

Summary of Synod Process

Diocese of Charlottetown

April 15, 2024

In the Diocese of Charlottetown, our focused, deepened reflection was on the following themes: prayer, formation, and community. Parishes, service organizations, and communities of women religious from across the diocese took part.

Across these themes, several topics emerged as common points of reflection, including: personal formation and prayer, building community across age groups and culture, the importance of meeting people where they are, and the need for leadership and collaboration in pastoral planning.

The **personal formation and prayer** already happening included diverse styles and formats, ranging from in-person retreats to podcasts and social media. It was clear how central Sacramental life is for participants, particularly the Eucharist, and other devotions, such as the Rosary. However, there was a deep desire expressed for more access to formation, especially as it provided an opportunity to grow community, and formation to equip new leaders in the parish community.

The **importance of building community across age groups and cultures** was addressed multiple times, especially when acknowledging the increasing diversity in our parish communities, and broader society. One suggestion for building community in parishes is to support newcomers in celebrating special liturgical feasts and devotions from their culture. Parishes and groups where these devotions and liturgies have already been celebrated shared the richness it added to their faith community.

Another suggestion for enriching the faith community was increasing opportunities for multi-generational conversation and ministry. The absence of youth and young families in Church communities was noted many times. This was accompanied by a desire to find ways to incorporate them into the life of the Church, whether through designated ministry opportunities (like a men's group, or youth group), or in already existing opportunities, such as parent sessions during catechism classes. It was also noted that multi-generational ministry opportunities needed to include the seniors in our parishes and communities.

Building community, especially when trying to reach those who are not currently in the parish, requires a willingness for members of the Church to **meet people where they are**. This stems from the Great Commission, given by Christ to all the Church, to go and make disciples of all nations. We must be willing to be meet Christ in our neighbour, and to accompany them in their journey.

Underpinning each of these desires, for formation, community, and meeting people where they are, is the need for **leadership and collaboration in pastoral planning**. A spirit of

collaboration needs to permeate all aspects of the parish, so that lay members are supported in sharing their gifts with the parish in ways that are meaningful to both the individual and the community. This requires leadership and collaboration between lay leaders and the pastor. This spirit of collaboration invites the creation of active Pastoral Councils to support the pastor in decision making, and give the lay faithful an opportunity to help provide direction for their faith community.