

Balitang Nagbibigay Buhay

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Archdiocese of Vancouver



**The Church
wants to listen.
Come join the
conversation.**

SOME TOPICS OF CONVERSATION TO CONSIDER

- 1 What helps or prevents you from being active in the Church's mission?
- 2 What areas of the Church's mission are we missing or neglecting?
- 3 What particular issues in the Church do we need to pay more attention to?
- 4 What particular issues in society do we need to pay more attention to?
- 5 How can we, the local Church, journey with our Indigenous sisters and brothers in a process of healing and reconciliation?



Synod
2021
2023

THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

How the Church wants to listen

by: Marie Pacheco

"If you care about your Church, you care about the Church in Vancouver and in Canada, and you think oh I'm just one voice...But if that one voice is speaking what the Holy Spirit wants to share, you never know how that one voice is going to impact the group around you or the Archdiocese..."

Mario Ylanan from the Star of the Sea parish could not have said it better when asked why one should

participate in the ongoing Synod of the Catholic Church. He says it doesn't matter whether you're one voice or a hundred voices, you need to be able to bring forward what the Holy Spirit is asking you to bring forward.

In the past few months, Catholics around the world have been invited to join the conversation on how they want to change the way we do church through a series of small group discussions that

are part of the Synod.

The questions encourage a lot of reflection. Here at the Archdiocese of Vancouver, they include:

What helps or prevents you from being active in the Church's mission? What areas of the Church's mission are we missing or neglecting? What particular issues in the Church do we need to pay more attention to? What particular issues in society do we need to pay more attention to? How can we, the local Church, journey with our Indigenous sisters and brothers in a process of healing and reconciliation?

Whitney Nagasan from St. Nicholas parish in Langley is a trained facilitator in the ongoing Synod. She says she is humbled to be part of the process.

"This one is unprecedented. Pope Francis really wants to involve those who have not voiced their thoughts sa Church."

Ylanan adds it is a bottom-up approach where the laity is consulted on the current issues facing the Church. Multiple sessions have been ongoing since late last year till end of March in what is called the listening phase of the Synod. Parishes will then report a summary of the discussions to the Archdiocese; the latter summarizes and puts together a document to be submitted to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. It will be up to the bishops to open a period of discernment on what the Holy Spirit has raised up in the churches and to make a synthesis of the different contributions. The synthesis will be sent to the organizing committee of the Synod in April 2023 where bishops will gather with the Pope to deliberate what has been discussed in different churches around the world.

"If everybody faithfully discerns what the Holy Spirit is speaking to each of the groups and so on, it will be a very revealing document of what's on the hearts of engaged parishioners within the Archdiocese," says Ylanan.

Fr. Amador Abundo from the Immaculate Concept-

ion Parish in Delta is pleased with the enthusiastic response and participation in the conversation circles saying it has been more about listening and not arguing. But there are also challenges in reaching those who have not been active in the parish.

"It has been hard to reach out to those who were not already engaged in parish ministry. They have not yet taken up this opportunity to have their voice heard."

Fr. Abundo hopes that the process of listening without arguing is embraced moving forward when tackling faith and parish issues. He feels that the listening circle approach has the potential to help overcome some of the divisions that have become apparent especially during the pandemic.

Nagasan for her part shared some early takeaways after facilitating seven sessions. She says there is clarity on the need for evangelization. Within the Filipino community, there is also clamor on how we can help kids understand the value of going to church beyond just following their parents. She adds there is also a lot of discussion on our role as people of God and keeping the church alive. But she finds hope in seeing many people involved in the Synod.

"The invitation is to get involved. It's not all about having more documents, it's the process of hearing, listening and voicing out our experience." Synodality after all, is journeying together.

Meanwhile, the Filipino Ministry Office has been conducting Synod Conversation Circles especially with the Filipino Catholic Associations, who in turn are in the process of also convening groups to promote this new way of being church - of journeying, of listening to one another and to the Holy Spirit, as we discern how we are being called to live as the Mystical Body of Christ today.