



Archdiocese of Seattle Releases Synod Synthesis Report

Western Washington Catholics Add Voice to the Global Multi-Year Vatican Synod

SEATTLE, June 30, 2022 –Today, the Archdiocese of Seattle submitted its Synod Synthesis Report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), officially concluding the local consultative process of Pope Francis’ global synod. The synthesis report captures feedback from nearly 1,000 online and in-person gatherings since January, involving over 11,000 people across Western Washington. The report, which is publicly available on the Archdiocese of Seattle’s website, will now be included in a national synthesis process before a consolidated United States report is submitted to the Vatican for the October 2023 Synod of Bishops in Rome.

“Pope Francis’ vision for the synod called for the largest consultative process both in the history of the Catholic Church and the history of humankind,” said Archbishop Paul D. Etienne, who attended several local gatherings. “I’m so proud of the many thousands of people in Western Washington who led, participated and invited others to prayerful dialogue. These events were marked by prayer, heartfelt sharing and attentive listening. The purpose was not to determine solutions; rather to practice walking with each other as Church, to listen for the Holy Spirit and to begin to discern what God is asking of us in our time.”

Suggested discussion prompts were intentionally broad, freeing each participant to respond as they felt appropriate. One participant described the synod as “an official, Church-sanctioned conversation in which there are no taboo subjects, no off-limits subjects, no wrong answers.”

“Hearts and minds were genuinely shared,” said Archbishop Etienne. “I’m grateful that many found these experiences both healing and hopeful, especially for those who shared deeply personal and painful stories. I encourage all Catholics to read the report, to reflect on their opportunities to accompany each other as one human family in Western Washington and to invite the guidance of the Holy Spirit more deeply into their efforts.”

More than 90% of the Archdiocese of Seattle’s parishes are represented in the Synod Synthesis Report. Additionally, listening sessions were held with students, the imprisoned, Catholic Community Services of Western Washington and women religious.

The Process

The Vatican launched the global synod process in October 2021 and by December 2021, the Archdiocese had trained most of the 500 local volunteer coordinators to host listening events in parishes, schools and ministry communities. Coordinators submitted listening reports that highlighted the size and makeup of the group, key discussion points, personal stories and direct feedback. An online survey was made available for people unable to join scheduled events. Coordinators submitted final listening reports to the Archdiocese in early May. Each submitted report was prayerfully read by

the synthesis writing team, members of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council and a diverse gathering of lay leaders from more than a dozen parishes.

The Synthesis

Tim Hunt (lead for Archdiocesan Synod Efforts) and Corinna Laughlin (St. James Cathedral), worked together to synthesize reports representing nearly 1,000 events into a report no longer than 10 pages.

“Given the many thousands of participants, the page limit seemed like a challenge,” said Hunt. “But consistent topics arose under the themes of community, leadership and our future generations, which Corinna beautifully and accurately summarized into the report.”

The team worked through several drafts after review and consultation with the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, as well as lay leaders and clergy.

The synthesis highlights common themes that emerged from a dozen distinct community groups, as well as larger themes echoed by many Catholics across the Archdiocese.

For example, the report reveals that young people want “a Church of integrity, a Church of service, a Church that advocates for justice and combats climate change in concrete ways. They sometimes struggle to explain why they are Catholic to their friends, especially when they perceive the Church as sidelining women and rejecting the LGBTQ+ community.”

In addition, the report reveals, “Immigrant and refugee communities want the help and support of the Church in becoming part of their new community, and in handing on not only their faith but also their language and culture to the next generation. Catholic people of color call upon the Church to address racism more forcefully and to acknowledge the wrongs of the past with sincerity and transparency.”

Three key themes that emerged were community, leadership and handing on the faith to the next generation:

- **Community:** Listening sessions revealed the importance of community. The value of parish communities, barriers to belonging and the marginalization of LGBTQ+ people were key topics of discussion around Church communities as “a home, not an institution.”
- **Leadership:** Discussion focused on the role of Church leadership at the national level, the impact of the parish priest, models of leadership, the role of women, and concerns around both transparency and trust in the wake of the abuse crisis.
- **Passing on the faith:** One of the most prevalent themes centered on sharing the faith with future generations, with a focus on how youth are disconnected. Meanwhile, youth reported feeling judged and like they do not belong.

The archdiocese will be leading two webinars July 20 to present the synthesis report in more detail:

- 10 a.m. July 20: [Register here](#)
- 6:30 p.m. July 20: [Register here](#)

To read the full report, please visit the Archdiocese of Seattle website or [click here](#).

About the Archdiocese of Seattle

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from Canada to Oregon and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 72 Catholic schools and 174 parishes, missions and pastoral centers in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Frank Schuster. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, visit www.archseattle.org.

Media Inquiries:

Helen McClenahan

helen.mcclenahan@seattlearch.org | 206-375-5679

###