

September
2022

SYNOD REPORT

Communion, Participation, Mission



Diocese of Venice in Florida

Synod Summary

What's It All About?

The current synod, “Communion, Participation and Mission,” is a two-year process of listening and dialogue in the Catholic Church. The synod began with a solemn opening in Rome on October 9 and 10, 2021, with each individual Diocese celebrating the opening of the synod the following week. In the Diocese of Venice, the opening Mass was celebrated by The Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida, on Sunday, October 17, 2021, at Epiphany Cathedral in Venice.

From January through May of 2022, more than 1,000 of the faithful participated in the synodal process in the Diocese of Venice, including both young and old, women and men, English and Spanish-speaking. Twelve Listening Sessions took place: Eleven live sessions, many in both English and Spanish, and one virtual session for those who were unable to attend in person. Bishop Dewane attended the sessions, opening with a prayer for the synod. Bishop Dewane shared with participants that their role was to speak from the heart, and to discern what it is that the Holy Spirit is calling us to be as a Church. Participants then engaged in lively round-table discussions, guided by questions provided, based on synod themes from the Vatican. After the 30-minute table discussions, feedback and question responses were shared with the group for the next hour. Additionally, feedback and responses were encouraged via a dedicated synod email address.

Synod participants were enthusiastic, passionate, and engaged; feedback was thoughtful and constructive. Several topics were discussed, and some common themes emerged; a full report was shared with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in June.



Bishop Dewane and the Diocesan Synod Team listen attentively as the faithful share their views about the Catholic Church at a live Listening Session in January.



Our Holy Father Pope Francis wants to hear from YOU! Join us for one of our Listening Sessions to participate in this amazing opportunity to have your voice heard. Come and dream with us about the Catholic Church God is calling us to be . . .

More than 1,000 faithful participated in the Synod in the Diocese of Venice. Twelve Listening Sessions were held, including one virtual session for those who could not make it to a live session. Listening sessions were announced via parishes, traditional media and social media, as seen above. Additionally, a dedicated Synod email address drew hundreds of responses.

What did we hear?

Main Themes that Emerged

The Results of our Diocesan Synodal Process

Common themes emerged from our Listening Session discussions, and can be summarized as follows:

- Catechesis & Formation
- Celebration of the Mass
- Marginalized Groups
- Importance of Youth
- Increased Transparency

Catechesis & Formation: Participants were happy to report that they are proud to be Catholic and eager to evangelize, but many felt they lacked the tools to do so. There was a general hunger for more catechesis and formation among all.

Celebration of the Mass: Several areas of interest emerged regarding the Mass. They were:

- Centrality of the Eucharist
- Importance of the Latin Mass
- Need for Powerful Homilies
- Married Priests
- Women's Role in the Mass

Concern was shared regarding the centrality of and belief in the Holy Eucharist; it was expressed that this tenet of the Church needs to be reinvigorated.

The importance of the Latin Mass was raised repeatedly, with many seeing the traditional Latin Mass as “a way back to reverence,” which many saw as missing from the Church today.

(continued next page)



Bishop Dewane leads the faithful in prayer at the opening of a Diocesan Listening Session.

46 • WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022 • THE HERALD-TRIBUNE

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BEST BETS

SIESTA FARMERS MARKET: Today from 8 a.m. to noon, 5124 Ocean Blvd., Siesta Key. Local produce, plants, vases, bread and imported oils, and more. Live music. Dogs are welcome. siestafarmersmarket.org

LIWA FARMERS MARKET: Today from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 1681 Lindeman Drive, Sarasota. Organic produce, meat, poultry, seafood, eggs and prepared foods from more than 30 vendors. liwafarmersmarket.com

COQUINA BEACH MARKET: Today from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 2500 Gulf Circle S., Bradenton Beach. Local artists, arts and crafts, jewelry, fresh produce, plants, apparel, pottery, jewelry, collectibles. 941-738-4421

RISE & SHINE YOGA: Today from 10:30-11:45 a.m. at "The Nest" in Robinson Preserve, 1400 19th St. NW, Bradenton. \$10. A blend of physical movement and mindfulness to promote physical strength and mental rejuvenation. www.riseandshineyoga.com; 941-742-5923, ext. 5042

STRENGTHEN AND STRETCH: Monday from 10-11 a.m., Paradise Center, 546 Bay Isles Road, Longboat Key. \$10. www.strengthenandstretch.com

Diocese hosts 'Listening Sessions'

VENICE—The Diocese of Venice will host several "Listening Sessions" as part of its participation in the Catholic Church Synod entitled "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission," a worldwide effort for a "deeper communion, fuller participation, and greater openness to fulfilling our mission in the world," according to Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of the Diocese of Venice.

"These upcoming Listening Sessions are an important mission to put that 'listening' Bishop Dewane said. "Pope Francis has asked us for and urged. It is important to listen to each other and to the Holy Spirit as a community and discern what God is calling us to do; to listen how to become the Church that God calls us to be."

"These Listening Sessions will be held at various locations through May 23. Listening sessions locations were selected in an effort to include as much of the population and geography of the Diocese as possible. All are welcome.

"In the western area of the Diocese, Listening Sessions will be held Feb. 16, 4:30-6 p.m., Epiphany Cathedral, 300 Tampa Ave. West Venice, and Feb. 22, 4:30-6 p.m., St. Peter and Paul the Apostles Parish, 2850 73rd St. W., Bradenton. To view a complete list of Listening Sessions, visit bit.ly/3u2Lz6v.

For those unable to attend a live session, a virtual Listening Session will be held later in May. The Diocese has also set up a dedicated email for those who wish to share their thoughts: synodal@dioceseofvenice.org.

"Synod" is a venerable word in the tradition of the Catholic Church, and synodally expresses the idea that the entire Church walk forward together. For more information about "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission," visit bit.ly/3u2Lz6v.

The Diocese of Venice in Florida was established by St. John Paul II in 1984 and today includes 63 parishes, 15 schools and serves an estimated 230,000 Catholics. For more information, visit dioceseofvenice.org.

Submitted by Karen Johnson

Local press outlets reported that the Diocese was to host Listening Sessions.

Celebration of the Mass (continued):

Several expressed the desire for powerful homilies, as it can provide inspiration for the week ahead.

Some put forth the idea that priests ought to marry, as this may spark more interest in the vocation among young men. Others expressed a concern that this would present a dilemma for priests, as they are already married to the Church.

Women were seen as a potentially marginalized group as it relates to the Mass, with some suggesting that women play more of a role in the Mass and the Church in general. (Still others pointed out in response that many ministries are, in fact, led by women, giving women a strong and important voice in the Church.)

Marginalized Groups: In addition to women, other groups identified as possibly being marginalized by the Church included those who identify as LGBT, those who are divorced, those who work full-time, and those who are not necessarily part of any well-established "group" or "clique" in their local parish. It was suggested, for example, that the process for welcoming divorced Catholics back to the Church be made clearer, and that there be more convenient daily Mass times for working people.

Importance of Youth: The need to reach and engage young people was identified, with many feeling that young people drift away from the Church sometime between the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Sacrament of Marriage. Many felt that young people do not come back until it is time to baptize their own children, and then it may be too late to get them back.

Increased Transparency: There was a repeated call for continued and increased transparency in the Church, especially as it relates to sexual abuse and the wounds of the past.

Summary: Overall, participants were most grateful to be given the opportunity to be heard, and to share their feelings about the Church and its future. Many would like more such opportunities. All were extremely interested in the outcome of the synodal process. The Diocese of Venice is grateful for the participation of its faithful, and thanks all who attended a session or sent in their thoughts.