formation
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June 30, 2022

PREPARATION and TRAINING PHASE:

Our Bishop, Daniel E. Garcia, received the news of Pope Francis' desire to listen to God's People in a two-year process that began in the parishes and among the many ministries in our dioceses with great enthusiasm. He chose a Sunday to open the Synod with a Eucharistic Celebration at the Cathedral.

The first decision was to appoint his Vice-Chancellor and Director of Pastoral Ministries, Deacon David Ford to lead the complicated task as Synod Director for the Diocese of Monterey. With the assistance Ms. Ann Ventura, his Executive Assistant and Program Manager who served a critically important role as the Synod Coordinator, they began consultation and collaboration with the Directors of the Pastoral Ministries departments and the priests, deacons, and lay leaders of the Diocese.

A key decision at the beginning was that it was necessary to develop for our pastors and priests, deacons, and lay leaders, an effective but uncomplicated Training Program to conduct the Consultation and Listening Sessions.

The Diocese of Monterey is a geographically large California mid-coast diocese (four counties) of relatively small size – 210,000 Catholics, and so we had to decide how to accomplish this training task in a relatively short amount of time to allow for the parishes to have sufficient time to execute the Listening Sessions. Our next decision, since our formal Synod Team, consisted of only two individuals: Vice Chancellor and his Assistant, was to solicit help for the training. We reached out to our local Community Organizing group (COPA – Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action) and the Lead Organizer of Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), [of which COPA is a part] Mr. Tim McManus, agreed to join in the training. Ms. Ventura organized and broke up our parishes into five planned Regional Training Sessions. During these sessions the Synod Director, Deacon Ford and Mr. McManus and the COPA team did presentations, including much interaction, discussions and questions. The presentations focused on illustrating the most effective ways in which parish leaders can conduct the Listening

Sessions in each of the parishes. The approach had a focus on “listening and sharing” – not “organizing” per se.

We were very edified by the enthusiastic response of the pastors who engaged in this process and brought many lay leaders to these training sessions. The Diocese conducted these five Regional Training Sessions from the end of January through February 2022. From there, the pastors and leadership teams planned and implemented the Listening Sessions in the parishes. 41 of 46 parishes participated in the Diocesan Synod Listening Sessions.

Conducting the Listening Sessions:

The Pastors conducted their parish Listening Sessions for the most part from February through May 2022 where nearly 4,000 parishioners enthusiastically participated. Our first Listening Session in the Diocese was conducted for the Men and Women Religious of our Diocese and this collaborative effort was headed up by our Vicar for Religious, Sr. Gloria Loya, along with her team. The Synod Director participated in this session and much was learned as the Listening Sessions for the religious were conducted in an atmosphere of contemplative listening and respectful sharing. It became a model for our diocesan efforts as it was incorporated into our Regional Training Sessions. After the sessions, the parishes summarized their Listening Session results, and then forwarded them to the Diocese.

Final Collaborative Effort to Review, Identify and Organize the Listening Results into Themes:

This all-day meeting included about 20 individuals, who before the meeting, read four to five individual Synod Reports from parishes each. Then we shared around the room, identifying major themes, placing by way of notes, particular various listening results on theme-based Flip Charts. The individuals involved in this productive session involved: laymen and women from various parishes, deacons, sisters, priests and members of the Pastoral Center. It was a fruitful step prior to finalizing and writing our Diocesan Synod Synthesis Report.

Results of Synod Listening Sessions ~ THEMES

GRATITUDE AND JOY OF GOD'S PEOPLE IN BEING CONSULTED:

We heard from nearly all those who participated a **great joy** and **gratitude** that they were asked by the Holy Father, the Bishop, and the Pastor, to express their experiences of Faith, as journeying together, and their discernment as to where they felt the Spirit was calling the Church in journeying together into the future. Many expressed a desire that this process of the Synod becomes the way of the Church going forward.

MINISTRY of THE WORD: (Teaching and Preaching):

An overarching theme that came through the Listening Sessions was the desire of the People of God to be fed by the Word of God in the **preaching** ministries. Many of those consulted shared their desire for more engaging homilies that connected the Word of God to their daily lives. Homilies were an important theme. Some stated their request that the clergy (priests and deacons) be supported with tools and continuing education with tools to provide relevant and effective homilies.

Another overarching theme on the list of top five, was that of **catechesis**. It was felt that **youth catechesis** was too sporadic with classes offered for First Communion and Confirmation but nothing in between. It was expressed that catechists need better and more effective formation. More **adult formation** is desired and people are hungry for more faith formation and education opportunities. A desire was expressed for more education on the sacramental life of the people: baptisms, marriage, the Vigil, the Funeral Liturgy, and Committal services of the funeral rites.

MINISTRY of LITURGY and SACRAMENTS:

Some articulated gratitude for liturgies that were well prepared, planned and celebrated, feeling that they inspired people to gather for Mass. It was also very clear a number of parishioners longed for more well planned worship (with participation, inspiring music, homilies, etc.) that invited them into a deeper faith and sense of mission. Some desired a greater sense of all elements of the community being represented in the liturgical ministries. A desire was expressed for more opportunities to gather for prayer, bilingual liturgies, and a very, very small fraction expressed a desire for the Latin Mass. A much greater desire was for more priests and

deacons to be able to celebrate and preside at the Sacraments in the Spanish language. Some felt we are burdened by the Covid-emphasis on “virtual liturgies” and expressed a desire for leadership in our Church (diocesan, parishes, institutions) in encouraging the return of our brothers and sisters gathering for Liturgical worship. A number of participants experienced a lack of a “Liturgy of the Word,” dismissal for young children during Mass so as to allow children to experience an age-appropriate message and meaning during the Liturgy of the Word during the Sunday Eucharist. They expressed a great desire for this if we are to be a fully welcoming gathering for families with young children.

MINISTRY OF CHARITY and JUSTICE:

People felt through our ministries, our Church makes people feel accepted and given a sense of belonging. Respondents stated they wanted more opportunities to serve in the community and there is a great concern for immigrants and migrant workers, the unemployed and others who suffer. Many people feel the local Church and parishes need more leadership to encouraging all our people to reach out to the marginalized. Some felt the People of God aren’t aware enough of the social justice teachings of the Church.

THE ECCLESIAL LIFE of THE LOCAL PARISH COMMUNITY:

The most comments throughout our diocese were those in support of and need for more community! It is clear our culture suffers from isolation, exclusion and that the Church should be doing much more. People desired a feeling of welcome, of family and inclusion. Many young people felt that they could come to Mass and leave never being recognized, welcomed, known by name. Minority ethnic groups felt this the most. The People of God shared their sadness at the lack of hospitality. They shared their desire that the local parish create more opportunities in building personal connections and supportive relationships, offering social opportunities of different types: inclusion and recognition of those who suffer grief and loss, those struggling with poverty and job loss, those who suffer loneliness. Some asked, “Why are people invited in for Mass and leave with no opportunity after Mass for socializing, sharing food, conversation, and their lives?” It was shared that our Eucharistic Assemblies themselves should be led by the pastor, clergy, and lay leaders who encourage “welcoming assemblies.” Personal welcome it was said was vital – not just by the ministry of the greeters but by the whole

community. There was a strong feeling the Holy Spirit is guiding the Church into the future in this area where we are lacking as Catholics.

In this area of community – that of inclusivity was one of the themes mentioned most by our parishioners. Many said they felt personally rejected and excluded from the community in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. It was very clearly articulated, a feeling the Spirit was calling the Church to a greater sense of inclusivity from several groups including LGBTQ people, divorced Catholics, people from different ethnic cultures and languages, the elderly and disabled people, immigrants, young adults and new members. In this area of community and inclusivity, one participant emphasized compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation must be our “way forward.”

LAITY:

A desire was expressed to strengthen and extend lay activities and involvement in all the areas of our Church: governance, ministry, social organizing, worship, teaching and service. Many expressed feeling supported and appreciated in their parishes. There was a feeling the Church is being called to provide more training for Lay Leaders, paid staff and volunteers in their various spheres of work. There was a grateful expression of gratitude that **women are the major contributors to Church life** in the local parish ! There was a large expression of a sense that the Spirit is moving the Church to bring women into more leadership positions, and equal leadership positions among our parish, local, diocesan, and institutional areas of the Church leadership and governance.

YOUTH and YOUNG ADULT INVOLVEMENT:

Disengaged youth and young adults was one of the biggest concerns of our diocesan Synod participants. It was shared that our young adults and youth need acceptance, involvement, formation and opportunities for engagement and community within our parish communities. **Our people see this as an important priority.** They expressed a desire to address these areas that are lacking at the local parish level. A strong concern was that there seemed to be nothing to draw our youth into church after Confirmation and we are losing them. Young adults are leaving the Church in significant numbers. Parishioners feel that many of the Church’s issues resonate with youth – like its teaching on Care for our Common Home and integral ecology, social justice

issues such as inclusion of LGBTQ, the poor, and other marginalized peoples. There is lacking “a connection” to draw young adults....and perhaps the sense of inclusion in community is the missing key. Thus, many mentioned making the Church a safe and welcoming place for young adults and their questions, experiences, and desire to connect.

MISSION and EVANGELIZATION:

Some felt the diocese needs to lead with a more clearly defined mission. Many felt that the themes of mission and evangelization, at the heart of our identity as Catholics, are not often emphasized in the parish communities. Many felt the Spirit is **strongly** calling us to mission and outreach – in our local neighborhoods, to marginalized communities, to those who have left the Church, to the “unchurched,” and those who are seeking. The People of God seemed to feel the Spirit is calling the Church to evangelize with mercy and justice. While remaining faithful to the Lord’s teaching and our Tradition, it was shared that the Church needs to gain more relevance and be active in our mission. Social Justice was seen as a core theme in this mission. It was thought we must get out of our “comfort zones” as a Church that is too self-referential and that “outreach and mission/evangelization” must be re-emphasized. Catholic schools were thought to be possible effective agents of evangelization.

ECUMENISM and UNITY:

A universal sentiment and theme was the positive experience that we are part of the Universal Church in unity with one another, our local Bishop and our Holy Father, Pope Francis. There was gratitude that we celebrate together with all our diversity of language, race and culture, yet we are one in faith, hope and love.

There was a sense offered that the Spirit is also calling us to an ecumenism of outreach to our fellow Christians, and inter-religious dialogue with non-Christians – all of whom are part of our communities and sojourners with us on this planet. There was a sense that we as Church need to be “agents of unity and mutual respect” in a society filled with division, intolerance, and often lacking charity. Perhaps such efforts could be strengthened by fostering dialogue and building local relationships, including praying together, action for justice together, and the work of charity

together. There is a feeling that our society needs greater unity and greater mutual respect and caring.

LEADERSHIP and COMMUNICATION:

People are grateful for the Bishop's occasional presence in their local communities and his participation. Others felt the Bishop was not adequately 'connected' to the life of the parish communities. Some expressed feelings that there was inadequate or not strong enough leadership in both the parishes and diocese. Others felt the Diocese had too many rules and regulations. In the realm of the parish there was a strong feeling for much more representative leadership from parishioners in committees (e.g. Pastoral Councils, Finance Councils, Ministries, other Advisory bodies, etc.) and other areas of the parish. Some felt it was "always the same people" and not sufficiently representative. Our laity seemed to be asking for a greater voice in the leadership of our parishes, schools, ministries and diocese. Some felt that, for example, that we need a post-Covid emphasis to "reactivate ministries" such that control and management of the ministries are not restricted to the Parish Staff. Some questioned why Deacons are not utilized in our parishes in leadership as they have been at the diocese. There was a sense of being able to utilize more of their gifts in the local communities.

Again, huge numbers of our participants expressed great gratitude for the **Synod process and experience**. They feel they are being heard. They are hopeful that action will be taken by the leadership of the Local Church and parish churches to address their concerns and hopes and experiences. A number expressed hope that the Diocese would keep the Synodal Process going and share for example, best practices and resources with the parishes and among the parishes. There was a great desire expressed for further training in effective leadership for both clergy and staff in all our Church communities and institutions including parish and diocese.

In the area of **communication**, the People of God expressed a desire that stronger and more intentional communications, and adequately coordinated communications from the parish and the diocese be implemented. There seemed to be a definite level of frustration in this area.

CLERGY:

There was an overall response that our priests and deacons are caring and helpful. The People of God expressed gratitude where they experienced a beautiful and inspiring celebration of the

Liturgy that was transformative. There were some that expressed a number of desires going forward. Many hoped more clergy were bilingual. There were some who expressed concerns that priests need to exhibit more flexibility, a more welcoming demeanor, leading to a more positive parish environment. Many felt more on-going training and formation for the clergy in terms of effective communication, humility, self-knowledge and also English-language fluency would be helpful. Many expressed their thought that the Spirit may be moving the Church to a “larger circle” in calling others to the generosity of ordained ministry: Many expressed the thought that ordaining married men to the presbyterate would be helpful, as well as some who shared the thinking that women be called to the diaconate and presbyterate. Many expressed the hope for continued promotion of vocations to both the presbyterate and the diaconate. Many were appreciative of Pope Francis’ great discouragement of clericalism.

FORMATION FOR MINISTRY:

Many involved in the School of Ministry expressed great appreciation for the opportunity to obtain greater theological formation and pastoral formation in serving in the parishes. They would like more specializations offered. A sense that further on-going education and formation for ministry is important to address among priests, deacons, and lay ministers in our parishes.

SPIRITUALITY, PRAYER and DEVOTIONS:

Many expressed an appreciation for spirituality and prayer resources during the pandemic but also expressed a desire for more in-person opportunities for prayer, retreats, and spirituality groups during this post-pandemic time.

They called for more Cursillos, retreats, prayer groups, Scripture studies, etc., both on-line and particularly, in-person.

TRANSPARENCY and ACCOUNTABILITY:

In listening to God’s People, it is apparent there is still mistrust within our Church. Many shared a desire for more transparency in leadership, decision-making, and financial matters. They called for more accountable leadership among the clergy and parish staffs. Many expressed a desire to see priests’ ministry evaluated regularly.

TECHNOLOGY:

Most parishes learned to use technology to a much greater degree during the Covid19 Pandemic. Parishioners appreciated the effort to have Mass broadcasted, as well as some who offered classes and prayer and retreat opportunities. They would like to see even more Bible studies, catechesis, prayer meetings and outreach to homebound parishioners via technology. A number expressed the desire for greater use of social media to increase engagement.

SUMMARY:

It is a fair conclusion to say that the People of God of the Church of Monterey who participated, felt very enthusiastic, grateful, and hope-filled because of their Synod experience which was accompanied by their pastors, priests, deacons and lay leaders in an honest, respectful and prayerful manner.

We can also say with this wonderful experience of “being heard,” they carry within their hearts great hope that these Synod Listening Session results will be a foundation for the next steps. Their hope is for the Church to build on, respond to, and discern, with continuing openness to the Holy Spirit who guides our ‘journey together,’ at the level of the Universal Church in Synod 2023, but also and just as importantly, at the level of the Diocese and their local parishes as the Bishop, pastors and other leaders review these results. As St. Junipero Serra said, “Siempre Adelante!”



Synod 2021 -2023

Communion, Participation, and Mission

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;

Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful; do not let justice be passed over
nor let us promote disorder.

Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever.

Amen.

Diocese of Monterey



Synod 2021 -2023

Comunión, Participación, y Misión

Estamos ante ti, Espíritu Santo,
ahora que nos reunimos en tu nombre.

Contigo como nuestro guía único,
siéntete como en casa en nuestros corazones.

Enséñanos el camino que debemos seguir
y cómo ir a buscarlo.

Somos débiles y pecadores; no permitas que haya injusticia,
ni que fomentemos el desorden.

No dejes que la ignorancia nos lleve por el camino equivocado
ni la parcialidad influya en nuestras acciones.

Que encontremos en Ti nuestra unidad
para que caminemos juntos hacia la vida eterna,
y así no desviarnos del camino de la verdad
y de lo que es correcto.

Todo esto te pedimos,
que estás trabajando a todo tiempo y en todo lugar,
en la comunión del Padre y del Hijo,
por los siglos de los siglos.

Amén.

Diócesis de Monterey

California bishop invited community organizers to help with the synod. So far, it's working.



J.D. Long-García February 28, 2022



Pope Francis greets Bishop Daniel E. Garcia of Monterey, Calif., during a meeting with bishops from California, Hawaii and Nevada on their "ad limina" visits to the Vatican Jan. 27, 2020. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Bishop Daniel E. Garcia has been leading the Diocese of Monterey, Calif., since 2019. He said he had about one year of “normal” before the pandemic began.

He had been serving as auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Austin, Tex., when Pope Francis appointed him to the coastal California diocese.

“When I first got here, people asked me, ‘What is your vision for Monterey?’” Bishop Garcia said. He would laugh as he told them: “Well, I don’t know. I just moved here from Texas. Let me get an understanding of the landscape first!”

There are 46 parishes in the Diocese of Monterey, whose more than 200,000 Catholics are spread out over four counties and 8,000 square miles between Los Angeles and San Francisco. According to Bishop Garcia, it takes four to five hours to drive the territory north to south. So it took a while to get to know the local church.

According to Bishop Garcia, it takes four to five hours to drive the territory north to south. So it took a while to get to know the local church.

Bishop Garcia went for his first ad limina visit to Rome with the other West Coast bishops just a few weeks before pandemic lockdowns began in California. He said it was his first ad limina, and he was moved by the words Pope Francis shared.

“He really encouraged us to be spiritual fathers that would walk with our people. He uses the language, always, ‘accompaniment, accompaniment,’” Bishop Garcia said. “I see that the synodal process is doing exactly that. We’re walking with our people, we’re listening to our people, and it will make us a stronger church. It will challenge us, because it’ll probably identify some aspects of our church that we need to look at. And that’s O.K. He’s giving us permission for us to do that.”

Pope Francis initiated a roughly two-year synodal process on communion, participation and mission last October. Parishes throughout the world are called to participate in the process, which invites people of faith to reflect on their experiences with the church.

“I know that some are leery of the synodal process, but I think we have to trust that the Holy Spirit is behind this and has given us a profound leader that is trying to open our eyes to the realities right in front of us,” Bishop Garcia said. “So I hope we can trust the Spirit.”

“[Pope Francis] really encouraged us to be spiritual fathers that would walk with our people. He uses the language, always, ‘accompaniment, accompaniment.’”

The Diocese of Monterey is in the beginning stages of the synod, training parish groups to go out and listen to the experiences of everyone, including those on the margins. **Bishop**

Garcia and Deacon David Ford, who is leading the process in the diocese, both have experience working with community organizing groups in the past. They were quick to enlist their help with the synod.

“We don’t need to reinvent the wheel,” said Bishop Garcia, who had been meeting with [Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action](#), or COPA, since he arrived in Monterey. COPA is an association of community organizers based in California. “There are already some processes out there,” the bishop said. COPA “does a really good job of getting the pulse of the people. We’ve been really happy about how, at least initially, it’s going.”

Diocesan leaders planned to host five separate regional meetings to train leaders throughout the diocese about how to carry out the synod at their parish. Bishop Garcia invited pastors to attend along with a group of parishioners who would lead the synod at their church. The fourth of these regional meetings was on Feb. 12.

“In my lifetime, this is the first time the Catholic Church is asking to work with other institutions or other groups being part of this journey together,” said Maria Rocha, a COPA leader at Our Lady of the Assumption in Pajaro. Ms. Rocha has been working with COPA for 13 years and said she was delighted to see 150 people show up for the first meeting.

The Diocese of Monterey is in the beginning stages of the synod, training parish groups to go out and listen to the experiences of everyone, including those on the margins. “It makes me happy that people are coming and are willing to work together for the betterment of the group and the community,” she said.

Timothy McManus is a lead organizer in California with the Industrial Areas Foundation, a national network of faith and community-based organizations, of which COPA is a member. He said there are some key elements to community organizing that can help the church carry out the synod. For example, it is important for parishes to form the right kind of team.

“The team should reflect the diversity of the parish and get into different pockets of the parish,” he said. “Team members should have certain leadership qualities; it should be someone who can listen, is curious about others, has imagination and is not closed off to possibilities.”

Mr. McManus said COPA has been helping participants at the diocesan training sessions learn how to actively listen, engage people and ask questions. He said that it is essential to focus on people’s actual experiences and not to spend time focusing on theories and ideologies.

One question he asks participants is, “What recent stories can you share, positive and negative?,” he said.

“Team members should have certain leadership qualities; it should be someone who can listen, is curious about others, has imagination and is not closed off to possibilities.”

"Because that's real," Mr. McManus said. "Your experience is real. And it gets much closer to the truth of something than when we have our theories or opinions or worldviews of things." COPA also shared how to move the conversation when difficult issues come up, like immigration on outreach to the L.G.B.T. community and divorced and remarried Catholics.

Another key facet of successful meetings is turnout. Mr. McManus referenced what civil rights activist Ella Baker termed "spadework."

"It takes a lot of phone calls and being outside after Mass, repeating an announcement several times at Mass and follow-up calls," Mr. McManus said. "It's just really working it so you can get as many people as possible into the circle."

The danger in not delivering good turnout, he said, is having the group of the same people who show up for every church event. That is not the point of the synod.

"Sometimes the only way for the church to move forward is to really connect to what we're hearing from people," Mr. McManus said. "The real thing that we're after here is, will people have a different experience of their parish because of this process?"

The danger in not delivering good turnout, he said, is having the group of the same people who show up for every church event. That is not the point of the synod.

"If it stays as the College of Cardinals or the bishops figuring out a way forward, it's just going to cut out so many people and such a wealth of knowledge and wisdom out there that comes from people's experience," he continued.

That kind of clericalism is not limited to the ordained, **Deacon Ford** noted. Sometimes lay Catholics perpetuate it as well.

Luis Arreguín, a COPA leader at Our Lady of Refuge in Castroville, said members of his community thought the synod only involved clergy members. "So I'm telling them, 'No! This is the time for you to be involved with your church and your parish,'" he said. "It's taken so long, but this is the way for our church to be more proactive. It's more than just spiritual thinking. It's about giving people power and helping to address their problems at their roots."

In a way, the potential impact of clericalism is why he and Bishop Garcia were adamant that a survey was not the right way to carry out the synod. **Face-to-face conversations are the way to answer Francis' call for the synod, Deacon Ford said, and COPA has been helping with that.**



Around 150 people gathered for a regional training in the Diocese of Monterey, Calif., where diocesan leaders are teaming up with community organizers to promote the synod. They broke up into parish groups for discussion. (Photos courtesy Diocese of Monterey) **"It's important to resist the temptation to ask too many questions, which could become guiding questions," Deacon Ford said. "Have faith in the process and in the Spirit and in the power of reflection that the needs that you're concerned about and lots of other things are going to surface."**

The two questions leaders are stressing in the Diocese of Monterey are: **"How do we experience the church's journey together?"** and **"Where do I feel the Holy Spirit inviting us to journey in the future?"**

After they ask these questions, Deacon Ford is urging group leaders to promote "prayerful listening."

"We're being countercultural in a society where nobody listens," he said. "Instead of reflecting, we react. And sometimes it's loud and mean."

He stressed that the process should be more about listening than conversation. Sharing should be about personal experiences, not about ideology. For the most part, that has happened, Deacon Ford said. However, at one of the sessions, one of the participants stood up before the large group and said disparaging things about the L.G.B.T. community, he said.

He stressed that the process should be more about listening than conversation. Sharing should be about personal experiences, not about ideology.

"Sometimes I have to put on my coach's uniform, you know. I had to shut him down," Deacon Ford said. "I told him: 'I'm sorry sir, but the demeanor in which you're talking is clearly hostile. And that's not in the spirit of what we're trying to accomplish here.'"

He invited the man to speak with him privately about his concerns, but the man ended up leaving the training session early.

Deacon Ford said that he believed the L.G.B.T. community, immigrants and the divorced and remarried were among those groups whom Francis had in mind when he asked the church to reach those on the peripheries.

Barbara Meister, a COPA leader and parishioner at Holy Cross Church in Santa Cruz, said the church's involvement in social justice was the reason why she was attracted to the faith in the 1980s. She noted the U.S. bishops' advocacy for economic injustice at the time.

"If I listen with my heart and soul, as a Catholic, as a person who attests to these values of loving your neighbor as yourself, then I [have to] care about them getting rental assistance,

regardless of whether they have papers or not," she said. "I've got to care about whether their kids are in school and if they have enough food and if they have an internet connection. And what can I do about it? If I'm truly their neighbor, I have an obligation."

Mary Litel-Walsh, a COPA leader at Resurrection Church in Aptos, said it can be difficult to have dialogue within the church. During one session, she noted that some of the lay participants were waiting for the priest to speak first. She encouraged the group to speak up. "There was real excitement once they started participating," she said.

"I love this process," Ms. Litel-Walsh, who has been a member of COPA for 13 years, said of the synod. "This process fits with COPA and I.A.F.'s ideals and philosophy so much because we're looking for marginalized groups, for diversity, to include everyone, to work from the bottom up. And that's just exactly how we do it. So it's a perfect fit with us."



J.D. Long-García

Synod Leadership, Volunteers and COPA Leaders

Deacon David Ford, Synod Director
Ann Ventura, Synod Coordinator

COPA Organizers/Trainers:

Tim McManus, Lead Organizer
Arturo Aguila, Organizer
Mayra Bernabe, Organizer

Diocesan Volunteers:

Deacon Joe DePage
Maria Rocha, Assumption
Maricella Aceveda, St. John the Baptist
Leidi Acevedo, St. John the Baptist
Luis Areguin, Our Lady of Refuge
Jorge Guzman, Sacred Heart
Sally Torres, Sacred Heart
Adriana Santana, Our lady of Refuge
Marty Beth Orser, Sacred Heart
Deacon David Lansford, Sacred Heart
Marty Litel-Walsh, Resurrection
Adriana Molina, Our Lady of Refuge
Alma Oliveros, St. John the Baptist
Barbara Meister, Holy Cross
Deacon Randy Pozos, Our Lady Star of the Sea
Claudia Reyes, Cristo Rey
Marian Elena Manzo, Sacred Heart

Synod Synthesis Team:

Deacon Dave Ford, Synod Director
Ann Ventura, Synod Coordinator
Tish Scargill, Director of Catechetics
Kimberly Cheng, Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Deacon Warren Hoy, Director of Social Justice
Rev. Louie Bellen
Rev. Tim Nondorf
Sr. Sharon McMillan, SNDM
Socorro Lagarda-Quiroz, Director of Hispanic Ministry
Judy Neary- Parish Volunteer
Mark and Joan Ambers – Parish Volunteers
Suzanne Graybill – Parish Volunteer
Bobbie Morrison – Parish Volunteer



For a synodal Church
communion / participation / mission

Deacon David R. Ford, Th.M., S.T.L.

Vice-Chancellor

Director of Diaconate and Ministry Formation
Diocese of Monterey

Message from Bishop Garcia



What is the meaning of the Synod?

Walk together as a Church with the Holy Spirit

The purpose of the Synod is
"to plant dreams", to "journey together"
following the course of the Church in
the third millennium with a truly
synodal mentality.
Join us!

WWW.SYNOD.US

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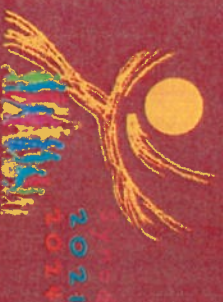
Towards a Synodal Church



Communion -> Participation -> Mission

It is good to reflect on those things that will impede our listening:

- Sharing without first reflecting
- Selfishness
- Lack of Charity
- Clericalism
- Never judge another's sharing



The Listening the Holy Father is inviting us to is NOT:

- A Debate
 - A Discussion
 - An argument about issues
 - Rather it is:
 - A prayerful Listening to one another
 - A Listening to our minds and hearts
- BEFORE we speak**



It is good that we each remember our own personality in its limits and gifts:

- **EXTROVERTS** = “Talk to Listen”
- **INTROVERTS**: = “Listen to talk”
- Table Leaders need to discourage individuals (extroverts) from dominating discussions
- Table Leaders need to encourage quieter individuals (introverts) to share their experiences



A Successful Process already used by the Men and Women Religious of our Diocese

- 1. Begin with a short Song, Prayer and silence**
- 2. Share a little about the Synod approach used through the history of the Church**
- 3. Review the two Questions**
- 4. Remind them – there are NO right or wrong answers**

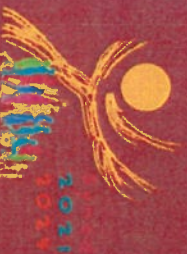


Listening Session:

-A Facilitator and Note taker at each table

-5 to 8 per table

1. The First Question is focused on and each table begins
2. 1st Person Shares, then a minute of silence to take it in
3. Keep going till all are done
4. The “Note Taker” reviews what he/she heard to ensure accuracy
5. Repeat with the Second Question



The Two Questions of the Synod

A synodal Church, announcing the gospel,
“journeys together.”

1. How do I experience the Church today as “journeying together”?
2. Where do I feel the Spirit is inviting us to “journey together” as Church in the future?





Timeline Due Dates

- Parish Regional Training Sessions
 - January and February
- Parish Listening Sessions
 - February, March & early April
- Parish Synthesis / Summary Report
 - Written as grouped by themes
 - Due to Vice Chancellor's Office by April 22
- Diocesan Synthesis / Summary Report
 - Summary of Consultation of 46 parishes & institutions
 - Due at USCCB by June 2022

