



OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

## ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

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My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings in the Lord! In solidarity with our Holy Father, Pope Francis, I am pleased to present “Journeying Together,” the synthesis reflecting our local Church’s experience of listening to the voice of the Spirit as we participated in the Synod on Synodality.

Through this process, Pope Francis invited dioceses throughout the world to develop a process that allowed the baptized to journey together and to reflect upon their experiences of faith and Church as they discern what the Spirit is saying to us in this time and place. Our local process sought to reach out to as many people as possible and was centered on mutual sharing, listening, and trusting in the Holy Spirit.

I am deeply grateful to all who participated, whether through group listening sessions or through our online portal, and to the parishes, schools, lay associations, diocesan agencies, and religious orders that facilitated these listening sessions.

More than 600 pages of feedback was received from this process, which had to be reflected in a 10-page synthesis report and submitted by us to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This synthesis reveals pain and challenges within our Church along with opportunities for healing and growth. It also reflects the great enthusiasm with which participants entered into this process.

While this experience will contribute to the fruits of the Synod of Bishops that will take place in Rome in 2023, it also provides us with new paths and opportunities in our own efforts to live out our mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in Central Kentucky. I invite all of you to read and reflect on this synthesis and look for ways to engage with your local faith community. A major theme that emerged from this listening was people’s love for the Church and their deep desire for the Church to be a vital force in the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

You are in my prayers. Please join me in praying for our Church and for all those who will gather in Rome in 2023 at the Synod of Bishops. Know that I remain,

Sincerely in the Lord,

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre  
Archbishop of Louisville



ARCHDIOCESE  
OF LOUISVILLE



# “Journeying Together”

## The Archdiocesan Synthesis

## INTRODUCTION

**Worldwide Invitation:** In October 2021, Pope Francis opened the worldwide Synod on Synodality by inviting all the baptized to share their personal experiences, hopes, and concerns for the Church. This Synod is an open-ended process of consultations with the People of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and with no pre-established priorities or intended outcomes.

The two-year Synod has three distinct phases: diocesan phase (October 2021–June 2022), continental phase (Summer 2022), and universal phase (October 2023 in Rome). In this first phase, the Synod process called upon Catholic dioceses around the world to organize local listening sessions, collect feedback from the faithful, and summarize the fruits of their listening in a 10-page synthesis, which is to be sent to the applicable episcopal conference.

Pope Francis has emphasized that a synodal path is a process guided by the Holy Spirit with patience and not a “search for immediate results that generate quick and immediate consequences.” The purpose of this process was to bring the faithful together to talk about their faith and the Church and to begin to truly encounter one another as they listen to the voice of the Spirit.

**Local Invitation:** In designing a local approach, the Archdiocese of Louisville sought to reach as many of the baptized as possible with an invitation to participate in the Synod. Starting with the premise that people are more likely to hear and accept invitations from their local Catholic networks, parishes, schools, religious orders, lay associations, and agencies were empowered to promote and host local in-person listening sessions. Hallmarks of the approach included welcoming inclusivity and allowing local listening sessions to unfold in ways that made the most sense in the local context.

The Archdiocese prepared extensive print and electronic resources conducive to local circumstances, offered training to host locations, and stressed flexibility in the listening session formats to best accommodate local needs. Throughout the month of May 2022, the Archdiocese hosted and widely promoted an online participation opportunity so that those unable to attend an in-person session had a way to share their personal experiences in this consultation phase. Recognizing that all forms of outreach would inevitably be imperfect, we trusted in the Holy Spirit to inspire individuals to engage in this synodal journey.

**Local Experience:** By all accounts, the experience of the listening sessions for participants was very positive. While there were insights, opinions, and hopes shared from various perspectives, the reports indicated that participants, even when initially skeptical, greatly appreciated the process and the opportunity to provide input to the Synod.

A total of 2,389 people in the Archdiocese of Louisville shared their personal stories and views in response to the Holy Father’s invitation. This included 120 in-person gatherings, at 72 different host locations around the Archdiocese and online input from individuals. Represented in these figures are personal witness accounts from preteens to seniors, virtually every ethnic group, rural, suburban, and urban parishioners, active and inactive Catholics, and individuals from a wide variety of perspectives.

The local process continued seamlessly when in March 2022, the Archdiocese of Louisville experienced a change in leadership with the retirement of Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz and the installation of Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre.

The Archdiocese received more than 600 pages of listening feedback from in-person Synod gatherings and individual input. Careful attention was given to all submissions over the course of nearly four months. Following the outpouring of local interest and participation in the Synod, we are pleased to share this synthesis document describing the bounty of fruits gathered while journeying together. This archdiocesan report includes a number of quotes from Synod listening sessions or individual input. The content of these quotes was not edited except to correct any obvious grammatical or typographical errors. Occasionally a word or two has been added to provide context or clarity to the quote; those words are identified by being placed in brackets.

### **HOPES AND ENTHUSIASM**

The Synod process highlighted at times controversial and difficult issues facing the Church. Those who facilitated the local listening sessions and prepared feedback, however, consistently noted the positive spirit with which participants entered into dialogue:

- “At each session, the attendees were engaged and excited for the opportunity to be heard.”
- “People seemed pleased that the Pope was asking for their stories, their opinions. Our Church is near and dear to the hearts of many people, and we will survive.”
- After experiencing the Synod discussion, previously skeptical members, “recognized the very real need for members of the Church to meet informally, to share blessings, encourage one another’s faith, and identify needs in the community...” and called for “increased fellowship and dialogue opportunities outside of Mass within parishes and across Catholic communities in order to assess where the Holy Spirit is moving...”
- A participant provided feedback to our archdiocesan Synod coordinator, stating, “I think some of us (maybe all) came with an agenda. I know I did, but the questions led me to think more pastorally, more about the Church in the world.”
- “I enjoyed this listening session. I appreciated the focus on reflection and sharing without problem-solving.”
- Regarding a session of high school students, the facilitator said, “At the end, so many commented on how they wish they could have more opportunities for this kind of discussion. They want to hear others and shape their thinking through this. For me, this was exciting as I believe this is what synodality is all about.”
- “Thank Pope Francis and the Archdiocese of Louisville for providing many ways to be included in this synodal process.”

Individuals also shared wonderful messages of hope:

- “I hope my Church has the moral courage to speak truth to power and lies. I hope the Church has the moral authority to influence world leaders and successfully address the problems in this world. I hope the Church grows in faith and justice. A priest in eastern

Kentucky was approached once and asked, ‘Is this the Church that helps people?’ I want my Church to be that Church.”

- “The Church is for sinners as well as saints...I love my Church and want it to continue to be a vital, inclusive force for good in the world and in the lives of its members.”
- “I believe in the Catholic Church. It came from the work of Jesus Christ, in the Apostles and early Christians. It has stood the test of time from the Old Testament to the New and reformed itself when necessary. I have now lived long enough to see God’s work in my own life, His protection, providence, grace, and guidance. I am grateful for His love and forgiveness. I want the world to do its best to come to an understanding of the hope we share.”

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The feedback from the Synod listening included common themes, best summarized under the topics of ordained leadership, engagement, inclusion and welcoming, and polarization. While this feedback includes frequent commentary about what needs to improve or change in the Church, the summaries of listening sessions almost universally described positive energy from participants that led to healthy dialogue.

**Ordained Leadership:** Many participants in the Synod process are deeply concerned about leadership of the Church and the need for increased vocations. Participants also expressed concerns about ordained leaders, especially a leadership style for which some used the term “clericalism,” and the sexual abuse crisis.

A number of parish groups and individuals discussed vocations to the priesthood, and there was discussion of their desire for the Church to change its discipline and doctrine that govern the ordination of married men and in some cases, the admission of women to the priesthood and/or to the permanent diaconate. A summary from one parish listening session stated, “[The Church] especially needs to open ordination to married people and women. This must take place if the sacramental life of the Church is to continue...There are vocations – married people and women!” Another parish listening session summary stated, “Right now in our moment in history, the Holy Spirit is calling for us to open up the leadership by providing a need – we lack enough ordained, celibate men. ...many parishioners believe we should ordain women to the priesthood or lift the ban on discussing it as a first step and quickly move to restore women to the permanent diaconate. The desire to ordain married men was expressed by many also.”

While some spoke about women’s leadership in the context of vocations, others discussed the need for the Church to embrace women as leaders in general and change what are seen as outdated rules and to “move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and embrace women as leaders in the Church.” A group of women religious noted, “Men and women are complementary when it comes to the Church’s sexual ethics, but not when it comes to building up and supporting the Body of Christ or Mother Church.” There were many other groups and individuals that did not touch on the topic of vocations, and certainly some participants expressed mixed opinions or firmly disagreed with any change to ordination discipline and doctrine.



Concerns about clericalism surfaced frequently in individual responses and group listening sessions. Pope Francis summarizes clericalism as when, “clerics feel they are superior, [and when] they are far from the people.” Individuals expressed deep gratitude for priests, and the discussion about vocations in the Synod summaries spoke to their desire for good priests to serve them. The power of a priest, however, in a parish community and within the faith lives of individuals was a source of concern, including cases when parishioners perceive priests do not listen well, when priests are not connected to the community, or when they impose a personal agenda on a parish without dialogue with or formation of the parishioners.

One listening session summary stated, “The role of the pastor has a great influence in the experience of community versus the experience of alienation within the parish.” Another parish report cited “Several stories shared [by parishioners] about a ‘slight’ or even a perceived slight by a parish priest and the damage it did to their faith and church involvement, which led to a lengthy discussion about clericalism.”

An individual shared this concern, “Leaders in the Church appear to listen and respond but nothing really changes. Case in point – a pastor can single-handedly, completely alter the personality, liturgical practice, and leadership of a parish without parishioners having effective recourse.” Another commented, “Clericalism among the hierarchy inhibits my listening [to God’s voice.] There are many wonderful, humble, kind priests who are present in our lives and are visible to us. They are my guiding light. And they are the majority. But the lack of humility and holiness among some inhibits my listening.”

Of course, clericalism is a complex issue as priests face a multitude of varying expectations and opinions among parishioners, and the definition of clericalism may differ from person to person. One parish gathering described clericalism as a “distorted model of priesthood” contrary to Jesus’ model of servant leadership but also called for changed expectations among the laity, “Lay people also need to be willing to give up any inflated expectations of clergy and religious or dependence on their authority for decisions of conscience.”

Finally, the failures of Church leaders to deal with scandals, especially, the sexual abuse scandal was cited as an explanation for a breakdown in trust in Church leadership. One parish reported, “Trust – a lack of trust in the current establishment brought about by what is perceived as an unwillingness to listen to people as well as remaining pain from past cover-ups like the abuse of children.” Other sources of concern for the Church included issues of inclusion, racism, and polarization – all of which will be described in other sections of this synthesis. In addition, there were a number of comments expressing frustration with conflicting positions and statements by priests and bishops on Church teachings about current issues, such as abortion, sexuality, and the admission of public figures to the Eucharist.

**Engagement:** Repeatedly, participants in the Synod brought forward the need for Catholics to be more deeply engaged in their faith. The dominant theme that emerged was for the deeper engagement of youth and young adults, but participants also mentioned as a source of concern those Catholics who are no longer connected to the Church and groups that many perceive

experience exclusion in the Church. In addition, participants spoke of the need for strong catechesis and better ownership of the faith by Catholics of all ages.

Participants expressed grief at the absence of young people in parishes. A parish report stated, “Our parish is getting older, and the next generation isn’t coming to Church at all...,” and an individual commented, “We are completely out of touch with the younger generation...I’m worried about the future of the Catholic Church. I fear that once the middle aged and older adults pass away, there will no longer be any youth that will continue the Catholic faith...”

Participants named many reasons for this dilemma, including the lack of opportunities for youth and young adult involvement in parishes, cultural trends, stale liturgies, ineffective catechesis, and a lack of parental involvement in the Church. They also cite, unwelcoming attitudes toward youth and young adults from older parishioners and Church teaching that youth and young adults find irrelevant to their life experiences. A group of high school faculty members summarized this concern well, “All agreed on the key issue of evangelizing the youth culture...the youth culture has hit a critical moment in disengagement with faith, which may need a drastic re-allocation of resources and training for the Church to address.”

Some high schools held listening sessions and shared interesting comments from youth about this issue of concern to the Church:

- “I am missing from the Church because I think it is boring.”
- “I am not currently involved in my local Church because I do not have transportation there. I still try to get at least a few minutes with God a day.”
- “We have missed church a lot in the past few years due to being really busy, and COVID kind of messed up with our routine.”
- “There needs to be better focus on inviting young people to interesting and enjoyable activities.”

Other students voiced a lack of connection to their parishes, a sense of not knowing how to get involved, a feeling of judgment if they speak up, and disagreement with the Church’s approach to the role of women and the LGBTQ+ community in the Church. A group of young adults cited the need to make “...necessary changes to parish practices...that would attract young adults such as beautiful liturgies, clear presentation of the deeper truths of the Catholic faith, personal invitations into opportunities to serve and minister, meaningful outreach efforts, and community building.”

Parishioners often named the distractions of modern day culture and the busyness of family life as conditions that hinder engagement with the faith. Sports was seen both as an opportunity for parishes to better engage with families and as “...priorities that some have allowed to become lower case gods.” An individual shared a hope that the Church could help with this challenge, “The pace of life allows for little reflection and evaluation of who we are and where we are going. The Catholic Church needs to help people find spiritual balance to face life’s challenges.”

The concern about engagement also extended to those Catholics who are no longer involved with the Church as well as groups that may be alienated or not as connected. A group of Hispanic

parishioners expressed the need for parishioners to “be attentive to the needs of brothers who do not attend church, [invite] distant brothers, visit sick brothers who feel lonely, help those most in need...we all have gifts that must be put at the service of others regardless of culture or nationality.” Another individual commented, “We need to pay attention to why people are leaving the Catholic Church and joining other religious organizations or leaving altogether. Families are busy and pulled in so many directions...They want a Mass and homily that will inspire them, music that will invigorate them, and interaction that is mutual.” A group of former African American Catholic parishioners lamented what they described as a lack of openness to their desire to share their gifts with the Church, the cultural inexperience of clergy leading their parishes, and their grief over the past closing of so many churches and schools.

Many named the need for relationship building and dialogue as ways to deepen engagement; others called for more effective catechesis, especially adult faith formation. Participants also identified hospitality and accompaniment as essential to the process, “We need to warmly invite, welcome all parishioners and new families and create an easy path to involvement in ministries. God more often qualifies the called than calls the qualified. So, we need to take people where they are and offer training, when necessary, to increase involvement in ministries.”

Though there were many barriers to engagement cited, the deep concern of active parishioners about this issue is a source of hope for the future. Many participants named COVID-19 as both a hindrance to engagement and as a wake-up call about the importance of engagement, attendance at Mass, and the building of strong communities. A parish report voiced a message of patience, “Again, if we had to summarize all of the comments regarding engagement, we would all remind ourselves and one another that ‘relationship/s is/are messy! It takes time and patience and commitment to return again and again.’”

**Inclusion and Welcoming:** Closely related to the theme of engagement was a constant refrain for the Church to be more inclusive and welcoming, especially to the voices of women, LGBTQ+ individuals, persons of color, divorced Catholics, the poor, and immigrants.

Both individuals and parish groups frequently cited the Church as unwelcoming and judgmental toward members of the LGBTQ+ community. Parents of gay children shared very personal stories: “I’m a proud parent of angel that God gave me...She happens to be gay. She is the most loving and caring person I know. But it hurts me that she is not welcome in our Catholic Church.” Another parent lamented, “No one has ever apologized for making my son feel suicidal...I want my fellow Catholics to understand what the hateful rhetoric does to our sons and daughters. LGBTQ kids have a much higher rate of suicide compared to straight kids.”

A number of parish reports also conveyed a general sense of our need to be more welcoming and less judgmental and a need to reach out to specific groups in particular.

- “There was a sense that the Church has too much judgment toward people, and that it is almost impossible to both listen and judge at the same time.”
- “Almost every group responded with the need for the Church to be more welcoming and non-judgmental. We are called to be Christ-like, welcoming each and every one.”



- “Inclusion of LGBTQ community in marriage came up at every session. This was consistent among older audiences as well as the younger, too.”

A Synod session held among Catholic Charities staff members noted, “LGBTQ clients are worried they will not receive services...Some don’t want to receive services because of our stance on LGBTQ.”

This concern extended to a variety of other groups. Synod participants spoke of compassion for divorced and remarried Catholics without the benefit of an annulment. One respondent in reflecting on her own experience stated, “I am divorced and remarried. I want to receive Communion but [I] am not allowed. This hurts my heart so much...” A number of parishes also mentioned their desire to minister more effectively to the divorced and remarried as well as others they perceive to be alienated, “The spirit of inclusivity, especially demonstrated in interactions [with] other Christians, ‘seekers,’ and others who might be interested in Catholicism needs to be evident in liturgy, hospitality, and welcoming efforts. This spirit is central to breaking down existing barriers within the Church, which may negatively impact the inclusion of divorced Catholics, those identifying as LGBTQ...” Synodal sharing from a group of engaged couples voiced a hope for the Church, “Respondents recognize the leadership role the Church holds in the public sphere, and many felt the need for ‘bolder compassion’ for those whose voices are unheard...the poor but also of the addicted, mentally ill, and victims of racial discrimination.”

Many participants expressed concerns about racism and about welcoming people of other cultures, reflecting both current racial issues in the local Church and the growing diverse ethnic groups now part of the Archdiocese. Listening sessions among the Black Catholic community spoke about the hurt from past closings of parishes and schools and the need for the Church to do something about the sin of racism – including apologizing for past offenses. They spoke of the need to train clergy and others to work better with cultural differences and communities, and the need for people in Church leadership to reflect their race. A group of African American young adults summarized these concerns succinctly, “Systemic racism – it’s killing our Church!!”

Predominantly Caucasian listening groups also voiced similar concerns about the Church’s commitment to our local Black Catholic community, “Instead, the Church needs to be more strategic about reaching out and listening to the needs of the people in West Louisville and responding in creative ways.”

Another parish that serves many Hispanic families spoke about the “parallel tracks,” especially of the Anglo and Hispanic communities. Reflecting on a time when their two communities came together when dancing to music during a parish celebration, Synod participants discussed “how do we find those ways for people to be more comfortable with one another to help bridge that gap?” This parish noted that this type of synodal gathering would be helpful to many parishes that experience divides between groups within the parish community.

Parish Synod summaries and individual responses included frequent comments about greater inclusion for the voices, experiences, and insights of women. One parish report stated, “We need to hear more from women’s voices in the Church – the voice of the Spirit is not heard from 50%

of its members.” An individual stated, “I feel that women need a more active role in leadership of the Church...we make up over ½ the members worldwide and yet major decisions are made without our input or viewpoint.”

It should be noted that there were a number of respondents who, while not rejecting inclusiveness, voiced concerns about any diminution in Church teaching. One individual response that was typical of others stated that the Church should “not [change] Catholic teaching to align with today’s culture. People and cultures may change, but God does not change...I pray the Catholic Church leaders and members join together to promote respect for life and for each other, innocence of children, a traditional family construct (man and woman in a sacramental marriage).” Synod feedback from a group of engaged couples noted, “Some [engaged couples] spoke of need of inclusion of LGBT persons, whereas strong fears of gender ideology were voiced by other people.” A report from a group of young adults stated, “The importance of Catholics in general, clergy and laity, holding to and boldly proclaiming true Catholic tradition and faith to the world and pushing against mainstream thought was a common theme.”

**Polarization:** This last theme was not as dominant as others were, but it was a definite trend. A significant number of groups and individuals expressed a concern about polarization, which Miriam Webster defines as “a division into two sharply distinct opposites,” in the Church. One parish summary noted that participants expressed a “frustration with polarization...many expressed a desire for the Church to help our people to learn to talk to one another again and to provide experiences where people can express their own viewpoint but also actively listen to another’s views with humility, openness, and mutual respect.” A lay association listening session reported, “What everyone could agree upon was love God and love your neighbor as yourself...We had some in the group who were very dogmatic and others who are very liberal with Church doctrine. Not sure how we meet in the middle.”

One parish noted, “Our Church encompasses orthodox and progressive factions within that need to be unified.” Another listening session described this dilemma well, “It was frequently expressed that the Church needs to refocus on the basics, i.e. Bible literacy, personal relationships with Jesus, the sacredness and dignity of human life, the 10 commandments, a moral framework that respects all life, all people. But at the same time, there was a desire that the Church move beyond dualistic thinking or presenting the faith in simplistic, black-and-white categories. There was a consensus that many modern issues are complex and challenging and best approached with humility, discernment, and patience.”

Several group reports and input from individuals expressed deep concern about the Church abandoning the reforms of Vatican II, while others decried a weakening of Catholic identity, “As a millennial cradle Catholic, I have seen the culture and watered-down catechesis wreak havoc on my generation. Almost all of my peers that I grew up with in Mass and CCD no longer practice their faith...In this synodal journey, I would like to ask for emphasis on tradition and reverence for Christ, his Church, and his sacraments.” A few individual responses emphasized a return to the Latin Mass, “I would like to see traditional Catholicism, the Latin Mass, and orthodox teachings in the Catholic Church.”

Comments about politics and the Church reflected a variety of viewpoints. This commentary emerged largely from individuals as opposed to group listening. The following examples demonstrate some of the polarization found among Catholics:

- “It’s sad to hear our leaders talking on ‘political’ matters like migration and climate but avoid correcting scandalous errors in Catholic politicians in order to not be ‘political.’ It stinks of hypocrisy.”
- “The alignment of the Church with political candidates who claim to be against abortion yet in their personal and political stance attacked life and dignity at other essential levels is hypocritical and unhelpful. The Church needs to avoid aligning itself with any political party or any particular candidate for office.”
- “Catholics believe in the word, not liberal politics.”
- “The U.S. Catholic Church needs to toss the U.S. and remember prayerfully that we are a universal Church. We have become politicized, in the sense that we are associated with power. We do not need to impose our beliefs on others. If we live our faith in action, in kindness, respect, and mercy, others will be drawn to our values and join us.”

Synod participants from a parish noted, “Politics is dividing the Church; people seem angrier; racism and other kinds of hatred seem to be a growing problem. How can the Church respond?”

### **OTHER INSIGHTS**

The items listed below introduce insights less frequently cited. They are, however, significant for our Archdiocese or introduce feedback that underpin some themes included above.

- Catholic Schools – The Archdiocese has strong Catholic schools and a relatively large number of students enrolled per capita in one-third of the counties of the Archdiocese. Thus, concerns about schools came up, with many wishing they were more affordable and accessible and others worried about the quality of faith formation within the schools.
- Church Hierarchy – Synod feedback lamented, “It can be discouraging seeing the Church as a hierarchy rather than a community.” and from another listening session, “The Church is meant to be a community of love, based in relationships, not an organization with a corporate structure.”
- Preaching – Participants spoke of the need for homilies that both break open the Scripture and connect with life experiences.
- Anti-Catholic Views – Participants in rural parishes expressed concerns about living in areas where Catholicism is not accepted, saying “Catholics remained hidden,” and it is important to realize that “what works in one parish may not work in another.”
- Other Issues – Some of the feedback included topics that were of great concern and that should be considered by the local and universal Church. These included care for the environment, the need for lay leadership, an overemphasis on money in the Church, the annulment process, evangelization, Mass attendance and concern about Mass being a true celebration, ecumenical outreach, mental health, strong parish councils, and economic and social inequality.

## INSIGHTS OF THE SYNODAL PROCESS

On the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, the Gospel according to St. John recounts a farewell discourse from Jesus Christ about the work of the Spirit, “But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming.”

It is important to recall that the purpose of this synodal process was to journey together, guided by the Holy Spirit, and not to immediately develop solutions or action plans. So in considering the fundamental question of the Synod, what is the Spirit of truth saying to our local Church?

- It is clear that we need to continue to talk to one another, whether through informal, grassroots opportunities or formal processes. Synod insights from listening sessions cited the value that Catholics found in coming together to talk about their faith and their Church.
- Utilizing the kinds of questions raised by the Synod, which sought to move people beyond personal agendas, and training in dialogue and discernment skills could enhance this journeying together. Significant efforts in these areas, including dialogue among clergy and laity, could begin to address the concern about clericalism as well as the sense of a harmful polarization in the Church.
- Engagement is a critical issue for our local Church, especially for youth and young adults and other groups that experience alienation from the Church. Those who participated in the synodal process want the Church to be a vital force in the lives of individuals, families, and communities, and they care deeply about the disconnect with some members of the community. People want the Church to accompany and help people as they deal with the joys, sorrows, and challenges of daily life.
- A greater emphasis on the full scope of the Church’s social teaching and related action in these areas could provide rich opportunities for engagement among youth and young adults. It also could serve to address issues of inclusion among various groups and to confront the various “isms” that plague our communities (racism, materialism, individualism, and so on.)
- Significant issues emerged about the discipline and doctrine of the Church in the areas of ordination, moral teachings, such as human sexuality, and practical issues, such as the formation of priests and greater involvement of laity in decision-making in the Church. In some cases, the teaching and practices of the Church may not be understood, but at a minimum, the teaching and practices are not always being received, and some seem to be calling for change. While many of these issues are beyond the scope of any one local Church, we look forward to insights from the larger Synod.
- Trust in leadership is another critical issue, and leadership development has been a core value for many years. Efforts to improve leadership skills and to continue to deal with the sexual abuse crisis need to be supported and enhanced to help address concerns about clericalism and distrust, both of which have the potential to erode the vitality of our local Church.

## ADDENDUM 1

Synod listening sessions took place at 72 different locations across the Archdiocese of Louisville during the months of February through May 2022. In addition, an online portal was widely promoted throughout the month of May so that anyone unable to attend an in-person session could still participate in this synodal journey and share their personal experiences of Church.

Host Organization	In-Person Sessions	No. of Participants
Parish-Based Sessions	78	1,241
School-Based Sessions	12	296
Agencies, Outreach Programs	23	512
Religious Orders	4	194
Lay Associations	3	28
Archdiocesan Online Portal		105
Other		13
<b>Synod Totals</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>2,389</b>



### **Reflection Questions – Synod on Synodality Synthesis**

1. What struck you about the Synthesis Report? What surprised you? What gave you hope?
2. The Synthesis reveals that Catholics have many different opinions on a variety of issues. What do you believe are the values that we share?
3. Engagement emerged as a key issue for Catholics in the Synod listening.
  - a. How would you assess engagement in your parish [or other context]?
  - b. What are some reasonable and attainable actions your parish [or other context] could take to improve engagement among groups for which it is an issue?
4. People cited the pace of life and the busyness of families as barriers to engagement and wondered how the Church could help. What are your thoughts about how the Church can help families navigate the many challenges of busy lives?
5. A Synod participant commented, “We surround ourselves with people that only look like us, think like us, and believe like us. How can we grow in our faith if it’s never challenged?” What is one way to challenge yourself to probe deeper into your Catholic faith?
6. What do you see as some opportunities for your parish [or other context] to invite people to engage in dialogue and increase mutual understanding among individuals and groups in the parish [or other context]?
7. Many Synod responses offered that the Church too often judges, and one commented “that it is almost impossible to both listen and judge at the same time.” How have you balanced “listening well and accompanying” with “judgment and accountability” in your own life?
8. One individual shared a moving statement, “I want the world to do its best to come to an understanding of the hope we [the Catholic Church] share.” How would you articulate that hope, especially to a young person or to someone who is not as connected to the Church?
9. What would you share about why you are Catholic with a youth or young adult that you care about?
10. What are your top three hopes for the Church?