



RADICAL LOVE, RADICAL MISSION

BEING BOLD AND CREATIVE IN RESPONSE TO THE PASTORAL
NEEDS OF YOUTH, YOUNG ADULTS, AND FAMILIES IN THE
DIOCESE OF DALLAS

*Results of the Convocation on Youth, Campus, and Young Adult
Ministries and Vocational Discernment July 27-29, 2017*

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Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

September 2018

My dear people,

Only months after being appointed by His Holiness, Pope Francis, to lead the Diocese of Dallas, I convened in July of 2017 a first of its kind convocation in our diocese, the *Convocation on Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministries & Vocational Discernment*. I called for this convocation for two purposes. First and foremost, this assembly took place in response to the Holy Father's October 2018 Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment. Pope Francis asked that every bishop across the globe engage in dialogue with their individual diocese and to communicate the information collected back to their bishop's conference, which was then sent to Rome. Secondly, as your bishop I called for this convocation to better understand how we have been ministering to the young people and young adults of our diocese—those in our parishes as well as those who are not—and ultimately discipling them into vocational living; that is, an understanding of how the Lord is calling them to holiness. It is now with great joy that I humbly share with you the findings of the convocation.

Within this document are the anecdotes, beliefs, and visions of so many who believe wholly in the truth of the Church and the way in which Her message can radically transform lives. Please accept my sincerest gratitude for taking the time to read and reflect upon all that lies within these pages.

My friends, there has never been a time like now. Our young people and our young adults deserve the very best proclamation of the Gospel that we can muster, a proclamation rooted in the joy of Jesus Christ that we first have received, united with our age-old and ever-relevant tradition, and ultimately made manifest through the lens of the young generations we must selflessly seek to serve. Indeed, the time is now and the urgency has never been greater, and my prayer for you and for me is that together, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will bring forth the kingdom of God here in Dallas with new ardor.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edward J. Burns
Bishop of Dallas



Ministry Training Source

Ministry Training Source (MTS, www.ministrytrainingsource.org) provided data analysis of the convocation and developed this report and recommendations. MTS is a non-profit organization committed to the formation of ministry leaders by providing customized ministry formation solutions using the latest research and technology.

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FOREWORD

Howdy, Church!

Words can barely contain my excitement in sharing with you this data report from the 2017 Dallas diocesan *Convocation on Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministries & Vocational Discernment!* Make no mistake, this is a watershed moment for the Diocese of Dallas.

For some time now, we have had at our disposal plenty of national, even global, data sets. Their indications have been dire, noting that youth and young adults are not only leaving the Church today, but have been for some time now. However, reports such as these serve only to read the pulse of the Church at large and offer little to no analysis for the grassroots ministries we serve. Though, with the report you now hold in your hands, we have the anecdotal proof we need to say that here in Dallas, it's time to step up to the plate. From middle school and high school students, to college-aged adults and young professionals, it is clear that young people long for the Church and her leaders to meet their needs with our sacred truths wrapped in a new ardor and, potentially, new methods.

This document gives permission to think outside of the box, to be bold, and even to fail. Too often, leaders in the Church view the failure of new initiatives with negativity. Such negativity, then, often governs decisions, fiscal year allocations, and employee reviews. Now is the time to reverse this misnomer. Failure, within the right culture, sharpens decision making and ultimately drives innovation. Innovation, dear friends, is what we need now more than ever. While many of our programs and ministerial offerings have been good, excellence in ministry is marked by the ability to see the individual rather than the group, engaging he or she in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and elevating his or her gifts and charisms within the context of each parish community. Such is and always has been the Church at her best, and that which drives a multiplicity of disciples.

As you read and reflect upon all that is contained herein, whether you are a teenager, young adult, parent, church member, ministry leader, or a pastor, do so with this singular presupposition—an elevation of ministry to youth, college students, and young adults requires the entire parish community. The time of relegating to one individual or small team the responsibility of ministry to the demographics focused upon in this report must end if we are to be successful in passing on a legacy of faith to future generations.

Allow me to express my sincerest gratitude to all of those whose tireless effort has brought about the creation of this report, including those that participated in the Convocation and online surveys, the researchers at Ministry Training Source, the project management team in the Dallas diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries, the various data analysts, editors, graphic designers, and most importantly, you as you read this report and become a catalyst and practitioner of the many hopes it expresses. Share this report with everyone that you know and challenge them to do the same. Collaborate with one another and do not be afraid to dream big. And be assured that when parishes and their members unite as one with the objective of inviting others into a dynamic life with Jesus Christ, the fiery and contagious joy of the love of God will spread exponentially.

For the Greater Glory of God,

Jason Deuterman

Director

Office of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries
Diocese of Dallas

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INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: ‘We have always done it this way’. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. A proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory. I encourage everyone to apply the guidelines found in this document (‘Evangelii Gaudium’) generously and courageously, without inhibitions or fear. The important thing is to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, and especially under the leadership of the bishops, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment.”ⁱ

In July 2017, the Most Rev. Edward J. Burns, the eighth bishop of Dallas, responded to the invitation of Pope Francis in his pastoral exhortation to rethink pastoral ministry with the young church by calling for a diocesan convocation. It was apparent from the comments within the dataset that convocation participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to share their experiences. Their input affirms the desire for pastoral ministry in a ‘missionary key,’ one that Pope Francis describes as “bold and creative.” This report is a summary of the convocation findings and recommendations, illuminating the voice and experience of participants.

Convocation Purpose

In response to the request of Pope Francis to collect data for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, the Diocese of Dallas conducted listening sessions with 780 constituents who had a touchpoint with youth, campus or young adult ministries, and/or vocational discernment. In calling for this gathering as one large body, Bishop Burns desired to engage as many people as possible in intentional listening over the course of the three-day convocation. He saw it as an occasion to seek responses in direct relationship to the synod preparatory document—and at the six-month mark of his appointment to Dallas—to listen as a shepherd and better understand the needs and aspirations of the young church and its ministers.

Convocation Delegation

The convocation consisted of parish delegations chosen by the delegation leader (which was most often a parish pastor). The July 27-29 event convened youth, young adults, parents and families, key stakeholders, parish leadership, and priests. The 67 delegations attending the convocation were mostly drawn from 49 parishes representing every deanery in the diocese (see Table 1.) See Appendix III for additional information on how delegates were invited.

<i>Table 1. Types of Delegations (Not including Jewish Delegation)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Catholic High School	1
Individuals	4
Organizations	7
Convocation Teams/OYYACM Staff/Volunteers/Pastoral Center Staff	4
Parishes	49
College Campus Ministries	2
Grand Total of Participants from Groups/Parishes	67

Convocation Structure

The convocation hosted a variety of listening sessions in which participants provided answers to predetermined questions. Each session was audio-recorded and yielded 89 hours of conversation and feedback. Conversations took place in three ways through full diocesan representation, in deaneries, and in pods (two-three parish groupings). While each day had a focus audience, each day also reflected a broad representation of people: youth, young adults, parents, lay pastoral ministry leaders, and clergy (see Appendix II.)

Convocation Definitions Regarding Youth and Young Adult Groups

The following definitions were used for the Convocation:

- Youth are those young people in middle school and high school.
- Young adults consist of individuals ages 18-39.
- Young Adult Ministry also refers to Pastoral Juvenil Hispana.

On the Margins/Marginalized Youth and Young Adults include individuals with addictions, health challenges, or disabilities; who are/have been homeless, incarcerated, or bullied; who have experience with poverty, homelessness, human trafficking, gangs, violence and abuse, refugee or immigrant status; or those who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBTQ+).

Purpose of this Research

The questions used at the listening sessions were a combination of questions that correlated directly to those in the synod report and additional questions that were specific for diocesan feedback. As such, the diocese contracted with research consultants from Ministry Training Source to aid in pulling overarching themes and significant data points of information from the raw data/audio-recordings collected. This process allows the Office of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries and Bishop Burns to move ministerial efforts and support forward in direct response to the needs of the people of the Diocese of Dallas. The hope is that this convocation report will shape diocesan and parish efforts in the coming years based on feedback from those who gathered, as well as provide useful information for Bishop Burns to move forward in intentional ministerial support and efforts.

Research Methodology

The questions utilized in the convocation and online surveys were initially drawn from the synod preparatory document and then expanded to provide a broad assessment of the realities and needs of youth, young adults, and their families in the Diocese of Dallas. For a complete list of questions, see Appendix IV. The questions were organized under these thematic foci:

- Where have we been, and what is our current ministerial legacy?
- What is our current landscape?
- ‘Missionary Imperative’

It is important to note that the questions asked played a major role in the responses provided. While some participants did not always answer the questions directly, nevertheless, themes emerged in the survey responses.

Dataset Description

Three sources of data were included in this research: audio-recording from convocation sessions, notecards collected at sessions, and online survey data. The primary source of data was 89 hours of recorded audio from the convocation sessions. There were 4,828 data points from the recorded audio sessions (see

Table 2 for a breakdown of the frequency of each data source in the dataset.) The diocese further collected data via online surveys resulting in 675 data points, as well as 142 pages of written responses from notecards that participants submitted on-site at the convocation, resulting in 1,264 data points. The notecards were available and collected at the end of each session. Distinct colors denoted each type of gathering. The only questions from the survey data that were included in the dataset were those that directly correlated to the convocation questions. The three sources of data resulted in 6,767 valid data points within the dataset. Throughout this report, different data points are quoted or referenced. A unique data identifier assigned by the researchers ranging from 1 to 7,675 serves as the reference for each quotation. These are found in parenthesis following a quoted data point. Due to data cleanup (for duplicate quotes, etc.), the identifier numbers exceed the actual number in the final dataset.

Table 2. Data Source		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Listening Session	4,828	71.3
	Note Card	1,264	18.7
	Online Survey	675	10.0
	Total	6,767	100.0



Deanery Representation in Dataset

The convocation was open to all parishes, and every effort was made to have equal representation by deanery. The largest deaneries in the diocese, North Central and Northern Deaneries, were the largest deaneries represented in the sample. In 76 percent of the dataset, the deanery from which the speaker came was able to be identified. Nine percent of the data was gathered in large-group sessions, so the deanery was not able to be identified. In Table 3, some deaneries are listed together because they were in a listening session together. Due to the mixture of some deaneries in one session or more, and the large-group sessions, it is not possible to identify an exact percentage of representation by deanery (see Table 3). However, every deanery in the diocese is represented.

Table 3. Deanery Representation Within Dataset		Frequency	Percent
	North Central	1,175	17.4
	Northern	1,014	15.0
	South West	666	9.8
	Large Group	594	8.8
	Central	560	8.3
	North East	555	8.2
	South East	429	6.3
	Eastern	267	3.9
	Eastern and North East	159	2.3
	South East and North East	124	1.8
	Deanery Label Missing	1,224	18.1
Total		6,767	100.0

Data Analysis

The process of analyzing the data was achieved in four steps. The first step was the creation of the dataset, transcription of audio-recordings, typing of the note-card data, and identifying the relevant questions from the survey data. At times, due to church language, or accent of the speaker, some words or phrases were not captured. However, the vast majority of the recorded audio sessions were successfully transcribed.

The second step was to code data points by the type of data that was provided, such as a description of current reality, a hope, a recommendation, etc. Table 4 provides a list of all the coded data types and the percentage of each data type in the overall dataset. Witness or example was the most frequent data type at 44 percent with recommendations being the next most common type at 24 percent.

Table 4. Data Types	Frequency	Percent
Witness or Example	2,998	44.3
Recommendation	1,597	23.6
Current Reality	1,340	19.8
Challenge	320	4.7
Vision/Goal	286	4.2
Question	92	1.4
Theological Reflection	66	1.0
Hope/Prayer	47	.7
Other	21	.3
Total	6,767	100.0

Then, each data point was coded by one of 30 categories describing the setting, the audience, the area of pastoral ministry, or the issue being described. The researchers created the category list based upon the various topics and issues that were present in the data and the various questions asked of convocation participants. Appendix IV provides a list of the 30 categories and the frequency of that category in the dataset. Table 5 names the top 10 categories in the data, with at least 200 data points, including Catechesis and Formation as the largest category, with Family and Parents being next highest in the dataset.

Table 5. Top Ten Categories of the dataset	Frequency
Catechesis/Faith Formation	441
Family/Parents	411
Parish Youth Ministry	406
Being Welcoming	365
Young Adults	328
Community	271
Missionary Discipleship/Relationship with Jesus	241
Prayer/Spirituality	227
Evangelization	222
Discernment/Vocations	214

The third step was to analyze the data to identify patterns and themes that surfaced within each of the 30 coded grouping categories. This was done by dividing the entire dataset into 16 sections with between 350 to 550 data points in each section. Then, the sections were distributed to one of 16 data analysts who identified common themes, issues, and patterns within their section. Data analysts were selected by the Office of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries and intentionally represented various roles in parish, school, and diocesan ministry (see the Forward of this report for the list of data analysts).

The last step in analyzing and interpreting the data was a meeting between the data analysts and research consultants from Ministry Training Source. They identified findings and recommendations from the themes, as well as a list of barriers and opportunities found in each of the 16 data sections (as identified by each analyst). Ministry Training Source studied this analysis and developed the following report of findings and recommendations.

Report Structure

This report is structured into seven parts, an introduction followed by four sections where major findings are discussed. The report concludes with recommendations, a conclusion, and a set of appendices. The major findings of this research are reported along the framework of ‘discipling’, beginning with outreach and evangelization, followed by faith formation and catechesis, then the living out of discipleship in community and shared ministry.

- Section One presents the findings on the need to increase outreach and evangelization as a welcoming community rooted in relationship with one another and the Lord.
- Section Two examines the findings surrounding the need to transform faith formation and catechesis with youth, young adults, parents, and families.
- Section Three concentrates on findings about how youth and young adults need to live out the Catholic faith within the community of believers who worship together and go out on mission in the world together.
- Section Four examines the systems that support ministry efforts with youth and young adults including the need for leadership formation with youth and young adults, as well as within the ministry community guiding them.

Data Points and Quotations

Individual data points are included in the research report as quotations from various convocation participants. They have been altered or shortened for clarity and to increase readability. Each data point has been notated by referencing the unique data point identifier from the data set in parenthesis following the quotation. Names are not used in this report. A person's gender, delegation role, and deanery may be used in place of a name to offer context to the source of the quote.

The Nature of Qualitative Research

The purpose of qualitative research is to explore areas of human experience to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations with the hope of uncovering trends in rationale while simultaneously probing stated problems. In this case, the purpose of the convocation was to listen to the lived experience of the Catholic faith community as it relates to ministry with youth, young adults, and their families. Often, qualitative research provides insights into the problem or helps develop ideas or hypotheses for future research that may be more quantitative in nature. Data collected in this research came from listening sessions at the convocation. The comments varied from personal experience, to ministry experience, to personal opinions, and general observations. Comments provided do not necessarily represent the parish, school, or organization of the participant. The comments shared in this report via quotations illustrate the types of comments received at the convocation to demonstrate the findings of this research.

Beyond the Convocation

The convocation structure inspired openness and reinforced interest in the stories of youth, young adults, parents, and pastoral ministry leaders in the diocese. This report provides a lens through which to appreciate and interpret their experience and discern appropriate pastoral action. With gratitude to the data analysts, the researchers were able to distill—from nearly 7,000 data points—one overall conclusion and nine recommendations for action. The best way to honor the participants for entrusting their stories is to “hear” their stories with the heart and reflect on both the individual and collective pastoral action they desire.



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Radical Love, Radical Mission

A background image showing a fisherman in silhouette pulling a large net filled with fish from the water. The scene is set at dusk or dawn, with the water reflecting the low light. The fisherman is on the left, and the net extends across the frame.

OUTREACH AND EVANGELIZATION

Recent popes have preached about the ongoing need for evangelization both inside and outside of the church. Pope John Paul II, in *“Redemptoris Missio,”* no. 1, asserted that “the mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion.” He wrote, “An overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service.” In his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI advanced this assessment. “There are regions of the world that are still awaiting a first evangelization; others that have received it, but need a deeper intervention; yet others in which the Gospel put down roots a long time ago, giving rise to a true Christian tradition but in which, in recent centuries with complex dynamics the secularization process has produced a serious crisis of the meaning of the Christian faith and of belonging to the Church.”ⁱⁱ

FINDINGS SECTION

1

This convocation provided an environment for the Diocese of Dallas to assess where it sits on this continuum while giving direct voice to levels of practical evangelization and outreach efforts experienced at the parish level.

Through its convocation, the Diocese of Dallas created a safe space to hear directly from youth and young adults their experience of the church. A female young adult from a parish in the Southeast Deanery portrayed the issues of outreach and evangelization in the most human of terms: “I was thinking about... the coldness that you feel in a lot of parishes. In our diocese, you go to church, and you don’t really know who’s sitting beside you.... As a teenager... well, as a young adult... I’m still living in this crisis of loneliness, and that’s something that I think our diocese could change, in the sense where there could be something to help you feel a warmth in the church and not just cold.... Youth and young adults are constantly looking for affection in different ways. It took me a long time to realize that the only thing that could fill my emptiness up was God” (2693).

This young lady’s words bring to life the message of Pope Francis in “Evangelii Gaudium”: “We have a treasure of life and love which cannot deceive, and a message which cannot mislead or disappoint. It penetrates to the depths of our hearts, sustaining and ennobling us. It is a truth which is never out of date because it reaches that part of us which nothing else can reach. Our infinite sadness can only be cured by an infinite love.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Through her voice and many other youth and young adults, the need and desire for God’s “infinite love” became clear as the following aspects of outreach and evangelization were identified as current realities that need attention.



The Most Rev. Greg Kelly, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Dallas, reflected upon the ongoing process of evangelization. “I was listening to Father Edwin walk us through prayer experiences each morning, [and I thought of] my own need to be evangelized. You know that it’s an ongoing thing... there is the image of getting out of the boat and walking towards Jesus at his word, which I find is something that never ends. There’s a certain fearfulness or hesitancy in standing next to somebody and asking them who, what you can pray for.... I find that in myself, so there’s a constant need for conversion” (63).

Transformation of Parishes into Communities of Genuine Hospitality

Through this study, the voices of those often ignored, dismissed, or unseen are amplified. Through their lived experience of the church and their local communities, they are challenging the present state of many parishes. They are calling their local communities to be genuine expressions of love and mercy. As one participant shared, “[The] most important part of welcoming youth and young adults is not questioning their past but welcoming everyone, no matter their circumstances, and showing them the love and truth of Jesus” (3671). Another participant observed, “Young adults are most effectively invited and engaged through personal invitation from a trusted friend to some activity which sparks their interest” (4096).

Repeatedly, study participants acknowledged that their parishes lack a culture of hospitality and poorly welcome youth and young adults, as well as others, into their communities. This included the need for parishes to be open to *all* people and move beyond the superficial to real and lasting engagement. Many participants insisted that this requires parishes to make room for all people, in terms of physical space, new ideas, leadership, word and worship, spirituality, and formation.

Pope Francis desires and advocates for the renewal of parish life. In “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” he notes the parish “is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community.”^{iv} Openness and creativity anticipate change. For some, change and creativity is long-awaited, for others it may signify loss or upheaval.

A North Central parish pastor commented, “Our earlier presenter talked about how oftentimes we see the Catholic parish as a campus where we sit back and wait

for people to enter the door. That is incompatible with how the church has always understood a Catholic parish.... A parish encompasses a particular boundary and all the people that live within that boundary. This particular reality led [our parish] to establish ministry in Spanish. When 70,000 people or more are living within your parish boundaries and a good 40-50 percent or so are baptized Catholic, it shows how much room there is to go out beyond... hospitality always has to be a part of that, because if we're not welcoming when we reach out to someone, then they're not going to experience the goodness of Christ in our church community. I remember very poignantly two particular young women coming to church one day. They were around the same age, and they were dressed, not immodestly, but very casually. They had tattoos and earrings, and nose rings, and eyebrow rings, and rings on their tongues, but they came to church and they experienced a church. Then they wanted to know where the pancake breakfast was, so I walked them down to it. They went and got some, and then I was distracted. When I thought to check up on these young people, they were seated down by themselves at a table, and I thought, hospitality, how far we need to grow. As I'm about to sit down with them, I saw one of the parishioners sit down with them and start talking to them. I think to reach out to young people is to make us so focused on Jesus that no boundary will matter. We'll just talk, invite, and encounter Jesus through others, wherever" (391).

For those looking for a place to belong, a lack of authenticity in parish communities surfaced as a deterrent to a welcoming environment. Youth, young adults, and those new to a parish asserted that longstanding parishioners do not project a spirit of love, acceptance, or welcome, and do not always act as Christ to others. Participants expressed a desire to feel less judgment and more love from community members. A ministry leader from a Northern Deanery parish emphasized the importance of personal invitation: "Everybody wants to be not just a number. Teenagers don't want to be a number. Young adults don't want to be a number. Adults, regular 50-year-old adults, do not want to be a number, and they want that personal invitation" (2729).

14 A North Central parish staff member articulated the concern of many: "I hear talk about millennials and how people are generally disconnected when you think of family structures and communities. People are longing. There's a deep longing for connection and belonging, and when you look at the spaces, [such as] coffee houses, and you see young adults there... people are looking for something to belong to, and I think in the church a lot of times we've made it, if you believe these things, and you behave a certain way, then you can belong in the church. I

think there is a need to create space in the church for people to just belong and be, to accept people where they are. As a priest here at the convocation said earlier, “People won’t listen until they first feel they’ve been heard.” So, we need to create spaces and opportunities in the church where we can just love people where they are and create authentic belonging. It’s in that context that people explore faith, hopefully come to belief in Jesus and the church.... That’s the greatest thing we have to offer, hopefully, as a church, is a place where people can find acceptance and belonging” (7200).

Responses demonstrated that yearning to feel welcomed crosses all age boundaries—every person wants to feel welcomed, connected, and engaged in community. This is not just a youth or young adult issue. Parishes are an expression of the Body of Christ, where all have a place at the table, in the pew, on a committee, and as a recipient of ministry. Each member has a responsibility to welcome the stranger into a meaningful experience of Christ and community.

Participants often brought up the time before and after Sunday Eucharist, when people are gathered in the church sanctuary or narthex. It is desired that this time be utilized more intentionally, foremost to inspire a spirit of welcome and hospitality. A ministry team volunteer from a Northern parish explained, “I am not a cradle Catholic, I was born, or was baptized as Presbyterian in my third month and have been a Catholic for almost six years now, but I went to the Catholic Church since 2006. I know what it’s like to be an outsider in a small church because the parishioners are looking at you, they’re watching your moves, they’re like, ‘What are you doing?’ If you go into the communion line for a blessing and you’re not Catholic, they’re like, ‘Don’t put your hand there!’ ‘Put your hand there!’ ‘Make sure you’re doing this.’ I think [Catholics are] short on being trained and skilled about how to welcome people into the church. I think we really fall short of the mark in saying, ‘Hello my name is... What’s your name?’ and establishing a two-way dignity ladder or rope, and then saying, ‘Are you visiting? Are you coming in? Can I help you with anything?’” (2637)

Reaching Out to the Marginalized

Convocation participants often questioned the inclusive nature of the church, especially in regard to marginalized people. A North Central parish youth ministry leader expressed concern about the church’s efforts in ministering to the marginalized. “I think part of that is there’s a gross misunderstanding... about what we

truly believe as Catholics and what people perceive the church teaches. I think a lot of times the marginalized don't feel welcomed in our parishes and we don't do a very good job of welcoming them when they're there. This is the problem. You know when the speaker [Robert Feduccia] was talking about how to move from a campus-based ministry to a territorial church? We have apartments across the street from us that are impoverished. We don't know who those people are, and we're not offering any help to them. And it's the same in every parish I've ever worked. We're not doing enough to reach out to these people and let them know that they are welcome in our communities. They come for free coffee and donuts, and then we kind of push them away. We don't take the time to get to know these families, or don't take the time to get to know the kids who are struggling with LGBTQ+ issues. We don't take the time to get to know the young people who have been incarcerated because they're the ones that we're, like, 'well, you're not really safe to be around the other kids, are you?' We've created these barriers in our parishes and ministries, and I don't think it's anything that any of us have done intentionally" (5031).

Often the desire to be welcoming, loving, and accepting of all people elicited a palpable tension when the issues of homosexuality and gender identity surfaced. For many youth and young adults, this is a significant issue: they want to support their friends but feel their friends are being judged and pushed away from the church. Convocation participants reported feelings of shame and distance among community members who self-identify as LGBTQ+. Divorce and LGBTQ+ issues are often cited as obstacles to participation in the Catholic community because individuals feel unwelcome and unloved.

As one young man explained, "As a man, young man, facing same-sex attraction, I don't think my Catholic community has cared for young men and women dealing with this struggle because I don't/didn't see any groups happening for us where we can get the help we need. There are individuals who've helped tremendously in my personal journey in my faith, but I don't see that at all in my community. I would love to see more talks on this, more groups where we can come together and support/help one another in our faith and to grow in the faith as well" (2802). His was not an isolated comment as another young person offered similar comments: "As a young adult who is also facing homosexuality, I felt so alone on my journey to have a relationship with God. I've never had anyone to relate to about my struggles to get [closer] to God, and I feel in my heart there are other young people with same-sex attraction, and I don't want them to feel like they're alone" (2823).



Pastoral ministry leaders expressed confusion about how to engage in conversation and relationship with homosexual persons, their friends, and family members while still upholding the teachings of the church from a place of love. Generally, convocation participants agree on the desire for more formation, direction (guidance), and conversation on these matters for themselves and parents.

One convocation participant expressed a common frustration when speaking about this topic. “I have to say, that in my entire life as a Catholic, I’ve never seen a church directly reach out to people on the margins in a public way. I’ve never heard someone from the pulpit say, ‘If you have a different sexual orientation or you identify as a different gender, we want you in our church. Please come. Please invite your other gay friends.’ I’ve never heard somebody say, ‘We want you and we want to love you. We want to love you as well as we possibly can.’ Their impression of us is judgment” (603).

One campus ministry leader shared an important insight about the broader issue of shame for those who are in marginalized situations. “I think one of the things we don’t like to talk about and aren’t very aware of as a Catholic culture is the culture of shame that is perpetuated within the church. This is something that would be extraordinarily helpful to address. What turns a lot of people away from

the church is the feeling they're no longer worthy to walk through the doors.... It's not necessarily because that is what the church teaches, but it's because, socially, that's what's been taught. To your point about the LGBTQ+ community, the divorced, those who are single parents feel like they're underserved and misunderstood. [They feel] somehow less, because, despite the fact that we're called to marriage or called to parenthood, they feel like there's something incomplete about them. If we can find a way to help people understand what love and mercy really mean in the church and how terribly inappropriate the word 'worthy' ever is in terms of faith, I think that would really help" (1570).

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WE ARE MISSING THE MARK WITH A LOT OF INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS LGBTQ, FAMILIES, THOSE WITH ADDICTIONS, THE OUTLIERS.

Another participant expressed the statement succinctly: “We are missing the mark with a lot of individuals such as LGBTQ+, families, those with addictions, the outliers. It reflects when they do not feel comfortable coming and investing in a church” (5001). The study evinced a call to action in reaching out to the marginalized.

A staff member ministering in the Northern Deanery explained the challenge: “I would never use the word disability for this, but, within the term marginalized, I think there are categories within that. Not just people who are marginalized, because they might be on the outskirts of society—like the homeless or drug addicts—or on the outskirts because they have a disability, but on the outskirts [because they]... feel unloved by us. Groups that feel they can't be loved when they bring up LGBTQ+ [issues], and how they feel they can't come to the church because they will be stoned—not with actual stones, but with words... [they fear being] hated if they admit what they are struggling with... that they will be seen... as broken or disgusting... and they won't be treated in the way they would want to be treated. There's margins in that regard of people who are on the margins, because they feel pushed there or being pushed there by us. That's why I love the idea of having a conversation with our parish about what the Catholic Church teaches on LGBTQ+, and having a parish-wide event where people can come to the church and get information on the church's teaching for everyone in the parish, whether they struggle with it or not. There's too much misunderstanding, and there's even some hatred that could be easily dispersed if we had real, honest conversation about the church's teaching. There's some people that just need to get over the fact that the Catholic Church tells us to love people that make them uncomfortable, whether it is people who are LGBTQ+ or homeless...” (2620).

Rooted in Relational Ministry

One young adult female from a Northern Deanery parish made this observation: In “my experience, youth and young adult ministry means being part of a community that always has your back. That if you’re going through a rough time, that there’s a community that’s going to be there to hold you up. If you’re having a bad day, they’re going to be there to lift your spirits. It’s a safe place to explore your faith and to be able to create friendships and a safe environment” (54).

Underlying much of what was expressed is the reality that pastoral ministry *is* relational ministry. Convocation participants shared the belief that all Christians are called to *be* Christ for one another, inherently understood as being in relationship with others. It encompasses knowing the other’s name, the name of his or her spouse or parent and children. It also means knowing his or her challenges and honoring his or her story as sacred. It means not gossiping or holding grudges, nor expressing cultural and ethnic prejudice or political bias. It demands withholding judgment about educational attainment, language spoken, and socioeconomic status. The universality of the church was generally embraced by convocation participants as they shared their meaningful experiences of diverse prayer forms and spiritualities, as well as theological and ecclesial perspectives. They held dear the vast treasury of the church, reflecting the breadth of a 2000-year history, while seeking the unfolding wisdom of the Holy Spirit in their midst.

As a foundational component of effective and transformational relational ministry, a North Central Deanery youth ministry leader spoke of the diocese needing to encourage deep-seated hospitality. She said, “The diocese could encourage in parishes a radical spirit of hospitality. When I think about what our Protestant brothers and sisters do well, it’s hospitality. I think that’s why a lot of young adults feel so welcome in the Protestant churches, because when they walk in that door, there’s someone investing in them, someone making them feel valued and welcomed. I think that we are on our way to that, I don’t think that we completely lack hospitality in the Catholic Church, but I think we could do a lot better job of it.... I think that a personal relationship with Christ starts with a personal relationship with the church community. Making sure that the diocese is encouraging that and maybe giving practical tools to help create a spirit, in a sense, of hospitality, within parishes [would be helpful]” (5062).

In relation to youth ministry specifically, one young adult from a North Central parish said, “I guess what I expect from a youth ministry... is to be inclusive of new people or even older people... also, to have a safe space where they can ask those difficult

questions or share their views that might not agree with the church. A lot of people I know stopped coming because their views are different than the church” (387).

Authentic Christian witness is warm and inviting by nature. It leads others to inquire of you “the reason for your hope” (1 Pt 3:15). Too often participants expressed that parishes were not truly seeking inclusivity and were not truly open, that they did not feel welcomed initially due to the environment they encountered and were not likely to engage in a community if relationships were not easily built or sustained. Some participants suggested that Catholic parishes urgently address the atmosphere of welcome experienced by members and non-members alike. Parishes should seek to uplift individuals, valuing each as a reflection of God. Moreover, they should develop a pervasive culture that is invitational, nurtures personal relationships, and opens a space for all at the table.

Sharing the Message of Jesus

A North Central parish youth ministry leader shared his perspective on the church’s role. “The church is supposed to bring people to Jesus and get them to heaven... Christ said, ‘Go make disciples of all nations’... there’s an end in mind, and that’s the salvation of souls. Is the church relevant? [I believe] it’s more relevant than anything, but the problem is we make it irrelevant, because everything we end up doing is the same thing that anybody can get anywhere else... we aren’t calling people to radical lives of holiness and virtue and relationship with Christ” (4).

The essence of the Christian message is a person: our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To deeply know Jesus requires openness and vulnerability. It involves spending time with him, sharing our inmost aspirations, joys, woundedness, and fear. The wellspring of evangelization is the profound relationship each disciple has with Jesus. For it is “impossible to persevere in a fervent evangelization unless we are convinced from personal experience that it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to.”^v

In speaking about his desire to share Christ with young people, a Northern Deanery youth minister said, “One of the things that really struck me today and challenged me was recognizing how much we can sometimes overcomplicate sharing the faith with young people. We can let our programs, or the way we think things



need to be done, or the things that we want to teach, get in the way of... building up in the young people and the young adults a relationship with Jesus Christ. And I can overcomplicate that. I can share too much theology and not the authentic relationship that we need to share with these young people. Theology's important, but so is our story. And our church is a church of stories, and we have to recognize the people that are in it, the lives that are in it, and all seek to be like Christ" (1355).

One youth from a North Central parish suggested that it is crucial to "actually talk about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ from a young age. I don't remember hearing anything like when I was in catechism. At confirmation preparation, maybe, but other than that, I don't remember anyone talking about having a personal relationship with Christ. I knew the prayers, I went through the motions, but I didn't actually have a personal relationship with Christ until recent years" (1470).

A North Central Deanery ministry leader, said, "Simply put, I would say the common ground with youth and young adult ministry and really everyone in the parish... is the universal call to holiness.... The 'missionary imperative'... what that means, and the challenge of being able to meet that. Being able to address that common ground with everyone's different needs at their different stages of life... how do we address this in all the individual ways of people experiencing what it means to be a missionary disciple" (541).

In a thoughtful moment, a college campus ministry participant considered his life's journey and the needs of young adults: "I think a lot of what young people are looking for is a purpose and the purpose to what they're doing. I think for most of my life until I got to college, the purpose was to check off the box, because the church told you that I needed to do this. When I came to [this ministry], they showed me that the purpose was to have a relationship with Christ and to be on a mission. It became something; that it wasn't me doing it to just check off boxes.... It was making my life more purposeful, and I didn't have to search for that anymore. I think the church is trying to do that, but especially in the high school to college years, people are searching for that purpose in a lot of different ways. If the church focused on that more, showing the people that there is a purpose to it, I think it would be more successful" (2316).

A parish staff member from the North Central Deanery maintained that young adults leave the church because "they're not meeting enough people that are on fire for the faith and Catholics that are in love with Jesus. I think it makes a huge difference when you meet someone and know their life has been changed

by the Lord. [When you know] the Catholic Church is a value in their lives, and they're living their life in a way that you can see that they have abundant joy and that they're a disciple of Christ. Their life is an adventure because of the faith in their lives" (6471).

Retreats as Means of Evangelization and Relationship

The use and effectiveness of retreats was consistently expressed. Commenters believe that retreats lead to greater awakening and involvement in the life of the community. Retreats are understood as spaces where vulnerability before the Lord is cultivated and intimacy in community leads to deeper prayer and a relationship with the Lord. Further, vulnerability in community, such as a small group, leads to spiritual accountability and one's willingness to engage with the fullness of his or her spiritual personhood. Practically, retreats are also the spaces where practices of prayer, such as journaling, can be easily learned and cultivated. One young person present affirmed this desire. "We want more things like diocesan retreats and DCYC (Dallas Catholic Youth Conference), where we can express ourselves in the larger community and learn more about being Catholic" (5384).

According to one convocation participant, vulnerability is essential. "I think a place that we need to start is realizing that we need that personal relationship with [Jesus]. Whereas an encounter with Jesus and the poor, or with some area of vulnerability in our life, I think that personal relationships starts with that vulnerability. Leading the youth and young adults through that place of vulnerability so they realize they need Jesus is a good place to start" (1157).

A parent from the Eastern Deanery discussed the powerful potential of retreats. "[Young people] are on Jesus time, Holy Spirit time... and they get to work on their personal relationship with Jesus.... We just recently had a mission trip with S.H.I.N.E. [that included] Adoration.... They brought the programming to help the youth grow in their personal relationship [with Jesus]" (5947).



24

Radical Love, Radical Mission

FAITH FORMATION

Respondents emphasized the importance of faith formation and catechesis, along with the need to prepare the catechist for his or her role in sharing faith, not just teaching about the faith. One data analyst summarized a recurring theme of the data: “We must all teach the concept of missionary discipleship and imperative earlier and offer moments of encounter versus just a sole focus on ‘Catholic information dumping.’”

A comprehensive understanding of catechesis is set forth by Pope Francis in “*Evangelii Gaudium*.” He challenges Catholics to move beyond a simple framework or perception that catechesis is restricted to formal instruction in the faith by uplifting the initial encounter in the Lord as foundational catechesis. He cautions that the *kerygma*, the essential proclamation of Jesus Christ as Savior, is not forgotten in our message. “Nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation. All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the *kerygma*, which is reflected in and constantly

illuminates, the work of catechesis, thereby enabling us to understand more fully the significance of every subject which the latter treats. It is the message capable of responding to the desire for the infinite which abides in every human heart. The centrality of the *kerygma* calls for stressing those elements which are most needed today: it has to express God's saving love which precedes any moral and religious obligation on our part; it should not impose the truth but appeal to freedom; it should be marked by joy, encouragement, liveliness and a harmonious balance which will not reduce preaching to a few doctrines which are at times more philosophical than evangelical. All this demands on the part of the evangelizer certain attitudes which foster openness to the message: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental.”^{vi}

The call from convocation participants was to embrace this deeper and comprehensive framework for catechesis. To transform formation efforts within the diocese, it was recommended that an extensive evaluation of the processes for forming youth, young adults, parents, and families occur so that there can be a renewed focus on forming missionary disciples.

Fostering Missionary Discipleship in Young People

The listening sessions data indicate, overall, that the classroom-only model of formation fails to respond to the life and faith questions of youth and young adults, inspire ongoing learning, foster a deep and personal relationship with Jesus, and forge a lasting connection to the parish community. Young people, parents, catechists, and pastoral ministry leaders all expressed some level of frustration with current efforts. There was a call from participants for new energy, perspectives, methods, and models to move youth from simple “participation” in current programming to actively “fostering” in young people an encounter with Jesus Christ. Along with this is the need to view and implement pastoral ministry with young people through a comprehensive lens, i.e., evangelization, catechesis, sacramental preparation, service, pastoral care, and worship, etc., are all aspects of youth ministry. Pastoral effectiveness requires a holistic approach. One Northeast Deanery ministry leader evaluated this approach. “I think we’re missing the mark. Especially within youth ministry is the fact that we have this mindset still that faith formation/catechesis is separate from youth ministry, and it’s not. It’s one thing. Faith formation/catechesis is a part of youth ministry and especially has to be now” (6833).

Commenting on youth ministry in the parish, a priest from the North Central Deanery insisted it is “not just simply the youth minister and the team that he or she puts together, but it’s every single person in the parish. But, first, it looks like a place of welcome; we form communities. Second, we share the *kerygma*, we look for encounter moments with Jesus Christ. Third, we engage.... After that, people will want to learn about the faith. I think what has happened in our church is we have said, ‘Oh, if we catechize, if we tell people to sit down and listen about Jesus, the church, sacraments, they’re going to take that in, it’s going to change their life.’ No, it doesn’t. It’s the living person of Jesus Christ that changes our lives, right? And then, once that happens, then we will want to learn about Jesus and his church and saints. The second point I think that I would like to share is especially with the young people—11, 12, 13, 15, 18 years old. I think as people of [the] church, we have been afraid to allow them and even help them ask the tough questions. Because the questions are going to come. And if we don’t allow them to ask those questions, and if we shut them down when they do, if we say, ‘Oh, that’s a silly question. Don’t worry about that,’ ‘How can you not believe in God?’ If we don’t allow them to really ask that question and then allow them to know that we can be a source of help and wisdom to struggle and enter into that question, whatever the question might be, then we are seeding the doubt that will cause them to leave the church” (1629).

While confirmation was the most commonly cited example, there was an overwhelming need verbalized by participants for faith formation at all levels to more fully encompass a ‘missionary imperative’ and ‘missionary discipleship’ language and mindset. It was noted by many that youth want to be invited into relationship with Jesus and possessed a great desire to respond to those in need. In fact, some specifically noted that they are ready and hungry for it, expressing a desire for parishes to focus on challenging and empowering them as missionary disciples in today’s world. One key way identified by participants for parishes to do this was to assist youth and young adults in discerning major life decisions (moral decision, job, college choice, marriage, priesthood, etc.), especially at the parish level and in Catholic high schools.

Accompaniment

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the data was the need to directly and tangibly accompany youth and young adults on their life and faith journey. Young people need the grounding, insight, patience, and witness of older generations

who are walking in faith through the challenges of everyday life. The need to be in real human relationships with young people over time is essential if the church is to fully communicate the message of the Gospel and church teaching. It was a strong recommendation that leadership at all levels within the Diocese of Dallas focus on providing young people with adult mentors and spiritual guides.

One convocation participant spoke to the challenge of ‘accompaniment.’ “I have one question that I would love to see addressed, and it was mentioned at different moments. But the idea of discipleship. The idea of that kind of accompaniment. The personal accompaniment of our youth. How are you going to go about doing that? What does a program of doing that look like? I think it’s more than just being there for somebody else, and I think [there’s] a little bit of a pedagogy to that. I’d be curious to see if anybody’s come up with a way of doing that or if there’s a way to kind of offer that to the diocese” (90).

Reimagine and Restructure Catechesis and Pastoral Ministry from Solely an Individual to a Systemic Perspective

Convocation participants recognized the complexity of pastoral ministry and the many and diverse factors that impact its efficacy. They advocated for a new pastoral perspective: a movement from a sole focus on the “individual” to a “systemic” approach. For example, to minister only to “the adolescent” is to miss the “family system” in which the adolescent lives. To minister only to the “the adolescent as an eighth grader” is to miss the transition point from middle school to high school in which the adolescent and his/her family is absorbed. These transition or connection points are critically important in an overall economy of pastoral ministry with youth and young adults and their primary context—their families. Within the context of the family lifecycle, other critical junctures provide opportunities for significant pastoral ministry including: adolescence to young adulthood, the recently married, and new parents.

One North Central Deanery convocation participant addressed the critical transition from high school to college. “This is a question that I’ve engaged several times in the parish, and I’ve heard it brought up here. In our parish, we tend to lose a lot of our young people who were active in the school once they graduate from the parochial school and go to Catholic high schools. They identify with their high school, primarily, and lose their connection to the parish. This is a struggle

that we have. How do we encourage them to move on to bigger and better things while also maintaining their identity as a parishioner? I think one practical way we can start is by having mini-reunions when they're going off to college. Bring them back for a brunch, bring back people who haven't been on campus in a while. [Hopefully], those memories start flooding back, they see old friends, they may end up coming back to Mass" (2375).

A Central Deanery staff member considered the important impact of adult faith formation on young people and wondered if "the best youth ministry that we can do today is adult faith formation. I think if I was given the choice of only working with adults and not doing anything with youth and young adults, I would pick adults... because that is what I think is going to have the biggest long-term impact.... Discipleship doesn't end in eighth grade or high school or young adulthood.... I think the systems that we have in place, while they're well intentioned, (are) walking people out the back door. It's not that we don't love Jesus, or the intentions aren't good, but I think the methodology that we have set up needs an extra look with how we position ourselves and how we're doing ministry" (1495).

A Family Perspective

One pastor posed this question about engaging families: "As I was listening to all the different responses, one of the things that kept coming to my mind was, what's the process to implement? How do you get from where we are to the fruition of that particular idea? We can all say in an ideal world every single family is going to have times of faith-sharing within their family life, the mass and sacraments, and life in service in the church. But how do we get there? That's the question. That's the real challenge for parishes; that's where it gets messy, that's where we stumble. [Do] we dare to experiment, to change and take a risk, even dare to fail at times as we try to create processes that are going to help people encounter Jesus and then empower them to go forth and share and serve him" (368).

In the meeting of the data analysts examining patterns and implications, the family was identified as the central context of missionary activity and parents as the nucleus of the mission field. Families with all their variations desire support, encouragement, guidance, acceptance, and love. The analysts agreed that this family lens ought to be applied to all the church's efforts, for families are a complex system that support or detract from missionary discipleship. Parishes seek diocesan training, support, and tools to better approach faith formation and

sacramental preparation through a holistic family lens, emphasizing a personal relationship with Christ, a deep and sustaining prayer life, and the creation of community among families. A lifelong approach is advocated for discipleship and formation—one that exhibits intentionality at each point in the individual's growth and the family life cycle. Emphasis must be placed upon evangelization and the initial and ongoing encounter with Jesus.

Parental involvement in faith throughout their children's life is critical for the development of lasting faith, and yet that appears to be missing for many young people. Parents and families are seen as the primary source and example of missionary discipleship, where young people encounter Christ first and where they can develop a relationship with Christ. Sadly, it is noted in the data that many parents are not prepared for the task of forming faith and need their own discipleship formation as well. It was simply stated in this way: "We need guidance on how to be a family—how to pray together, how to talk about our faith. We've promised in marriage to raise our children Catholic, but how do we really do that" (4057)?

One convocation participant explained, "It's not just that we have to educate the youth, we have to educate the 20- to 40-year olds. We have to educate the parents because the education starts for the child in the homes. If the children are not being educated in their homes, we become their only educators. We become the only educators because parents aren't educated themselves. We have to continue to educate the youth, but, more so, we have to develop programs that are going to educate the adults to make sure that the adults are able to teach the youth. Once they go to college and they live a different life, they're no longer in their homes, and they see all this other stuff and they're confused. 'How do I live my life, because nobody's taught me how to live now that I'm in college?' When they're seeing all of the sexual stuff going on, all of the drugs, alcoholism, they get confused. They don't know how to handle it. I think we have to develop programs to educate the parents and start there" (989).

A ministry team volunteer from the Northeast Deanery described this reality. "I believe not just our youth, but our families need help, they need tools to teach the faith... they do not know their faith very well. I think they need tools to help them, not only to teach the faith, but to help them with the struggles they have in the families, such as addictions or problems. They need online tools also, because so many of the families are working; they're working two jobs sometimes, and they don't have the time to go to a class on a specific day.... I think some online tools... would be very helpful for them and for the youth also" (1169).

One North Central ministry leader summed up what many participants thought is needed. “I truly believe in the missionary imperative and how that has to start first and foremost at home. I think parents have to see their children as that first step of ‘missionary imperative.’ If we’re not helping the parents’ journey through every step of [their children’s] faith formation—from the time they’re little, all the way up through youth ministry, journeying every step along the way—it’s going to be really hard to develop any kind of missionary imperative in our youth or in our young adults.... Having that open relationship between the youth and young adults and their families is really going to foster that process of being able to experience good quality missionary imperative, good quality vocational discernment, good quality faith formation” (1671).

Fostering Personal Prayer and Discernment

Consistent with this understanding of Jesus being the core of the message was a great plea to teach young people to pray. It was noted that before programs, prayer is needed, as a devoted prayer life is necessary for discerning major life transitions (1675). A parent from the Eastern Deanery stressed the need to help



young people discern God's call: "I think in order to lead them to recognize and accept this call, we have to help them to trust that God's will for their lives is going to make them happy. God wants them to be happy and that doing these things and following this call is their only path to true happiness. We have to model that and teach it and really believe it ourselves" (74).

One of the top themes identified in review of the data regarding discernment, vocations, and call was the belief that prayer and relationship with God are the best means to foster vocations. Convocation participants agreed that youth and young adults actually need to be taught to pray—to speak to and learn how to listen to God. This was expressed as a needed foundational aspect of youth and young adult ministry and vocational discernment. The next highest emerging theme was a call for mentors in all areas of life (professional, married, religious and priestly life, and seminary formation). Participants expressed a need for mentors and spiritual guides to accompany youth and young adults over time and to be in relationship with them. Finally, participants called for a deeper understanding of the meaning of 'vocation' and 'discernment' by reinforcing the common vocation of all to holiness and discipleship. It was suggested that this can be achieved by providing an accurate picture of vocations in the church, versus associating the word vocations more commonly (or solely) with consecrated life and the priesthood.

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THE HEART OF DISCERNMENT AND THE HEART OF VOCATION IS PRAYER, AND UNTIL WE TEACH OUR PEOPLE HOW TO PRAY, THEY WILL NOT KNOW HOW TO DISCERN.

One campus ministry leader stated this understanding and need: "The heart of discernment and the heart of vocation is prayer, and until we teach our people how to pray, they will not know how to discern. It just can't be done. Discernment does not happen without prayer. If discernment happens without prayer, then it's decision-making, and they're not the same thing.... [We need greater] access for parents to bring their families to reconciliation... [and] Adoration. [These]... types of opportunities should be the focus of our parishes if we truly want to inspire this missionary initiative in our young people, and if we truly want to inspire a culture of vocations. A culture of vocations is born from a culture of prayer, because it is a culture of discernment.... This has been a major shift that we have undertaken the last couple of years in [our ministry], to create a culture of prayer, thereby a culture of discernment, thereby a culture of vocation" (7047).



It was expressed in the data that parishes should become schools of prayer. A priest noted that it is not so much that we need spiritual directors, but what he coined as “discipleship mentors” (375). The notion of “discipleship mentors” was well placed in the conversation, as many commenters expressed a desire for spiritual guidance either for themselves or for someone they knew. It was noted repeatedly that priests should use their homily time to teach people how to pray.

Convocation participants conceded that prayer is rarely taught, and if it is, it is not necessarily taught well. The average Catholic may be able to recite rote prayer (i.e., the Hail Mary), but struggles with any form of contemplative or conversational prayer. Interestingly, the rosary as a devotion was brought up repeatedly, but not necessarily as a prayer relationship with the Blessed Mother. Praying the rosary is often a cultural reality but not a fully understood vehicle for prayer. Also communicated was the connection between prayer and the movement of the Christian into the streets. One person from the Southeast Deanery (5726) talked about how she began with prayer in her family, then expanded her efforts to pray with others in local parks before venturing to pray with individuals gathered under a bridge. This expansive mindset was captured best in the common sentiment that the parish is not a campus, but a territory (5730).

The impact of contemporary culture on young people was expressed repeatedly. Concern was raised that the average person seems to have trouble simply “being” due to a constant state of connection through technology. Stillness and being are understood as essential elements of prayer and need to be taught along with other prayer skills. Regularly noted was the longing for more time spent in front of the Blessed Sacrament, namely in Adoration with Exposition. Participants cited the impact of these devotional practices in fostering a culture of discernment. As such, repeatedly mentioned was the need for “perpetual adoration” or “24-hour access.” Commenters longed for greater access to sacred spaces, referring to the “quiet” they find there. Many also noted that an open church signified hospitality and welcome, but that too often the doors to the church were locked (1060).

A North Central parish staff member indicated that the need for silence “is essential and a challenge at the same time.... Everyone is swimming in distractions; everybody knows it, feels it, and doesn’t like it, including youth. I believe that there’s kind of a love/hate relationship with our cell phones. Being able to have a sacred space where we set that aside and deal with the tension and the dissonance that causes for us is a good thing, and it’s a healthy thing. The church has always had the ability to create solemn spaces, but even secular society is looking



at the health benefits of [practices] such as meditation and mindfulness. There's an open door there for evangelization and drawing people in and saying, here's a space where we can try to be recollected and teaching recollection, that beginning stage of prayer, of just setting time aside" (7465).

Marriage Preparation and Support

Convocation participants identified the need for a broad sense of vocational discernment, catechesis, ongoing sacramental preparation, and support (including pastoral counseling and mentorship). They underscored the need to help youth and young adults (and all people) understand, appreciate, and apply their God-given gifts in discipleship. Discipleship may take many forms. Marriage, single life, and consecrated and priestly life are all holy states. A common concern voiced is the inability of youth and young adults to practice discernment and the capacity to discern marriage particularly, given what some perceive as a downplaying of the marriage vocation over the priesthood or consecrated life.

This was highlighted by one participant: "I'd like to comment on vocations. One of the disservices that I think we've done in church, especially because of the shortage of number of priests and number of religious... is so [much] focus on priestly vocation or consecrated life. I think we need to elevate marriage as well. Because we neglect that, and people lack that belief in their own sacrament as a married couple. If they don't believe that as a married couple, how can they give it to their family" (6432)?

A common theme discovered was the need to bolster marriages in the church—while acknowledging that it is good to focus on priestly and religious vocations—the sacrament of marriage needs more attention. Young married couples were identified as needing specific support and community. In addition to focusing on their marriage, they also need assistance with "life issues" such as buying a house, when to start a family, and career connections. Marriage is seen as a dividing line for young adults, when their needs and interests shift, yet the church is not responding, especially if they do not have children. Importance was placed on the need for better emphasis, practice, and methodologies for lifelong formation and intergenerational catechesis, especially formation opportunities for families and parents.

One convocation participant described the marriage ministry-based video program called "Choice Wine" that seems to be working in her parish: "We [conducted] it in peoples' homes with small groups.... My husband and I are both educated in

theology and have master's degrees and [are] steeped in church life. Most of our personal friends are similarly minded. Suddenly we were thrown into these small groups with people who were not at all of the same mindset. We found that this group was incredibly fruitful. Lots of marriages [were composed of] one Catholic, one non-Catholic, some reverts, some converts, and just a lot of people from a lot of different places. We were able to walk together in a home and in a very personal [way]... sharing food... and talking about what's going on in our life. I think that it's been incredibly fruitful and very much a surprise. I don't think anybody at the parish [expected] this to be a great way to evangelize people on the margins of our parish who may not come to Mass. And suddenly, it's been very fruitful, and we see these people at Mass all the time" (521).

A concern was expressly raised about outreach, support, and pastoral care for the separated, divorced, and those going through the annulment process [and their children]. Convocation participants acknowledged the general misunderstandings of church teaching on divorce, reception of sacraments, and participation in community life. To be relevant, it was felt that the church needs to attend to the real issues in the lives of people. In addition to divorce, participants also mentioned poverty, education, alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic violence, employment, etc.—all of which impact the health of marriage.

Sacrament of Confirmation

One youth minister summarized the statements of numerous people regarding the sacrament of confirmation: "Too many people think, 'This is confirmation prep, and you're going to do this, this, and this, and then you're going to be confirmed and... have a big celebration.' They unintentionally set it up like graduation. Some parishes even wear robes that look like graduation robes, or gowns, that look like graduation" (6682).

A consensus proposed that the structure of parish preparation requirements for the sacrament of confirmation needs to be examined and improved to focus more on missionary discipleship versus program requirements. This was made clear, as convocation participants reiterated again and again, by the challenging reality of preparing young people for the sacrament of confirmation, as well as the importance of intentionally including parents in the formation process. The overriding feeling expressed is that confirmation is seen by too many as an end to faith formation, a graduation.

A priest from the North Central Deanery echoed this sentiment about confirmation preparation: “A lot of parishes I’ve been to have the missionary aspect, especially in confirmation formation. It has been [akin to] forced labor, or just a lot of requirements that are not necessarily engaging our youth. I think the struggle for us is to try to have a balance between engaging people and really trying to get to their heart and allow them to engage this missionary aspect of their sacramental preparation. While at the same time we need to have parameters and guidelines to ensure a quality formation” (2241).

One convocation participant expounded on the need for a discipleship focus in confirmation programs. “I think that even in the confirmation classes, there are lot of youth that have not had personal encounters with Jesus. We need to refocus from teaching them the catechism and start making sure that they have a personal relationship with Christ.... It’s [possible to]... go through [formation] and receive all of your sacraments and still be atheist or agnostic, even going to JPPII where it’s a Catholic school. There’s a lot of youth who come from Catholic families and have received all the sacraments, but you talk to them and they’re like, ‘Yeah, I don’t really know if there’s a God or not, I don’t know if I believe in God, I don’t really know.’ And you’re, like, ‘OK, something’s gone wrong’” (1786).

A struggle was identified in the data with respect to finding a balance in confirmation preparation between the checklist mentality of requirements and providing opportunities for growth. This is especially true for the requirement of parish service hours. Many people noted that this opportunity to transform the hearts of young people through service to those in need is wasted because of the focus on hours. Many examples were provided on how the priority of an encounter and personal relationship with Jesus often gives way to parish guidelines and requirements for confirmation preparation.

A youth ministry leader from the Central Deanery shared her concern with the service component of confirmation. “I feel like there needs to be a total revamping of service hours. It seems to be another one of those [items] where we’re checking the box or [the attitude is expressed], ‘How many do I have to get?’ This is an opportunity to serve other people; it’s an opportunity to be a missionary, but it comes across... as a requirement to be confirmed. I am doing everything I can at my parish to try to change that mindset because we’ve got to get rid of that” (1716).

Many convocation participants indicated the desire for diocesan leadership to examine the role that confirmation plays in a young person’s faith journey and

transition from youth to young adulthood. As such, a need expressed was to have an examination of confirmation policies, curriculum, and programs such that the formational process becomes a transformational and lifelong encounter with Christ.

A Southwest Deanery ministry leader suggested modifications in the preparation and attitude of pastoral leaders towards confirmation. “We need to change our approach in how we set up our programs and how we teach youth and young adults. We need to make it more focused on their lives and how they can use that to make a change in the world, how they can go out and have that missionary imperative of which the speaker [Father Edwin] spoke. For confirmation or for other programs, we need to be talking about it more as [a key moment in the faith formation process] and not as an end to our faith journey.... It’s a continuous journey... rather than it being talked about from the beginning of the year as, ‘OK, once you go to confirmation, then it’s over.’ [It’s important] how we talk about these things, our language [about] The sacrament of Confirmation needs to be changed; because it’s not just about that one moment. It’s about a lifelong journey of faith, which we’re all on together” (1084).

One youth ministry staff member from the North Central Deanery gives an example of how her parish is changing, “We’re currently transitioning from a classroom model of confirmation into a more engaging Life Teen type model for confirmation. We just found a lot of the youth were really bored in the classroom models, so we’re trying to make it [more] engaging. Another idea we’re going to try this fall is a family retreat—that’s required for confirmation—because we just find that the exit has to do with a lot of parents not supporting youth staying involved in their faith after confirmation. [We are] really trying to evangelize the parents as well” (1402).

Diverse Spiritual Practices and Spirituality

There was a notable simplicity to the commentary on spirituality. Though offered through vastly different perspectives and voices, the same sentiments were often expressed. Foremost was the need to better convey that prayer comes from the heart, and that God wants you “exactly where you are” (1055).

A female participant from the North Central Deanery said, “[As a] young adult, having just gotten married not too long ago and having been in that space of discerning a job... developing our interior life, that is so important. Every single

person here wants to bring people to Jesus, and it's wonderful. We've got to start with ourselves; I have to work on my interior life and grow closer to Jesus. I have to dig up the courage to ask my neighbor to go with me to Mass. I don't want us to get stuck, saying, well, the church needs to do this, and we need a staff member... No, this is me and my interior life. That's why I [feel so strongly]... about eucharistic adoration. I know, I'm the first one to be in line, I need more Jesus, for me, for the sake of others, and for the glory of God. I think it would be really great if the pastor or a ministry could assist me in learning how to pray, how to grow in my interior life, how to really discern where God is acting and where I can see the Holy Spirit. That's huge for young adults.... In teaching [people] how to pray, in different forms of prayer... we have got to drive people back to Jesus. It's all good and well to drive someone into a youth ministry program, but... we've got to be leading people to Jesus himself, not just to the parish, not just to the diocese" (2386).

Many agreed that a strong personal prayer life leads to a more powerful witness. This modeling inspires others' spiritual journeys. Importantly, the witness of parents and adults will increase the missionary imperative for young people. Beyond teaching personal prayer, participants advocated for unity as a spiritual practice that would be promoted in parish life amid its diversity. The consensus held that cultural practices should not be stripped away but rather celebrated and uplifted.

Many diverse ways to foster the interior life were suggested that reflect the rich diversity found in the Diocese of Dallas. Suggestions included: *Lectio Divina* or Scripture study, Adoration, praying in the Spirit [Charismatic Renewal activities], Ignatian spirituality, and silence. Praise and worship was seen as an especially good prayer mode for the younger generations. Regardless of "how" one prays, the fruits of prayer include the discipline and practice of discernment and the courage to be a witness, especially in the face of real life issues, because prayer leads to a grounded faith life.

Forming Moral People

Convocation participants recognized that the church needs to be a welcoming community to all, as all are sinners. They cited the importance of linking suffering, forgiveness, and mercy with baptism and the paschal mystery, as well as individual and communal [institutional] sin. One convocation participant identified the fundamental message that we need to share with youth and young adults. "I think one of the things I heard... and have experienced in my own life, is that to help

young people accept the... fullness of life and love, we have to announce to them the love of Christ on the cross, such as your sufferings and sins. [In] the things you don't accept today, that you wish you could erase, God is not hating you, but loving you. For me, that's been meaningful. When I didn't accept my father, when I was rebellious, when I was leading a double life, God loved me the way I was, he didn't turn his face from me.... Our youth who are very secularized are many times scandalized with themselves, thinking, 'I'm not a good kid, I'm a hypocrite going to church.'... The love of Christ impels us... [to] witness that there is hope. You can be a struggling Christian and not give up. God loves you. And for me, that's made a difference in my life" (76).

Participants surfaced a desire for parishes to better form all people about moral decision-making. Instead of just imparting "rules" by which people ought to live, convocation participants indicated that people would be better served in the long term to understand what constitutes a "moral" decision, what principles guide moral decision-making, and what skills are necessary for moral decision-making. One participant observed, "A real relationship with Jesus most often comes through when we struggle in our life. Can our churches be places where we help people with their struggles to find Jesus present there" (3213)?

In catechesis, an important consideration was named that clear distinctions should be made between mental health, mental illness, and sin. Faith Formation must be an engaging, lifelong pursuit rooted in the real lives of people. Topics such as sexuality, pornography, divorce, abortion, etc., are all starting points for conversation and teaching. One youth leader ministering in a parish the North Central Deanery confirmed the impact of psychological health on ministry. "I represent a counseling center. One thing that I have found in young adults is that they turn away from the church because there's a lot of psychological wounds, and we're not treating those wounds in our day-to-day interactions with these people. We're not willing to stand with someone and be Simon for them and help them carry their cross.... They turn away and they find those answers in society [which] is offering the wrong answers and creating a destruction of the human person and the family. So, I would like to invite everyone to be Simon to these people, so they don't turn away from the church" (6943).

A Southeast Deanery participant reflected on his experience and offered this approach to forming young disciples: "I was raised in a rough neighborhood. I had a rough background. When I wanted to come back into the church I was told, 'You can't do this. You can't do that because of your background.' I was judged.

No, I did not find a place in the church as I was told I didn't have a place in the church [this is back when safe environment just started]. Because of my rough background, I couldn't participate. There are a lot of people like me, this was 20 years ago. Because of these situations, a history, young adults fall into the traps of the devil.... They don't find a place in the church. Finally, I was able to enter a community and now am able to find myself with other sinners, who like me see the struggle and fight for this faith.... I think one good thing is to present to the youth your sufferings, your struggles. They need to know that... this conversion is not something that [when we were confirmed it was like] bam, we got it.... It's a daily struggle... they need to know that we are just like them" (6979).

Discussing Human Sexuality and Christian Anthropology

Young people perceive the church as silent on matters regarding the emerging issues of sexuality in their lives. The participants experience the church's reticence to deeply discuss the present-day breadth of perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to human sexuality. This results in the church *not* being a place where youth and young adults believe they can come to receive education, guidance, and pastoral care concerning human sexuality. A focus on Christian anthropology is strongly recommended (for example, through Pope John Paul II's theology of the body) to help youth and young adults understand their identity in general, which will then inform a spirituality regarding their sexuality.

A female participant from the Southeast Deanery discovered as a youth and now as the youth leader, the necessity of speaking to young people "about sexuality in the context of the Catholic Church. [Another participant] was speaking of living a chaste relationship. A lot of youth don't know what chastity really is. They feel like chastity is a punishment, or they're being deprived.... They think the church has all these laws on sexuality, instead of understanding how sacred sexuality is and why God has this plan for sexuality, which, at the end, is the best for us.... In the families, it's like a taboo, it's not spoken about. The parents... don't know how to speak to their children about sexuality. There's this embarrassment, or there's this secrecy to sexuality, and so, at the end, our children, the youth, learn from school, learn from their friends, learn from what they see on TV, and unfortunately, they learn from seeing pornography. They learn from all these things that their friends show them, and that is not sexuality. There's no sacredness in all of that that they learn from school.... It would help a lot... to speak to them with faith about sexuality, how

important it is and why it's important in understanding how, at the end, it's just for our own good... about the beauty of sexuality... we see it through creation... A lot of it has to do with the theology of the body by Pope John Paul II" (2691).

Recommendations were made regarding curriculum and the need to include sexual activity, sexuality, and theology of the body in catechesis. Convocation participants are hopeful that future education opportunities will be relevant to the picture of sexuality in our culture and provide deeper spirituality on the teachings of the church regarding sexuality. For example, one participant said it was not enough to teach the Ten Commandments, the "how" had to be taught as well as the "why."

Catholic Schools

In the data, feeling surfaced that there seems to be a "disconnect" between Catholic schools and the local parish community. The lack of connection between Catholic school youth and parish youth ministries was an issue noted by both school personnel and parish ministry leaders. There was an articulated need for youth ministries to be open to all youth within the parish, from both public and Catholic schools, as well as those who are home-schooled. Additionally, there was a request for better collaboration and communication between parishes and Catholic schools to enable a more cohesive faith formation effort.

Additionally, participants expressed that Catholic schools were often seen as treating faith solely as an academic subject, rather than a way of life. One participant phrased the concern this way: "In Catholic schools, faith is being taught as a subject rather than a lifestyle" (3293). A Northern parish teen said, "I go to JPIL, which is a private Catholic school. Even though half the people there identify as Catholic [I know that their families belong to my church], I don't see them at Mass. I don't see them in youth group, and I feel like the school is really lacking Catholic spirit... [and we have] Adoration—that's once a year for 30 minutes. We literally sit in a chapel in dead silence and stare at the Eucharist. That's all we do. Our retreat is four hours of sitting on a hard gym floor listening to people talk. There's no excitement, there's no Catholic spirit, and that's something that's really lacking and I think we could improve" (1160).

It was the perspective of convocation participants that many parents and Catholic school students see no need for parish ministry because they attend the Catholic school, and yet the experience of participants was that many schools do not



employ a more ministerial approach. Clearly noted in the data was the current mentality that if you are in a Catholic school, you don't need to be a part of a parish youth ministry community. To engage more Catholic school students in the parish, pastoral ministry leaders advocate that they must confront the mentality that youth “get church” at school and the parish is secondary to their faith.

A pastor from the Northern Deanery said, “I think it’s awesome that young people who are involved in a youth group in their parish would carry that over to Catholic school. It’s our parish’s experience that the youth who go to Catholic school feel like they don’t have to be involved in their parish because they’re already involved with other Catholic youth at the school. If there’s something I could redesign, it would be somehow drawing upon the young people already involved in their faith at Catholic schools and... impress on them that part of their Catholic faith is being involved in the ministries of the parish, not just the ministries at the school” (1238).

The meaning of Catholic identity in Catholic schools surfaced frequently. The difference between “religion class” and youth ministry was discussed, as well as how to engage youth who compartmentalize faith into the box of religion class. A convocation participant noted, “Catholic education does a great job inspiring a call to holiness, but once you graduate, it’s easy to get lost from that unless you actively seek out opportunities and ministries that encourage accountability to continue that call to holiness” (3112).



The hope surfaced at the convocation is that schools would promote parish efforts or programs that cultivate a personal relationship with Christ, such as youth ministry offerings and participation in evangelization programs, as a means to strengthen Catholic Identity. To encourage this development, many advocated for opportunities in the school day devoted to fostering a personal relationship with Jesus, as many expressed this is missing in the schools.

One convocation participant shared her experience, “I serve in campus ministry and also teach theology. I’m coming at this question from a bit of a different perspective. At our school, we’re not part of the parish. In our school, not everybody is Catholic, not everybody is Christian, or a... believer at all. Obviously, we have theology classes and we have a very vibrant campus ministry, but we are approaching this question from a whole different perspective and... starting point than people in parishes. Catholic schools have always been an incredible vibrant part of our Catholic faith.... What I’m hoping to do is expand the question... how [do we] connect our Catholic students and Catholic schools more firmly and strongly with our parishes? I would like all of us to continue and expand upon that conversation. In our theology classes, in our campus ministry and... the liturgies that our students experience, that may be the only time they go to Mass. Ever! Their families may not necessarily be Catholic; if they are, they may not go to Mass.... At our school [we are working on]... connecting students more firmly with their parishes... but it needs to be at both ends. It needs to be the school and the parish. Because the center of the Catholic life is truly a parish, and I’m excited and gratified we are having these conversations today, which do focus primarily on what is going on in parishes. But I also would like us all to put in the backs of our minds to expand the conversation to all of our Catholic schools and how we can mutually work and support one another and more fully integrate all of our students in the life of their parish” (6710).



46

COMMUNITY LIFE AND WORSHIP

The center point for life in the church is the parish. For it is in local communities that people form bonds, raise their families, celebrate accomplishments, and encourage one another in difficulties. Convocation participants often identified the importance of parish life, the need for welcoming vibrant communities of relational ministry, evangelization, catechesis, pastoral support, and worship. The U.S. Bishops affirm parishes as the place where the “...Church lives. Parishes are communities of faith, of action, and of hope. They are where the gospel is proclaimed and celebrated, where believers are formed and sent to renew the earth. Parishes are the home of the Christian community; they are the heart of our Church. Parishes are the place where God’s people meet Jesus in word and sacrament and come in touch with the source of the Church’s life”.^{vii}

Consistent with this vision, Pope Francis identifies the parish as “a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach.” He, however, admits that, “the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented”.^{viii}

Primacy of Eucharist and the “Sunday” Experience

Convocation participants deeply cherish the ‘source and summit’ of discipleship and the primacy of Eucharist in the lives of Catholics. As the central weekly gathering of Catholics, it is strongly advocated [for by participants] that the Sunday experience be built upon and transformed into the first place of radical hospitality in parish life. As articulated in Section One, authenticity and warm welcome is fundamental for thriving communities of faith. Communities where anonymity is stripped away and names are remembered motivates newcomers and parishioners to return to church week after week. It is clearly recognized in the data that there are significant numbers of people sitting in the pews each Sunday who are disconnected or drifting away. One participant urged greater engagement with Mass-goers: “Accepting them for who they are. They come into church, and they sit there, and they stand, and they kneel, and they go out of church. Who acknowledges that they were there? Who says hello to them? I think that’s so basic. Recognition, maybe, or acknowledgement, or intentionality” (872).

Recurrently expressed was the need for full and active participation in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, not only by teens and young adults, but also the parish at large. At the core of many comments was the perception that many Catholics lack a true and deep understanding of the Mass and the capacity to evangelize others. As one participant stated, “I believe that there needs to be a renewal of preaching on the true presence of Jesus in the holy Eucharist. We all agree that the holy Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. That being said, there are many Catholics who either do not know that, or do not believe in that.... When we become one with Christ, we truly live the joy of the Gospel. That joy becomes infectious without even trying to evangelize. In all, it is Christ in us that does the evangelization. He becomes the missionary, we are merely an instrument working through love and grace” (3159).

A Southwest youth ministry leader talked about the need to grow youth in their understanding, competence, and skill as members of the assembly. By example, “our middle school program gathers 270 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders every Wednesday night for Eucharist. In doing so, they recognize that the families of the youth “are not bringing them to Mass on Sundays.” Of that experience and practice he observed, “When we first started doing that, it was a chaotic zoo.... It was like they had never been to church before.... We would literally stop after Mass, after the other parishioners would leave and say, ‘OK, raise your pew. Lower your pew. OK, you made too much noise. We’re going to do it again. Now stand. Sit. Kneel. Lord be with you.’... Actually practice and practice and practice... then let it build and grow through continued experiences with relational ministry... We’ve seen great fruit from our middle school program by intentionally working with them, very patiently, over and over... again and allowing our formed high school teens [to help with] the middle schoolers... to build more disciples” (5914).

The Mass and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament were mentioned repeatedly as essential offerings of a parish, and commenters seemed unanimous in their desire for liturgical excellence. A 14-year-old from the North Central Deanery said this about the importance of Adoration: “There’s no better way because in such a fast-paced, noisy world; it’s such an easy way just to step away and sit in front of our Lord and just be able to listen to the silence. It’s so cool to be able to hear the air move. It’s so easy just to be able to listen to him and talk with him, because he’s right there. That just needs to be encouraged because it’s something that youth aren’t really a part of” (1473).

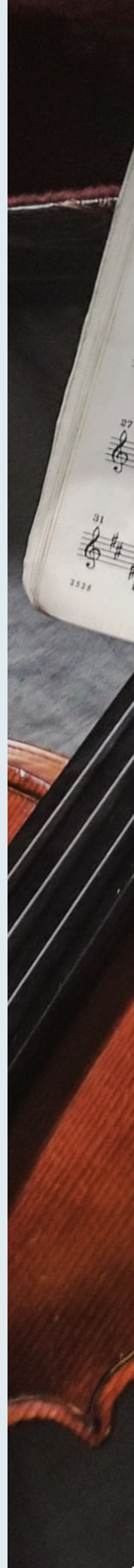
Consistently asserted was the need for better quality music (along with the suggestion that every parish should vet music leaders before giving them a platform), better quality of art and use of sacred space, and better preaching. In fact, better preaching by priests during the homily was noted the most often of the three. Preaching seemed to strike an interesting chord for many commenters. They expressed a longing for the priest to connect with everyday life and utilize the time in a more pragmatic way. Several wondered how parish communities might change if the pastor taught people how to pray more often. If nothing else, the average person (non-paid staff, non-clergy) expressed a longing for priests to have a real understanding of normal, non-priestly life and what people are going through. Also regularly noted was the need to offer a Spanish Mass and the acknowledgment of the empowering nature of a young adult Mass, though the latter seemed to be more focused on the intentional expression of the liturgy and less of a focus on the age demographic represented. Some participants spoke to

the reality within parishes of “cultural differences and language differences” and the desire to “bridge the gaps” and not always have separate “Spanish or English Masses [but] multilingual Masses” (5906).

One female participant explained, “Authenticity is really attractive to both youth and young adults, and things that are beautiful and of good quality. It’s important for parishes to invest both time and money in having good music at Mass, something that’s beautiful, whether it’s traditional, whether it’s contemporary, both/and, but having music that when people go, they’re, like, ‘This is beautiful. This makes me feel like I’m talking to God right now.’... We have such a rich history of excellent music, and same thing for the liturgy. I mean, I think that youth and young adults are drawn to liturgies that are done really well. So, making sure that we’re pulling out all the stops, we’re really taking advantage of our tradition, and having liturgies that are magnificent, that reflect what they are in truth, which is a radical encounter with God.... I want to go to a place that takes seriously the liturgy and wants it to be beautiful and wants it to be rich” (5946).

A female participant spoke of the need for the Eucharist to be celebrated well, the impact of music in the overall experience, and the skill required for leadership within the liturgy: “I also think the liturgy needs to be powerful. Part of the liturgy is the music. I’ve been to parishes where the music is incredible, and I’ve been to parishes where the liturgy turns out to be a death march—not the liturgy, the songs—a death march by the time you get to the end.... I think of other [aspects] of the liturgy... the hospitality ministers/ushers need to have a smile. The music and the celebrant need to coordinate, too, because they walk on each other frequently” (2407). Others agreed that they would “change the music and make sure that they have better music” (2584) and “invest in music” (5904).

In speaking about her children who no longer attend Mass and belong to other denominations, one participant acknowledged their different expectations of worship. “Energy and liveliness—that’s where the word zealotry came from. Then they would come back home, and they would go to Mass. To them it felt like a funeral, because they don’t understand the solemnity of it, that atmosphere. They’re very lively and energetic and want to be constantly stimulated. That’s how they were raised. Coming and being silent... being quiet and listening, and being present in the moment isn’t something that [resonates]. They’re like, ‘If there’s no energy there, then we’re doing it wrong.’ [We have to help them understand]... the solemnity of the Mass; it’s sacred. It’s what brings you closer to God. You don’t need to go out and set your hair on fire in order to have that relationship with Christ” (354).





Liturgies that are impoverished and joyless undermine evangelization efforts, according to those gathered. One convocation participant remarked, “If you walk in there, and it doesn’t feel like a celebration, then it’s like this weird anti-evangelization tool because it’s like, ‘Oh, I went there, and it was bad, so why would I go again?’ It’s like you go to a birthday party and everyone walks in, and you walk through the door and it’s like, well, I don’t really feel loved or invited by the person who opened the door” (2567).

The regular participation of families in Eucharist, or the lack of it, was another commonly mentioned reality. When asked the question, “Where are we missing the mark, who are we not serving?”, there was much concern for “family and parents that do not participate, for parents that do not go to Mass” (5902). A Southwest Deanery convocation participant witnessed to the challenge of growing up in a family that did not practice the faith and participate in Mass. “I didn’t go to my first Mass... until I was 14. And even then, I had no idea what was going on. I just saw everyone saying prayers and these words and I was totally lost” (291). Yet, another participant recalled, “I was baptized because my mom was baptized and because her family was Catholic. But my parents never went to church... didn’t receive Communion... until I was 17 when my parents got married in the church.... It was a dramatic change,

but it was something my family needed at the time... because I was... going into high school and then going to college. [I needed my parents to] reinforce in me that going to church was important, that going to church was going to help me.” (990).

A parishioner at a North Central Deanery parish raised a concern shared by many that families are not attending Mass—or not attending as a family unit. She noticed that “a lot of the parishes... schedule their Mass times at the same time as [religious education] classes, [such as] their second grade First Communion classes. I feel like this is a real disconnect when those children should definitely be at Mass... experiencing the holy Mass... seeing their parents modeling attendance at Mass. A lot of times parents are confused, because they don’t understand, and they drop their children off at the class and then they attend Mass. Their children aren’t actually being a part of what they really need to be a part of” (5888).

The desire to allow and encourage youth leadership in the Eucharistic Liturgy was often communicated by convocation participants. Some maintained that youth liturgical leadership “would bring in those who are no longer involved.... We don’t really empower [youth]. The youth only gain strength when they’ve been given the liberty through empowerment to learn how it goes.... If we’re not giving them the opportunity to be just as involved as anyone else, then it’s an adult Mass.... If



they're going to Mass at 10:30 with their family, why couldn't they be an usher then, or if they're going at 7:30, why can't they be a lector then, and be more incorporated into all the Masses in the parishes, not necessarily, specifically the youth Mass.... Because they'll say, 'I'm going to youth Mass tonight and the rest of the family is going at 10:30 because they sing in the choir,' so they end up at church at completely different times of day" (5911).

One North Central Deanery pastor underscored the importance of fostering involvement of youth and young adults in the liturgy, especially after confirmation. He stressed the need to "routinely invite and encourage an active life in the liturgical ministries of the parish. To be rooted there [in the liturgy], as well as other service and leadership opportunities [is vital]. Oftentimes, our parishes are stagnant; we rely on the same people over and over again because it's easier, instead of going out and inviting that engagement of people. What that does, especially with young people and young adults, is help them [experience] how... to serve and live as an adult within the parish, also discover particular skills and talents that may not be known. Moreover... it's not just simply a ministry that is received, but there is an outward mature investment by the part of the young person and young adult, which I think is important for that age group" (373).

A parent from the Northern Deanery noted, "The way that we are inspiring our youth at our parish is through our youth Mass. It's just not attendance, we actually get them involved in the Mass.... We provide them opportunities to participate. [They can be a] lector... an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist... altar server... or usher" (1377). Another participant noted, "I know within our youth community and our young adult community, we probably have a lot of talent out there that we don't know about. [We should] try to get more people involved with doing music and doing some praise and worship events. Try to look for people who are willing to sing, play guitar or... drums for different events, especially if they are youth leaders. It would be really cool because I'm sure that there are people who are 12 years old or 13 who are learning guitar and [will aspire] one day [to play at Mass]" (2626).

Intergenerational Relationships and Small Christian Communities

Acknowledging the efficacy of relational ministry and the desire for connectedness, convocation participants believe that connecting families in small Christian communities promotes a strong sense of belonging and discipleship, even though

their experiences of small Christian communities varied. These small groups, while connected to the larger framework of the parish (parish-wide activities, Eucharist, service), simultaneously build one another up within the holistic, practical, and intentional needs of each family, modeling the early church.

One participant maintained that it is necessary to create a “welcoming and spiritual community FIRST, so that when they come, they want to stay” (5488). While another said that “youth, young adults, and their families need a sense of belonging and unity to feel welcomed in their community whether they are new to the parish or not. If families have problems, which many of them do, the Catholic Church should help them with those problems because that can be something that’s keeping someone from discovering or rediscovering their faith” (2951). These comments amplify the need to be known in community, connected to others in order to foster faith and provide personal and familiar support.

Convocation participants saw the benefit of intergenerational relationships within the community setting. This was often expressed as the need for mentorship, guidance, and support from others on how to live as a disciple in contemporary culture. It was felt that discipleship, missionary, or community experiences for youth and young adults could either start with, or be a part of, an intergenerational setting.

One participant suggested an explanation: “There is a time and a place for some level of age segregation... but you have to [be] intergenerational, because... we are all family; we’re all different ages, we all have different needs, but we’re still a family, and we’re still going to do [activities] together. Why is it different at church? How do you learn to be an adult if you’re completely separated from them” (6612)?

Pastoral Care

Even a cursory reading of the comments of participants leads to one conclusion: people (youth, young adults, parents, pastoral ministry leaders alike) are wounded. Suffering with a wide range of ailments, people are walking, limping, or running through life, often trying to hide their desperation or simply not knowing where to turn for help.

One parent detailed the challenge: “I think that as a diocese, we do need to start addressing the emotional needs in our youth, our young adults.... The world that

we're living in is not the same as when I grew up. Before you were bullied in school, you dealt with it. You stood up to them and told them, 'Hey, leave me alone.'... But nowadays, with social media, you have so many people that are just being terrorized, and our youth are not learning how to cope the way they should.... I think we need to start finding ways to bring in more professional help... find more ways to provide some type of emotional support for them, because it's not a case of we can just walk away [from] whatever's hurting them. They're hurting on the inside, so they're hurting themselves. Then they hurt themselves to the point where they think that they need to take their own life.... They're not seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. They're just seeing right now and suffering. And sometimes they'll ask you, 'Well, why does God allow this to happen?'... I really think that's something that we need to start addressing now because we are losing so many youths to the point where they're hurting themselves and then also looking to other sources of how to release the pain and the hurt that they have inside of them" (715).

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WE DO NEED TO START ADDRESSING, THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS
IN OUR YOUTH, OUR YOUNG ADULTS... THE WORLD THAT
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Young people—and all who hurt—desperately need faithful disciples and communities to be audacious and take courage. So often stated was the reality and challenges associated with the mental health needs of youth, young adults, and their families. Alcohol and drug addiction, depression and suicide, eating disorders and cutting, and separation and divorce were among the many issues identified.

The clamor for access to counseling and genuine pastoral care was clear and persistent. Convocation participants identified their brokenness and the need to talk with a professional counselor, advocated for small communities of young adults for support and sharing, and recommended mentors (either parish- or diocesan-based) for youth who can be examples of faith and willing to listen to their concerns. The perception was widespread that other denominations seem to have programs for those who struggle with marriage, addiction, and other issues. Additionally, pastoral ministry leaders recognized these challenges while also acknowledging that they are underequipped to respond and provide needed support, referrals, and education. More robust communication efforts are needed to share information and resources currently available to Catholic parishes and schools.

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A religious sister observed, “What our young people and families need from the church is a listening ear. They need stability and I agree... professional counselors, however, that is not always possible. I think that we could train a few people to be ministers, for ministers, or just for listening. Many of the situations that our families have would not need professional counseling. They just need someone that will listen to them and can give insight. Because there is a need for a lot of emotional support and spiritual support” (1172).

Strikingly, the call from the participants to help heal the wounds of young people, is similar to the message of Pope Francis, as he expanded on this in his famous description of the church as healer he clearly sees, “The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds.... And you have to start from the ground up.... The church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules. The most important thing is the first proclamation: Jesus Christ has saved you. And the ministers of the church must be ministers of mercy above all. Instead of being just a church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, let us try also to be a church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside itself and go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit or are indifferent. The ones who quit sometimes do it for reasons that, if properly understood and assessed, can lead to a return. But that takes audacity and courage.”^{ix}

Service and Mission

Discipleship in Christ calls Catholics to live out a “preferential option for the poor and vulnerable,” meaning that Catholics *opt*, or choose, to act on behalf of people living in poverty or with other marginalized persons. Convocation participants appreciated their baptismal call to serve others, both inside and outside, of the faith community. Service was understood to build community and compassion, to embody mercy for others. It was stated that if we do not talk about Christ when we are serving, we are missing the mark. Catechesis must prepare young people for service as well as help them process the experience afterwards.

One convocation participant stressed the important role service plays in any youth ministry program. “One thing I think should be included in any youth ministry

program is some kind of service project... I just think service is really important in terms of, that's what Jesus did. I think that's where youth can encounter, through their actions... Jesus in others through... service. Just in taking my own children, our Girl Scout troop, down to feed the homeless at the Austin Street Shelter. I think that changed them, gave them a different perspective. I think regular service projects would be good. That also allows the youth to be evangelizing through their actions toward the people that they're helping" (330).

A priest at the convocation discussed the impact of mission trips. "In my experience... mission trips and summer camps... get people out of their element... and... you have a much greater opportunity for them to experience Christ on a deeper level in the poor and others or just in their friends.... I found those to be the greatest, really biggest, impact-type of event with youth and young adults" (1642).

In addition to service hours and confirmation preparation, many participants discussed ways to foster in young people a heart for serving the poor and marginalized. It was noted that young people are excited to do service, but they dislike "service hours" as a requirement for sacraments, which often creates a "check-box" instead of a "discipleship" mindset. Providing more occasions for service and mission, especially intergenerational-community options and family-centered opportunities helps youth see service as integrated into community life and discipleship.

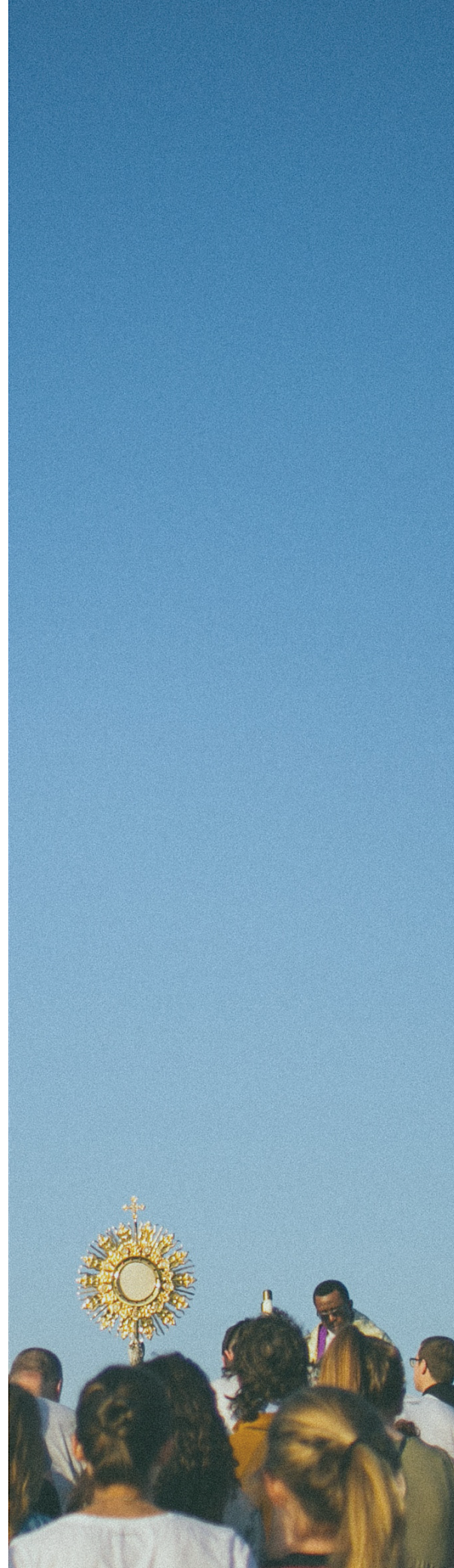
One youth ministry leader from the Central Deanery affirmed the "need for a total revamping of service hours.... This is an opportunity to serve other people, it's an opportunity to be a missionary, but it comes across from the catechetical standpoint as a requirement to get confirmed. And I am doing everything I can, which, I'm only one person, but I'm doing everything I can at my parish to try to change that mindset because we've got to get rid of that" (7388).

Common concerns that surfaced regarding service include: not enough follow-up after retreats and trips to talk about the experience itself and how it impacted individuals; a lack of communication about parish service opportunities; a lack of resources; and the constraints of Safe Environment policies that can impede service in community.

One participant expressed the frustration and perception of some pastoral ministry leaders about the negative impact of Safe Environment policies and practices on missionary programs. "Unfortunately, many of our missionary opportunities

have been done away with; the reason given is usually Safe Environment. [For example,] we no longer deliver Thanksgiving baskets to families in need due to Safe Environment [or offer] children's church... We need to make sure we are safe, without a doubt. But we cannot allow fear to take over our parish. I understand also that Safe Environment is interpreted differently by different pastors, but I think the oversight needs to ensure that ministry can happen" (7386).

A convocation participant underscored the value of service: "I've worked with different types of youth groups, both in and out of the church, and saw that when students were doing service, it helped them to think about their careers, their futures, what they wanted to do in life. It also helped them to get to see how fulfilling it is to help others. Maybe as a parish, or as a church, or as a diocese we could have organized activities, so it doesn't look like a checklist. We can say we have these groups of activities you can do.... Maybe we can team up with... St. Vincent de Paul, where they see... a family that maybe needs their house painted or some work done on their home... just start to make it a habit" (7408).



Embracing Diversity

The theme of unity in the midst of diversity was a thread throughout the data. While many comments were made in relation to the Hispanic cultures represented in the diocese, commenters recognized that diversity embraces other cultures as well. While they see unity as the goal, they are often at a loss as to how to foster it. As one participant pointed out, “There are many different cultures at our parish. I don’t necessarily agree that we have done a very good job of integrating all these cultures into experiencing community with one another. And, I don’t really have a good answer to that.... When I see in the pew in the church, it’s absolutely multicultural.... There will be a Vietnamese person here, a Nigerian there, Hispanic.... But, then, when you get into the ministries, you do see that natural segregation. And I want to try and stop it, because I don’t like to be that way.... I want to find that young adult, Latino, Hispanic, South American, Spanish, Polish, Nigerian, that wants to draw their friends into the Knights of Columbus so we are more multicultural, because we are supposed to be multicultural” (910).

Purposeful community-building events such as festivals and outreach projects were advocated to bring cultures together, in addition to building relationships outside of one’s own culture in small faith-sharing groups. Participants thought it would be helpful to intentionally invite people to be involved outside of one’s own culture, such as attending Mass in another language.

One young adult from the Northern Deanery made this suggestion: “[I visited a parish that has] a bilingual Adoration night. It... was really cool just to see English speakers who don’t speak Spanish worshipping along with Spanish speakers who don’t speak English, still getting lost in that moment with Jesus in prayer and fellowship... I think that would be something really cool that [our parish], with a larger community as a whole,— equally Spanish and equally English speakers— [could do]. I think that could be a great place of unity” (5893).

Others expressed that more information is needed about parishioners and their realities, challenges, and faith questions. One participant mused, “One of the struggles we have in the Hispanic community, they don’t want to participate, and we need to find out why? Is it because of the language? Is it because of the culture? We need to know why” (460).

Still another convocation participant, who specializes in marriage and family therapy, related problems in the Latino community that aren't being addressed. "Part of the reason that we're missing the mark is because of the acculturation process. What is that? The negotiation of values. When we're not guiding [as a church] this demographic in how to negotiate those values, they abandon Catholic tradition because they think that they're welcoming American values.... Part of the family piece is that the youth are acculturating at faster rates than their parents, and the parents are undereducated— some with second-grade education, sixth-grade education—and so the parents then can't guide the youth in negotiating those values. I think that if we had a program that taught parents how to guide their youth in the negotiation of the values, and we taught youth how to manage American values that are counter-Catholic in the public school system, then we could really take advantage of this opportunity, because as much as we're gaining Hispanic Catholics, we're losing them to Protestantism. That's a shame" (625).

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THEY ABANDON CATHOLIC TRADITION BECAUSE THEY THINK THAT THEY'RE WELCOMING AMERICAN VALUES.

Pastoral ministry leaders discussed the challenges of working in multicultural settings, often seeking to better understand the reality in which they minister. At times, they also acknowledged the ways in which they need to grow or change to better engage the people to whom they minister. One participant shared the following: "I think if we can work on helping our people to step out of their comfort zone and learn something new about someone else—regardless of who that may be, the perceived 'other'—that goes a long way, 'cause you're giving some of yourself in order to learn more about another. You're stepping out of yourself, and I think we need to help our people step out of their selves.... We speak of the language barrier.... Many of the young adults that are from, at least Hispanic cultures, are very Americanized. And I'm thinking from my perspective of my junior high students. I have youth from Hispanic families; they speak English, but their parents don't. And so, if I'm going to keep this youth involved, I need to step out of myself and improve my Spanish and engage their parent.... When it comes to young adults.... It's more than a language problem, it's a cultural embrace, because I have many friends... college classmates that lost their faith, because they didn't belong. And they were brought up Catholics; they moved to the U.S., but the [Protestants] were more welcoming to them" (916).





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SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP FOR MINISTRY

The U.S. bishops' "Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord" laid out a vision of lay ecclesial ministry: "We are also obliged to be stewards of the Church—collaborators and cooperators in continuing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which is the Church's essential mission. This mission—proclaiming and teaching, serving and sanctifying—is our task. It is the personal responsibility of each one of us as stewards of the Church".^x The convocation participants expressed their desire and commitment to foster missionary discipleship among youth and young adults. Many needs and issues were identified to help support ministerial efforts with them. There was clearly a call to be better stewards of the ministry we have been entrusted to lead.

Unifying Vision

Pastoral ministry leaders clearly identified the need for the Office of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries to establish a clear vision for youth and young adult ministry. A vision points to an end-goal. In this instance, the goal is the formation of youth and young adults as missionary disciples. This formation takes place within multiple contexts that include but are not limited to: cultural and ethnic realities and traditions, stratified socio-economics, geographic and educational divergence, and a range of family configurations, cohesion, and strengths. To this is added the range of church diversity in terms of ecclesiology, theology, and spirituality. In short, no one program, practice, method, approach, or response will fit all parishes and people. Multi-pronged pastoral strategies, within new or renewed collaborative systems, are needed to achieve the desired outcome of youth and young adults committed to being missionary disciples.

A teacher and campus minister from a Catholic high school, framed the need in comprehensive terms: “The most important thing I feel like the diocese can do for us as ministers... [is] to cast vision for us. Tell us the direction that we need to go.... At this conference, we’re getting all of these good ideas. We’re seeing this idea of missionary discipleship as something that needs to be striven for. But not all of us are here. There needs to be marching orders. I need the bishop to tell all these



ministries in all these parishes, ‘This is our new goal. Our new goal is missionary discipleship. This is your first priority, make missionary disciples.’ And not only make missionary disciples, but teach those missionary disciples to make more missionary disciples.... That’s the key. If we have a great event, and we bring 200 people to Christ as disciples, if we aren’t teaching those 200 people how to bring more people to Christ, then we’re never going to make it to the whole diocese. The bishop... needs to tell everyone; it has to be a clear message across all the parishes.... The way in which we do that can vary. The way—I think it should be more unified, but that can come later. I think casting the vision needs to come first. The bishop needs to tell us, ‘Let’s be on the same page here’” (6494).

Inadequate Human, Financial, Infrastructure Resources

Commenters often mentioned that insufficient resources are available or allocated for effective pastoral ministry with young people. Human, financial, and infrastructure resources are insufficient and unevenly distributed among parishes, creating a challenging pastoral ministry environment.

A young adult from a North Central parish recognized that staff cannot meet every pastoral need. “The youth, the young adults, and their families are the church. And we can, as a staff, serve all day, every day, until we run out of breath and our face turns purple, but the reality is that we can never meet all the needs. And what I feel as a young adult, what is lacking at the church, is the calling of leaders. We’ve got leaders in business, in engineering, in teaching, in education. We’ve got to provide a place where they are called more. Because we as 12 people on a staff can’t do that for 5,000 people.... We need to be a church as a whole, and not a service team serving customers.”

It was noted that many families with youth, college-age, or young adult children have financial constraints that hinder their participation in ministry offerings. Subsidizing actual costs of ministry or offering financial aid gives them opportunities to participate. Pastoral ministers agreed that this is especially necessary in parishes with lower-income families, but these parishes often lack the resources themselves to offer financial aid. Convocation participants suggested the diocese and wealthier parishes better support low-income parishes financially, and with other resources, to improve the response to pastoral needs across all the diocese. These sentiments, among others, are reflected in the various comments below.

One Northeast Deanery participant expressed concern about budgets and staffing. “We have a school, but a lot of our faith formation students are not in the Catholic school. They’re all at public schools, and their parents cannot afford to send them to private schools. And so, they send them to [religious education classes], and some parishes require a certain amount of tithing to be able to get them into faith formation. Additionally, they ask for \$50 or \$150 for each student. Some of the parents have two or three students, two or three family members that are wanting to be in faith formation, and sometimes the parents cannot send them because they can’t afford to send all three kids.... I think there needs to be scholarships for faith formation... or a lower membership fee... because... we’re missing the boat and not having a lot of young people come to faith formation because their parents can’t afford it” (1207).

It was reflected in the data that many parishes do not have qualified, professional pastoral ministry leaders for youth and young adult ministries. Lay ministry leaders (paid and unpaid), volunteer core team members, catechists, and parents strongly identified the need for more training, resources, and support to assist them in their role of ministering to youth and young adults.

A Northern youth ministry staff member suggested there is a staffing crisis within the Catholic Church. “It doesn’t get talked about very often, but we don’t hire a lot of people to do the things they should be doing professionally. We rely way more heavily on volunteers than non-Catholic denominations or even just other organizations. If your parish doesn’t have the budget to hire more people to work in youth ministry or hire a young adult minister or something, it’s probably because they’ve already hired one person to be on their development staff. There’s only one or two people who are supposed to be working on getting the money for the parish to do the things that it needs to do. I think sometimes you have to spend money to make money, and the church is investing too little in building up the staff of its parishes for us to build the programs we need to build and make them as effective as possible” (1146).

Yet another participant said, “Here is a specific example of what is needed; UTD needs a Catholic center, more of a religious presence, and we need campus ministers” (6295).

One Northeast Deanery participant added, “We do not see our youth and young adults as a priority yet. I think we’ve come a little way in the last two years, but it’s still not enough; it doesn’t reflect the ability to have sufficient staff for 600, 700

youth, having one person in charge of all that.... We do not look at youth ministry or young adult ministry or even family ministry as something that needs paid positions, full-time positions. But we need that; I mean, it's that important that we need to have staff in that. I think you can see it reflected in the diocesan offices.... I think we need to see that across the board where we have to start tithing, have to start giving our time, and our tithe, and our worth to the church. It's twofold; if we want our finance committees to give us more money or do that stuff, we have to as a church still give back to the community as well" (6283).

Many youth, college, and young adult ministries described the reality of financial constraints or no budget. They noted limited space and resources for ministry gatherings and the lack of staff to properly support the number of volunteers and participants. These factors adversely impact ministry effectiveness and the number of people being served. It was stated that, "Young adults need a place or time to gather and ability to gather on a regular basis in more areas than just the most popular points of the city" (2923).

A female participant from the Northeast Deanery shared her frustration: "Part of the question was, what do we need? As I said earlier in the general assembly, we are a rich community. However, we are poor, we don't have money, and that's the truth. And we have many necessities, one of them being space. And yes, we do need space in our church. We have to keep that noted in this recording, and hopefully someone will listen.... What is the issue with money? I am just wondering; how do you get more money or how do you solve that? We don't know" (6308).

Many parishes need better stewardship formation and processes that properly convey the spirituality of giving of time, talent, and treasure. While fundraisers often become a common tool to help increase financial resources, they also consume a ministry leader's time and talents, reducing the effectiveness of their ministry efforts. Fundraising is not seen as a substitution for tithing.

Regarding human resources, a pastoral ministry leader identified one "thing to make ministry to young people better would be a constant flow of competent adult volunteers seeking out the opportunity to minister to young people. As it is, it's like pulling teeth to get people to volunteer.... The one thing that I think would make ministry so much more effective and so much easier would just be having enough people involved to actually mentor young people.... If we had adults who are committed to meeting with, participating in the programs, getting to know the same group of five to seven, eight youth over the course of their time in junior high

and high school and sticking around, even if they stayed only with that group for two years or three years. Sticking around and getting to know the youth is going to make more disciples than any talk the best speaker in the world can give. We just don't have those people" (425). One parish staff member's comment captured the inherent difficulty: "I am the only youth ministry staff at my parish and do not have the time for what I have to do in the parish, let alone outreach" (3502).

One Northeast Deanery convocation participant shared her perspective on the need for more volunteers. "I don't think it's the lack of money; I think it's the lack of participation.... I think we, as leaders... [need to ask,] how can we attract other people to volunteer? I think we need to start with us first. How can we change, how can we attract people to come forward?... I think it's the love. Be humble, so that way we can have more people.... What changes are we willing to make? What sacrifices are we willing to make?... So, whatever we learn here, take it, endure it, and put it into action" (6308).

Equipping Pastoral Leaders for Effective Ministry

Convocation participants were asked, "What are the challenges churches face in engaging and inviting youth and young adults who do not currently participate in their community?" The answers that came back were very clear: we need competent workers in the vineyard. One person said it succinctly: "Lack of qualified lay and pastoral leadership.... Ministers do not know how to effectively use their time and resources in order to identify and move forward on the best way to engage the culture. They are under-resourced and significantly understaffed, leading to ineffective and 'thrown together' ministries" (3606).

"Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord" sets the framework for the formation of lay ecclesial ministers in the United States. It refers to the Code of Canon Law, Canon 231, in naming the obligation of the church to assure proper preparation for ministry leaders: "'Lay persons who devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly.' Lay ecclesial ministers, just like the ordained, need and deserve formation of high standards, effective methods, and comprehensive goals." Further, the document "encourages dioceses and academic institutions to seek creative ways of providing opportunities for the preparation and formation of lay ecclesial ministers, especially in mission and rural



areas, and for meeting the needs of various cultural groups. ‘To set high standards,’ said Pope John Paul II, ‘means both to provide a thorough basic training and to keep it constantly updated. This is a fundamental duty, in order to ensure qualified personnel for the Church’s mission.’... Effective formation methods address the whole person: emotions, imagination, will, heart, and mind. It is the whole person who ministers, so the whole person is the proper subject of formation”.^{xi}

A priest challenged participants to take actions in this area. “I hear people talk about vocations, parents, young adults, high school, and middle school youth [and the need] to discern. So, this is my challenge to all of you, when you go back to your parish, tell your pastors... we need to train our staff, because the staffs are the ones that touch all these age brackets.... They need to know how to talk to the parishioners, how to run a meeting, and how to help people in the parish. Everybody needs to discern, everybody needs to be guided and loved, but it begins with the staff.... Go back to the parish, tell your pastor to invest in his staff, to disciple his staff, to teach them how to love, how to discern, so they may in turn do that for the parishioners.... It is his responsibility to make sure that the staff is equipped and ready to do that” (1542).

The data conveyed that paid and volunteer pastoral ministry leaders in the Diocese of Dallas seek formation and encourage the diocese and pastoral center offices to provide more formation, training, and support as they exercise their roles.

Convocation participants identified:

- A desire to feel more equipped to reach out past their comfort zones and engage and welcome those on the margins through increased formation and training.
- A lack of confidence and skill in responding to the pastoral, addiction, and mental health needs of youth, young adults, and their families
- A need for better resources and catechist training to effectively reach and teach youth
- A fear of engaging in conversations about real issues affecting people, especially in the areas of human sexuality, homosexuality, and gender identity
- A lack of leadership training for youth and young adults to equip them for leadership and service in the church
- An increased need for clergy formation for pastoral ministry with youth and young adults
- A need for training in volunteer recruitment, management, and support
- A desire for seasoned mentors, who can support and assist them in their ministerial role

A parish staff member in the North Central Deanery explained the diverse needs of ministerial leaders in today's church and the requirements for excellence in ministry. "In the day-to-day work of ministry, someone who might have a background in ministry, pastoral care, spiritual direction, theology is also then expected to do design work, marketing, outreach, accounting, and fundraising—any number of other things. And they're like an entrepreneur within a church, rather than a part of a ministry team. Sometimes the gifts aren't being coordinated or administered well. We're not hiring for more specific tasks, really leveraging people's strengths. I think [we should] strategically hire in ministry, thinking about what is really needed as a parish overall, rather than just within [a specific] ministry.... It's going to take a lot of strategy within structures to [integrate] youth in every event, it requires a lot of safe environment efforts. It can be done, but it has to be strategically.... If you ask one single minister to handle that, plus the event, food, music, and message, it's just not going to get done well. We won't be able to achieve excellence" (6376).

Importance of Support from Parish Pastors

A Central Deanery parishioner had this to say about pastor involvement: “I think it’s important to plant seeds. That was very vital in my faith journey and in my spirituality. And I don’t think I see enough of that today. One of the things from a diocesan level... we can do to improve... would be for our priests and our deacons to be out in the community more. They don’t do that. I don’t know why they don’t do that. But they don’t do that anymore. That was so vital for me. That helped me grow. That helped plant seeds. Those seeds didn’t sprout until much later in my life, but the seeds were there. I think we have the attitude that the church is there, people will come. And we can’t have that attitude anymore. We have to go out and reach people where they are, especially from our clergy. Our clergy need to know what our ministry is all about, and our parish. A lot of our clergy are not participating in our ministries. They need to know what their ministries are in their parish. And that’s part of the problem.... How are you supposed to know what the needs are of your people if you’re not out there in the community realizing what the needs are” (1346)?

Pastors greatly impact the effectiveness of youth and young adult ministries, for better or worse. Currently, the lack of such support was identified as a barrier to ministry with these age groups. Participants expressed that a pastor’s vision, support, effort, and advocacy are essential for communicating the importance of pastoral ministry with these age groups to the entire parish. His advocacy is needed to direct human, financial, and infrastructure resources, in addition to the overall vision for missionary discipleship. The physical presence of the pastor in direct ministry efforts with youth and young adults is an essential component in communicating the importance of this ministry. Often, examples were given where pastor support made a tremendous difference in ministry efforts with youth and young adults, as well as many comments about where the lack of presence and support of pastors becomes a deterrent to ministry.

The need for pastor and priest involvement was stated again and again. “I believe our parish priest, or any parish priest, should be involved with our youth. I’m not saying attend every gathering but enough for them to become engaged with youth and be a resource for them. A relationship with a priest is important and provides an avenue of trust and bond to be able to talk to someone about our faith and traditions. Our priest is not involved with our youth personally. We’ve been together since 2015 and he has not spent time with our group” (2790). In

addition, the pastor's support and influence is invaluable in a parish setting, said another leader. "[The] most effective way to engage [youth and young adults] is when the pastor gives his thoughts on a particular ministry and helps spread the word with other ministry heads" (3669).

It is strongly desired that all clergy in the diocese, particularly pastors, commit to this goal or common vision along with lay pastoral ministry leaders. This is not an indictment of the clergy present in the diocese today. Rather, it is a recognition and uplifting of the deep bond that priests and pastors have with the communities entrusted to their care. Parishioners, including the young, trust priests to be living examples of discipleship, available for conversation, personal visits, vocational discernment, and pastoral, formational, and spiritual guidance.

A North Central Deanery participant expressed this need: "I think the most important thing in helping young adults discern is for the priests to be available to go talk to for spiritual direction and discernment help. How are you supposed to figure out if you're called to be a priest if you can't talk to a priest? I understand that priests are busy, but it is so, so important for them to make time to help their parishioners make these decisions" (6914).

Diocesan Safe Environment Policies

One minister provided a good analogy of the challenge that ministry leaders experience with Safe Environment policies: "An inability to communicate with youth via text message and social media is the equivalent of limiting 1980s youth ministers to sending letters and no phone calls" (5749).

Current Safe Environment policies or practices were often seen as a hindrance to authentic outreach in pastoral ministry with young people. While the need to protect young people is understood and supported by convocation participants, practical and reasonable guidelines are needed that foster meaningful and healthy relationships between young people, pastoral ministry leaders, and other adults. Given the cultural and social context of our times, technology, social media, and new forms of communication yet to be implemented must be at the disposal of pastoral ministry leaders. In the minds of young people, such communication and technology usage lends credibility to pastoral ministry leaders and increases the relevance of the church. It was noted in some cases that examples given by participants about Safe Environment protocol did not actually reflect

the current diocesan policy and guidelines. Uneven implementation of policies was also described in the data, which leads the researchers to conclude that there are likely gaps in education and communication about the policies and their implementation.

A parent volunteering at a parish in the Eastern Deanery explains the challenge in this area: “Safe Environment makes it incredibly difficult. I feel like we have really pumped it up to a degree where we’ve let our fear of something happening impede our ministry.... But I think when that causes us to lock every door all the time, when that causes us to be unable to communicate with our small group.... There is no way for me to even send them a reminder about a class. There’s no way for me to communicate with them even through their parents. I can’t even get parents’ information. I think Safe Environment really impedes our ability to be missionaries” (152).

To ensure the well-being of young people and effective pastoral ministry, participants recommended that the diocesan Safe Environment policies undergo review and revision, especially as it relates to the use of social media with minors. Pastoral ministry effectiveness with youth and young adults is a highly relational ministry, and it requires contemporary communication strategies, tools, and technology systems. One commenter shared a frustration: “We can’t use Snapchat because of Safe Environment. We have a youth Instagram page for [our parish], but it’s only because it has to be closed... only the kids from youth group can be in it.... We have to make it private, so it’s hard for us to reach out to other teens who want to see what we’re doing” (619).

One parent attending from the Eastern Deanery described how the church is missing the mark on communications. “Our youth live in a different technological age than we have [with] cell phones, text messages, Instagram, and Snapchat, etc.... The means of communication that our youth use is different from what we traditionally have used. I think [it is best] to meet them where they are. We need to be using those methods of communication—so tweeting, sending Snapchat messages, texts—to communicate effectively. We need to be sending the messages often enough that they [do not]... forget... an event coming up. We do put on some good events at our church, but sometimes we have some disappointing participation, and I think communication would improve that. The neat thing about Twitter and sending out a tweet is it can be retweeted so easily that if you want to reach people that aren’t currently participating, youth can retweet a message to their friends and say, ‘Hey, we’ve got game night coming up.’... that’s an area

where I think we miss the mark: with communication and reaching people the way they need to be reached. Not our way of communication, but our youth's way of communication. And, unfortunately, I think that needs a re-look, the social media policy of the diocese, because we're not allowed to do that" (2176).

One youth ministry leader explained the challenging reality: "We're called to go out to minister to teenagers, but I feel like I really can't do that.... I understand that over 50 percent of all teenagers check Snapchat once a day. That's a huge missionary imperative that I could take and post a Scripture verse or communicate to them about youth ministry. But I can't get on Snapchat because of Safe Environment polices.... Unfortunately, I think a lot of youth ministers... feel handicapped... by fear... we're kind of afraid of a lawsuit" (1135).

The implementation of comprehensive policies that strike a balance between safety and pastoral effectiveness can best be guided by three essential values: prudence, reasonability, and transparency. *Prudence* encourages forethought and weighs the merit of the technology and its attending policies with consideration of pastoral effectiveness and potential risks. Pastoral practices and certain technologies may be deemed *reasonable*, if the action or method is practical, sound, and considered a normative practice or standard. Being *transparent* requires that all the church does is open to the scrutiny of others and that pastoral practice and the use of technology and subsequent policies be clear, intelligible, and observable. With this balance, the ability to train, share new ministry techniques, communicate, and evangelize will be enhanced and continue to be an advantage for parishes, schools, and ministries within the Diocese of Dallas.

Participation and Leadership Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults

Some young adults report that their parish does not seem to want or need their gifts. When they have volunteered for an activity or specific function, they are often told that they "are not needed," or there is no follow-up from the parish. The lack of a specific ministerial outreach to young adults compounds this inhospitable experience.

A college-age participant noted, "We all individually need something different from our church, and we all individually have the capability to give something

very specific and very unique. I think creating a space where youth feel comfortable coming up and saying, “I have this to offer, where can you use me?” is really important because [that will help] them feel connected to the community, and it creates an understanding that we each serve God” (2314).

Many pastoral ministry leaders believe that the more the church is able to engage youth in leadership roles, the better chance there is for creating a new generation of leadership. For young adults, it was proposed that they minister to their peers, as well as to those younger than themselves. Leaders recognize that it is not always easy; it requires a great deal of trust to be placed in the youth and young adults, a trust that acknowledges they may fail. However, allowing the youth to have a voice creates ownership, a place for maturation and growth, allowing for at least the possibility of future ministry.

A youth from the Eastern Deanery shared a desire to be involved. “Something that really... impacted me is, I didn’t realize that the adults didn’t know that as youth, we truly want to be involved. We... love our faith... and want to see more... youth as eucharistic ministers or lectors... [and] want to feel invited.... Give us that invitation; we want it. It all comes down to that. We... are just so open, but we’re closed, because we’re scared, and we don’t know who to go to” (1680).

One convocation participant commented on the leadership skills needed in pastoral ministry, especially when calling forth the gifts of others. “When a leader is brought to the forefront who is open, warm, and charismatic like Pope Francis, this is helpful. It is important to not hide under a bushel those who are lights in our parishes—those who have the gift of being warm and inviting, those who enjoy being mentors and being around others in general. Leadership can be groomed, but we also have to be aware of the gifts that leaders have that are not always recognized and nourished. We must choose leaders in our church who are not just business leaders but spiritual leaders, who are inviting and are gifted as nurturers” (4085).

Collaboration, Networking, and Systems Related to Ministry

Participants often named a systems perspective and approach to pastoral ministry and applied this to direct ministry with parishioners, as well as to the diocese as a whole and its deaneries. Convocation participants advocated for regional and diocesan-wide systems for collaboration and better communications. They felt



these were essential for effective pastoral ministry, along with diocesan support and leadership to empower and resource parishes to create organizational structures for missionary discipleship.

A Northeast Deanery ministry leader used the convocation as a model for what needs to continue. “[The] convocation is good for us youth ministers and young adult ministers, because we see what is needed with our ministries, especially inside our parishes. We... were all agreeing and talking about [the desire for]... a big network of youth ministers all over the Diocese of Dallas, coming together as one... the diocese has summits every month... but we think it’s not enough for us. We see... situations... some of the parishes where there’s no youth ministry, there’s no young adult ministries, and some are struggling with leading the youth ministry or young adult ministry.... All our brothers and sisters in those parishes need help.... Let’s open our hands to them... as one diocese, as one ministry, youth and young adult ministry. We have just one purpose... to bring those... youth, young adults closer to God, experience God, and be Christ-like” (1684).

Collaboration and networking are desired to: increase unity; increase support for pastoral ministry leaders and their formation; and share in financial burdens, staffing, resources, communications, and ministerial offerings through multi-parish, regional, or diocesan efforts. One suggestion was made regarding networking: “I would like to see our parishes north, south, east, and west network and share ideas. Let’s have parishes who have paid staff share with our less fortunate parishes” (3036). Another leader offered a similar comment: “It is hard to figure out the best way to invite them. I know some parishes are successful, but I feel like we are each working in a vacuum and not learning from each other” (5455). One participant suggested, “Let’s make a giant diocese-wide app that allows Catholics to see the activities going on around them” (3618).

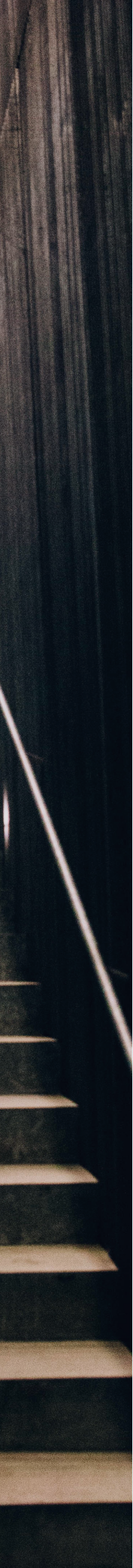
One convocation participant felt inspired by the manifestation of the diocesan church. “Each parish has been sharing their best practices as to how we could resolve a certain issue. It’s just massively inspiring to see all of you here and to see the whole diocese sharing their input. I feel that I’m not alone in the battle. We’re all together on the same page... the outcome of this is not just something for our parish, but for the whole diocese, too” (238).

One North Central Deanery youth ministry leader said, “Sometimes we just look at the diocese and tell them what they can do for us, but it’s actually us inside the church... we could start engaging and helping out each other on how we could

improve [ministry], especially the transitional part from the elementary up to the middle school, to the high school, to the young adults, and to the adults. I think the part that is lacking [is] the transitions. How do we deal with that? That's why we're losing so many after confirmation, because there's no transitional element" (1443).

A contemporary perspective on communication is found in "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response" and sheds light on the needs articulated by convocation participants. In the U.S. bishops' 1992 pastoral letter, they write: "Quality communications is the result of hard work and careful planning. It also requires a significant financial investment by the diocese, parish, school, or other church-related organization... given the mobility of our people today, informational items should be communicated frequently and in a variety of ways, so that those who miss one information source can still be reached through other sources. If the desired outcome of our communications efforts is a community of people who understand, accept, and are committed to the mission and goals of the diocese, parish, school, or agency, we must develop forms of communication that can inform, motivate, and invite people to participate in our mission. As a Catholic community about to enter the new millennium, the communications opportunities and





challenges that are being presented to us are staggering. The way we respond to these challenges and opportunities will have significant consequences for evangelization, religious education, and all our stewardship and development activities.”^{xii}

The communication challenge was identified as “getting the word out. Churches need to make use of social media to broadcast events. The church bulletin is no longer effective. Churches also need to realize they are competing with other, more glamorous activities in a teenager’s week. Making events attractive is a must” (3728).

Convocation participants conceded that even when there are valuable and successful ministry opportunities available, there is a lack of marketing, branding, and communication to reveal to others the availability and value of these opportunities. Resources for contemporary communications and marketing are strongly desired.

Recommended parish and deanery strategies and collaborative systems for ministry covered a wide range of challenges, including:

- Assessment of organizational structures, systems, and policies to move from maintenance to missionary mode
- Pastoral and strategic planning
- Structures for youth and young adult ministry
- Scheduling of ministerial offerings and leadership to coordinate a calendar of gathered events
- Online technology to support communications and/or marketing endeavors might include: community joint calendars, a resource library, idea-sharing forums, and “think tank”-style gatherings

One participant representing a non-parish based organization expressed this need: “I see opportunity for us to better serve young adults by leveraging each other’s learnings, within the parish and with movements. Many times, we do events that are very similar, or we have skills that are very similar, but we’re totally disconnected. This really is a network; how can we know what each (of us is) doing and what are we good at? Some might put together a great ‘holy hour,’ others a concert, others an apostolate with the poor, while others are great at spiritual direction. Each group could have a certain brand, or what are they good at, and then, where do we combine all these? Whether it’s a website, whether it’s different WhatsApp groups, technology... these networks [are how] we know where we fit in into the entire diocese” (1452).



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Radical Love, Radical Mission



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From a research perspective, the convocation is a pivotal moment in the life of the church in Dallas, especially if ministerial leaders take the findings of this research and engage in actions to transform ministerial practices with youth, young adults, and their families. With any vast undertaking such as this, it has been a challenge to summarize in a few words what almost 7,000 points of data are saying in a cohesive yet digestible manner for the church of Dallas.

The direct focus of the convocation was the intersection of youth and young adults and effective pastoral ministry. Yet, many of the needs and issues addressed in this report focus upon the larger ecosystem—that is, the family, parish, campus, and diocese in which they live. No one ought to be surprised that an effective pastoral response is connected to the health and vitality of the systems that foster growth in life and faith. Because of this reality, those in parish, school, and diocesan leadership need to be open to changes within the overall systems in which these ministries reside.

It is the overall recommendation that the Diocese of Dallas develop a strategic plan to move faith communities, schools, and campuses that are functioning in a maintenance mode to a missionary mode. This plan needs to be bold and creative and offer a cohesive strategy for disciples to become disciple-makers, responding to the needs of diverse youth, young adults, parents, and ministerial leaders within a systemic framework. Addressing the needs of various cultural communities to achieve better integration and pastoral response within faith communities is an essential aspect of this plan.

To bolster excellence in parish and school ministry, the plan must address the challenges articulated by convocation participants regarding the lack of collaborative and effective systems surrounding pastoral ministry. Attention must be given to systems promoting collaboration, communication, and support—both human and financial—for pastoral ministry leaders. The recommendations offered below provide additional points of action called for by the convocation findings.

Recommendation 1: Focus on Discipleship with Youth

Parishes and Catholic schools need to assess their ministry efforts and programs to ensure that discipleship is the central focus of their activity. The convocation participants expressed the importance and challenge of inviting young people to missionary discipleship in today's culture. It is recommended that all diocesan offices involved in direct or indirect ministry with adolescents, as well as those that form parents and/or ministry leaders, work together to identify effective



“missionary discipleship” models and methods. Further, it is recommended that a review of all programs focused upon adolescents occur. Consideration ought to be given to how young people are prepared for the sacrament of confirmation, especially in light of their capacity to evangelize and form young missionary disciples. For example, an examination of service hours as a component of confirmation preparation in parishes is warranted, as it was often noted that it fosters a checklist mentality of formation instead of lifelong discipleship.

Recommendation 2: Vision and Plan for Young Adult Ministry

Young adult ministry must go beyond present circumstances to emphasize radical welcome, invitation, hospitality, and community. This need was echoed throughout convocation leaders’ comments. There was a call to collaboratively develop a unified vision and plan for young adult ministry in the diocese—by the bishop, pastors, parish leaders, parents, young adult ministers, and young adult leaders—and to promote its use. The plan needs to foster collaboration among and between parishes and campuses to build unity in all efforts. It is recommended that this cohesive vision and plan for engaging young adults move from a programmatic model to an accompaniment model that nurtures relationships and community.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen Families in Faith

Convocation leaders repeatedly articulated the reality that parents and families are struggling to pass the faith on to their children. It is essential to strengthen the ‘domestic church’ by developing strategies for holistically forming and supporting parents, especially in the task of transmitting faith to their children. These strategies must acknowledge and meet the needs of the diverse nature of families today (culture, language, multi-generational, blended) and reach out in concrete ways, providing practical approaches for support and encouragement. It is recommended that the diocese provide pastoral ministry leaders education on topics related to family life and faith (for example: the family life-cycle, intergenerational catechesis, cultural influences on faith development), facilitate the sharing of best practices, and support collaborative pastoral action for families at the deanery level.

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Recommendation 4: Accompany Youth and Young Adults through Life's Transitions

Many convocation participants spoke to a missing element in church ministry: the need for the church to be present and accompany youth and young adults in the transition points in their lives. Transitions include the movements from: middle school to high school, post-confirmation or graduation to college, and through young adulthood into marriage and parenthood. People in “transition periods” need special care and support in both life and faith matters. Catholic schools, campuses, and parishes must build intentional relationships to facilitate the communities and transitions of youth and young adults that keep them connected to the faith community. One theme of accompaniment surfaced through the data analysis concerned the capacity for young people to embrace their call to holiness and discipleship. It was believed that the ability for young people to discern their vocation—to marriage, single life, priesthood, or consecrated life—will likely increase in proportion to the depth of their real connectedness to the church and human ties in their local communities. Recommended is the identification of practical strategies, tools, and programs to provide a safety net for young people during these transition periods, increasing the church’s presence and capacity for accompaniment.

Recommendation 5: Renew Commitment to Excellence in Eucharistic Celebrations

Convocation participants called for a renewed commitment to the primacy of eucharistic celebrations for missionary disciples. There was a clear plea that Sunday liturgies be celebrated with joy and vibrancy to uplift the Sunday experience as one of radical welcome, hospitality, and introduction to Jesus. The Sunday Eucharist must also make room for and welcome youth and young adults, both in the assembly as well as in the exercise of liturgical roles. It is recommended that a pilot program be developed representing parishes from each deanery to evaluate their Sunday experience, implement strategies to strengthen their Sunday experience, and share their learnings with each other and the diocese.





Recommendation 6: Form Disciples as Witnesses to Jesus’ Saving Love

Convocation leaders clearly stated that current efforts in catechesis are not successful and need to be revitalized. The formation of catechists, teachers, and ministry leaders is central to facilitating revitalization. It is recommended that the diocese examine and revise programs to form pastoral ministry and school leaders at all levels in the diocese, especially in: catechesis, sacramental preparation, and in the formation of mentors and guides to accompany youth and young adults in faith. This formation requires basic and practical knowledge on how to teach. Equally important are the skills for how to witness and model faith in an authentic way. Catechists must have the ability to honestly share the struggles, as well as the joy and happiness, that come with living a life of discipleship. It is also recommended that paid and volunteer staff be formed or re-formed in the ministries of welcome and hospitality.

Recommendation 7: Extend God's Mercy and Heal Those in Need

Convocation participants desire for pastoral leaders to connect with people in their real lives and minister to them in a holistic manner. People are broken and facing challenges in the many areas of mental health, addiction, social and digital media, family structures, sexuality, and gender identity. Pastoral ministry leaders identified that they often feel ill-equipped to respond to the many needs described through this report. While conceding they are not professional counselors, they desire more training and support to appropriately and effectively respond to these pastoral needs. It is recommended that the diocese provide ongoing and regular comprehensive professional development and support for pastors, parish staff, volunteer ministry leaders, and diocesan staff on these issues to increase awareness, outreach, and communication with youth, young adults, and their families.

Recommendation 8: Evaluate and Communicate Diocesan Safe Environment Policies and Practices

It was clear from this research that many people perceive or experience current Safe Environment policies and practices as a hindrance to pastoral ministry with teenagers. This impediment was especially noted in the use of social media as a ministry tool to engage young people in relationships and matters of faith. Equal attention must be given to how policies are understood and implemented since there appears to be inconsistency in the application of diocesan policy. It is recommended that a review of the diocesan Safe Environment policies and practices—with special attention to social media—be conducted to assure a safe environment for ministry, balanced with opportunities for effective pastoral ministry, outreach, and accompaniment of young people. This evaluation should include examination of education methods and communication strategies with ministry leaders to increase effectiveness, understanding, and identification of best practices.

Recommendation 9: Advance Formation, Support, and Leadership for Ministry with Youth, Young Adults, and Campus Ministry

Many convocation participants expressed the need for professional and competent staff to support youth, young adult, and campus ministries. Lay pastoral ministry leaders desire initial and ongoing comprehensive formation and support to fulfill their function properly. They are often under-resourced and understaffed. It is recommended that the Diocese of Dallas examine current staffing patterns, qualifications, responsibilities, and compensation for youth, young adult, and campus ministries. Flowing from careful study, the diocese ought to develop and implement effective strategies, models, and tools to ensure the formation and support of current pastoral ministry leaders, as well as calling forth the next generation to service in the church.







APPENDIX I: DELEGATION MAKEUP BY PARISH, SCHOOL, AND ORGANIZATION

<i>Delegation</i>	<i>Total People</i>	<i>Day 1</i>	<i>Day 2</i>	<i>Day 3</i>
Ablaze Youth Retreat	2	1	1	1
All Saints Parish	18	9	15	14
Blessed Sacrament	6	2	5	4
Catholic Pro Life	1	1	1	
Christ the King Parish	14	6	8	5
Church of the Incarnation/ University of Dallas Campus Ministry	3		1	1
Community of Gods Delight	2	2	2	
Convocation Team	13	13	12	8
Divine Mercy	5	1	4	4
Good Shepherd Parish	33	9	14	13
Holy Cross Parish	7		2	2
Holy Family of Nazareth	10	3	5	6
Holy Spirit Parish	16	5	8	8
Immaculate Conception-Corsicana	5	1	3	1
Immaculate Conception-Grand Prairie	15		1	11
Individuals	4	2	3	4
Mary Immaculate Parish	21	8	12	12
Mater Dei	21	10	15	7
Mother of Perpetual Help Parish	12	5	8	8
Nuestra Senora Del Pilar Parish	37	17	9	8
Our Lady of Angels Catholic Parish	8	3	5	2
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish	8		6	2
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish	4		1	1
Our Lady of the Lake	14	4	10	6
Pastoral Center	5	4	2	1
Pines Catholic Camp	2	2	2	
Prince of Peace Parish	15	11	14	6
Regnum Christi	5	1	1	3
Sacred Heart Chinese Parish-Plano	1		1	1

Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ VN Parish	17			
Sacred Heart Parish	21	3	14	17
Santa Clara of Assisi Parish	24	2	14	4
SMU-Catholic Campus Ministry	8	4	5	2
St. Ann-Coppell	9	7	4	4
St. Anthony Parish-Wylie	21	6	16	13
St. Augustine Parish	15	8	6	3
St. Bernard of Clairvaux	6	2	4	
St. Edward	4			4
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish-Plano	16	3	13	7
St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish-Dallas	18	8	10	8
St. Francis of Assisi-Frisco	19	11	15	11
St. Francis of Assisi-Lancaster	4	3	3	3
St. Gabriel the Archangel	11	3	6	4
St. John Nepomucene-Ennis	10	7	7	
St. John the Apostle-Terrell	4	4		
St. Joseph Parish-Richardson	21	12	16	15
St. Joseph Parish-Waxahachie	10			6
St. Joseph Vietnamese Parish	3			3
St. Juan Diego	1		1	1
St. Jude Parish-Allen	16	4	15	11
St. Luke Parish	10	2	6	3
St. Mark the Evangelist	20	14	17	9
St. Martin Parish	12	5	12	7
St. Michael Parish-McKinney and Holy Family -Van Alstyne	8	1	2	2
St. Michael the Archangel-Garland	12	6	1	1
St. Michael the Archangel-Grand Prairie	5	2	1	4
St. Monica	7	2	4	2
St. Patrick Catholic Parish-Dallas	8	7	5	1
St. Philip the Apostle	20	7	14	14
St. Pius X Parish	17	6	12	4
St. Rita Parish	30	12	23	18
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish	15	6	12	8
Staff-OYYACM	9	7	8	7
Staff-St. Rita	12	11	11	9
Ursuline Academy	1	1		
Volunteers	23	13	13	10
Young Catholic Professionals	6	3	3	3
Grand Total	780	312	464	357

APPENDIX II: DEANERY REPRESENTATION

<i>Deanery Representation</i>	<i>Parishes w/ Representation per Deanery</i>	<i>Total Parishes in Deanery</i>	<i>Percentage of Parishes in Deanery Attending</i>
Central	6	10	60%
Eastern	3	7	43%
Non-Parish Representation	7	N/A	N/A
North Central	12	14	86%
Northeast	8	11	73%
Northern	11	15	73%
Southeast	5	9	56%
Southwest	10	13	77%

Parish Listing by Deanery

Southwest Deanery

- Corpus Christi, Ferris
- Epiphany Quasi Parish, Italy
- Holy Cross, Dallas
- Holy Spirit, Duncanville
- Immaculate Conception, Corsicana
- Immaculate Conception, Grand Prairie
- St. Anthony, Dallas
- St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Dallas
- St. Francis of Assisi, Lancaster
- St. John Nepomucene, Ennis
- St. Joseph Vietnamese, Grand Prairie
- St. Joseph, Waxahachie
- St. Michael, Grand Prairie

Eastern Deanery

- Our Lady of Fatima Quasi Parish, Quinlan
- Our Lady of the Lake, Rockwall
- St. Ann, Kaufman
- St. John the Apostle, Terrell
- St. Joseph, Commerce
- St. Martin, Forney
- St. William, Greenville

Northern Deanery

- Holy Family Quasi Parish, Van Alstyne
- Our Lady of Angels, Allen
- Prince of Peace, Plano
- Sacred Heart of Jesus Chinese Catholic Community, Plano
- St. Anthony, Wylie
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Plano
- St. Elizabeth, Bonham
- St. Francis of Assisi Quasi Parish, Whitesboro
- St. Francis of Assisi, Frisco
- St. Gabriel the Archangel, McKinney
- St. Jude, Allen
- St. Mark the Evangelist, Plano
- St. Mary, Sherman
- St. Michael, McKinney
- St. Patrick, Denison

Northeast Deanery

- Divine Mercy of Our Lord, Mesquite
- Good Shepherd, Garland
- Mother of Perpetual Help Vietnamese Catholic Community, Dallas
- Sacred Heart, Rowlett
- St. Augustine, Dallas
- St. Mary Malankara, Garland
- St. Michael the Archangel, Garland
- St. Peter Vietnamese, Dallas
- St. Philip the Apostle, Dallas
- St. Pius X, Dallas
- St. Thomas the Apostle Syro-Malabar, Garland

North Central Deanery

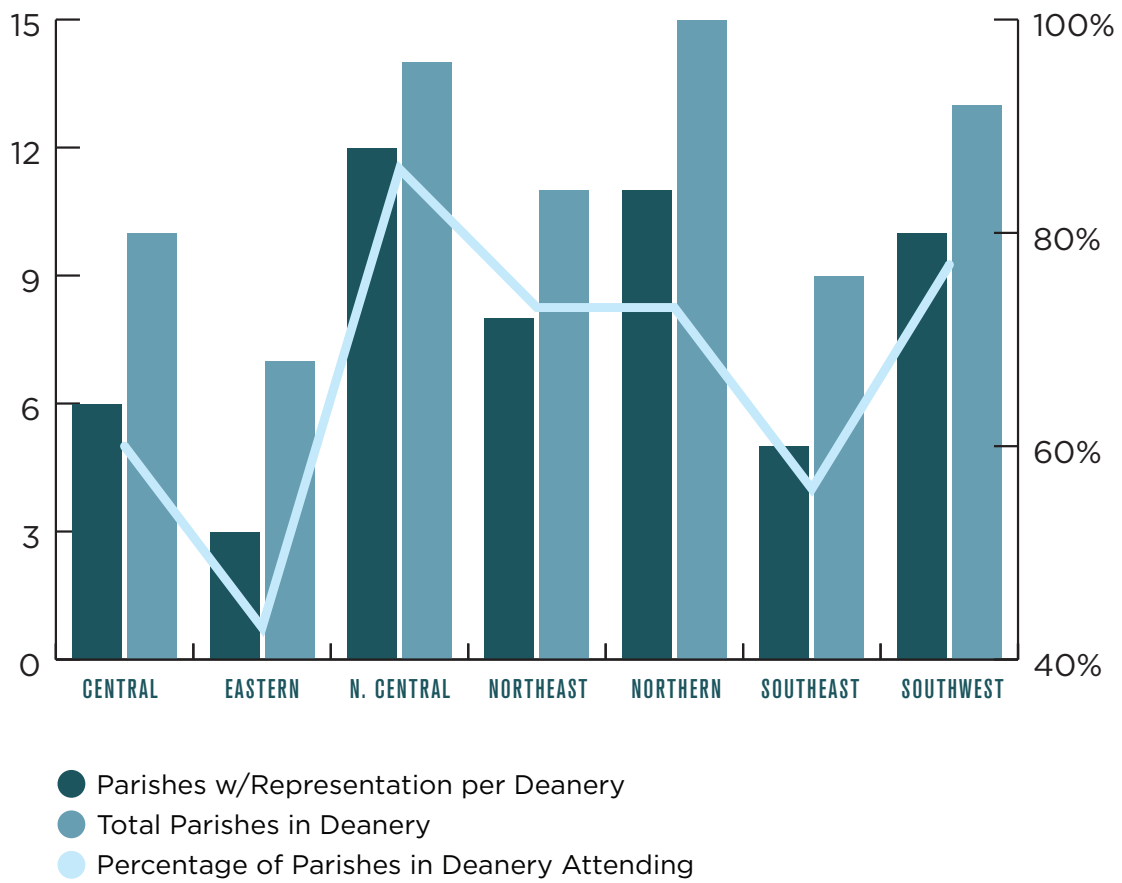
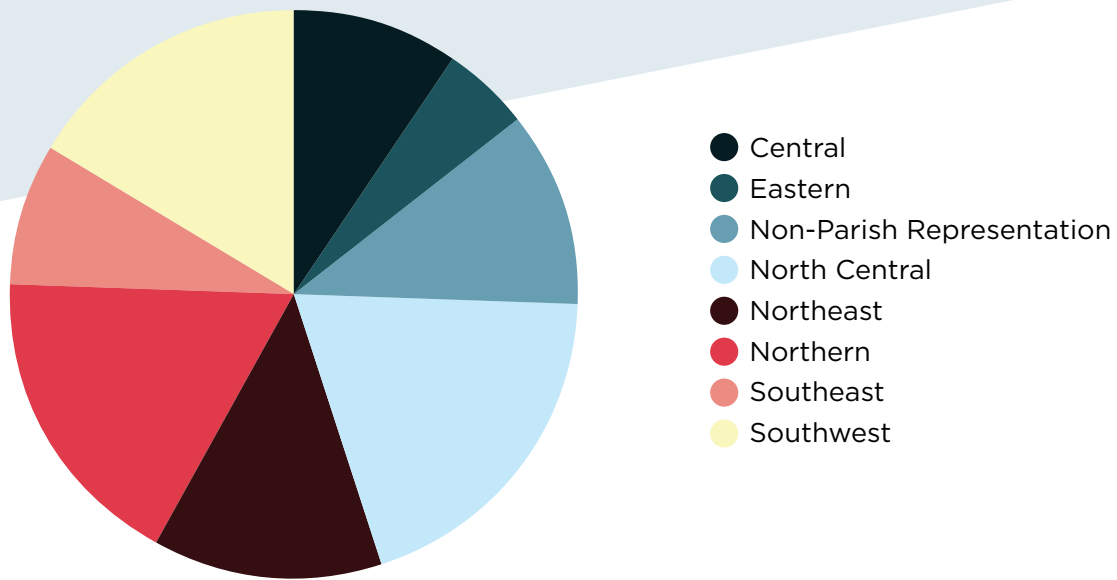
- All Saints, Dallas
- Church of the Incarnation, UD, Irving
- Holy Family, Irving
- Mary Immaculate, Farmers Branch
- Mater Dei Latin Mass Parish, Irving
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Dallas
- Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ Vietnamese, Carrollton
- St. Andrew Kim, Dallas
- St. Ann, Coppell
- St. Joseph, Richardson
- St. Juan Diego Quasi Parish, Dallas
- St. Monica, Dallas
- St. Paul the Apostle, Richardson
- St. Rita, Dallas

Central Deanery

- Cathedral Santuario de Guadalupe, Dallas
- Christ the King, Dallas
- Holy Trinity, Dallas
- SMU Catholic Campus Ministry, Dallas
- St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Dallas
- St. Edward, Dallas
- St. Jude Chapel, Dallas
- St. Patrick, Dallas
- St. Peter the Apostle, Dallas
- St. Thomas Aquinas, Dallas

Southeast Deanery

- Blessed Sacrament, Dallas
- Nuestra Señora del Pilar, Dallas
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Dallas
- Our Lady of San Juan de los Lagos Quasi Parish, Dallas
- Santa Clara of Assisi, Dallas
- St. Basil the Great Byzantine, Irving
- St. Cecilia, Dallas
- St. James, Dallas
- St. Luke, Irving
- St. Mary of Carmel, Dallas



APPENDIX III: CONVOCAATION INFORMATION

Parish Delegation Makeup

- A parish delegation should be no less than 10 people and no more than 20 people and fill the representation requested by the Holy Father.
- Pastors or Delegation Leaders will determine the makeup of their team and should be inclusive of themselves and ministry leadership that is in a direct role to the constituents named above.
- The age range for youth and young adult constituents invited to attend should fall in the age range of incoming eighth graders/Fall 2017 through young adults under the age of 35.
- Key parent stakeholders are also welcome to attend.

Parish Delegations May Include

- Pastors/Priests
- Ministry Leaders for any Youth, Campus, or Young Adult Ministry (paid staff and/or vital volunteers)
- Supervisors to Ministry Leaders or other Parish Staff
- Youth (Grades 8-12, Fall 2017)
- Young Adults (college age to under the age of 35)
- Parents/Guardians/Grandparents of Youth or Young Adults*
- Other Stakeholders/Key Donors



Non-Parish Delegations

- Non-Catholic campus ministry, school communities, and religious-order delegations may not have the same delegation makeup as a parish.
- The discernment of non-parish delegations should be a good cross-section of leadership. Any young constituents who are connected to their delegation will be left to the discernment of the invited delegation's pastor or primary point of contact.
- Any non-parish delegations should be no larger than 20 (if bringing youth constituents) *

Definitions of Groupings

- Large Group—All participants met in the church
- Deanery—Grouping of all parishes from one of seven deaneries within the boundaries of the Diocese of Dallas
- POD—Smaller groupings of two to three parishes, breaking down each respective deanery into smaller gatherings

Note—Some preplanning statistical information for who was projected to be in these groupings exists, however, final attendance in each gathering was not taken.



APPENDIX IV: CONVOCAATION QUESTIONS

(Many convocation questions were modeled after the Washington Diocese website sharewithfrancis.org)

Thursday, July 27, 2017

11:15 A.M. - LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS / TOWN HALL STYLE

Thematic Focus: Where have we been? / What is our current ministerial legacy?

- What does the word “faith” mean to the youth or young adults of your community?
- What is the role of the church? / What place does the church have in Dallas today? / Is it relevant? / Why or why not?
- Why do you think some youth/young adults drift away from the church?
- When you hear the terms youth ministry or young adult ministry, what does that mean to you? Is this a term that is familiar to your experience of church?
- What is one challenge faced by a young person or young adult in the Diocese of Dallas today? *(Please provide which age group you are speaking about: Youth (Middle School or High School), Young Adult (inclusive of Pastoral Juvenile Hispania).*
- What is one significant opportunity for young people in the Diocese of Dallas today? *(Please provide which age group you are speaking about: Youth (Middle School or High School), Young Adult (inclusive of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana).*

1:45 P.M. - LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS / TOWN HALL STYLE

Thematic Focus: What is our current landscape?

- How do the statistics mentioned by our speaker line up with your ministerial experience in the Catholic Church?

- In light of these statistics, how should we minister to this current generation? *(Please provide which age group you are speaking about: Youth (Middle School or High School), Young Adult (inclusive of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana).*
- How does your Catholic community care for youth/young adults who are on the margins/marginalized? (Addictions, gangs, violence and abuse, homeless, incarcerated, bullying, human trafficking, identifying as LGBT, poverty, refugees, immigrants, health, and disabilities, etc.)
- Let's dream for a moment. Imagine you walk into the perfect Catholic community, what would it look like? What would ministry for youth and young adults look like?

3:00 P.M. - DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS / POD / SUB-DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS

Deanery Questions

- What do youth, young adults, and their families need from the Catholic Church?
- The way a parish community provides ministerial offerings for youth and young adults and provides outreach to them varies from parish to parish within deaneries.
- What is your understanding of or description of what ministry should look like for youth or young adults? Are ministry offerings important for this age group? Why? *(Please provide which age group you are speaking about: Youth (Middle School or High School), Young Adult (inclusive of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana).*
- In light of what you have heard today, what is one thing you feel your parish does well? What is one thing you would redesign?
- Where are we missing the mark? Who are we not serving?
- What is one thing we can do (within our power) to improve youth/young adult ministry in the Diocese of Dallas?

POD Questions

- What struck you the most from the Town Halls? What was challenging? What was inspiring?

- The way a parish community provides ministerial offerings for youth and young adults and provides outreach to them varies from parish to parish within deaneries.
- What is your understanding of or description of what ministry should look like for youth or young adults? Are ministry offerings important for this age group? Why? *(Please provide which age group you are speaking about: Youth (Middle School or High School), Young Adult (inclusive of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana).*
- With respect to youth and young adult ministry: What do you expect your parish to provide? What do you hope they provide? What are you looking for?
- Does your parish engage and invite youth and young adults who aren't involved in the church? Yes: How? OR No: How could they start?
- How do you integrate young people with physical, intellectual, or emotional disabilities into your parish youth and young adult programs?

4:45 P.M. - REPEAT DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS / POD / SUB-DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS

Friday, July 28, 2017

11:15 A.M. - LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS / TOWN HALL STYLE

Thematic Focus: 'Missionary Imperative'

- When you heard the speaker refer to the idea of 'missionary imperative,' what do you see? What does that look like to you?
- How does your parish community inspire a missionary imperative in youth or young adults through ministry opportunities?
- How do your parish formational opportunities for the sacraments of initiation inspire a missionary imperative in the hearts of young disciples?
- From your experience/your reality with the Catholic Church, do current formational/ministry efforts inspire a call to holiness in the lives of youth and young adults? How so? - OR - How should they?
- How can the church "lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love" and make everyday decisions by those standards?

1:00 P.M. - DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS / POD / SUB-DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS

Deanery Questions

- What kinds of places of group gatherings have major success outside the church and why?
- From your perspective and experience, does your parish community see youth and young adults as consumers or disciples? Does your parish see youth and young adults as a priority reflected in your staff support, budget, and ministerial opportunities?
- As Pope Francis calls us to embrace a spirit of missionary imperative, a parish community must do a self-assessment in prioritization of how it walks with youth and young adults: How does your parish welcome youth/young adults?
- Missionary imperative is born from our understanding of vocation. It is how God is calling you to use your life in an ordinary way for a supernatural purpose. What can our parish communities do to assist youth/young adults in discerning major life decisions (moral decision, job, college choice, marriage, priesthood, etc.)
- How can our (parish/school/community) help (youth/young adults) to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ? What would help?
- If you could name the top three programs/ministerial offerings that are effective evangelization moments for youth or young adults in your parish, what would they be? *(Please provide which age group you are speaking about: Youth (Middle School or High School), Young Adult (inclusive of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana).*

POD Questions

- In what ways does your parish currently inspire a sense of missionary imperative?
- With respect to the concept of missionary imperative in complement to youth and young adult ministry: What does your parish provide? What could they provide? What would be inspiring/meet the needs of a youth and young adult?

- How do your parish formational opportunities for the sacraments of initiation inspire a missionary imperative in the hearts of young disciples?
- Missionary imperative is born from our understanding of vocation. It is how God is calling you to use your life in an ordinary way for a supernatural purpose. What can your parish do to assist youth/young adults in discerning major life decisions (moral decision, job, college choice, marriage, priesthood, etc.)
- When a parish community is composed of many people who are fed spiritually in a myriad of different ways, how can your parish community best meet the needs of youth and young adults? Where is the common ground? What are the challenges?

2:45 P.M. - REPEAT DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS / POD / SUB-DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS

8:15 P.M. - LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS / TOWN HALL STYLE

Thematic Focus: Where have we been? / What is our current ministerial legacy?

- What is one challenge faced by a young person or young adult in the Diocese of Dallas today? *(Please provide which age group you are speaking about: Youth (Middle School or High School), Young Adult (inclusive of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana)).*
- What is one significant opportunity for young people in the Diocese of Dallas today? *(Please provide which age group you are speaking about: Youth (Middle School or High School), Young Adult (inclusive of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana)).*
- What is the role of the church? / What place does the church have in Dallas today? / Is it relevant? / Why or why not?
- Why do you think some youth/young adults drift away from living their faith through a relationship with the Catholic Church?
- Let's dream for a moment. Imagine you walk into the perfect Catholic Community, what would it look like? What would ministry for youth and young adults look like?

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Question if time permits / ensure enough time is spent on the previous questions first:

- How does your Catholic community care for youth/young adults who are on the margins/marginalized? (Addictions, gangs, violence and abuse, homeless, incarcerated, bullying, human trafficking, identifying as LGBT, poverty, refugees, immigrants, health, and disabilities, etc.)

Saturday, July 29, 2017

11:15 A.M. - ALL DELEGATIONS SESSION (CHURCH) / LARGE GROUP LISTENING SESSION TWO

Thematic Focus: ‘Missionary Imperative’

- When you heard the speaker refer to the idea of ‘missionary imperative,’ what do you see? What does that look like to you?
- How does your parish community inspire a missionary imperative in youth or young adults through ministry opportunities?
- From your experience/your reality with the Catholic Church, do current formational/ministry efforts inspire a call to holiness in the lives of youth and young adults? How so? - OR - How should they?
- How do your parish formational opportunities for the sacraments of initiation inspire a missionary imperative in the hearts of young disciples?
- How can the church “lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love” and make everyday decisions by those standards?

1:15 P.M. - DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS / POD / SUB-DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS

Deanery Questions

- What do youth, young adults, and their families need today from the Catholic Church?
- What is one thing we can do (within our power) to improve youth/young adult ministry in the Diocese of Dallas?

- Where are we missing the mark? Who are we not serving?
- In light of what you have heard today, what is one thing you feel your parish does well? What is one thing you would redesign?
- What kinds of places of group gatherings have major success outside the church and why?
- How can our (parish/school/community) help (youth/young adults) to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ? What would help?

POD Questions

- If you could name the top three programs/ministerial offerings that are effective in leading youth or young adults in your parish closer to Jesus and his church, what would they be? *(Please provide which age group you are speaking about: Youth (Middle School or High School), Young Adult (inclusive of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana)).*
- With respect to youth and young adult ministry: What do you expect your parish to provide? What do you hope they provide? What are you looking for? What do you need?
- Does your parish engage and invite youth and young adults who aren't involved in the church? Yes: How? OR No: How could they start?
- With respect to youth and young adult ministry: Where, as a parish, are we missing the mark? Who are we not serving?
- Missionary imperative is born from our understanding of vocation. It is how God is calling you to use your life in an ordinary way for a supernatural purpose. What can your parish do to assist youth/young adults in discerning major life decisions (moral decision, job, college choice, marriage, priesthood, etc.)
- How are youth and young adults with physical, intellectual, or emotional disabilities integrated into social and spiritual activities such as retreats, Bible studies, and social activities?

3:00 P.M. - REPEAT DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS / POD / SUB-DEANERY LISTENING SESSIONS

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APPENDIX V. FREQUENCY OF CATEGORIES CODED WITHIN THE DATASET

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Catechesis/Faith Formation	441	6.5
Family/Parents	411	6.1
Parish Youth Ministry	406	6.0
Being Welcoming	365	5.4
Young Adults	328	4.8
Community	271	4.0
Missionary Discipleship/Relationship with Jesus	241	3.6
Prayer/Spirituality	227	3.4
Evangelization	222	3.3
Discernment/Vocations	214	3.2
Bishop/Diocese	200	3.0
Youth and Young Adult Leadership Development	173	2.6
Relational Ministry	161	2.4
Parish	159	2.3
Cultural Inclusivity/Competence	156	2.3
Digital/Social Media	153	2.3
Other	145	2.1
Social Justice/Service/Mission Activity	141	2.1
Confirmation	135	2.0
Faith	134	2.0
Eucharist/Mass	130	1.9
Relevance/Priority of Church/Faith	130	1.9
Pastor	127	1.9
Collaboration or Systems Related to Ministry	125	1.8
Financial Resources for Ministry	125	1.8
Leadership Development/Ministry Formation	125	1.8
Disengaged in Faith/Leaving Church	108	1.6
Special Needs	106	1.6
Recruiting and Supporting Volunteers	101	1.5
Pastoral Care	100	1.5

Movements	79	1.2
Devotional Practice/Adoration/Mary	76	1.1
Poor/Marginalized	73	1.1
Psychological Health	68	1.0
Homosexuality/Gay Marriage/Gender Identity	67	1.0
Transition from Youth to Young Adult	64	0.9
Culture and Society	63	0.9
High School Youth	63	0.9
College/Campus Ministry	59	0.9
Marriage	58	0.9
Catholic Identity	50	0.7
Catholic School/Campus Ministry [HS]	50	0.7
Middle School Youth	46	0.7
Sexual Activity, Sexuality, or Theology of the Body	36	0.5
Reconciliation	29	0.4
Morality	26	0.4
Total	6767	100.0



NOTES

- i. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG). (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2013), 33
- ii. Pope Benedict XVI, "Homily of First Vespers on the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul," (The Vatican: 2010), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20100628_vespri-pietro-paolo_en.html, Accessed May 29, 2018.
- iii. EG, 265
- iv. EG, 28
- v. EG, 266
- vi. EG, 165
- vii. *Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish*, (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 1996), <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/communities-of-salt-and-light-reflections-on-the-social-mission-of-the-parish.cfm#intro>, Accessed May 29, 2018
- viii. EG, 28
- ix. Antonio Spadaro, "A Big Heart Open to God: An Interview with Pope Francis." *America Magazine*, September 30, 2013, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2013/09/30/big-heart-open-god-interview-pope-francis>, Accessed May 29, 2018
- x. *Stewardship A Disciple's Response: A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship Tenth Anniversary Edition*, (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2002), 43
- xi. *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2005), 33
- xii. *Stewardship a Disciple's Response: A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship*, (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2002), 63.



