

1 Synthesis – Toledo Diocese

Diocese of Toledo

Synthesis on the Diocesan Preparatory Phase for the Universal Synod on Synodality

Diocesan Bishop: Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas

Diocesan Contact Person: Patricia Oedy-Murray

The Diocesan process for consultation in this preparatory phase consisted of principally five regional meetings and an online survey open to all people. All information regarding these opportunities was sent to parishes and disseminated from there. It was also published on our diocesan social media site. In addition, the Deacon Council, Presbyteral Council, Diocesan Council of Catholic women, and the Diocesan Pastoral Council engaged in the process personally with the Bishop. The Diocesan Preparatory Phase committee reviewed the ten nuclei that were part of the *Vademecum* and composed ten questions stemming from those nuclei. These questions were then reviewed with the religious superiors of the Diocese, integrating their ideas, and subsequently finalized by the Diocesan Preparatory Phase Committee.

The most significant part of our consultation process was the decision to begin each session with Eucharistic adoration and vespers to set the tone for our conversations. We wanted to listen to the Lord first before engaging in discussion. At our regional meetings we asked individuals to discuss the ten questions at their tables and to designate a note taker. The directions given were that all comments needed to be recorded. We were not focused on coming to a consensus on each question, but on listening to what each individual wanted to share on that topic. We stressed that this was about listening to the Holy Spirit and not making it about personal opinions. We truly wanted to be guided by the Holy Spirit and listen for the will of God in our lives and the life of the Church.

Despite inclement weather, still we were able to host 6 gatherings, in various demographic locations in the diocese. The online survey was important because of the lingering pandemic. We were still in a situation where some people did not feel comfortable gathering for discussion. We wanted to give them and all people a chance to offer their insights. Also at the regional meetings, the Diocesan contact person encouraged people to direct others to the online survey which was open to all.

Despite all our efforts, it was surprising how many people have indicated they did not know about the meetings or the synod process. Information sadly was not disseminated in the way we had hoped and we may have overlooked some opportunities to encourage involvement.

The spiritual dimension of the journey for us was beginning with *Vespers* and Eucharistic Adoration. We also did an abbreviated form of *Lectio Divina*. Even with the online survey, we provided prayer opportunities before asking respondents to engage the questions. It was important to us that the process of listening begin with listening to God. A surprise was that the movement of the Holy Spirit in one's life was not understood by some in attendance. Going forward it will be important to distinguish a true movement of the Holy Spirit versus one's feelings or desires. If we cannot listen to the voice of God and understand the movement of the Holy Spirit, then our conversations are "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." (1Corinthians 13:1). This reference from Corinthians deals with love, but once again, all love comes from God and we love and listen to one another in a way that flows from the love of God.

2 Synthesis – Toledo Diocese

The demographics of those who attended the regional gatherings and took the online survey are in the addendum of this document. It is important to note that the United States census demographic was used. While we thankfully did have a number of consecrated religious in attendance at all the regional meetings, religious orders were invited by The Holy See to submit their synthesis directly to the responsible Vatican Congregation.

The synthesis that follows summarizes the responses to the ten questions that were formulated from the ten nuclei of the *Vademecum* document.

1. How do we journey and invite all people into the Body of Christ in our Local Church?

The discussion revolving around this question began with the theological point that Christ is in each person. We must recognize the *Imago Dei* in each of us. When we recognize this, we can engage one another in love, especially those with whom we do not agree.

With the onset of the pandemic, more movement was made toward technology. While needed in some cases, many thought that this is not what brings people into the Body of Christ. It is the personal invitation, modeled by Jesus himself. This leads one to being hospitable and welcoming to others.

The idea of Truth came forward in this discussion. The Truth is what is needed to assist believers in engaging a secular world that does not know Christ. How can we share what we do not have? We must know Christ in order to share Him with others. Families are important in building up the Body of Christ. But again, parents must have a relationship with Christ and choose to be a part of his Body in the Church so that they can form their children in his truth and grace.

Visibility is also important to inviting others in. The idea of *Corpus Christi* processions through the streets of the community was mentioned here. Also, the idea of blessing each family and house in the parish was brought up by the deacons. This is part of journeying with each other. It builds relationships.

Open-mindedness was also a part of this discussion. But here there was a division of ideas on what the Church needed to be open-minded about. Tradition-minded Catholics stated that they feel alienated because they love the traditional Latin Mass and would like more reverence in the *Novus Ordo*. Others who spoke of fidelity stated that the Church should not change because of what society puts forth as truth, but that we are to be counter-cultural. Others believed that the Church was too traditional and not open to progressive ideas and movements, i.e. women's ordination, gender identity and gay marriage.

Catholic school education was also stressed as a way to bring all into the Body of Christ. Education is a must for all who proclaim the Gospel in their lives. We must know Christ and his message in order to live discipleship and invite others to live in discipleship.

3 Synthesis – Toledo Diocese

2. How do we listen to the voice of Christ in each person in our midst?

There were many wonderful insights in this discussion. The focus appeared to be on listening to one another, though not necessarily to the voice of Christ. Answers to this question reflected the idea of listening person to person and of being listened to in the parish setting.

A response from the online survey gives a wonderful introduction to the discussion of the question. "...we can only listen to the voice of Jesus in others when we have first heard his voice in our own lives. The Lord constantly speaks to each person; he longs for us to hear his voice and see his face. We are

first introduced to him, and only through regular conversation with him do we come to recognize that his voice is not singular, but is a harmony of voices; just as the Trinity is a perfect harmony. When the Father speaks, he does so through the Word, and in the Spirit. All are distinct, and yet the same--each speaks the same truth. Having been initially formed to hear the Word of God and having received the foundations of truth, our ears (our hearts and minds) are conditioned to hear him speaking in other persons, who to a greater or lesser extent have themselves heard his voice and begin to speak with his words and in his Spirit."

Many were familiar with active or reflective listening. Openness was a central focus. Detachment was also brought up in that if you truly want to listen to another, you must detach from what you want to say in order to hear the other. One must detach from one's own opinions in order to truly listen to another. Again, face to face interactions were emphasized as a way to truly listen, as opposed to texting, emailing, etc. It was important to understand the time that needs to be taken to really listen. In a fast-paced society, we want immediate results, and listening does not meet that type of criteria. We must be patient. Follow-up with the person is also very important. This is what builds relationships and relationships lead to invitation. When one truly listens, one is brought into the life of another. Many emphasized that the Lord works in everyone's heart.

Prayer is essential to being able to listen. We pray for attentive attitudes and we pray for those whom we are encountering. Prayer helps us again to see Christ in others. We are called to love them even if we don't agree with them. We should pray for prudence and wisdom as we listen, so we know it is the voice of Christ we hear and not the prince of deception pretending to be the voice of Christ.

Again, Truth is emphasized in some responses. We are called to listen to all we meet, but only to accept the truth. That is true love for that person. This brings into question our understanding of Christian love.

As far as focusing on how parishioners are listened to in a parish setting, it is important that the parish model listening by providing opportunities or structures which allow parishioners to be heard. That could be done in many ways. The idea of parish surveys seems to meet this need. The Diocese also needs to be a model of listening. Diocesan leadership needs ways to listen to the priests, sisters, deacons and laity of the Diocese. Some respondents brought up the need to listen to those who identify as LGBTQ as well as to Black Catholics.

Another area that came up in this question and in some later questions was the idea of promoting spiritual direction. It is a way for people to learn to listen to the voice of God in their lives.

4 Synthesis – Toledo Diocese

3. How do we speak with freedom and charity to communicate the truth of Christ in and to our community?

We should start with ourselves. It is not about what we want, but what God wants for us and our Church. We must test what we believe is the truth using the Word of God and Tradition. We must form ourselves in the truth. It was mentioned that there is no charity without truth. These two are linked together because Christ himself is love and truth. Here again we see a concern for the Truth of Christ versus the worldly or secular truth. We must ask the Spirit of God to help us distinguish between these two.

Some commented on how Catholics may feel their faith is personal and shouldn't be spoken of out loud. One said that "synodality is a process, not a product." We must welcome the noise and confusion that comes with children at Mass. Speak truth, plant the seed, trust God.

In this discussion the role of Church leadership was very important as to formation. Priests and deacons are "key to awakening the desire for formation in the laity." They also play a role in proper formation, providing resources and ensuring that all who teach are well formed. Proper formation in one's relationship with Jesus and His Church must precede the sharing of the Gospel. The apostles experienced Christ and were formed by him before they went out to all the world.

Once we are formed, we communicate the Truth of Christ in our community by how we live. We are called to live Godly lives. We are called to bring the Gospel into the public square. But we must pray for courage and prudence. It is essential to know if those to whom we are speaking are open to the truth. Again, building relationships is important for one to be open to the truth, and actions speak louder than words.

Charity is a must when speaking the truth. As was stated by a participant in the process, "Charity always. Paradoxically, charity can be difficult when speaking about Christ's values because Christ's way is not the way of the world. Since He is a sign to be contradicted our witness will meet resistance. But charity always, to a sacrificial degree." This statement also reflects what came up through comments and that is boldness. Leadership needs to be bold in proclaiming the truth, but again with charity, which means that wrath cannot be a part of our response.

There was some comment over not being allowed to communicate or speak out within the parish setting without fear of retribution, though this was not a major concern.

4. How is our journey together based on and nourished by the celebration of the Holy Eucharist?

Many who were a part of this discussion understood the Eucharist as the source and summit of our faith as stated in the Vatican II documents: "It's everything." As was so eloquently stated by a respondent, "At the Sacrifice of the Mass, we are united in intense prayer, with Christ, to the Father in the Holy Spirit; it is personal and yet communal. This unity in prayer draws us toward Christ, but also toward our neighbor: to realize that indeed, I am my brother's keeper. We are there not simply for our own good, but for the glory of God and the good of others (just as the Cross itself is vertical and horizontal). United in the one sacrifice that is offered for all, we will find a common life--that we are

disciples of Jesus. Sharing in the Lord's Supper, we are fed at his table, our eyes are opened to see how he works in and through our life... something that cannot be kept to ourselves. Just like what happened at Emmaus, we have to run back and share what we've experienced, and so we become active disciples, who seek to journey with others--we bring them back to Mass to experience what we ourselves were first given." This gives a wonderful understanding of how the Eucharist is the source and summit of our lives, as expressed during our meetings and in the surveys.

Within this discussion there were many ideas and concerns. One major concern is how we continue to be a Eucharistic community with a priest shortage. Several expressed concern over a perceived lack of understanding of what the Real Presence means in our faith, as some Catholics don't care or don't believe. Many encouraged more education and teaching on the topic of the Eucharist. Parents need to take their children to Mass and Eucharistic adoration. It is important for parents to witness to the importance of the Eucharist in our faith. One suggestion was to have a Mass where the priest stops and explains each part.

Having Holy Hours and Eucharistic adoration in parishes affirms the importance of the Eucharist in our lives. Many times, Eucharistic adoration was stated as the most powerful experience of an individual. It was suggested that tabernacles be front and center, prominent, as one enters the Church, indicating that this is the source and summit of our faith. The need for reverence in the presence of the Eucharist was also encouraged. Some asked for a continuance of offering the Latin Mass because of its reverence.

Mass as a whole was also discussed. People need to understand the Mass, they need to actively participate, and they need to have a sense of joy. We need to understand the beauty of the Mass and the Eucharist. Our presence at Mass is very important. Some believed that this may need to be stressed following the pandemic. It was also mentioned that those who are homebound or in nursing homes understand the Eucharist as a real gift. It was mentioned that they "light up" when the Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist enters their room. There is a longing for the Lord.

5. How is each baptized person called, formed and empowered to be a missionary disciple?

Many stated that we have an individual mission and that we are ambassadors for Christ. Each person is responsible for ownership of the faith. Each baptized person is called to cooperate with the grace of God in their lives. Baptism calls each of us to be prophet, priest and king. The faithful need education as to what each of these titles means in their own lives. Baptism calls us to share in the evangelistic mission of the Church. Again education is mentioned as a necessity for formation and empowerment. In this discussion the youth were mentioned. It is important to educate and form our youth so they claim their membership in the Body of Christ. Focus should be given to the time after Confirmation, that they continue to have involvement and growth in the faith.

Leadership comes to the forefront here also. Some stated that homilies should help the people of God understand what it means to be a missionary disciple. Clergy need to encourage new members and have parishioners take ownership. It is "our church." Life long formation needs to be encouraged. Here an appropriate use of technology enters into the equation. Catholic media, including Catholic radio, were mentioned as ways to assist the faithful in their formation.

As one respondent stated, “Baptism doesn’t end at the font.” We must be aware of the many ways we can bring Christ to others. For those within our Church, encourage the sacramental life and how it continues to strengthen us in our missionary discipleship.

6. In dialogue and collaboration, how do we encourage the gifts and charisms of each person in our local Church and society, knowing we are all members of the Body of Christ?

Prayer is essential. Every individual needs to pray for the insight to know their gifts. The community also plays a role in recognizing the gifts of those around them. Leadership needs to call forth those gifts and afford opportunities for discernment and service. Individuals need to step out of their comfort zone and be open to how God is calling them to use their gifts. It is important to affirm that all are given gifts and charisms. Discernment of gifts is needed. There are programs that assist faith communities in this endeavor. It is important for us to reach out to those who have left our Church and affirm that they have gifts and charisms to offer our community. We must also remember that those who could be considered on the margins of society also have gifts and charisms and the Church needs to reach out. Part of being members of the Body of Christ means that we need to re-imagine ourselves as a servant community, stressing the equality and dignity of all.

Empowerment of the laity was a part of this discussion. Once gifts and charisms are discerned, one must give the laity the opportunity to use them in service to the Lord and his people. Laity need parameters in their service, but not micromanaging. However, the other side of the coin in lay involvement also was discussed. Some felt that the laity can become possessive of their ministries. They do not welcome others in or make room for others in their ministries. They also are not willing to step aside after their service and allow others the opportunity to minister, or they may not admit new ideas.

If we are to encourage the gifts and charisms of each person, communication is essential. There must be a dialogue. This dialogue needs to be a part of every parish and the diocese itself. Part of this communication is inviting the Holy Spirit into the prayer, dialogue and discernment. Part of this understanding is knowing that gifts and charisms are not given to us for our own benefit, but for the good of the community as a whole. Everyone must approach this prayer, dialogue and discernment with gratitude, appreciation and humility.

7. How do we live out our relationship with Christ and share in His Mission with our brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations?

There were various interpretations of this question. Many focused on various activities we could collaborate on with our brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations, particularly works of mercy such as prison ministry, food pantries, and pro-life work. The idea of worship was approached in various ways. One respondent stated, “if we work and play together, why not pray together too.” One way was to invite them to our prayer such as adoration or Mass. Other suggestions were pulpit sharing and interfaith Bible studies.

Some understood this question to be about sharing our faith with other Christian denominations. Therefore, it was imperative that one understands the faith so as to answer questions or clear up fallacies regarding the Catholic Church. Others believed that we should focus on our commonalities, not the things that divide us. This means that we should use Christian words. We should not debate another, trying to win, but be respectful in our dialogues. Some stated that again these types of interactions must be built on a relationship first. A couple of specific suggestions were to “stay out of politics,” and “as for the Orthodox {Churches}, we need to settle our differences.”

There were two main divisions in thought in response to this question. Some thought the Church should not be shy about stating she is the one true faith with the fullness of revelation. Others thought that was not appropriate and the Church should humble herself and see herself as one of many. This division was at the heart of many of the responses. Some raised objections to the phrasing of the question, as it

implies that the Catholic Church is just one of many denominations. Some believed that we do not change our faith for the sake of ecumenism. Others stated that we need to be inclusive and build bridges and not walls. One respondent brought another approach by this statement: “By living our Catholic faith the best we can, and allowing non-Catholics to live their faith the best they can as well.” This is an area of discussion where it appears there is a lack of understanding of how do we uphold the primacy of the Catholic Church and yet be welcoming and able to collaborate with those of other Christian denominations.

A few responses indicated issues attached to this question. One issue was the role of women in the Church and women’s ordination, and another was not including outreach to non-Christian religions.

8. How is authority exercised in our particular Church, such that it promotes the responsibility and collaboration of the laity?

There was much diversity of ideas in this discussion, possibly because it was about “our particular Church”. Pastors exhibit many types of leadership styles, and that was quite apparent in these answers/discussions. The ideas of delegation, listening, and not micromanaging the laity in their ministries were very important. There was some concern that we do not have a good understanding of authority. The authority given to our clergy needs to be explained. Vatican II’s document on the laity was pointed out as a guide for our understanding. One respondent defined authority in this way: “Authority is about caring for the people under you. Listening genuinely to what the flock needs. Be like a good father, it might not be what the children want but listen and understand what they need.” Some indicated that it is a top down model and there is no collaboration with the laity in their particular parish.

The personalities of clergy came into focus in this discussion. Some wanted more outgoing clergy who reach out to all people, especially the young. Some realized that each priest is not given every gift and charism. They asked that parish priests be self-aware and delegate those things that fall outside of their gifts to the laity. Some were concerned about the work load of their pastors and wondered how they could be of help. Others stated that their pastors were not interested in listening to ideas and inviting the laity into the decision-making process. Some commented authority (parish and diocesan) comes to the laity when in need of money, but not in how to respond to current issues.

8 Synthesis – Toledo Diocese

Consistency in parish leadership was also an issue. When a new pastor arrives, he brings new rules to the parish. Part of those new rules involves how the laity will work within the Church and/or collaborate in decision making processes. In reality, many times it is the people who need to change, when the new pastor arrives. There were suggestions as to providing orientation for new pastors as they move into a new parish.

Some respondents reported that the laity were well engaged in their parish and their pastors knew how to bring them into decision-making processes. Some mentioned the vibrant lay apostolates at work in the parishes. Others mentioned the parish and pastoral councils that provide support and collaboration with the pastor, seeing these as very positive changes in the Church. They see this as shared responsibility with the pastor because it is also their parish. One was surprised to learn of all of the advisory committees that are in place to advise the Bishop.

The inconsistent responses to this question are summed up by a respondent: “Some parishioners have too much power and control which drives people away. Some pastors are more authoritative and less willing to include the laity.”

There were also divergent views on women in this question. Some stated that women shouldn’t be priests, but that they are still important and should have a voice in the Church. Others believe that women need greater participation in positions of authority within the Church.

9. How do hierarchically structured communities promote discernment and participation, with transparency and accountability, in communal decision making in obedience to the Spirit?

One discussion group set the tone for this overall question with this response: “Ultimate authority is important for our faith and health of the Church. A structure for authority is important. Laity can give their opinions but final decisions are up to the pastor. Jesus listened to the disciples but ultimately it was God’s word.”

There was consistent concern about transparency and accountability with Church leadership. Some believed there was not enough communication from the diocese. Once a year there is a financial statement sent to households, but it was believed that was not enough. Many believed that when the diocese/parish engaged in some type of collaboration that all information should be made public, including the raw data. At the parish level, committee reports should be included in the bulletin. Again, not all have the technological skills to access social media if it is put on the parish website.

The idea of communal discernment and hierarchy was thought by some not to work together. There was also a great deal of confusion concerning discernment. Some stated they have never participated in any type of discernment experience. Others stated that some use the concept of discernment as a way to reinforce what they want, not what God wants. People use the “obedience to the Spirit” to imply that everyone can have their own way. This is dangerous and wrong. It is quite apparent by reading through all responses there is a lack of understanding of true discernment. Parishes seem to use more secular ways of collaborating on ideas or setting up committees. They nominate people for parish council and then vote. This is not discernment because discernment takes time, listening,

dialogue and working through conflict using the Word of God as our Truth. Some wondered if seminarians are trained in discernment.

In this discussion there was also the mention of fear. Sometimes leadership is afraid to make known what is being discussed and decided within a parish. Why should the church be afraid of publishing or talking about issues if things are done in Christ's name? Fear should never be a motivator to shut down transparency and accountability.

Another issue was money and power. The idea that money influences decisions and shuts down dialogue among the people of God was stated. This is a reminder to those in authority that they are the pastors of all the sheep, not just the wealthy and powerful.

Again, prayer is important to this discussion. Everything the parish does should begin with prayer. Not just a quick prayer, but one that leads those who are in attendance into the presence of God and lets them know they are called to serve Him through his people.

10. How do we cooperate with the grace of the Holy Spirit to be formed into disciples more capable of journeying together, listening to one another and engaging in dialogue?

This question led us back to the workings of the Spirit. It also dealt with the idea of formation again. One respondent made this connection by stating: "The first step to cooperating with the grace of the Holy Spirit is to actively engage in the formation process. Forming ourselves is not passive. Encouraging involvement and dialogue only makes sense if people are willing to work on their formation." We can only cooperate with grace when we open ourselves to it. I cannot share Jesus when I have no experience of him. Formation is more than just academic knowledge. It is learning so that we may seek and experience the one true God. We start this process by making intentional disciples. We need to ask why people do not want to start a journey toward the Lord and His Church. What is holding them back from discipleship?

When talking about the movement of the Spirit, it was apparent that all are gifted with the Spirit, not just the hierarchy. The Holy Spirit moves us in humility, compassion, and truth, not in pride. Part of understanding the Spirit is also having some type of training in Virtue, *Lectio Divina*, Theology of the Body, Marian devotions, etc. This type of formation moves us to be in accordance with the Holy Spirit, rather than merely voicing our opinions. The quote from St. Catherine of Siena seems appropriate here: "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire." The idea of listening to God kept coming up in responses. It is not about listening to yourself and your ideas, but to God. Some mentioned that there are ideas within our culture that confuse us. It is hard to keep our eyes and ears focused on God and not our own ideas. We must test if our ideas are God's ideas and the Church should help us in knowing how to do that.

There are many other opportunities for growth and formation in grace suggested in the responses. Many pointed to retreats, spiritual direction and other activities that helped them so that they could be formed in ways that assisted them in journeying with others.

10 Synthesis – Toledo Diocese

Prayer again is at the heart of our responses here. We must slow down in our lives so that we have time to pray. Reading and praying the Scriptures are important, as is the sacramental life of the Church. Fasting and penance are also called for as we continue our formation of discipleship. It is important to form relationships that help us increase in virtue. It is likewise important to form relationships with those who are at the margins of our society, recognizing the Spirit of God within them. Someone mentioned that we should have parish masses said with cooperating with the grace of the Spirit and forming disciples as the Mass intention. These are all ways that we can open our lives to the grace of God so that we can be formed into loving disciples who say to all we meet, “Come and see, it is the Lord.”

Conclusion: As we are concluding this synthesis, it was important for us to look to this final question/instruction for us as a diocese which comes from the Vademecum.

“In what ways is the Holy Spirit inviting the local church to grow in synodality? What dreams, desires, and aspirations for the church were expressed by participants? Based on their feedback, what steps does the diocese feel called to take in becoming more synodal? What are the next steps forward for our diocese on the path of synodality, in communion with the whole Church?”
(Appendix D, page 2)

Practical take-aways:

1. Prayer and Discernment
 - a. A true understanding of Discernment of spirits
 - b. *Lectio Divina*
2. Real Presence
 - a. Greater opportunities for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
 - b. Eucharistic processions in parish communities
 - c. Eucharistic Adoration opportunities for youth
 - d. Tabernacles front and center in churches
3. Family Involvement
 - a. Equip and empower parents to form faith-filled Catholic families
4. Formation of Lay Leaders
 - a. Provide leadership training and development
5. Clergy Development
 - a. Provide orientation for new priests and new pastors
6. Transparency and Accountability
 - a. Provide opportunities for parishioners to be heard, i.e. parish discernment gatherings, parish surveys, providing information for review

Having received all of this information, the Diocese will discern how best to consider the wisdom shared in the preparatory phase of the Synod, as it can guide us into the future.

11 Synthesis – Toledo Diocese

Appendix

Demographic for gatherings

Ottawa: 50 people at Prayer – 30 people at Discussion

- 1 Asian / Pacific Islander, 29 White
- 21 Women and 9 Men
- 4 priests, 1 deacon, 4 religious sisters, 21 lay people
- Ages 27 to 73

Defiance: 50 people at Prayer – 30 people at Discussion

- 1 Hispanic, 29 White
- 19 Women and 11 Men
- 2 priests, 2 deacons, 1 religious sister, 25 lay people
- Ages 45 to 83

Toledo: 60 people at Prayer – 50 people at Discussion

- 3 Black, 2 Hispanic, 45 White
- 35 Women and 25 Men
- 5 priests, 3 deacons, 13 religious sisters, 29 lay people
- Ages 24 to 82

Tiffin Afternoon: 80 people at Prayer – 75 people at Discussion

- 2 Hispanic, 73 White
- 41 Women and 34 Men
- 4 priests, 4 deacons, 8 religious sisters, 59 lay people
- Ages 26 to 81

Tiffin Evening: 20 people at Prayer – 10 people at Discussion

- 10 White
- 10 Men
- 2 priests, 2 deacons, 6 lay people
- Ages 49 to 75

Findlay: 65 people at Prayer – 45 people at Discussion

- 1 Black, 9 Hispanic, 35 White
- 25 Women, 20 Men
- 2 priests, 1 deacon, 2 religious sisters, 40 lay people
- Ages 28 to 71

Demographics for Online Survey

Females: 37

Males: 25

Did not indicate: 4

12 Synthesis – Toledo Diocese

Average Age: 64

Youngest: 18 years old

Oldest: 86 years old

Hispanic or Latino: 1

White or Caucasian: 59

Did not indicate: 8

Divorced: 1

Married: 35

Single: 14

Widowed: 11

Did not indicate: 5

Focused Quotes from Online Survey

Question 4

This understanding of the Eucharist and longing for it was articulated very well by a respondent.

“Knowing the wholeness of the Eucharist is needed by many. As one who used to attend a church wherein, I helped pour the grape juice into little cups and tear up loaves of bread for communion I also helped throw the leftovers in the trash. It was a representation of the Lord but not the Lord. The Catholic Church has many who cannot see that difference. The Eucharist IS THE BODY of Christ. It is Jesus entering your body to be a part of you forever. More teaching on this topic is needed. When Co-Vid was going on I missed receiving Christ. I yearned for communion. I pray I never have to go that long without it again.”

Question 5

One of our respondents set the discussion well by their initial response: “Responsibility, and more personal responsibility, is not something that our world delights in at the present time. We are often seen pointing fingers and blaming others for the ailments of society. This illness, sadly, has found its way into the Church as it has everywhere else in our communities. The remedy is to first return to our roots--our common baptism. Renewal begins through a more perfect understanding of what the Sacrament of Baptism gives: not simply forgiveness from original sin, not just the grace of becoming a child of God; but a share in the mission of Jesus Christ--to bring the Good News to the world; to open our ears to receive his Word and to proclaim it to the glory of God. This is the responsibility of the person who has received the great dignity of baptism. What happens throughout the life of the baptized person is part of their responsibility in the mission of Jesus Christ. They were created for this particular moment in time and history--vital to the success of the mission among those people whom they will encounter. Only a correct understanding of this initial moment, whether at infancy, childhood or as an adult, will allow the individual to take seriously the formation offered to them by their parents and the Church, empower them to be disciples among those they encounter on their journey, and take personal responsibility for the success of the mission.”