

SYNTHESIS OF DIOCESAN SYNODAL CONSULTATION

1. Overview of the diocesan approach and of the responses

The fundamental question of the *Vademecum* is: “A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, ‘journeys together.’ How is this ‘journeying together’ happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our ‘journeying together’?” (5.3). In its consultations, the Archdiocese of Gatineau selected five of the 10 themes proposed: nos. 2,3,4,5,9. In the order determined by the diocese, these were *Listening*, *Speaking Out*, *Celebration*, *Discerning and Deciding*, and *Sharing Responsibility for our Common Mission*. In addition, picking up on the *Vademecum*’s first theme, “Companions on the Journey” and its reference to those “who seem further apart” on the journey or “left on the margins”, the diocese later added as its own optional theme *An open dialogue*. The intention was to encourage conversations with “those not necessarily ‘practising’” yet “open to dialogue with the life of the Church”.

Out of its possible 53 parishes and missions (38 French-language, 11 English-language, and two bilingual, plus two serving Portuguese communities), the diocese received responses on behalf of 24. In addition, 20 small informal groupings and six individuals across the diocese responded, as well as nine movements and prayer groups, members of at least five communities of women religious, plus a number of priests. No less than 605 people in total participated in at least 140 reports. Some of these addressed only one of the six proposed themes; others more than one. The responses were from urban, suburban and rural communities; French-speaking and English-speaking parishioners, and “*Quebecois de souche*” as well as parishioners of other cultural and ethnic origins.

The responses were overwhelmingly positive and constructive. Even those from a minority of respondents who indicated profound impatience or despondency. This results from what they perceive as the current situation of either the Church in general or their own local parish as it tries to find a way forward through the challenges of contemporary culture and secularized society.

To assist and promote the consultation, launched 16 October 2021, the diocese produced a full-colour brochure (*Dialogue Groups*), a Synod bookmark, discussion guides, an animated power-point presentation, and a special website (*Info Synode*) linked with the diocesan website. Each of these was enhanced with the Synod’s logo, as well as with information from the *Vademecum* and the *Preparatory Document*. A Diocesan Contact Person was appointed who coordinated the production of the information resources as well the consultations of the parishes and groups. Once a number of responses had been received by the diocese, a team of four was selected (one laywoman, one woman religious, and two laymen including the Diocesan Contact Person) to read and reflect on the replies. The four met by videoconference approximately once a week. The principal points highlighted in each of the responses were summarized in an analytical résumé on which all four members of the team concurred. The résumé included numerous brief citations

compiled from the responses. On this basis a preliminary draft of the diocesan synthesis was prepared by one member of the team, again with input and comments from all members. After its initial examination by the Archbishop, the provisional draft of the synthesis was reviewed and endorsed by the Diocesan Synodal Assembly of 28 May 2022, involving some 205 delegates from across the diocese who were organized into workshops for discussions and consultation. Based on the summaries presented by each workshop, a conclusion was added and the proposed text was again reviewed by the Archbishop.

2. Over-arching points of convergence (in descending order of frequency)

Of the six themes selected, *Listening* and *Sharing Responsibility for our Common Mission* were most frequently addressed, with *Listening* predominant. *An open dialogue* was the least often addressed. The remaining three themes (*Speaking Out*, *Celebration*, *Discerning and Deciding*) were almost all equally addressed, but only about half as often as the leading theme, *Listening*.

As Pope Francis often insists, “everything is connected.” The responses clearly indicate how the themes interrelate. Each interacts with the others, with the sixth in its way “testing” the first five, and “checking” how well the responses recognize that each theme is integral to continuing Jesus’ ministry and message: the proclamation of the Good News to the poor, freedom for prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1,2). This dynamic interrelationship becomes even more evident in the emerging points of convergence. These are divided here into six “main affirmations” and three “secondary trends”. Each of these secondary trends was indicated in the reports about half as often as the affirmations, yet they give valuable perspective and insight into the preceding points of convergence.

1) Affirmations in the points of convergence

- a) The most dominant affirmation in the reports was the *importance of service and engagement*. “To be attentive to the realities of one’s environment... helping people in distress, the poor, the isolated... knowing how to mentor and encourage the young ... and the less young ... daring to be renewed ... to be a place of hope, discerning the sources of hope that can be found in our world.” “Being present to our neighbour.” “With everyone involved in the Christian mission, as well as engaged in the family, parish or community.”
- b) Second most dominant was the *value small groups* have in facilitating listening, sharing and welcoming because of their size. “In small sharing groups, listening to others and welcoming them goes better – lay people are recognized.” “You are better known in a group and you can express yourself more easily.” “An exchange is better in a small group or a small committee.”
- c) The four remaining affirmations noted are, first, the *need for, and the lack of, welcome*. “One can’t always perceive friendship, support, welcome and unity.” “By sharing our experiences about listening and welcoming, whether happy ones or not, we build community.” “Some residents of the neighbouring parish regularly attend our parish because they feel more welcome.” “Many families in our parishes are divorced and often remarried, or same-sex couples or transgender people. They don’t feel welcome in our celebrations and activities.”

- d) Next of the affirmations is *appreciation for the liturgical celebrations* in the parish or mission, although a number of respondents also expressed need for formation, greater variety and more joyfulness, better homilies, and the revitalisation of their choir and music. “Our celebrations are monotonous routines Sunday after Sunday, the homilies too long, the congregation passive. We greatly need celebrations that serve life and manifest God’s love for his people.” Yet the disappointments also underline the almost unanimous recognition of how the Eucharist is to be “the heart of each encounter, the spring from which the faithful drink to quench their thirst.” “Our liturgical celebrations are sources of life and joy”, “uniting all generations and empowering a communion of friendship and support.” Given this importance, and the challenges of a society and culture that has been “secularized little by little” and where “the message of Christ no longer exists”, there is evident concern about the growing number of those needing to be “led to participate in and appreciate the celebration.” “Catechesis is imperative because the people do not understand the meaning of the words and symbols.”
- e) In a similar way there is *recognition the Word of God is to be the foundation and strength of personal and community life*. “We must take the time to listen to God in his word. He is here to say something to our world today.” “By listening to the Word of God, I have discovered my mission in this world.” “The Word of God nourishes us.” This recognition likewise goes hand in hand with demands for better formation in Scripture. “Don’t hold off about providing formation on the Word of God so people can know it better.” “We need to understand the Word in order to take it in, apply it to our lives and let it change us. Preparation for the sacraments and Sunday Mass should not be the only occasions for formation in the Word of God.”
- f) The final affirmation noted and which was as frequent as C, D and E above is the *importance of accompaniment, encouragement and leadership*, but are often found inadequate or insufficient. “We need encouragement, support to grow.” “It is important to cultivate an attitude of tenderness, acceptance, kindness, gentleness, love and patience in the Church. To congratulate and encourage, in this sense. We are at a turning point in the Church, so it is important to reflect and share together.” “There is an evident lack of leadership, of structures, perhaps of energy and originality, in the ways of functioning as Church rather than as individuals gathered together.” “The mission of approaching people, inviting them to be Church, giving them responsibility can be very important.” “Our priests are at the service of our Church to assist us and to support us.” “People long to be listened to, welcomed, appreciated and loved.”

2) *Secondary trends among the points of convergence*

- a) A recurring number of responses plead for *women to have greater visibility in leadership and formation*, with similar though less concern about laymen. “There would be more empathy toward the Church if women had real responsibilities.” “Priests have an administrative attitude – a lack of empathy and confidence with women and lay people.” “When we look inside the Church, we see a ‘boys’ club’ where women come second.” “We are convinced these experiences show profound discrimination toward women.”

- b) There are repeated pleas for *formation* – in Scripture, theology, liturgy, as well as communication skills. “It is important for us to know our Christian faith well and make God known (through evangelization, catechesis, sacramental initiation), and this from childhood on.” “We hope there will be better formation, especially on Scripture, the Church’s traditions and positions, as well as about the nature, vocabulary and significance of the gestures during the celebration of the sacraments.” “We need formation so we in turn can form others.” “To learn to listen, by paying attention to our emotions” and to “our capacity to analyze how to listen”.
- c) Of equal insistence as the two above is the desire for *homilies* that are not “repetitive and boring” but “more interesting”, “more about people’s experiences” and “engaging.” They should be preached “with simplicity, without moralizing” and without “using language that is too technical or inaccessible.”

3. Elements tied to specific themes

1) “Listening”

Listening is “important in life, in family, in friendship, at work and in the Church”, yet a *constant challenge*. “Listening is effective when you listen right to the end of what the other has to share.” Those who sense they are listened to in the Church feel recognized, heard, valued and part of the same family. Those who sense they are not heard feel excluded, unimportant, useless” and that “their views do not count in the Church.” “Listening to each other brings us closer” and “leads to personal and spiritual growth.”

Listening “requires perseverance and patience.” Sometimes we are in solution mode instead of listening and receiving what the other has to say. It’s *difficult* to build community when you don’t take the time to get to know each other.” “You really have to evaluate your listening and how you listen, and you have to pray to help each other listen in the Church.”

Listening as part of the family of faith today means *being approachable to those around us* from other nationalities and cultures, from different types of family, or who are in difficulty. “There are many in our parish from different cultures. Where can we dialogue and listen to each other?” “How do we reach out to newcomers and those arriving from another culture, to young families, or to those sick and destitute, or weighed down by painful burdens?”

2) “Speaking out”

What must be done is “*leave the anonymity of the community*” and “humanize, personalize it”. The challenges to this are many. “Embarrassment, nervousness, lack of leadership, differences of opinion or culture, lack of self-confidence.” “Few express themselves and when they do, there is still little change.” “Though we celebrate together, we don’t know the life of our neighbour.” One “takes on a function and has a job to do, but does not take account of the needs of those who come to help out.” “Fatigue, wear and tear, sometimes these make us intolerant and prevent us from welcoming others properly.”

According to the responses, the measure of the faith community's ability to listen and speak out is *how well it heeds, seeks out and welcomes* those in its midst and surrounding milieu who are "new" and who are "poor". Does the Church "share the experiences of those on the periphery, those with disabilities or who are prisoners", the "distressed" or "isolated", those in "hospitals, detox settings, the street"? In biblical language, the strangers, orphans and widows, the vulnerable and defenceless. "The Church is us! If anyone suffers, everyone suffers! We are all invited to do our part to keep the Church alive today!" Thus a self-examination is to be made about "compassion, support, the need for others who can act." "Did I do a good job of analyzing the situation? Did I first step back before jumping in? Did I consult those I consider persons of integrity and good judgment? What happens if a conflict emerges with a person or a group? We really need to look for the right time and the right situation. If something is important to us, then we need to ensure we are in the right frame of mind to make a constructive exchange possible" and to be truly welcoming. "The others must not feel excluded."

3) "Celebration"

So a community can "return to everyday reality strengthened by the Holy Spirit", it wants the celebrations of the liturgy to: "Aspire to the *greatest degree of community participation possible* – welcoming, reading, bringing up the offerings, joining in various gestures during the Our Father". "Reach all the family of God present, of all ages, each according to his or her level and experience – spiritual, intellectual, linguistic" – "children, adolescents, families, lay people, those from immigrant communities, older people, single people, in short every generation, not forgetting also the priest." "Pray for all – those who don't come to Mass, those who are sick, the dead, those in trouble, in need." "Be concerned about all who are present without exception – those who do not resemble us, are less talented, less attractive, not part of 'our gang' – which presupposes openness to those absent and to all humanity."

Just as one needs "to allow others to express themselves", so too "*silence* helps us listen to God." "We must allow time for reflection" and "times of silence to take in what God wants us to understand." "Recollection helps us deepen the meaning of important moments" such as "before and after the celebration", and "after the homily and communion". Unlike "today's frantic pace of life", the liturgy should "breathe" by providing moments for "awareness" through "interiority" and "reflection".

Often "celebrations lack impact because people either come out of habit or unprepared." To help address this, some suggest taking "time for *personal preparation*, such as with a reading, a prayer, a moment of interiority." Others point out the helpfulness of *family follow-up*. "We need to get children involved again." Even if "parents want their children to receive the sacraments and they themselves do not come to church, it is for us to 'adapt and ensure' they find it interesting to come back and with the children."

Some are disturbed by the *devotions* and different ways various groups or cultures express their faith. But for others, "Novenas, adoration, powerful images – age does not matter – movements, responding to the call and action of the journey of faith, all these represent experiences of celebration that inspire and guide us in our mission as Church." "It is this that inspires me and binds me to God." The suggestion from one parish as a way forward: "There was a lot of attention being given to different ways many people of various nationalities celebrated. Because of this, a team was formed to help us better understand and communicate."

There are concerns about unresolved *practical considerations*: “Insufficient attention to the disabled and the elderly during Communion.” The failure of celebrants and readers to “speak clearly and with a strong voice.” “The unfortunate state of the acoustics in many churches.” Difficulties with sound systems – “a microphone badly placed” or “too far away”.

As well, a yearning by parishioners for occasions *to meet and greet each other*, such as before and after the liturgy, and also for opportunity “to discuss and listen with each other”, “to cultivate awareness of how mutual support and enrichment are of assistance.”

Similarly, an appeal recurs for “our *priests to be present* not only for the sacraments and the Mass” but also outside these celebrations. To help them identify “the gifts and strengths to be found among their parishioners”, “priests should participate in meetings outside the parish community.” There is a desire for pastors “to be shepherds with the smell of their sheep”, “to be close to us and our realities”. “Maybe they are uncomfortable about integrating, especially when they come from other cultures? But it is a two-way street: it is for us to welcome newcomers and what they bring, it is for them gradually to fit in with our culture.”

4) “*Discerning and Deciding*”

This theme elicited the most *frustration*. “Decisions have already been made ahead of time.” “Disappointed we can’t make a difference.” “We don’t participate enough” in this. “The opportunity to make a decision is rare.” “Often those most influential demand their views be followed.” “The ones in charge don’t stand back and let those who are reticent speak.”

The *explanations for these difficulties*: “Certain ones dominate.” “The priest does not make enough effort to know the people, so does not know what each can offer.” “The authority from on high is strong.” “The hierarchy should be humbler and more human.” “The Church needs to return to her primary mission.”

Suggestions for *ways forward*: “We must understand all are called to mission.” “Go to people. Invite them to participate.” “Communication.” “Many are afraid about not doing well. They have to feel comfortable.” “Encourage people according to their talents.” “Accept that someone’s commitment may need to be limited to a specific task and time.” “Encourage the laity to do things. It makes them grow and encourages them to become involved in a variety of ways.” “A better understanding between the diocese and the parish community.” “Sharing in decisions – and taking advice from others.”

5) “*Sharing Responsibility for our Common Mission*”

The consultation indicates some have a profound *understanding of the mission of the Church* and the demands it can make. “Evangelization – this is the Church’s mission entrusted to all the baptized.” “We participate in the Church’s mission by various means.” “One must be missionary not only in the Church but in the world. To be present and to serve. This is how Jesus wants us to witness.” “Some bravely admitted that whether at work or among their acquaintances they feel embarrassed to say they are believing and practising Catholics.” Others are not clear what the mission is, confusing it with different forms of individual service and engagement: “a very important role ... supporting and assisting the clergy”; “a call to a community need in the parish”; “various activities of the Church”; “taking Communion to the sick, assisting, visiting them”; “a volunteer”; “various kinds of service”.

Laity, “by their very vocation, seek the Kingdom of God *by engaging in temporal affairs* and by ordering them according to the plan of God”. To participate in the Church’s mission of evangelization they are “to illuminate and order all temporal things”, nurturing and transforming them “according to Christ” (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 31.2; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 898). But is this known and appreciated by laity and clergy? “We dream of a Church that clearly defines and explains the role and responsibilities of the faithful in the mission of evangelization in which we wish to share.”

The responses also underline the need for *better support from the clergy*. “Sensitize the members of the community by talking about involvement not as ‘volunteering’, but as ‘engagement’ in the name of their faith.” “Our common mission must be inclusive at all levels of the Church. It is the base, the community as a whole, that must be given the means to act and be heard.” “We are regulars at Church yet do not know the movements, groups and organizations that are part of it, and these in turn do not know each other.” “Without the backing, support and encouragement from priests, we cannot go very far.”

6) “An open dialogue”

Respondents considered this theme from the perspective of “those *on the periphery*”. The persons so identified were “the poorest”, “the marginalized”, “the LGBTQ+”, “people with disabilities”, “prisoners”. Some of those identified have described their own situation in the following words: “I felt excluded and even rejected.” “I never felt welcomed.” “An outsider.” The Church “is a club in which I am not a member.” “We are not part of the Church. We and the Church are in each other’s periphery, in orbits that do not meet.” “We would like the Church to walk with us as human beings.” “I wish the Church journeyed with us.”

What makes these discoveries possible: “Listening”; “common values – families, children, workers”; “boldness”; “going from word to deed”; “an outgoing mission”; “the experience of synodality”; “a message of inclusion and caring”; “being a social safety net”.

Spaces for such encounters: “A community which exercises its faith, its spirituality, and its solidarity with the most deprived.” “Organizations that promote diversity.” “The *Comité partage* and the *Troubadours de la bienveillance* which respond with concern for helping and supporting others.” “The parish *guignolée*.”

What prevents such encounters: “An incoherent message.” “Lack of openness.” “The Church’s language which fails to reach.” “An image of being selective and exclusive.” “The difficulty of getting news about the Church.” “Because laity have not really been given the powers and recognition they deserve.”

4. General observations on synodality

The consultation indicates that this experience of synodality was *rich and meaningful*. “An opportunity to express oneself and to be welcomed. Proud to live this experience of Church. Hoping both to be heard, and that this experience will bear fruit.” “Coming together and sharing on this Synod launched by Pope Francis for us becomes a source of great hope. We can foresee a possible renewal in our Church so that it can be more and more missionary and prophetic.” “A humanizing encounter. We made community. We shared our joys and sorrows. A daring

encounter. Here we are, telling each other the truth.” “By sharing we exposed the human aspect and helped lessen the judgments people make.”

As the *Vademecum* notes, synodality is already experienced in many ways across the Church. The Archdiocese of Gatineau has held a Diocesan Synod, with its final stages deferred in order to focus instead on the preparatory phase of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. In addition, the diocese for years has had a diocesan pastoral council and parish pastoral councils. Yet surprisingly (and helpfully!), a number of the responses reveal *flaws and weaknesses in how well the local Church is living its synodality*.

These local weaknesses became evident on several levels. First, the *concerns about listening and speaking*. “This was an opportunity to learn to listen to each other with respect and to express oneself freely without fear, without feeling judged but also without accusing each other ... It was a great school.” “The method of this synodal process is the method to be learned and followed.” Secondly, *communication and follow-up*. Respondents pointed out the need for “a closer relationship between the diocese and the parish community”; how “the decision-making process at the diocesan level focuses many of its decisions and activities on the situation of urban parishes”; that “the moment has come for a thorough analysis of all those elements previously identified many times before.” As well, *practical issues are being left unresolved*, such as with regard to the aged, the handicapped, and also sound systems. Another example. “At the time a parish church had to be closed, one person suggested its site become a ‘place of presence’ (for prayer). The proposal was rejected out of hand. Looking back, it seems to have been a reaction to something new simply because no one knew how to go about doing this.”

Despite our differences, *we must all arrive* at that communion and unity of heart which the Apostles lived and Christ wants. Can we hope that the Synod will be a path that leads us there?

“This diocesan phase of the Synod of Bishops gives us the opportunity to deepen the fruits of our own synodal process that we undertook in 2018, which enabled us to identify specific pastoral priorities.” “True dialogue between spouses, between children, between parents and children requires perseverance and patience. It allows for mutual understanding. The Church is a large family.” “With the Synod and this exercise, we would like to see something emerge that will help us advance in the mission of evangelization.”

5. Various suggestions for moving forward on the path of synodality

Subject to further appropriate consultations and reflections, 14 pastoral approaches seemed to emerge. These possible next steps are provided in **Appendix 1**. The various suggestions, which are listed in no particular order, indicate ways the diocese could continue moving forward on the path of synodality in light of feedback from its synodal consultations.

Conclusion

The Diocesan Synodal Assembly accepted the above observations. Its members indicated they recognized themselves and their situation in its findings. The consensus of their workshop reports signalled once more particular need to: 1) Foster welcoming and listening; 2) Encourage small groups; 3) Give priority to the Word of God; 4) Simplify language; 5) Adapt liturgical celebrations, especially the Eucharist; 6) Integrate the laity, with special attention to families, children and

young people, and to providing more visibility to women in leadership and formation; 7) Offer formation, including increasing skills and confidence; 8) Give witness to fraternal, universal love.

At the same time, the word “evangelization” was seldom evident in the workshop reports, although every aspect mentioned in the plenary session in its way conveyed evangelization. This may indicate need to examine further whether there is confusion about the term and if it is clear for all what evangelization really is.

There is also the question about the time and means to follow up on the diocesan insights. A diocesan synthesis is not the end of the process but the end of its beginning. When opening the diocesan assembly, the Archbishop said that, “Together, we will chart the paths that shall enable us to implement in our communities your many rich and pertinent suggestions.” A workshop later noted “a lot of work is needed to make the Church appealing” – by cultivating that love for one another by which we are recognized as disciples of Jesus (*cf.* John 13:35), becoming brothers and sisters to all. Another called for a “strategic way to reach everyone, not just those fully involved.” One suggested “events that bring people together.” Yet another observed various ages and social groups respond to different challenges (as examples, for some animating the Mass; for others, going out toward those absent from the Church). Even more basic, how do Christian communities regain “the flexibility of the early Christians and learn to break out of the present mould”? How can they best deal with the “individualism in our churches” and which permeates society?

The animator for the plenary sessions concluded the assembly by drawing attention to the children’s art which was part of the preparations and how many of their drawings illustrated people hand in hand. It reminds us, she said, how children see the significance of “walking together”. Her point was also a timely reminder how those following the “Way” of the Lord (9:02 and other places in Acts) are described by Saint Luke as “one in heart and mind” (Acts 4:32).

13 June 2022

APPENDIX 1

Various suggestions for moving forward on the path of synodality

The following are the next steps identified as possible ways to invite the People of God in the Archdiocese of Gatineau to be better at “journeying together”:

- 1) As a reminder and symbol of the synodal process, participating parishes and groups to have at their meetings an open Bible, a lit candle and an image of Charles de Foucauld. Sacred Scripture, which nourishes the faithful, enlightens minds, strengthens wills and kindles God’s love in our hearts (*Dei Verbum*, n. 23). The candle to remind all that they share in the mission of the risen Christ through baptism. Charles de Foucauld (canonized May 15, 2022), so they too are inspired in the mission “to feel a brother to all” (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 286-287).
- 2) The *coordinator of the diocesan synodal process to visit each parish* (in person or by video) and confirm that their reports have been carefully studied, have been summarized to compile a report for the Holy See as well as a reflection guide for the diocese, and are also being retained for future consultation.
- 3) *The greatest frustration indicated by the consultation centred around decision-making.* The Archbishop to discuss this theme with each parish and group. Why is decision-making so challenging? How best can the members of parishes and groups contribute to the process? In what way can consultations and even disagreements assist?
- 4) Gatineau and the surrounding area live more and more in a society not only multicultural but with many different lifestyles. The diocese and its parishes to search for ways to be better at *welcoming and listening to those who feel isolated and marginalized*, or uncomfortable and threatened, because of race, language, ethnicity, sexual orientation or lifestyle.
- 5) Our time seems characterized by noise, distraction and rush. The diocese to ensure its churches offer *time and space for contemplation, meditation, recollection and silent prayer*.
- 6) The responses indicated how *ongoing formation* is opportune for clergy, pastoral workers, and laity. “By using resources such as we already have” – for example, the *Troubadours de la bienveillance*, *Mess’AJE*, “Cursillo, Alpha, EESA, prayer groups, the *Comptoir Ste-Rose, Famille Secours*” – , the diocese, parishes and groups to promote formation in the following: Scripture; the art of preaching, and for lectors the art of proclaiming; approaches to communication (new as well as those “tried and true”); the pastoral implications of synodality and co-responsibility; faith formation in catechesis, the Mass, the sacraments, symbols; current questions having particular impact on families; leadership, particularly in view of how clergy and pastoral workers can better assist “journeying together”.
- 7) The diocese to examine the following *possibilities offered by the Holy See*: The mandating of women and laymen as lectors and acolytes, and now also as catechists. Canon 766, which allows laity to preach in a church or oratory under certain circumstances. The *Motu proprio Antiquum Ministerium* of May 2021, which establishes the ministry of catechists to serve as “faithful co-workers with priests and deacons”, recognizes “the importance of lay involvement

in the work of evangelization”, in the “pastoral service of transmitting the faith”, and in “ongoing formation”.

- 8) Parishes to consider *celebrations of the Word* especially for funerals and weddings when a significant number of those present are not practising Catholics; and also the introduction in parish liturgical celebrations of *shared homilies, personal testimonies, and the involvement of laity to assist* in the preparation of homilies.
- 9) Welcoming immigrants and newcomers is important and enriching for the diocese. *Popular devotions and pious practices*, often expressing the religious sensitivities of specific countries and cultures, can foster interior and community life. At the same time that all the faithful are to give pre-eminence to full participation in the liturgy, they should be understanding toward popular devotions and pious practices. The diocese to encourage parishes to be hospitable to these devotions and practices through guidance, dialogue and in accordance with the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*.
- 10) *Small groups* provide opportunities for personal discussion and sharing, and are effective ways to educate, motivate, and foster solidarity. They have proven value in Bible study, evangelization, faith formation and human development. So as to assist them in “journeying together” with the Church in the spirit of synodality, the diocese to encourage the formation of their leadership, while also giving particular attention to their communication, collaboration and communion with the wider ecclesial community.
- 11) The respondents to the consultation are among the most engaged in the life of their faith community, yet relatively few of them indicated that as part of their synodal process they had dialogued with those less or not active in the Church. Parishes, movements and other groups to reflect on the *efforts they are making to reach the peripheries*, in order to listen to the views of those who have left the Church, who are not practising, or who feel marginalized.
- 12) The diocese to examine how to involve all the faithful (including the ordained) in a better appreciation and understanding of the *mission of the whole Church* (evangelization), of the *vocation of the laity* (to illuminate and transform temporal realities), and the *responsibilities of priests* (especially in preaching, teaching, formation, coordination, and pastoral leadership).
- 13) In the responses there was little mention of the *major Catholic movements and organizations* present in Quebec. These were founded to involve and help the laity in transforming the world – and include the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (serving Christ in the poor), the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace / Caritas Canada (focusing on international solidarity and the Global South), and *Mission chez nous* (which raises awareness of Indigenous realities). These organizations to consider how well they listen to parishes and diocesan groups, communicate with them, and involve them in decision-making.
- 14) In view of discovering and sharing “a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 87), parishes to find ways of increasing the *visibility of Catholic groups and movements* present in the parish, and to draw attention to opportunities for community involvement and service that are also available in the region.