

**SYNODAL LISTENING SESSION
HELD ON MARCH 26, 2022
PARTICIPANTS INVITED FROM THOSE SERVED BY ENCOURAGE MINISTRY**

Attendees: 19 (12 in person; 7 via Zoom)

Selected Themes in Rank:

- 1- Speaking Out
- 2- Dialogue in Church and Society
- 3- Listening

SUMMATION AT LARGE

During this session, a few common threads emerged that were either shared, or supported by all who were present: A strong desire for the Catholic Church to maintain her identity and be bold in the face of a changing world; a significant hurt in receiving a lack of support, and even betrayal, from within the Church, both from the hierarchy and her members, when they stand up for the teachings and the authority of the Church; a desire to hear the truth spoken and to be led boldly in the Word of God.

SPEAKING OUT

Nearly all of the participants expressed, in some form, a desire for the leadership of the Church to be more courageous and willing to speak out in defense of the teachings of the Catholic Church as well as a need of support from their brother and sister Catholics when they take a stand for controversial teachings of the Church. There was expressed a real hurt that often times the greatest opposition that they face when trying to speak out and follow the teachings of the Church, comes from their fellow Catholics in the pews. Many feel left abandoned and alone when they stand up for Catholic teaching regarding same sex attraction and gender dysphoria.

Those present expressed thoughts and feelings that the leadership of the Church is guided too much out of a fear to offend someone, or a fear of being “canceled.” They want to encourage the hierarchy and bishops to speak out in compassion and truth, without compromising Catholic teachings and values, particularly against those groups that are opposed to the Church and her teachings, against the LGBT agenda and issues facing families, such as the growing reality of fatherlessness.

They desire for the Catholic Church to be Catholic, in teachings, in architecture and to be a beacon for the world, not to conform to it.

DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

There were two main sentiments expressed with regard to approaching dialogue. The first was concern expressed over placing the need for dialogue over respecting and maintaining our Catholic faith. Several participants expressed disappointment that we sacrifice being Catholic for the sake of maintaining dialog, recognizing that there are many who are not open to true dialogue, using this to give cover to a culture of death, and while there are some things that are open for real discussion, there are others, such as matters of Doctrine and formal teachings on Faith and Morals, that should not be open for discussion.

A second theme that was expressed often was the need to embrace the art of conversation, which is in opposition to cancel culture and what is often described as dialogue.

Several other particular ideas were shared such as the need to form young people so that they are better able to engage in conversations; dialogue needs more references to Eucharist and Confession; while the culture of the medical field has changed, the Church has remained silent; the Church's failure to call out public figures when they are not speaking or acting in ways that represent the faith gives a bad impression of being Catholic and undermines the good of the faith.

LISTENING

Many present expressed a strong reaction to the wording of this theme, being "triggered" as they feel that Catholics are in the minority, and in standing up for the teachings of the Church they are the ones who have been marginalized, pushed out to the periphery and in the shadows. All present agreed with the sentiment that they are not being listened to by many in the hierarchy and their fellow Catholics, and discriminated against when following the authority of the Church and the Word of God.

There were also many who expressed a desire for the truth to be spoken and to "be offended by the truth." They would like priests to be more courageous from the pulpit and all leadership to speak more boldly. They would like the hierarchy (bishops and priests) to listen to the Holy Spirit over trends and movements in the culture.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The participants were given an opportunity to share any final thoughts. The vast majority of these centered around a desire in the words of one participant "We are hungry for something more than this world. We want beautiful latin churches and the truth." and as another "We pray and hope for leaders to help us navigate this journey we are on."