

Young Adult Synodality Listening Session

April 4, 2022

Participants: 10

What are your main issues and concerns?

- **Trust, accountability, credibility**
 - Can we trust this process? We're not talking directly to the Pope. Who's to say they're not going to edit everything that is "unpleasing" out of the documents that get sent to Rome – message is likely to get diluted.
 - Can I choose an unsafe space repeatedly knowing how much harm the church has caused and continues to cause? I'm concerned about deep trauma (e.g., clergy sexual abuse, genocide of Native Americans and slavery) and not how cool the music is.
 - If the Catholic Church were a corporation, there would have been different accountability measures – significant restructurings, firings/hirings, etc.
 - History of colonialization that needs to be redressed. Need to acknowledge the land and return material possessions.
 - Some people's deeply held ethic prevents them from participating in the church.
- **Challenges of being a global church**
 - So much diversity – both a blessing and a curse.
 - How will everything be compiled? Whose voices won't be heard? How will we move forward with such diverse cultures?
 - If we're a global church, are we truly consulting everyone?
- **Invitation to be a (g)local – i.e., a global and local – church**
 - The church is more than just the institutional church; need to focus on Catholicism as a local spiritual practice
- **Exclusivity and lack of representation**
 - Church has become a safe space for people who make others marginalized but not a safe space for people who are marginalized:
 - LGBTQ+
 - Women
 - People of Color
- **Importance of honoring human experience**
 - My experience of God and of humanity leads me to different conclusions than is reflected in current church teaching. "I don't buy this [e.g. Church teaching on same sex attraction] anymore." Frustrated by the Church not being in alignment with science and human experience.
 - The church needs to engage in dialogue – i.e., do more homework – before writing documents.
 - I really gravitation toward Catholic Worker and Liberation Theologians – it's "where I've found humanity in the church."
- **Church hierarchy**
 - Why does the hierarchical church get to determine what church means to us?
 - Restore the power imbalance, especially between the victims and victimizers.

- Problem with the thinking that individuals can sin, but Catholic doctrine is never wrong (Galileo, slavery, sexual abuse scandal).
- While we all have different roles to play, the Church's structure is flawed; ordaining women in the current structure won't help.
- People need resources

Unity/Encounter Thread

- There is hope amid the tensions.
- Embracing unity asks those who have already been marginalized to endure more of the burden.
 - How can we painfully endure this?
 - Who is bearing the brunt of the endurance?
 - How long will the cycle of harm and trauma continue?
- Division creates/forces change.
- We are not all on equal footing, some of us bear much more of the burden of unity.

How would you describe a local ecclesial community where you could be your true spiritual self, a space that/where _____?

- Centers on human experience as the starting point
- Is artistic, intellectual, encourages creativity, exploration, and is open to challenging tradition
- Space that is more about caring and embracing the fullness of life and not policing people
- Where everyone knows that they are loved by God, where they can encounter God
- Fosters genuine relationships; starts with relationships
- Children are welcomed, cherished, and embraced; a space where children do the teaching.
- People can say what they believe without becoming "lesser members"
- Explicitly affirming of peoples' experiences of gender and sexuality
- Intergenerational space where the land is given back to indigenous peoples
- Contains laughter
- All people know they are beloved of God; a space that accepts each person as they are; a space where Love is the focus