

**Synod on Synodality Synthesis**  
**Diocese of New Ulm**  
**Submitted by**  
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There were 15 listening sessions throughout the Diocese of New Ulm. There were 406 participants in these sessions. There were several individual responses not connected to a specific listening session.

After reviewing the reports of the sessions, the following themes emerged as most common.

- 1. The centrality of the Eucharist to our life as a Church.**
- 2. Concern about the celebration of the Eucharist especially about communal participation. There was some unease expressed about the division caused by a perceived move away from the vision of Vatican II on the liturgy and towards earlier forms of celebration. There was a much less broad feeling that the move towards pre-Vatican II forms would be a good idea.**
- 3. Many mentioned the damage done by the isolation and distancing necessitated by the Covid pandemic and how to overcome and heal that damage.**
- 4. There was great concern about the effects of the clergy sexual abuse scandal.**
- 5. Concern with liturgical education and formation was a prominent theme.**
- 6. The need for more priests was common throughout the submitted reports**
- 7. Concern with the formation and education of the faithful.**
- 8. There was much discussion about listening to those on the edges or outside of our parishes. Special concern was expressed for divorced people and the members of the Hispanic community.**
- 9. There was an almost universal desire to learn how to listen to and engage young people.**
- 10. The refrain of listening to God, to the promptings of Holy Spirit, and to each other was evident throughout the process.**

We chose not to supplement our in-person sessions with on-line virtual sessions or with a questionnaire format online. Through consultation with the Diocese of New Ulm administrator, Msgr. Douglas Grams, and the Board of Consultors, we chose to present three areas for consideration. We chose these areas and the questions from the Vademecum. The three broad areas were the basic question dealing with journeying together, listening to the Holy Spirit and each other, and celebration of our faith especially in the liturgy.

At this time, we are hoping to make the synthesis public, but that decision will depend on Msgr. Grams with consultation with the Board of Consultors. We have no plans for the future use of the process outcomes at this time, mostly because we do not have a bishop at this time. It is entirely possible that our future bishop would and could choose to build on this process as he takes up his ministry among us.

As I watched the process unfold, I was struck by the people's eagerness to share their thoughts and ideas, and I was impressed by the participants' willingness to listen to each other without feeling the need to correct, disagree or convince those who held different views.

There was a heartening concern for the centrality of the Eucharist and for Eucharistic community. While there exists some division about the proper celebration of the Eucharist, there seems to be a universal love and concern for the Eucharist in our life as a Church.

There was some reluctance around this process as perhaps leading us into disagreement, error or the change of truth. Repeatedly at the sessions I attended there was a confidence expressed that God's truth would guide us, and that our experience could be helpful in remaining faithful to the truth God reveals in our lives and in the life of the Church.

In addition to the work of coordinating our participation in the Synod, I am also the pastor of four parishes. It took me some time to understand the process. The announcement of the process and the short time-line for accomplishing the task was daunting, especially since it was not a full-time job for me. I floundered in getting the process up and running, and so our time-line was quite short. I believe that if I had been able to understand the process more clearly, we would have had greater participation.