

**SAINT ANN CHURCH, HAGERSTOWN  
SYNOD ON SYNODALITY  
LISTENING SESSIONS  
SUMMARY REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

- ◆ This Summary Report presents the major/common themes identified from a series of 10 Listening Sessions (2 Facilitator Sessions and 8 General Sessions) that included approximately 100 participants.
- ◆ The specific notes generated by the various small table group sessions are available as an Appendix for additional reference if desired.

**JOYS**

- ◆ Spiritually nourishing experiences of sacraments and prayer (preaching, devotions, retreats, small groups, Scripture study groups ...)
- ◆ Impactful ministry, service, witness from Church ministers (priests, deacons, women & men religious)
- ◆ Experiences of welcome, hospitality, diversity of cultures in a spiritual community of mutually supportive relationships
- ◆ Opportunities for service and outreach
- ◆ Spiritual formation, growth, development experienced in Catholic Schools, Faith Formation programs, retreats, adult faith offerings, RCIA ministry, youth ministry, marriage preparation ministry ...

**OBSTACLES/CHALLENGES**

- ◆ Sense of rigidity, exclusion, non-welcome, judgement to non-Catholics, marginalized, divorced/remarried, LGBTQ, those of other cultures/races ...
- ◆ Continuing fall-out from sexual abuse scandal (loss of trust in hierarchy, anger at cover-ups, feeling of hypocrisy with VIRTUS requirements ...)
- ◆ Inadequate transparency from hierarchy/Church leadership
- ◆ Limitations on ministry (women as deacons/priests, married priests ...)
- ◆ Slowness of Church to change/respond to current times
- ◆ Inadequate support/direction from hierarchy
- ◆ Weakness of faith formation efforts for children, youth; parents' lack of confidence to teach the faith in their families
- ◆ Young adults feel overlooked, forgotten, left out
- ◆ Struggle/pains associated with the annulment process (complexity, cost, necessity ...)
- ◆ Worries about post- COVID return to participation; people not just switching but leaving
- ◆ Relevance of preaching; relevance of Church to every-day lives
- ◆ Fewer priests result in more administrative attention than shepherding focus
- ◆ Competition with influences of secular society/culture
- ◆ Lack of support for children with special needs

## HOPES

- ◆ Increased role of women (Church leadership roles, ordination as deacon/priest) and allowance of married clergy
- ◆ Inclusivity/openness/welcome of all – divorced & remarried, non-Catholics, LGBTQ, multi-cultural ...
- ◆ Greater appreciation of the role of the laity, with greater practice of “bottom-up” vs “top-down” pastoral governance
- ◆ More vibrant liturgies, relevant preaching, inspiring music; availability of engaging and challenging spiritual formation offerings/opportunities
- ◆ Better connection/involvement with youth, young adults, families
- ◆ Seize opportunities to change decline in Church participation into growth with innovative, creative thinking/approaches to stimulate growth
- ◆ Improved transparency by Church leadership regarding scandals, failures ...
- ◆ Simpler, more accessible pastoral experience with the annulment process
- ◆ More opportunities to connect with other parishes for shared/partnership ministry initiatives