



ARCHDIOCESE
of
KINGSTON

Synod on Synodality
Synthesis Report

July 14, 2022

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ARCHDIOCESE *of* KINGSTON

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In October 2021, our Archdiocese embarked on the *Synod on Synodality* with the purpose of coming together to discern how the Holy Spirit is calling us to live the Gospel in our present age. From 2 January to 3 April 2022, over 2600 people participated in the synod process. The attached report was written by Archdiocesan Synod Team as a synthesis of the responses received. This report was forwarded to the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) in June and integrated into the provincial synod report for the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Before making the report public, a few words or phrases were changed for clarity of meaning, and further detail of responses received in the 27-question parish survey was included in the appendices with a short reflection guide to support ongoing synodal listening for the faithful within our parishes.

In prayer and dialogue, the team responsible for writing the Synod Synthesis sought to reflect the integrity of the responses shared through the parish listening sessions and the two online surveys. Some of the terminology utilized is imperfect and was not meant to minimize or categorize, but to speak to the trends that emerged from synod responses within the Archdiocese. It was not a simple task to capture the diverse opinions and feedback received, however, I am confident that the team captured the essential elements to the best of their abilities with charity and sensitivity.

We have learned a great deal from this first synodal experience and recognize the blessings we have received within the Archdiocese from the engagement of so many who shared their thoughts, hopes and concerns. All that has been shared is so valuable for the reflection of the diocese as a whole. Thank you to all who participated. I invite you to spend time with the Synod on Synodality Synthesis Report and listen to how the Holy Spirit is guiding you. The Lord has been very good to us.

Yours in Christ,

+Michael Mulhall
Archbishop

COMMUNION PHASE - 26 November 2021 to 2 January 2022

Archbishop Michael Mulhall, opened the *Synod on Synodality* in the Archdiocese of Kingston on 17 October 2021, inviting all members of the Body of Christ to participate in the synodal process to discern how the Holy Spirit is calling us to live the Gospel in our present age. A Synod Coordinator was appointed and a 20-person Archdiocesan Synod Team of clergy, religious and lay faithful, Catholic and non-Catholic members, was formed, bringing together diverse service ministries from across the archdiocese. Throughout this Communion phase of synodality, the Team prayed and reviewed together existing resource documents to discern a path in designing and leading a synodal process with multiple entry points for individuals of all ages, small groups and communities. Resource packages and tools to be used within parishes and schools were created. Subgroups of the Synod Team were formed to develop strategies to engage targeted populations in listening sessions including refugees, penitentiary inmates, Indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQ+ youth, elderly and numerous parish and service groups within the archdiocese.

Weekly E-Newsletters to parishes, Synod updates and resources were shared across the archdiocese from October to the end of December 2021, to support parish communities to enter the Participation phase of the synodal process beginning in January 2022. Members of the Archdiocesan Synod Team developed and facilitated workshops to prepare Parish Coordinators to run listening session groups in their communities. While questions developed by the Synod Team were provided to stimulate reflection and dialogue, parishes were encouraged to follow where the Holy Spirit leads them in their listening session.

In light of the public health restrictions on gathering due to the pandemic, which extended throughout the duration of the Participation phase, two survey tools were created to engage individuals and groups in listening and sharing in the spirit of the Synod. The first survey, comprised of 27 questions for individuals and groups within parishes of the archdiocese, was developed and posted on the archdiocesan website in both English and French. Age demographics and poor Internet connection for many rural parishes, made it difficult to take part. Therefore, print copies of the survey were also made available. Two or three questions were dedicated to each of the following ten topics: 1) Companions on the Journey, 2) Listening, 3) Speaking Out, 4) Celebration, 5) Sharing Responsibility for our Mission, 6) Dialogue in Church and Society, 7) Ecumenism, 8) Authority and Participation, 9) Discerning and Deciding, and 10) Forming Ourselves in Synodality. Sample questions included, "*How do we hear the voice of Christ in the Church? How do we hear Him on the edges of our communities? What particular issues in the Church and society need conversion in the light of the Gospel?*" A total of 1436 surveys were completed with 1870 people contributing to the submissions. There were 74 group surveys submitted by parishes, community groups and school classes. The archbishop also engaged priests in listening sessions in four Deanery meetings.

Pope Francis encouraged all dioceses to reach out to those not currently engaged in parish life and include them in the synodal process. A second survey was developed as an outreach tool. The questions were short, using straight-forward language and focused on listening and dialogue in Church and society. The three questions were: 1) *What is your experience of Church?* 2) *How does*

the Church help you? 3) What can the Church do differently? Staff, students, and families within two Catholic school boards were engaged in responding to the questions through the facilitation of Religious Education Departments of the school boards. Despite the planning efforts of the Archdiocesan Synod Team, little success was achieved engaging with the local homeless or local Indigenous populations. Because synodal conversations call for vulnerability, they are best conducted in an atmosphere of communion and community. The inability to engage certain populations is evidence that the archdiocese does not have relationships with certain groups which would be supportive of this type of interaction. This is an opportunity for learning and bridge-building for clergy, lay leaders, and archdiocesan staff. Some community members who were willing to broach the topic of Synod with people on the periphery on behalf of the Synod Team were told individuals did not want to participate or that individuals did not have positive things to say. Some people who did share communicated deep woundedness caused by the Church (sexual abuse, 60s scoop, etc.). With multiple federal institutions in our archdiocese, staff also attempted to solicit feedback from Catholic inmates. However, pandemic restrictions made group listening impossible. As a result, very little feedback was received from this population. The three-question outreach survey was posted on the archdiocesan website and a total of 775 outreach surveys were submitted.

Across the archdiocese, 2645 people participated in the synodal process by submitting their comments in response to the two surveys posted. As the Participation phase came to a conclusion and the Mission phase commenced, two committees of clergy and lay Synod Team members were assembled to analyze and summarize the survey data. One committee addressed the 27-question parish survey results and the other addressed the three-question outreach survey results. Several meetings were held to bring both committees together and align approaches through prayer and dialogue. Under the guidance of the Synod Coordinator, four members of the two previous committees were charged with the task of integrating the findings of the two sets of analyses and writing the final synthesis. In May, a meeting of parish listening session coordinators was held to share their experiences, insights, and next steps as a result of their learning in the synodal process.

PARTICIPATION PHASE - 3 January to 3 April 2022

It was clear that parishes designed unique approaches to engage their communities in synodal processes. In one parish, synodal questions were read each week from the pulpit accompanied by a series of reflective statements for parishioners to consider. Several parishes sent emails or mailed letters of invitation to all parishioners to solicit participation in listening sessions. One parish hosted a listening session by phone to overcome the barriers of lack of access to technology and pandemic in-person meeting restrictions. Parish listening sessions were well received by participants and proved to be very fruitful. Parishes are responding to needs identified within their community because of the listening sessions, including, creating social opportunities for seniors experiencing loneliness, reaching out to young families to provide faith resources and to encourage them to attend Mass. One coordinator shared that group members commented that their ability to listen improved over the sessions and that further opportunities to come together was requested. Finally, a desire to strengthen relationships between parishes and the archdiocese was expressed as a goal by several coordinators.

The process of coming together for discussion and listening was noted by some participants as a highlight in itself. One individual involved at both the Archdiocesan planning and parish participatory levels described the process as an invitation to share what was on our collective minds regarding our relationship with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. The results were interesting and intriguing conversations and a daring sharing of our experiences. Though the individual is unsure where the Holy Spirit will lead us next, it was clear that everyone involved cared deeply about their faith, religious traditions, the Church, and each other. This daring sharing was a new process for Archdiocesan lay people, staff, and clergy. It was a consolation to see elevated levels of engagement, resulting in positive and self-reflective feedback. Even when comments veered into negativity, it was heartening that people cared enough about the Church to participate in the process.

Positive comments frequently expressed Church as a welcoming and inclusive community that fostered communion, hope, ritual, belonging, support, peace, calm, and prayer. The sacraments were a source of strength, forgiveness, and grace, and Church teaching provided a moral and value framework for how to live well. The Mass was an opportunity to take time to be quiet and "reset," be with family and/or community, reflect, pray, and listen to the Word of God. Comments focusing on the community aspect of Church described caring parishes made up of parishioners coming to the aid of those in need. This demonstration of our faith in action helps to reinforce both close community ties and the benefits of living within a faith community.

However, individuals also expressed concerns about the long-term viability of their parishes given the lack of volunteers and aging congregations, especially in the post-COVID era. Given this concern, young people are perceived as being on the margins of the faith community, as they increasingly fall away from the Church and choose not to practice their faith. Concerns were also expressed about the Catholic Provincial Curriculum's inclusion of world religions, and teachers' ability to present the information from a Catholic perspective. Respondents overwhelmingly expressed a need for ongoing Catechesis, programming, and faith formation opportunities for youth (pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12) and young families, as well as better connections between parishes and our local Catholic schools. While seeing individuals' love and concern for the Church was a source of consolation, negative feedback was at times distressing. Critical responses were born from a deeply personal and negative experience of Church, such as child sexual abuse in their community or difficulty accessing the sacraments due to various circumstances. Alternatively, some respondents' criticism appeared rooted in a more general ideological position, reflecting the current political and cultural landscape. Those responses that fell into the ideological position category frequently brought up the sexual abuse crisis, residential schools, divorce, the treatment and role of 2SLGBTQ+, lay people, and women in the Church, married clergy, abortion, birth control, and poverty/social justice issues. Frequently, respondents expressed the desire for the Church to "modernize" or "get-with-the-times." Individuals with progressive views that conflated the Church primarily with community expressed that the Church fails in her mission when she is not all-inclusive, welcoming, and loving to others.

The desire for the Church to modernize influenced opinions on everything: from genres of music at Mass to calls for more tangible signs of reconciliation between the Church and the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. Some responses did not pinpoint particular social or political issues, but still felt the Church was "out of touch," and needed to be updated or made more relatable and relevant to young adults, teens, and children. Some felt the Church's expectations or rules were too demanding and should be relaxed or made more flexible. For instance, it was suggested that doctrines that may prevent 2SLGBTQ+ persons from feeling included in their faith communities should be ignored or changed to assure those persons feel welcome in their parish.

While some misunderstanding about Church doctrine was to be expected, the ideological agendas shared and resulting stark divide amongst Catholics today was the largest source of desolation for the Synod Team. Participants across engagement platforms frequently used the proposed synodal listening questions to share strong, even strident, views and agendas. Ideological positions varied from very traditional (the Extraordinary Form/Latin Mass should be introduced throughout the archdiocese), libertarian (vaccine mandates are wrong), to more progressive or socially liberal (women should be priests, the allowance of same-sex marriage, etc.). Those who fell into the ideological position were frequently progressives seeking modernization, but there was also a large minority of ideological respondents that felt the Church had become too liberal or was yielding to the current "politically-correct" or "wokeness" culture. Some called for a return to tradition, while others expressed how it was difficult to be a devout Catholic in their parish or the Catholic school system. Some respondents felt marginalized by their unwavering commitment to their faith, and that their voices were not heard in the Church.

When advocating for the inclusion of 'marginalized' and 'peripheral' voices in the *Synod on Synodality*, Pope Francis was likely alluding to those individuals who have been excluded and abandoned by their families, shunned by others, and cast out of society. Typically, one thinks of the marginalized as those suffering extreme physical, social, psychological, and spiritual distress, such as individuals experiencing mental illness or victims of abuse. This is the approach that the Archdiocesan Synod Team took when soliciting feedback from the wider community. However, in the remarks mentioned above, 'marginalization' did not pertain directly to the Mission of the Church, but instead was adopted in unexpected ways to express personal discontent and a desire to be listened to. In these cases, otherness was not equated to those in need, but used to designate exclusion from the faith community due to conservative or traditional beliefs. Whether the use of "marginalized" in the Gospel sense of the word can be rightly attributed to traditional or conservative Catholics is outside the scope of this synthesis. Nevertheless, progressive Catholics *did* dominate the responses, meaning overtly traditional responses were the minority. Those views characterized by a call for greater inclusion, even at the expense of doctrine or tradition, were the mainstream opinion in our local context.

Other respondents, not necessarily ideologically aligned, also expressed a concern regarding who is listened to in the Church. Responses noted a lack of confidence in sharing opinions and the perception that a small number of people have considerable influence in parishes and decision making. Cynicism was expressed regarding the synodal process specifically. A recurring pun was used: Sin-odd. Many respondents did not believe the Church would listen to their responses or that

the Synod was rigged to bring about a certain result. Other respondents were concerned that more extreme views may drown out the "middle."

Ideological responses may have varied in opinions, but they were all concerned with what the Synod team termed as Authentic Catholic Christianity. All of these "Authenticity Oriented" responses broadly agree with the following argument:

1. The Church is in trouble because it is not being true to its authentic self
2. The authentic self of the Church is (X)
3. Therefore, if the Church acquires (X) and returns to its authentic self, the Church will no longer be in trouble

Though every Catholic should be concerned with Authentic Truth considering the Gospel and Church teaching, the confusion around what is *authentic* Catholic Truth is concerning. We speculate that the diversities of views may be the result of poor proclamation, or reception, of the Gospel, Catechism and Mystagogy, in addition to a society that values individualism over all else.

Overall, Synod responses that were overtly critical of the Church or requesting drastic doctrinal change – though distressing – appeared to come less from a place of anger, and more from a place of a wounded love. Many respondents love their Church, but express sadness and regret that the Church is not where they feel it should be today. There is a lack of trust in the institutional Church due to the sexual abuse scandal, clericalism, lack of transparency, corruption, and residential schools. For some, breaches in trust caused by past abuse and the Church's perceived old-fashioned values concerning gender, marriage, and sexual morality made people feel ashamed, resulting in a distancing from Catholicism. This population has not necessarily lost their faith in God, but possibly lost faith in the Church as an institution and seek to worship God elsewhere.

Speaking to the Church's involvement in residential schools specifically, participants felt not enough had been done regarding reconciliation and called for a formal apology from Pope Francis. A common sentiment shared was that the Church was hiding from history and trying to protect its own self-interests rather than protecting those who could not protect themselves. It should be noted that the local Participation phase unfolded at the same time as the First Nations, Metis and Inuit delegation met with the Holy Father in Rome. Some individuals may have submitted responses prior to the papal apology and plans for a Canadian visit. Though Pope Francis' recent words and actions may be a step in the right direction for some Catholics, synodal responses indicate that more work needs to be done regarding healing the relationship between the Church and Indigenous Canadians. Parishioners are grappling with the historical reality of residential schools and abuse and are looking for guidance on how to reconcile these revelations with a Church that is supposed to be Christ-centred. It is becoming increasingly difficult for some to publicly justify participation in the Catholic faith due to the harm committed by the institution. Our faithful are looking for direction on how to move forward in reconciliation, both at the institutional level, regarding the appropriate next steps for the archdiocese, parishes, and local communities, and at the personal level. The lack of clear direction in responses indicated a need for the Church to provide guidance on how to approach the situation.

Even when speaking from a positive perspective, very few people spoke to their personal relationship with Christ, their own spirituality, or their understanding of salvation and agape love. When people referred to the Mass, it was often in technical terms such as the music, homily, or readings and not as a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Respondents typically defaulted to an institutional definition of Church. There was little thought given to how the Church is the Body of Christ, made up of all the baptized people of God.

An institutional understanding of Church may account for the importance placed on the role of clergy, specifically the role of the Parish priest. Some noted the positive role that priests have had in their faith journey, while many more noted how priests had negatively affected their faith journey, sometimes by actively discouraging the respondent, but overwhelmingly through inaction and disinterest. Several were frustrated that the priest was not taking leading roles in what they consider vital areas of parish life (not attending group meetings, not helping at soup kitchens, not showing up to demonstrations), while others felt their priest did not yield enough authority to lay leaders at the parish level. Others were upset at the lack of connection between the community and the priest. Parish level Catholicism in our local context remains very clerical, as the priest is seen as the guiding hand of Authentic Christianity, and the central figure of the Christian community. There was little evidence of personal accountability in improving parish life and it may be that our parishioners place too much emphasis on the role of the priest in their Christian development. Alternatively, in some cases, priests may very well be perceived to hinder parish improvements, leading to genuine frustration.

One aspect of priestly ministry that received attention was the homily. A common comment raised was that fear of being cancelled or offending people was keeping priests from preaching the unvarnished truth. Individuals also shared the belief the Archbishop was unwilling to support priests who preach on contentious issues, resulting in timid homilies. Sometimes this was related to 'progressive' issues like poverty, but more often the issues that priests were allegedly avoiding tended to be culturally conservative issues (abortion, marriage, and vaccinations). Among these respondents there was an agreement that priests should be more willing to speak out about contentious subjects.

Some respondents noted a close relationship with their local parish community. While many others felt disconnected from their parish, and few felt any connection to the archdiocese. Returning to the role of the priest in the parish, many felt they had no connection to the pastor. Worse, many felt they had not connected to their fellow parishioner and broader community. Some noted that they arrived in their parish, or became disconnected from the parish, during the pandemic. The lack of in-person fellowship and liturgy has had a negative effect on connection. Others pointed to a more existential or cultural problem in the parish; some complain that they felt more like a collection of individuals than a community, that others were unfriendly or mean, and sometimes respondents admitted they themselves were shy and standoffish.

Individual responses indicated that when institutional practices are put before encounter and relationship, people feel hurt and rejected. This was evident in responses that shared how it was difficult to access the sacraments. Some may interpret Church requirements as institutional hoops to jump through. Furthermore, comments indicated individuals have not always been intentionally

accompanied, whether by volunteers, clergy, or pastoral staff. For instance, hurts caused by delays in receiving the sacraments or annulments may have been avoided if time was taken to accompany, rather than instruct – though without specific circumstances disclosed this is difficult to discern. Nevertheless, an individual's level of communion with the Church should not be a prerequisite for developing a deeper relationship with Christ. In our atomized society, our parishes often fail to provide the necessary support both to parishioners, and to marginalized members of society. There is a need to develop stronger, deeper community in the parish, which will hopefully quench the thirst of the lonely. In our local context, determining how we can best accompany people remains the central question for pastoral ministry.

The lack of available volunteers to accompany others, among other ministry roles, may result from the lack of understanding around the Church's Mission and our individual call to vocation. Several commented that they have never heard the Mission of the Church talked about before and did not know what it meant. Others may have guessed or did not provide comment. The minority who understood the Mission of the Church used words like Evangelization, Alpha, Faith on Fire, St. Andrew's School of Evangelization, Opus Dei, CCO, NET Ministries, and quoted the Great Commission in the Gospel of Matthew. Some individuals showed a passionate commitment to Evangelization but requested better resources to equip themselves and their parishes. Both the overemphasis of the role of the priest and the disconnection that parishioners feel from their local communities, points towards a greater need for Christians to realize their role in the overall Mission of the Church. Our faithful need to be better equipped to understand themselves as having a vocation to go into the community and act in a Christ-like way. Responses indicated that parishioners are thinking about what the Church can do for them personally, rather than what they can do for the Body of Christ, and the world. These comments frame the Church as an institution, as opposed to a community of believers where parishioners have responsibilities.

Other noteworthy contributions included the divide of how individuals are responding to the pandemic. Some individuals shared they feared a return to Church due to the ongoing pandemic, while others felt the Church had kowtowed to the government and should have fought against closures and other restrictions. The pandemic has impacted community connections and fellowship, with many individuals missing their faith community and social aspects of Church. The pandemic has also impacted Church attendance patterns, as some have not returned because they have fallen out of the habit. Others mentioned their varying attendance patterns without referencing the pandemic. Some grew up with the faith and slowly drifted away or no longer attend. They may still pray and believe in God, but they no longer feel connected to the Church community. Some feel they do not need the Catholic Church to explore their faith or relationship with God. Some may only attend with school, with grandparents, or on special occasions. Individuals are grappling with how and where they will worship given the current pandemic and social climate. There were also respondents that had so little experience of Church that they were not able to respond to the Synod questions in any meaningful way.

Though we had respondents share how the Church community has helped them, many individuals also shared how they have been deeply wounded by the Church, highlighting areas in need of healing and conversion. It is important to emphasize here again that Church as an institution vs.

Church as the Body of Christ were either conflated or not well defined. For individuals who have felt condemned, intimidated, isolated, judged, marginalized, rejected, or unwelcomed by the Church, it is clear they have experienced a Catholic community at odds with the welcoming, inclusive, and redemptive message of the Gospel. Even those who have not directly been impacted by crises in the Church feel deeply wounded by the harm perpetuated. Future listening opportunities at the local level concerning topics such as residential schools may be the first step in understanding the harm committed, learn from one another, and move forward together. In turn, there are those who continue to feel marginalized by the Church because of their identities or personal circumstances, such as 2SLGBTQ+ and remarried individuals. A continuation of the synodal process may be a form of communal accompaniment in which parish communities are encouraged to listen to each member and grow in solidarity and compassion.

We must learn to better welcome people whose lives do not neatly conform to the Church and her teachings. There should be no division of 'us' and 'them' because in community there is only *us*. However, we must also learn to be inclusive without compromising the truth of our faith, as is suggested by some of the respondents. The various responses that conflict with Church teachings are a sign of confusion. Across the responses were varying degrees of misunderstanding regarding what the Church teaches and why. This confusion, accompanied by feelings of rejection and alienation, should be understood as a cry of pain. It is our duty as Christians to respond to any cry of pain with charity and mercy. As a Church community – including priests and laity – we must also ask *how we have contributed to this confusion*. There is an opportunity to teach better, with more understanding to the diverse experiences of the Body of Christ. We must learn to better walk with all of God's children, regardless of where they are in their journey, without compromising what we hold to be true as Christians. This is the narrow path of true synodality.

The failure of adult catechesis and/or ongoing adult faith formation may account for why respondents used certain language or avoided certain themes in their comments, such as their personal relationship with Christ or notions concerning mercy, forgiveness, and sin. In our local context, formal catechesis ends with confirmation for many of our parishioners. We can therefore assume that many of our Catholics may have a 12- or 13-year old's understanding of the Church and our faith. Those in the Catholic school system receive religious education until grade 12 (or grade 13 depending on their age), with graduation marking the end of formal formation for many of our faithful. Individuals who have not sought out or received additional faith formation may have a youth's understanding of the faith and have been equipped with tools that are no longer adequate to navigate an increasingly complex society. Adults who do not fully understand our Catholic tradition, history, or doctrine may respond naively or choose to reject the faith when faced with crises or challenges. If our parishioners are looking for moral clarity from a homily once a week, they will not be adequately formed to address the challenges of the modern world. Our faithful need to be empowered to seek additional sources of faith formation at the parish level and in their own spiritual lives.

To the point above, individuals whether explicitly or implicitly sense the counter cultural call of the Gospel. Most everyone can agree the culture is at odds with what Catholics believe. As evidenced by the responses, many individuals respond to this understanding by choosing to not

live the faith, following instead, the current cultural dogma and doctrine of our time. Others may respond to cultural confusion by gravitating to strict forms of traditionalism. Most of our faithful sense this counter cultural aspect of the faith, but do not know how to integrate this tension into their lives within a full, mature Christian faith. Individuals may also struggle if the Church is not seen as showing moral leadership, such as in past abuse cases or current Indigenous reconciliation efforts. Confusion abounds when Church messaging is perceived as silent, timid, unsure, afraid, ambiguous, garbled, or bland.

If Catholics are not being formed by the Church, we can presume they will seek formation and guidance elsewhere, including the media (especially social media) and government. This is especially true on complex societal questions, such as end of life issues, sexuality and gender, marriage and divorce. Those without a strong spiritual foundation may succumb to pressures of secular society, and either hide their faith, or abandon it completely. The faithful of our archdiocese have communicated their struggle in navigating our modern, complex reality, while also maintaining their Catholic identity and faith. We require strong leaders, both lay and clergy, to shepherd our people to a fully integrated view of the human person within our Catholic tradition and faith.

MISSION PHASE - 4 April 2022 to ongoing hopes and dreams

As in every age, it is fundamental to our human flourishing that we orientate our person and life toward God, acknowledging His majesty and authority, receiving, and accepting divinely revealed truths and founding in God every act and choice that we make.ⁱ We are called to persevere in prayer and to praise God (*cf* Acts 2:42-47), presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to Him (*cf* Rom. 12:1); all are called to manifest this holiness in their lives.ⁱⁱ From both what was said by some in their synod responses and what was absent or unspoken in many others, we are being called to re-emphasize the call to holiness, as we seek to respond to the challenges that we face today. True for individual members of the laity, this is no less the case for the archbishop and his clergy, in the exercise of authority in this archdiocese and in its parishes and different ministries.ⁱⁱⁱ

In some responses, the need for a renewed emphasis upon catechesis and formation was explicitly identified but the urgency of this task was underscored even more in those responses that did not explicitly address these questions: in both the suggestion that the Church's moral teaching should become more responsive to the prevailing attitudes of our society and in those that exhibited an inability to articulate the mission of the Church, it was apparent that our catechetical methodology needs to be re-examined. Individuals need to be equipped for the task that is before them; that is to be faithful followers of Christ, living lives of holiness and bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to others.

Moreover, "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists to evangelize, to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection."^{iv} Prayerful study of the Second Vatican Council's decree, *Ad gentes*, through St Paul VI's *Evangelii nuntiandi*, and St John Paul II's *Redemptoris missio* to Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*, will assist the archdiocese in not only examining how we form

individuals for the missionary task but also to determine how the archdiocese can better respond in a corporate way to the task before us.

This attention to catechesis and formation needs to include a particular emphasis upon family and youth. Parents and families face ever greater challenges as they seek to catechize and raise their children in the Faith. Assisting the youth and the children of the archdiocese in navigating a society that has repudiated the Church's teaching on important issues, particularly relating to Catholic anthropology and the Church's moral teaching and equipping them to be disciples in a new missionary age must be recognized as a critically important task. This question of how we might best support families and form our youth in the practice of the Faith deserves our immediate attention.

In all this, we must cultivate not only our appreciation of the Truth and build strong foundations in Faith but we must also cleave ever more closely to Love. Without Love, the truth can become an awful burden and faith can become dry and parched. This is particularly important as we encounter those whose lives are at odds with the Church's teachings and God's purposes for us as human beings. We must be attentive to how we can bring them to the Truth in a way that sets them free from the bondage of sin (Jn 8:32) and pride but instead lovingly draws them into the community of Faith.

In baptism, we have been incorporated into one body, the Church (*cf* Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:17, 12:25, 27; Eph. 4:12, 5:23; Heb. 13:3; Col. 1:24) but we are not always conscious of this fact. A renewed appreciation of the corporate nature of the Church will remind us, as individuals and as parish communities, that we belong to something greater than ourselves and that we are called to support one another and to be supported by one another in turn. Our strength is not that of the autonomous individual, seated in an illusory independence, but is instead a gift of God and found in the love that we have for God and that we share with one another. These fraternal bonds and the expansion of our horizon beyond that of the parish need to be nurtured and strengthened, particularly as we respond to the Great Commission that Christ gave to His Church (Matt. 28:16-20).

The Church into which we have been incorporated has within it a variety of ministries and has been structured by Christ in a hierarchical fashion, to nurture the faithful in their Christian vocation and ensure that the task entrusted to the Church is pursued in an orderly way.^v Alongside this, Pope Francis has called the Church to a greater attendance to the many gifts that the laity have to offer, requiring a careful examination of the way in which they cooperate in matters of governance in the Church.

ⁱ St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II^a II^a3 q. 81, art. 1.

ⁱⁱ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, 39-42

ⁱⁱⁱ *LG*, 18

^{iv} St Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 14 & 15

^v *LG*, 18

Appendix A

Parish Survey Results Table

The table, *Parish Survey Results*, shows the questions asked, the number of respondents to each question (n) and the themes identified in the comments associated with the survey questions.

Section 1: Companions on the Journey			
Who has Christ sent to encourage and support you in your life, in your faith, in your parish and in Church?			
1	<i>I have someone who supports and/or encourages me in my life and faith.</i>	n = 1101 87 % agree – very strongly agree, 3.6 % unsure, 9 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Respondents emphasized the importance of being encouraged and supported in their faith. This means talking and sharing, aspiring to growth. The family was described as the “cradle of faith”. Small group gatherings for prayer and social connection were emphasized as important to parishes.
2	<i>I feel connected to my home parish.</i>	n = 1036 80 % agree – very strongly agree, 4 % unsure, 16 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
3	<i>My home parish is an important partner in encouraging me in my faith.</i>	n = 1002 81 % agree – very strongly agree, 3 % unsure, 16 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
Section 2: Listening			
How do we hear the voice of Christ in the Church? How do we hear Him on the edges of our communities?			
4	<i>I hear Christ’s voice guiding me in life through my home parish.</i>	n = 887 81 % agree – very strongly agree, 3 % unsure, 16 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Respondents expressed concern for engagement of youth in our parishes and church. The absence of young people at Mass was noted. The existence of programs for the very young and the elderly were acknowledged however few options for youth.
5	<i>I seek to recognize Christ in those who may be considered on the fringes of society.</i>	n = 848 91 % agree – very strongly agree, 2.7 % unsure, 6 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
6	<i>My home parish reaches out to those in the community who may be considered on the fringes of society.</i>	n = 796 79 % agree – very strongly agree, 4 % unsure, 17 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
Section 3: Speaking Out			
What enables or hinders us in hearing the voices of others in our parish communities and in our Church?			
7	<i>I feel safe voicing my opinion in my home parish.</i>	n = 763 72 % agree – very strongly agree, 4 % unsure, 24 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Respondents expressed concern for who is listened to in the church. A lack of confidence in sharing opinions and the perception of a small number of people
8	<i>My home parish encourages all to</i>	n = 929 74 % agree – very strongly agree, 2 %	

	<i>participate.</i>	unsure, 24 % disagree – very strongly disagree	having significant influence in parishes was discussed.
9	<i>The Catholic Church enables all to have a voice in the Church.</i>	56 % agree – very strongly agree, 4 % unsure, 40 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Opportunities for women in leadership roles in the church was identified as a need.
Section 4: Celebration			
How do Mass and communal prayer inspire and strengthen you? For your decisions? Prepare us for our mission in the world?			
10	<i>Prayer is an important part of my decision-making process.</i>	n = 883 94 % agree – very strongly agree, 1 % unsure, 5 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Respondents demonstrated deep commitment to Mass as a source of strength and sustenance. The consensus of respondents is highest here and in questions 26 & 27 regarding listening to Christ for guidance.
11	<i>Mass and/or communal prayer help me in my Christian life.</i>	n = 935 93 % agree – very strongly agree, 1 % unsure, 5 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
12	<i>I am inspired and strengthened by Mass and/or communal prayer.</i>	n = 890 94 % agree – very strongly agree, 0.5 % unsure, 5.5 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
Section 5: Sharing Responsibility for Our Mission			
What is the mission of the Church? How is this realized in your parish and in the archdiocese?			
13	<i>I know the Mission of my home parish.</i>	n = 667 72 % agree – very strongly agree, 5 % unsure, 23 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Uncertainty in defining the mission of parishes and the archdiocese was a common response and many indicated that they referenced bulletins and websites because of this question.
14	<i>I know the Mission of the Archdiocese of Kingston.</i>	n = 524 59.5 % agree – very strongly agree, 5 % unsure, 35.5 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
Section 6: Dialogue in Church and Society			
What particular issues in the Church and society need conversion in the light of the Gospel?			
15	<i>I feel my home parish understands what is needed in the surrounding community.</i>	n = 644 72 % agree – very strongly agree, 3 % unsure, 25 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Respondents expressed concern for reconciliation and healing in the church and broader community due to past abuses of clergy and religious. Ensuring all feel welcome in the church including 2SLTGBQ+ parishioners and divorced Catholics was emphasized.
Section 7: Ecumenism			
What might build up a closer communion with our brothers and sisters of other Christian traditions?			
16	<i>My home parish engages with other faith communities and traditions.</i>	n = 644 63 % agree – very strongly agree, 6 % unsure, 31 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Building strong relationships with other faith traditions was identified as important however

17	<i>The Archdiocese of Kingston engages with other faith communities and traditions.</i>	n = 427 71 % agree – very strongly agree, 8 % unsure, 20 % disagree – very strongly disagree	respondents also expressed concern for celebration and preservation of Catholic teaching and traditions.
18	<i>The global Catholic Church engages with other faith communities and traditions.</i>	n = 626 83 % agree – very strongly agree, 3 % unsure, 14 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
Section 8: Authority and Participation			
How does the Church support, encourage and serve our participation in its life and mission?			
19	<i>I feel a sense of belonging and responsibility towards my parish community.</i>	n = 819 85 % agree – very strongly agree, 1 % unsure, 14 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Service in ministries within parishes was discussed as both challenging and rewarding in the context of the pandemic. Preferences in forms of worship were discussed, e.g. the Latin Mass and opportunities to gather in small groups within parishes for prayer and faith formation.
20	<i>My home parish supports and encourages my involvement in the participation of its Mission.</i>	n = 731 82 % agree – very strongly agree, 2 % unsure, 16 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
21	<i>The global Catholic Church encourages me to serve and participate in the overall Mission of the Church.</i>	n = 670 78 % agree – very strongly agree, 3 % unsure, 19 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
Section 9: Discerning and Deciding			
How do we, as individuals, as parishes and as an archdiocese, discern and make decisions in the light of the Gospel?			
22	<i>Reading scripture helps me to discern what Christ is asking of me.</i>	n = 760 89 % agree – very strongly agree, 2 % unsure, 9 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Concern for the future direction of the church was expressed by respondents from several different ideological perspectives. Respondents identified a need for increased responsibilities for laity, deacons, women within the church, consideration for married clergy and outreach to the 2SLTGBQ+ community. Also, preservation of traditional forms of praise, the Latin Mass, and the need to stand in contrast to secular influences was emphasized. The pulpit as a teaching platform was
23	<i>My home parish follows the Gospel teachings when making important decisions.</i>	n = 673 87 % agree – very strongly agree, 3 % unsure, 10 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
24	<i>Christ's message is at the root of all decisions made by the Archdiocese of Kingston.</i>	n = 556 78 % agree – very strongly agree, 4 % unsure, 18 % disagree – very strongly disagree	

			identified as a need to catechize the faithful.
Section 10: Forming Ourselves in Synodality			
How does listening to Christ prompt us to hear one another, encourage us to participate in mission and help us to reflect Him to those we encounter?			
25	<i>I feel comfortable discussing my faith with those of other faith backgrounds.</i>	n = 812 85 % agree – very strongly agree, 2 % unsure, 13 % disagree – very strongly disagree	Themes: Respondents expressed a desire to be able to know and explain the teachings of the Catholic church to others.
26	<i>I pray for Christ’s guidance in finding the path for my life.</i>	n = 888 97 % agree – very strongly agree, 0.5 % unsure, 2.5 % disagree – very strongly disagree	
27	<i>Listening to Christ helps me put the needs of others ahead of my own.</i>	n = 872 98 % agree – very strongly agree, 0.5 % unsure, 1.5 % disagree – very strongly disagree	

Appendix B

Synod Report Reflections and Group Discussion Guide

Begin with the synod prayer:

**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 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.

1. How can the synodal journey of listening to the Holy Spirit be extended in your community and who needs to be included?
2. What steps may you take as a community to care for each other and build up the body of Christ in your parish?
3. What resources are available to you to draw on to support your efforts?

Appendix C

Archdiocesan Synod Team

Archbishop Michael Mulhall Kimberly Long Archdiocesan Synod Coordinator Fr. James Quirk Chancellor of Spiritual Affairs Fr. John Whyte Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO) Deacon Greg Vaughn Deacons Sr. Una Byrne Religious Sisters Karen Shannon Director of Communications Nadia Gundert Youth Coordinator/ Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO)/ Universities/ Newman House Mariola Gozdek Liturgical Coordinator Mary-Jo MacKinnon-Simms Religious Education Coordinator	Sharon Buffett Assistant to the Chancellor of Spiritual Affairs Nancy Richer Catholic Women’s League President Bill Coopens Knights of Columbus Dan Irwin Director of Partners in Mission Foodbank Jeanne Lambert Parish Nurse Bronek Korczynski Refugees Taylor Alexandra Lynch Director of Family Ministries and Outreach Mike Gundert Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board Murray O’Coin Indigenous People Mikaela Dickison Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO)/ Universities/Newman House
First Draft - Analysing the Data Fr. James Quirk – Parish Data Deacon Greg Vaughn – Parish Data Karen Shannon – Parish Data Fr. Brian Russell – Parish Data Fr. Stephane Pouliot - Parish French Data Taylor Alexandra Lynch – Outreach Data Bronek Korczynski – Outreach Data Fr. Michel Quenneville – Outreach Data Mike Gundert – Outreach Data	Final Draft – Writing 10-Page Synthesis Fr. James Quirk Fr. Brian Russell Taylor Alexandra Lynch Karen Shannon Jeanne Lambert – Editing