



ONE CHURCH
ENCOUNTERING JESUS
EQUIPPING DISCIPLES
LIVING MERCY

SUMMARY AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF THE SYNOD QUESTIONNAIRE

Part One: Summary of Questionnaire

Participants: The synod questionnaire is for everyone thirteen years and older in the Archdiocese of Omaha, including non-Catholics and those who no longer consider themselves Catholic.

Question Topics: The topics covered in the questions for Catholics are based on Pope Francis' theme for the 2021-2023 synodal process, "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission." The questions for non-Catholics and those who no longer consider themselves Catholic are based on synod instructions from the Holy See. For details about the theological foundation of the questionnaire, see pages three and four.

Terminology: When a question includes a theological term, it is followed by a short explanation of the term or examples to make it understandable.

Deadline: The deadline for submitting the questionnaire is February 28th.

Questions For Everyone

Section 1 for Everyone: Introductory Questions - The first section of questions asks demographic information (if you are Catholic, age group, parish) and for adults only a few additional questions.

Note: Most of the sections described below have a space to write further comments on the topic. The length of time needed to complete the questionnaire largely depends on how much time is spent writing additional comments.

Questions For Catholics – Time length 5-10 minutes on average

Section 2 for Catholics: Connectedness Questions – Based on the theology of communion, the second section asks Catholics how connected they feel to the universal Catholic Church and the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Section 3 for Catholics: Participation Questions – The third section of questions asks Catholics if they participate in the Catholic Church. If no, it asks them why not. If yes, it asks if they would like to participate more and, if so, what obstacles get in the way of doing it.

Section 4 for Catholics: Evangelizing Mission Questions – The fourth section of questions asks Catholics if they would recommend their parish to a friend or colleague and why or why not. It also asks Catholics if they participate in the evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church.

Section 5 for Catholics: Concluding Questions – The fifth section of questions asks Catholics who participate in the life and/or mission of the Catholic Church how their life has been blessed within the past three months by that participation. It also asks Catholics how they feel called to grow in their participation in the life and mission of the Catholic Church.

Questions For Non-Catholics and Those Who No Longer Consider Themselves Catholic - Time length 5 minutes on average

Section 2 for Non-Catholics: Impression Questions – This second section asks non-Catholics about their impression of the Catholic Church.

Section 3 for Non-Catholics: Witness Questions – This third section asks non-Catholics if they have ever met a Catholic with a strong prayer life or who lives a life of great charity.

Section 4 for Non-Catholics: Minister Questions – This fourth section asks non-Catholics who minister in non-Catholic churches about their church's experience working with Catholics.

Part Two: Theological Foundation

The 2021-2023 synod theme is “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.” The quotes below present a short summary of the deep theological foundation upon which the synod questions for the Archdiocese of Omaha are based and their connection to the synod theme.

For a Synodal Church

Synodality means “involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church.” - International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*

"The word “synod” says it all: it means “journeying together”. The Book of Acts is the story of a journey that started in Jerusalem, passed through Samaria and Judea, then on to the regions of Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, ending up in Rome. A journey that reveals how God’s word, and the people who heed and put their faith in that word, journey together. The word of God journeys with us. Everyone has a part to play; no one is a mere extra. This is important: everyone has a part to play." - Pope Francis, *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of the Diocese of Rome*

Communion

"Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: 'Therefore...we are members of one another' (Eph 4:25). Baptism incorporates us *into the Church*. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: 'For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body' (*1 Cor 12:13*)." - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1267

“Ecclesial communion is at the same time both invisible and visible. As an invisible reality, it is the communion of each human being with the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit, and with the others who are fellow sharers in the divine nature, in the passion of Christ, in the same faith, in the same spirit. In the Church on earth, there is an intimate relationship between this invisible communion and the visible communion in the teaching of the Apostles, in the sacraments and in the hierarchical order.” – Congregation For the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*

“From the Church, which in its origins and its first manifestation is universal, have arisen the different local Churches [a.k.a. dioceses], as particular expressions of

the one unique Church of Jesus Christ. Arising *within* and *out of* the universal Church, they have their ecclesiality in it and from it.” – *Ibid.*

Participation

"The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew." - Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

"Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful have received the sacramental character that consecrates them for Christian religious worship (cf. *LG 11*). The baptismal seal enables and commits Christians to serve God by a vital participation in the holy liturgy of the Church and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by the witness of holy lives and practical charity (cf. *LG 10*)."
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1273

Mission

“Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations’ (*Mt 28:19*) ...The Christian community is never closed in upon itself. The intimate life of this community - the life of listening to the Word and the apostles' teaching, charity lived in a fraternal way, the sharing of bread, this intimate life only acquires its full meaning when it becomes a witness, when it evokes admiration and conversion, and when it becomes the preaching and proclamation of the Good News. Thus, it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole.” - St. Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

Questions for Non-Catholics

“The second perspective considers how the People of God journeys together with the entire human family. Thus, our gaze will focus on the state of relations, dialogue, and possible common initiatives with believers of other religions, with people who are distant from the faith.” - Congregation for the Synod of Bishops, *Preparatory Document*

“For although the Catholic Church has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace, yet its members fail to live by them with all the fervor that they should, so that the radiance of the Church's image is less clear in the eyes of our separated brethren and of the world at large, and the growth of God's kingdom is delayed. All Catholics must therefore aim at Christian perfection

and, each according to his station, play his part that the Church may daily be more purified and renewed.” – Vatican Council II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*