



SYNOD 2021-2023 DIOCESAN SYNTHESIS



Results of the synodal consultation process
with the Latino community in the Diocese of St Cloud, MN 2022

Communion, Participation and Mission

Latino Catholics who live and work in the Central Minnesota area want more participation, an open church "where everyone can contribute on an equal basis, we all have gifts and charisms." They often find their church structures rigid and do not accept diversity. Economically speaking, we do not contribute like our Anglo brothers and perhaps that makes the difference.

"Many times, we are not seen as part of the community of faith." "We do not exist in the annual parish or diocesan budgets." They want women to have a greater role in leadership positions, so that Latino deacons can do Services of the Word when there are no Spanish-speaking priests to preside at masses. We need as a community of faith to create and sustain social and pastoral services to attend to the family as a unit. We need a new church model of integration at all levels, this makes a body of Christ strong and alive. The role of the laity should already be seen as the future of the Catholic Church, which today is losing parishioners for not having human resources to do pastoral work. As Catholic families we must work to promote priestly vocations. We miss the religious orders that supported us in the past and gave us respect and love. The laity must be active participants and servants at the church. Today the religious orders in our area are history. Priests are administrators and not parish pastors.

The Catholic faithful want "a church that is open and welcoming, that is authentic, that speaks with inspiration, that excludes no one and that listens to others." This is how the diocese of San Cloud in MN summarizes the wishes expressed by its faithful during the so-called "listening phase" of the Synod 2021-2023, launched by Pope Francis. We are one Body of Christ.

The results show, among other things, that Latino Catholics want a church that "on the one hand, is more outward-oriented, that is, towards the community and its social aspects, and, on the other, must offer a pilgrimage together with spaces and time for formation, reflection and prayer". The pastoral and formative attention to our young people is essential. Access of the little ones to Catholic elementary schools could help family ministry. Family, youth and formation are the three areas that are manifested again and again as areas of pastoral focus. Some successful practices are recommended such as:

- Continuous and permanent leadership training
- Family ministry that includes adolescents

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- Start pastoral work from the parish reality
- Meeting retreats with Jesus Christ for new initiates
- Missionary catechesis that invites service and emulation of God

Pope Francis wants a “synodal church”. It is a complicated word that expresses the fact that in the Catholic Church all the faithful - and not just bishops, priests or ordained deacons - are active participants in its life and mission. As ecclesiastical leaders they recognize that it must begin with an experience of God's mercy that would liberate, heal and release the Holy Spirit in each parish.

One of the central questions is how the role of the laity should be related to the specific role of ordained ministers. As ministerial ecclesial leaders, they must have job positions with fair salaries at the cost of living now and recognizing their academic levels and individual gifts.

In the listening phase, dozens of discussion groups were consulted, individual or group consultations were made, at the parish and community level, the Catholic faithful made themselves heard, other Christian churches were also consulted at the express request of the directors of the process. synodal

The call for “an open and hospitable community in which everyone can contribute on equal terms” is repeated in all the conversations. But at the same time, many worry that the Catholic Church is not living up to this dream. Not everyone experiences this in the Church today. Many volunteer servants in the parishes find inconsistency with the Synodo model that calls for the participation of all and the daily reality of the parishes where only the priest and the pastoral councils make the decisions. The report also bluntly states that “the Church as an 'institution' does not evoke secure or warm feelings, but rather is experienced as rigid, distant and closed in on itself”, “with a purely top-down approach, most people who contribute financially to the church are people who will die within the next ten years.” There is a great concern of discouragement within the youth to be part of the institution as such.

The laity feel unappreciated, and the parishioners are not involved enough in the development of the vision, or the parish plan.” Better communication is important, and “the way in which authority is exercised in the Church raises doubts for quite a few people.” Leadership in the Church “should be less hierarchical,” say the faithful. and “there needs to be more personal responsibility and participation by all the lay faithful. In the Latino community “we are afraid that the masses will become bilingual or that they will disappear completely in this area where we are not the majority as Spanish speakers.”

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The call for an "inclusive church" is repeated in almost all the young people consulted. In so many conversations, from teenagers to some older people, there was misunderstanding and even outrage at the "exclusion" of, among others, homosexuals. For many young people it is evident that "there are other types of relationships besides those between men and women".

For this reason, the faithful want "a Church that offers an outstretched hand — rather than a raised finger of judgment — to all, including Catholics outside the Church, the divorced and remarried, and lesbians and gays." Some voices are totally opposed to this idea and ask to return to a church that returns to pre-Vatican II practices and ask to return to masses in Latin, the mother tongue of the church, they say.

Give more space to women in ministry. Some women spoke of promoting ordaining women as deacons and parish administrators. "It's too ridiculous that we still have to discuss this in 2022." Why should all politics be determined and discussed by ordained priests, and only by men? Opening ecclesiastical positions to men and women, married and single, is something that many defend.

However, there is no unanimity on this issue, since in addition to the most frequently mentioned desire for women to be admitted to the ministry, some consider that "more attention should be paid to what is possible and not what is not allowed".

The demand for a greater role for women is often combined with the demand for greater attention to families and how they live their faith as a family. The request for a greater role for women is also linked to the desire for greater participation in the Church by the laity as a family unit. Some young Catholics would like to return to a church that their grandparents and parents have told them lived in their home countries, where the patron saint festivities and the church were the center of daily life.

And then of course there are the concerns about the mergers of parishes in our diocese, and the pastoral service, the workload for priests and other pastoral workers, the lack of connection to the world of youth. Here and there, concern is expressed about "the insufficient understanding of Latino culture by priests, but at the same time the richness of diversity is pointed out by ethnic and cultural diversity in various parishes.

Reconsidering mandatory priestly celibacy is also being questioned and much is being talked about. Priests who are lonely, or in need of physical or emotional intimacy, might function better and be more balanced if they married, some interviewees opined.

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All the conversations and consultations show a need for Sunday celebrations that are more inspiring and with greater participation of believers. Unfortunately, we are becoming more and more spectators of a sacred ritual that we are not allowed to approach. "As faithful we often experience a lack of knowledge of the meaning of the Eucharist." There is also a demand for different types of religious services or spiritual exercises. In particular, "more attention to the time devoted to faith development" and "more catechesis and more conversation about faith" are often called for. Many Catholics find it difficult to put into words what and why they believe. There is a need to continue with the traditional celebrations, such as the presentation of the children in the temple, the blessing of the Quinceañeras, (celebration of the 15th birthday for girls), and receiving all the sacraments. An interest in community life is not necessarily seen and this is of concern.

The synodal experience has also revealed "a great need" to speak and listen more in the manner of a conversation of faith. There is a desire to grow in faith. All the reports show how beneficial the conversations have been for the participants and the diocese. "We conclude that our method for synodal talks has been fruitful. The meditative, prayerful atmosphere and the dialogue method led to open and honest conversations in which everyone was heard and in which the Holy Spirit was able to speak and manifest itself". Many are grateful to Pope Francis and Bishop Kettler for the synodal process and for what it has already brought them. There seems to be a great need for conversation. Parishioners and people from outside feel heard." There are also those who prefer that this process not be carried out and continue with decision boards on the administration of cemeteries and parishes. The process of dialogue and listening makes us a living church, which many of us claim.

Important Community Needs:

- Address the fear of lack of legal documents
- Discrimination and abuse of their labor rights
- Identify resources and professionals to address mental and emotional health issues
- Need for ongoing legal assistance
- Dealing with the issue of immigration from a pastoral point of view
- Training for pastoral leaders
- Coordinate efforts in the diocese and parishes to protect human dignity.

Sincerely

Mayuli Bales, Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

If you participated in a consultation, what was your experience? What did you learn about yourself?

- What can we get out of this synodal process that may be ongoing?
 - What surprised/disappointed/excited you about this synthesis?
 - What do you think should be the next steps? Where is the Holy Spirit calling us to act?
 - How do I commit to being proactive in participating in a healthier Church?
 - What else do I want to know?
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- How do I live my faith in everyday life? How am I a witness to my faith at work? At home? In the community?
 - How is the Holy Spirit alive in my family?
 - Where do I see an opportunity to use my God-given gifts for the good of others?
 - How am I living and claiming my baptismal call to be a disciple of Christ?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

stcdio.org/synod-2021-2023

Visit the website...

...for a link to the full summary/report presented by the Diocese of Saint Cloud

... for a translation of the synthesis from English to Spanish

... for a translation of the synthesis from Spanish to English

QUESTIONS?

Email: synod@stcdio.org