

## *An Open Dialogue*

The Catholic Church throughout the world has entered the preparatory phase of the Synod of Bishops that will take place in Rome in 2023. The Church in Gatineau has begun this preparation by inviting people from parishes and movements to meet in small dialogue groups to reflect on how we listen to each other, express ourselves, celebrate, make decisions and engage with the world. We also want to encourage group dialogues with people who are not necessarily “practising” but who are open to talking about the life of the Church.

The goal of this process is to better discern the mission of the Church in the world as it follows the footsteps of its Master, Jesus Christ. As we seek permanent conversion to the great values of love and mercy, Christians seek to humbly enter into dialogue with as many people as possible, regardless of their life situation.

Following their pastor, Pope Francis, Christians want to welcome all so that we enter together into fraternal dialogue with the world. The Church feels the urgency of its mission to serve humanity of this time by welcoming, as a sign of the times, the hope of a more humane world, attentive to the challenges that face all peoples.

The Catholic Church of Gatineau with its leader, Archbishop Paul-André Durocher, invites you personally to enter into this process of dialogue in an attitude of mutual listening and openness. Thank you for accepting this invitation.

### *A Few Questions. A Bit of Breathing. Dialogue*

The following method of conversation aims to encourage dialogue between people in a group. Experience shows that it is easier to listen to everyone in a small group conversation of 4 to 6 people. The diocesan team would love to hear your conclusions from your dialogue. You may want to designate someone to write a short report on what you discerned as important in your dialogue group. This activity takes about 90 minutes to allow time for participants to express themselves.

To foster an atmosphere of shared dialogue, let's listen to a song.

**Song: What do I know (Ed Sheeran)**

[https://youtu.be/RBQAv6hmX\\_M](https://youtu.be/RBQAv6hmX_M)

*Ain't got a soapbox I can stand upon  
But God gave me a stage, a guitar and a song  
My daddy told me, "Son, don't you get involved in  
politics, religions or other people's quotes"*

*I'll paint the picture, let me set the scene  
I know when I have children they will know what it means  
And I pass on these things my family's given to me  
Just love and understanding, positivity*

*We could change this whole world with a piano  
Add a bass, some guitar, grab a beat and away we go  
I'm just a boy with a one-man show  
No university, no degree, but lord knows  
Everybody's talking "bout exponential growth  
And the stock market crashing in their portfolios  
While I'll be sitting here with a song that I wrote  
Sing, love could change the world in a moment  
But what do I know?*

*Love can change the world in a moment  
But what do I know?  
Love can change the world in a moment*

*The revolution's coming, it's a minute away  
I saw people marching in the streets today  
You know we are made up of love and hate  
But both of them are balanced on a razor blade*

*I'll paint the picture, let me set the scene  
I know, I'm all for people following their dreams  
Just re-remember life is more than fittin' in your jeans  
It's love and understanding, positivity*

*We could change this whole world with a piano...*

This process consists of three 20-minute sessions. Adopting a non-judgmental (of oneself and of others) encourages the give and take of speaking and listening.

In the first step (20 minutes), identify one or two spiritual experiences (not necessarily "religious" experiences) in the course of your life that still inspire you today. In other words, what spirituality or spiritual practice continues to inspire you and give meaning to your life? (After everyone has spoken, take a moment of silence [2 or 3 minutes] to let a word you heard resonate within you. Any word shared in sincerity of heart can be a seed for the heart that receives it in listening).

In a second step (20 minutes), share what struck you as you listened to what the others shared. What resonated within you? What path seems to open up for you as you listened to what was said?

(Again, after each has had time to speak, give yourselves a moment for silence. Welcome yourself without censoring your feelings or emotions, without judging yourself or others.)

Finally, in a third step (20 minutes): Try to identify as a group what emerges from your conversation, both convergences and divergences, that should be shared with the broader Church community.

(Again, a few minutes of silence each to identify what has spoken most powerfully to them.)

Conclusion. Go around the group and ask participants to summarize in a few words what they have personally received from this exercise, how they found the process. A secretary takes note of these comments and prepares a summary to conclude the meeting. (See the last page of the handout for writing suggestions).

### *A Moment of Gratitude*

As you return home, thinking about what you heard in these dialogues, ask yourself today and in the days ahead: what stirs within me? “To what do I feel Life is calling me in these days?”

Writing the meeting of the meeting (no more than two printed pages).

1. Describe the group that met. Describe how the participants’ define their degree of belongingness to the Catholic Church.
2. Was the age group of participants homogeneous or diverse. How did the process go: harmoniously or not? Why? Did you have to adapt the suggested process and in what way?
3. From the notes collected after the third moment of dialogue, present the main conclusions reached by the group: findings, sources of joy or sadness, awareness, proposals, hopes, etc.
4. Did the group members leave satisfied with the experience? Why or why not?

Please send your report to Mr. André Inkel.

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