



Salubong

(Welcoming Encounter)

THE PHILIPPINE CATHOLIC CHURCH
SYNODAL REPORT

AUGUST 15, 2022



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SALUBONG (Welcoming Encounter) **The Philippine Catholic Church Synodal Report**

Jesus is risen indeed! Our synodal consultations in the Philippines were an experience of Easter. Like the traditional Filipino *Salubong*¹ which we celebrate annually on Easter dawn with a reenactment of the encounter between the Risen Lord and grieving Blessed Mother, our own encounters became an experience of new life. Somehow our strongly Marian Filipino spirituality has drawn inspiration from the Gospel narratives about the Easter encounters between the disciples and the Risen Lord. We have indeed experienced Jesus alive in each other, and the veil that keeps us from recognizing him has been lifted. We have seen the Lord and this is our story.²

PAGSALUBONG (Welcoming)

The act of reaching out to those in the peripheries mimicked the *Salubong* ritual of the women and men meeting each other. We were coming from different directions and yet we welcomed one another. In one diocese, the bishop personally wrote a letter of invitation to the sectoral groups. Many organized sessions per sector, while others preferred multi-sectoral gatherings giving due attention to different voices in the community. Some conducted the consultations alongside the preparations for baptisms, marriages, and the other sacraments. Although most dioceses reported that the majority of the parishes succeeded in conducting orientation sessions, there were some that mentioned the disinterest of a few. In one diocese, twenty six of the forty one parishes did not attend the orientation sessions, expressing that it was just going to be another activity from above and that nothing concrete would emerge from it anyway.

Those who participated ranged from one to fifteen percent of the total Catholic population of the parish and/or diocese while a few required thirty to fifty percent participation. Most of them consulted different sectors, with one diocese reported reaching forty five sectors in all. Some dioceses relied on the members of their ministries and regular Sunday Mass-attending faithful as respondents. A combination of different approaches were developed by most dioceses: survey questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, FGDs (focused group discussions), house visitations, and online sessions among many others. Questions were translated, put in context, and simplified as well as pilot-tested. One parish reimbursed the sectors' foregone day's labor since they lost their income when they attended the consultations.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our people met Jesus in one another through the synodal consultations with "their hearts burning within them," as they shared to one another what happened on the road. The encounters with the different sectors were faith experiences, deepening people's love for God and strengthening their desire to follow Jesus' compassionate love. Growing in empathy and acquiring the spirit of consultative judgement, we learned to embrace the "poorest of the poor." There was a touching story of a team that visited a remote area, which unknowingly turned out to be a 'rebel community' (where military and rebel groups engage in violent gunfights). They continued their session, which became one of the most enriching encounters they have ever had.

As people shared and listened to one another's experiences and insights, it was the Holy Spirit who spoke through each one of them. The communal process was characterized by listening and discerning at every step — from tabulating to collecting data, to categorizing, writing, and validating them with the people they interviewed. Some parishes convened separate assemblies with sectoral representatives; these consultations included other stakeholders whose task was to present to them the initial results as well as to engage them in a deeper reflection on the data. Some involved only the parish synodal teams, while in other dioceses, only the diocesan synodal team unpacked the results for deeper reflection together with writers who were tasked to develop their ten-page synthesis reports. Some collected the stories and included them as an appendix, while a few others integrated the stories in the main body of their report. There were a few dioceses that made use of quantitative research designs. Some included the tabulation of the responses in the attachments.

¹ In most parishes in the Philippines, the Easter *Salubong* begins with two processions coming from opposite directions: one with a group of women accompanying the image of the sorrowful Mother covered with a black veil, and the other with a group of men accompanying the image of the Risen Christ. The much-awaited main event in the encounter is the lifting of the black veil of the Blessed Mother by a child acting as an angel and singing the *Regina Coeli*.

² See attachment 1 for the Synodal Process adopted by the Philippine Catholic Church.

Food and fellowship were always part of the experience. From the initial gathering to every consultation in the parishes and chapels, there was “*salu-salo*” (sharing of food). As it was also an opportunity for invited participants to enter the church premises, it became an opportunity for them to get to know parish/diocesan services as well as groups they can be involved in as members. Many remarked how the consultations positively affected the celebration of the liturgies. Special liturgies were also created such as the lighting of synodal candles, which were used in all the consultation meetings held. One diocese ended the consultation with a three-kilometer walk which highlighted the significance of a church walking together.

There were various reactions to the process. In some dioceses where similar consultations have already been done in the past, people were not surprised as they willingly participated and got engaged all throughout. Majority of the respondents appreciated the encounter and the opportunity to share and to listen. Some expressed confusion regarding the wide spectrum of synodality on account of the questions the participants were being consulted about. With very little orientation on the purpose and goal of synodality, participation in some of the assemblies was not as active and as dynamic as expected.

Participants continued to share the fruits of their synodal journey. As an exercise of leadership and humbled to be chosen to listen, they have been empowered to contribute to building a more synodal church. Some confessed feeling ashamed after listening to people’s stories and their complaints about the church, especially about the clergy. Others felt pressured because after listening, they felt responsible to take action. They realized the challenge of breaking down power structures to hear the real cries of the voiceless. As they climbed mountains, crossed rivers, and built bridges to reach out and to embrace “the least, the last, and the lost,” they grew in their understanding of being church. We are church together with them!

SALUBUNGAN (Meeting of Hearts and Minds)

The synodal process (parish, diocese, metropolitan and national) was indeed a *salubungan* - a meeting of hearts and minds. In the Philippine setting, when one says “*Nagkasalubungan na kami*” it means after having been through conflicting moments they have finally found a common ground and can now move forward together. Although diverse in personalities and backgrounds - socio-political, cultural and religious, as well as different in theological mindsets - the spiritual conversations brought forth joyful as well as painful realizations about our church’s life and mission. It took a lot of courage to face the shadows of the Philippine Church experience! But like the Easter *Salubong* ritual, how joyful Mary was as her black veil was removed and she was allowed to see her Risen Son face to face! We believe Jesus stayed with us and spoke to us in our attempt at communal discernment, and as we listened to one another.

Below is our ‘Emmaus walk’, what we were discussing as we walked along the synodal roads at the diocesan, metropolitan, and national levels. On the pathways where we stumbled (we were not who we proclaimed ourselves to be), Jesus gently ‘explained the Scriptures to us’ prophetically pointing out to us where we missed the ‘signs of the times’. Jesus’ gaze on our humbled countenance helped us also to rise up and walk on new pathways.

Companions on the Journey

Majority of those who were consulted were the usual Church leaders – clergy, religious, lay leaders, members of church organizations, ministries and commissions, and the BECs (basic ecclesial communities). The synodal teams (diocese/parish) made efforts to reach out to those who are in the ‘existential peripheries’ - those whom we do not see or engage within the usual church activities. Representatives from the sectors were consulted.³ One diocese called all those who were consulted as ‘*kamanlalakbay*’ (companions in the journey).

³ The sectors include the following: LGBTQ+ (lesbians, gay, bi-sexual, trans-gender, queer), farmers, fisherfolks, PWDs (persons with disabilities, including deaf mute), PDLs (persons deprived of liberty), government officials, *barangay* (village) leaders, politicians, single parents, unwed mothers, cohabiting couples, people recovering from substance abuse and other forms of addiction, youth, students, teachers, school staff, public transport drivers, laborers (miners, construction workers, carpenters, ranch workers), daily wage earners (vendors, laundry women, candlemakers, etc.), media people, medical frontliners, members of other Christian denominations, IPs (indigenous peoples), OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) and their families, inactive Catholics, those who have left the Catholic church, women, street children, street families, those afflicted with HIV-AIDS, other religions (especially Muslims), migrants, elderly, broken families, atheists, CICL (children in conflict with the law), children with special

All the dioceses expressed that the consultation was a ‘synodal moment’ because for the teams, it opened up insights about a life and a world they did not know about. Of the people who had been interviewed, especially the sectoral representatives, many said it was their first time to be consulted and to be listened to. Someone said “*Nakikinig talaga ang Obispo sa amin!*” (“The Bishop is really listening to us!”) It made them feel they belong to the church. They believed such experiences of companionship and belongingness were the fruits of the spiritual conversations (some followed *lectio divina* or Bible-sharing methods) which were employed in the consultation. They said that it was a no-holds-barred conversation, and they felt free to express their hurts and wounds (especially those that had been caused by Church leaders, clergy and lay alike) as well as beautiful moments of grace / experience of God especially in their most difficult moments.

“Kasali pala kami!” (“We belong!”) Many of the respondents perceived communion to be associated with liturgical celebrations and pious devotions. While many regarded those who are baptized as companions, the mention of BEC and stewardship program, life groups, as well as “*daupang palad ng mga sektor at taong simbahan*” (hands linked between the sectors and church pastoral ministers) indicated that only those who are engaged in ministry or are members of task groups and associations are considered as companions. However, in areas where Catholics are a minority the parishes extended their gaze towards other Christian denominations and nominal Catholics, as well as the Muslims and IPs (indigenous peoples) as their synodal companions. They came up with different levels of engagement as Church – interreligious, ecumenical, political, and social. One suggested that their diocesan profile reflected different sets of people to journey with depending on their localities. In one part of the region of Mindanao, the eastern vicariates were less confrontational and their involvement was limited, while the central and the western vicariates tended to be more open and aware of socio-political realities even from the grassroots level.

“Marami ang nakikilakbay, ngunit mas marami ang naiiwan” (“Many are journeying together but many more are left behind.”). Many dioceses acknowledged the failure of the church in general and the priests, in particular, to journey with their flock and to reach out to so many people, especially *mga nasa laylayan* (existential peripheries), the poor, and the marginalized. It has also been noted how the lifestyle of the priests either inspires or turns people off. In the words of one of the participants, “*Bigyan nyo naman kami ng pari na handang bumabad sa aming kalagayan!*” (“Please give us priests who are willing to immerse in our situation!”). Some have pointed out that their priests are becoming too secular, hooked to vices, engaged in business, own vast properties, and use parish funds for every personal need. Such priests, they say, are offensive to people and drive them away from the church. On the other hand, priests who live a rich pastoral ministry, not in love with money or properties, have no vices and celebrate Mass with dignity, deliver good homilies, inspire people, and draw them to the Church. The same comment is noted with regard to lay leaders.

“Hindi kami kagayak!” (“We are not of their kind!”) Many of the underprivileged and those who were marginalized in society felt that they were also left out in the church. As the church is seen to be for the rich, the economically poor as well as those who are deprived of social acceptance are being left out. Dioceses with Catholics as minorities felt however, that they can identify more closely with those who were marginalized and persecuted, and for this reason they embodied a Church of the poor and those suffering from bombings, intimidations, and persecutions.

“Ayawan na!” (“We quit!”) Those who were demoralized or felt excluded have left the church and no longer find the need to be part of it. Another very painful reality that makes people leave the church are some priests who have committed sexual abuse and those who have sired children. They have wounded not only the reputation of the Church but also the credibility of their fellow-priests. Some male parishioners have gone to the extent of prohibiting their children or their wives from being actively involved in church ministries and activities presumably to protect them from abusive priests. But sometimes it can also be a mere assertion of patriarchal authority. Many found the pastoral statements and programs of the church irrelevant to their own concerns; to these they responded with indifference.

Listening

The structures for listening are: social media, church radio station, pastoral visitation by priests and bishops, pastoral assemblies, BECs, prayer gatherings, catechism and home visitation. The Eucharistic celebrations and liturgical activities are foremost among the occasions where people hear the voice of God. Some also say they hear God more during times of hardships, poverty and calamities.

needs, policemen, *barangay tanods* (village watchmen), civic organizations, NGOs (non-government organizations), undocumented people, business people, house helps. See attached graph.

Those who have expressed that they have been listened to, especially during the synodal consultation sessions, were grateful and felt blessed because “*naipadama ng simbahan na mahalaga kami*” (“the Church has made us feel that we matter”) and they have been given the opportunity to understand what it means to be church and to actively participate as a member. It is for this reason that many had felt that the “synodal journey had left them with a treasure.” Social action programs were also identified as spaces for listening that lead to concrete responses to the needs of the poor. Among them, programs such as housing, scholarships, physical and mental health care are sound indicators. In relation to this, house visitations and immersion activities allowed voices to be fully heard and listened to. Listening is facilitated when church leaders open pathways to encounter and to welcome others. Among the examples given are the establishment of mission stations in grassroots communities, willingness to dialogue regarding difficult and challenging issues like those of the LGBTQ+, and the sincere efforts to ensure a balance between “administration of the sacraments, evangelization, and care of the flock”.

However, many also regard “poverty as a major obstacle,” and “distance as a hindrance” to listening to one another. They perceive the ‘Church’ to be *malayo* (distant) from the faithful especially from those in the existential peripheries. Among the factors that are seen to block the Church from fully listening to one another are language, cultural diversity, lukewarm acceptance of those who are stigmatized in society, such as the LGBTQ+, single parents, separated families, etc., as well as negative attitudes like pride, greed, domination, indolence and unreasonableness, selfishness, intolerance, sloth, self-righteousness, lack of interest, self-pity, and close-mindedness. Likewise, inadequate responses to their needs further distance the Church leaders from them; so also does the “unfelt presence” of those in the peripheries, and the lack of “visible signs of concern.” Also cited were situations when Church leaders do “not represent the voice of the people, such as in issues that have to do with corruption, political dynasties, gambling, illegal fishing, etc.” These indicate their unwillingness to listen fully.

There is no proper channel or structure for the people, especially the sectors, to be listened to. It was also reported that listening has been selective and with favoritism, listening only to those who are close to the parish (like the pastoral workers, the members of organizations) but especially the rich. Someone asked “if we do not listen to the excluded, are we even listening to God?” Furthermore, there is a need to evaluate existing spaces of dialogue and discernment in the church. Some lament over “consultations that are devoid of real conversations,” and meetings as mere venues for “information dissemination whereby the lay are heard under the guise of consultation but in reality, it is only a means for ratification and immediate execution.” Communal discernment is not a common practice in many dioceses and parishes.

Speaking Out

Some respondents shared that there are spaces in Church life that allow people to speak out, like the weekly BEC meetings and prayer gatherings. Regular pastoral programs such as *Alay-Kapwa* (Offering for the Neighbor), the annual *tontongan* (in Ilocano, dialogue or discussion), ministry meetings and parish as well as diocesan assemblies. While BEC meetings are opportunities to speak out, much also depends on the capacity of the facilitator/leader. The PPC (parish pastoral council) meetings are also venues for speaking out as all church groups are represented. Occasionally, non-officers & non-members are allowed to join and speak up. Lay leaders, the educated, and those who are active in the church, have the courage to express themselves.

In the synodal consultation, participants shared freely their joys, pains, dreams, frustrations, and hopes in and for the church. Some among the sectors were timid or even afraid, or lacking in confidence to speak up because of their social status. Openness took some time as people were not used to the opportunity that was being given to them to speak. It was also important to reorient the facilitators about their listening role since they were used to lecturing.

The consultation made it possible for the unheard voices to be heard and for people in the margins to share their views regarding the Church. It also gave Church workers the opportunity to raise their concerns regarding “work overload, the inadequacy of operational resources, discrimination, health issues, retirement security, attitude problems, allowances, and infidelity of priests to their vows, especially to chastity.” But Church pastoral workers also became aware of their “maintenance mentality” and were challenged to move out of their comfort zones. Dialogue with local government officials was most welcomed. They said the Church only engages with them when they commit mistakes; they don’t feel that the Church has anything to do with them.

Some dioceses reported that there is a gross lack of dialogue. They reported that they were only listening to Church leaders, especially the priests. When the poor speak out or try to voice an opinion, they are simply ignored or set aside as unimportant. Many people feel that only the donors and

benefactors (dubbed as the “owners of the church”) have a voice or are entitled to speak out. There are many references about the Church focusing only on collections and contributions but failing to initiate and implement pastoral programs that include meaningful encounters and dialogues.

There are many blocks that prevent authentic dialogue from happening: fear of being judged, feelings of unworthiness and low self-esteem rooted in the lack of understanding of the Christian faith, *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) and connivance, bribery, as well as blind obedience to authority. Politics and gossiping severely divide families. Some people shared that it is better not to speak out (“no talk, no mistake”), while others, the persuasive ones or the ‘oppressors’ among Church leaders, tend to dictate what others have to do.

Certain sectors expressed their concrete needs and grievances and challenged the Church to fight with them and for them. A farmer questioned why the Church is not doing anything to address the increasing price of fertilizers and farm implements. A fisherman lamented that the seashores and beaches were desecrated because of ongoing coastal road construction. The perceived politicking of the clergy especially in the recent elections gave rise to contrary feelings and opinions among those involved. IPs (indigenous peoples) see themselves as “objects of missionary help” but they are neglected in the area of evangelization. The church’s inattention to the environment also indicates its lack of understanding on the plight of the indigenous peoples and their needs. In one diocese, they have appealed for the church to “oppose destructive activities like open pit mining and coal-powered plants.” Church and *barangay* (village) should also speak out about conflicts among tribes, between military and NPA (the New People’s Army, an insurgent group), and also those caused by drunkenness and gambling.

For the Church to facilitate people’s capacity to speak up or speak out, there is a “need to explore helpful mechanisms to encourage honest and open exchange of views, to be proactive while keeping all informed, engaged and empowered in all matters of decision-making.” In one diocese, children and youth were able to speak about the Church through images or illustrations. The members should also be able to motivate one another to speak up by entering into conversations with a humble heart and open mind. Among the poor and marginalized, there is a need on their part to feel that they are valued and trusted. More than anything, Church members should “walk their talk”. In challenging situations of oppression and injustice, especially when people are in danger or they feel powerless, they feel the need to ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit and support one another in speaking out the truth.

Celebrating

People appreciated the meaningful celebrations of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. They felt the need to be enlightened and nourished spiritually and to find strength in facing challenges such as vices and conflicts, and making decisions. These inspire humility and charity and strengthen our feeling of belongingness in the family of God, as well as our desire to keep our own families together. People have also become more used to online Masses and liturgies which also present many new opportunities and new methods of facilitating God-encounters in the community. Several dioceses also mentioned the gift of popular religious practices as important ways of experiencing God.

Participants are grateful for the well-prepared liturgies and homilies of priests, especially when priests celebrate Mass in the far-flung areas of the diocese. There was a touching story of a priest washing the feet of the members of the family left behind by a suicide victim on Holy Thursday. He did so especially after the synodal team had listened to their story and had discovered that the one who committed suicide did so after another parish priest did not appear four times to his supposed visit to the family.

Whether face-to-face or virtual, worship remained as the best venue for experiencing synodality. However, the consultations called for priests to reevaluate their understanding and formation regarding the celebration of the sacraments as people have observed that they are merely “dispensers of the sacraments.” The homilies of the priests have received a lot of negative comments as well as some attitudes that hindered participation (e.g. pulpit abuses like scolding people in public, criticizing parishioners, engaging in character assassination of fellow priests during homilies). Unclear policies regarding the arancel system for the celebration of the sacraments, funeral Mass for suicide victims among many others, tend to keep people away from the church. In a diocese affected by the bombings of churches by religious extremists in the area, people live in a “threshold of vulnerability,” and their trauma keeps them from attending Mass in the Church.

The BECs have been important spaces for building up the life of worship of the baptized, through regular Bible-sharing, popular devotions and other community liturgies, like the Service of the Word led by extra-ordinary ministers on Sundays in places that cannot be reached by priests.

However, only a very small portion of the baptized community are actually attending Sunday Masses, and an even smaller number participating in other religious programs or activities, which are available only in the main parishes. The elderly are usually unable to attend Mass in the parish center. Moreover, there is a clamor for more meaningful, new and inculturated approaches in the Church's evangelization efforts and not to be content with rituals and methods that have lost their relevance and attractiveness. There is a clamor to provide the sacraments with no charges. In the BECs, the communities contribute for the stipend of the priest when he comes to preside over Masses. They hope to remove the perception that the sacraments are for sale and that only those who have money have chances of having the Eucharist celebrated in their places.

To increase participation in the celebration of the Mass, they suggest the following: celebrating it where the people are like fishing ports, distributing tasks and responsibilities, having a more aggressive approach to encourage youth and non-church goers to attend, conducting regular formation for liturgical ministers on the meaning of the Eucharist and popular religious practices. In one diocese, people commented that the priests have a lack of appreciation of the deeper motivations of people who practice popular devotions lovingly.

Dialogue between Church and Society

Dialogue exists within the structures of the Church. But it is generally limited to those who are active in the various Church organizations, in particular, between the clergy and some lay leaders. Such a dialogue does not extend to the laity in general, to the poor, and the marginalized in particular. There is also not much dialogue about the social and political issues between the priest and the laity.

There are partnerships with government agencies, both national and local, such as the UBAS *Ugnayan ng Barangay at Simbahan* (Barangay and Church relations), including networking with NGOs to promote community welfare. Collaboration with the various sectors is happening in the many institutions and ministries that serve the poor and the marginalized. Despite this, effective collaboration mechanisms for poverty reduction, ministry to dysfunctional families, caring for our common home, addressing moral disintegration are lacking. Likewise, there are no comprehensive programs to address materialism, secularism, and consumerism.

Opportunities for dialogue with LGBTQ+, the poor, abandoned, those suffering from substance abuse, the youths, PDLs (people deprived of liberty), laborers, and other marginalized sectors are also inadequate. Some members of the LGBTQ+ feel that they are not only abandoned but also highly misunderstood and condemned by the Church. Moreover, there is also a confusing position of the Church on politics since some bishops and priests have remained non-partisan, while others have taken a more partisan political stance.

The Church should facilitate dialogue on the following: political issues such as election fraud and vote buying, human rights violations, corruption in government, environmental issues, social issues such as broken marriages, gender identity, same-sex union, relativism, sex scandals, gambling (e.g. *jueteng*), discrimination, cultural bias and stereotyping. The Church has to address the common perception that it is the Church of the rich, the influential and the powerful, as well as the perception of the young that the Church has become outdated or irrelevant.

The MSPC (Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference) and the Bishops-Ulama Conference diocesan desks in Mindanao are avenues of active dialogue with Muslims and the Indigenous peoples. However, more space for dialogue needs to happen with and among indigenous peoples throughout the country. Some note that although IPs are already part of the BECs, there is little attention given to recognize their unique culture and identity. In some areas, the IPs are caught in the crossfire between rebels and the military and they have no one to turn to for help except the Church. In other instances, the Church turns to the IPs to concretely address the urgency of caring for our common home.

Dialogue with Christian Denominations and other Religions

Other Christian denominations are seen as more aggressive because of their house-to-house preaching. They are also perceived to be more Bible-centered, more lively in their praise and worship fellowships, more close to one another and more generous in giving tithes to their churches. Some of their pastors are more engaging and inspiring than our priests. In general, according to reports, their goal is to proselytize. The fundamentalist attitude of some Christian denominations is a hindrance to ecumenism and dialogue, and it sometimes leads to conflict, division, and misunderstanding, which happen even within families and clans, and among their members.

The faithful are not equipped to dialogue with other Christian denominations and other religions primarily due to lack of a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. Interestingly, dialogues with Christians are seen during the annual celebration of the Week of Prayer and Christian Unity through programs and activities organized by the local government units, collaborative partnerships in response to the victims of natural calamities, and common prayer services during disasters and other important socio-political or cultural events. In general, such dialogue encounters are limited to the leaders and active members of the various Christian churches.

Some dioceses have good programs of collaborating with other religions like *Duyog-Ramadhan* (Ramadhan fellowship). However, many reported that these programs are active at the diocesan level but are not being practiced at the parish level. Most Catholics in their area, according to them, are not even aware of the presence of other religions and Christian traditions and that they are called to learn to relate with them. One diocese mentioned that we cannot discount the dialogue of daily life that happens at the neighborhood level; living life as good neighbors.

The Church is willing to work to end violence and conflicts and is called upon not to retaliate or take revenge in times of discrimination and persecution. The Church opens its doors to other Christians and people of other faiths in times of natural calamities and other emergencies. Catholics welcome them into their homes.

Sharing Responsibility

There is a general perception that sharing responsibility in the mission of the Church is about active participation in the Mass and devotional practices. Many do not have a clear understanding of the Christian mission, and in most cases it is perceived as an *ad-intra* commitment only.

Many good and holy priests have become an inspiration to the people especially during the pandemic in their heroic acts of anointing the sick and giving comfort to the people during the wakes for the dead. Still, people are longing for good priests who do not only dispense the sacraments but act as companions of the faithful in their journey towards peace, justice, and social harmony.

Although many priests would celebrate Mass in difficult-to-reach places by traversing mountains, still many far-flung areas are neglected. Some people have never seen a bishop visiting their place. Masses are held once a year only during their patronal fiesta. Participants expressed the need for the clergy's increased and visible presence in the parish, especially in remote areas. The people desire that the priest stay after Mass and spend quality time with them. There are very few volunteer catechists and pastoral workers who serve in the *barangays* (villages) and other remote areas.

In terms of temporal management, the laity expect the clergy and their leaders to be more transparent, especially in financial matters. Many parishes are demanding transparency especially from the Parish Finance Councils. They also expect a stricter implementation of policies and guidelines, and express the need to eliminate ecclesiastical red tape (unnecessary bureaucracy in the Church). They question the implementation of the policies of the local Church such as the system of tithing and collection. Furthermore, they also report about having authoritarian church leaders, and some who are involved in alcoholism, as well as others among them who are meddling in political affairs and supporting political candidates.

The BEC is the flagship program of most dioceses. It is frequently mentioned as a key factor in building up the faith and mission at the local level. The BEC has been an effective approach in building communities through various programs and projects such as financial aid to the needy, construction of houses for the homeless poor, relief work for victims of natural disasters, source of refuge for mutual assistance especially during the pandemic.

IPs are forced to sell land due to poverty. The uncritical confidence in government assistance like cash for work and other subsidies for the poor, the deceptions of "populist politics" and "partisan political leanings", and the "ideological distortions of sinister groups" which sometimes creep into the systems of the church, are factors that undermine the works for the mission for both the settlers and IPs.

The contribution of the youth ministry has been commonly felt especially because of the need to set up social media ministries and to provide backup support for a more organized distribution of "*ayuda*" (financial help), food and medicines during the height of the pandemic.

Cultural practices & traditional rituals sometimes clash with Church teachings, causing confusion and conflict among people.

The active participation of women in the Church is evident in all activities and groups, but the participation of men is sorely lacking. On the other hand, people have also expressed the need to make the Church into a safe space for abused women and children. They call upon the Church to help “unbox structures of society” that are not gender sensitive and continue to hinder their growth.

In certain dioceses there were several politicians and LGU (local government unit) officials who were interviewed. They asked why the church leaders engage with them only during elections and why such engagements always tend to be negative or confrontational/critical. Some said they still dream of a Church that would welcome them despite ‘the dirt’ that they get tainted with when they serve in the political realm. They say “when the Church does not put a wall for politicians, the Church’s mission to evangelize politics is possible.” Some politicians asked that they be allowed to serve in ministries in their parishes.

Authority and Participation

Although the Church is experienced by many as a mother in providing the spiritual needs of her children, it is also seen as authoritative and powerful. Clericalism, elitism and unapproachability dominate the relationship between the laity and the clergy. Interestingly, lay leaders also tend to imbibe this clericalistic way of handling authority in relation to the rest of the faithful. Church authorities should be more open to constructive criticism and must learn to do appreciative inquiry. Authority tends to rest solely on the priests and bishops. There are also some lay leaders who tend to monopolize leadership positions and make succession very difficult for the younger generation of leaders. Church management is perceived to be fraught with irregularities and inconsistencies, and tends to be authority-centered, inefficient in the administering of temporal goods, and dismissive of the views and values of the marginalized poor. People feel that in general, there is hardly any consultation with the faithful before appointments for church leadership roles are finalized.

Parish organizational meetings, pastoral assemblies — diocesan, vicarial, and parish levels, and including BEC prayer gatherings and regular meetings are seen as structures that allow for active participation in the life of the Church.

Discerning and Decision-Making

Decisions are hardly ever made based on collective discernment. The final decisions are usually made by the church leaders, in particular by the bishops and priests, and that, in most instances, decision-making processes tend to favor the opinions and preferences of the affluent and powerful. They also note a lack of transparency on issues and on how decisions are being made.

The main structures in the Church that allow for collective discernment and decision-making are in the PPCs (Parish Pastoral Councils), which are involved in pastoral goal setting, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Almost all matters having to do with the life of the Church are characterized as top-down in their approach. There is a perceived lack of spiritual conversations. The common impression is that church administration does not give as much importance to prayer and communal discernment.

Impunity and unilateral decision-making result in confusion and disorientation during the “changing of guards” (reshuffle of parish priests). The sustainability of pastoral processes does not seem to be a major concern.

PASALUBONG (Gift of Mission)

Filipinos often come home from a place of encounter with *PASALUBONG* (gifts for the welcomer). They bring home some food and tokens to share to their families and friends, like the disciples who returned to Jerusalem to share the Good News. Meeting the Risen Jesus, in the familiar and unfamiliar roads of their dioceses and with hearts burning at what they have encountered, they come home with a new mission; ready to break new grounds and blaze new trails. As the consultations have deepened the desire to “walk the talk” and “walk the walk” together, many reports point to the need to “think diocese.” A pilgrim Church that is “co-responsible, transparent, and accountable,” a “communion of communities,” and a Church that “leads us to the fullness of life.” Through a revisiting and/or a conscious reformulation of their diocesan vision-mission statements, it will be possible to come up with more comprehensive, realistic, and responsive pastoral plans. While this is not new to many

dioceses in the Philippines, many are convinced that integrating the principles and the fruits of the synodal process will enable them to move forward to embodying synodality. Synodality and the new ways of listening have expanded their perspectives and have challenged them to enter into new pathways. One suggests that the Church “open their ecclesiastical windows to welcome fresh air of reforms and conversion.” Such reforms will also enable them to “bridge the gaps between church leaders and the people of God, liturgy and social engagement, social services and social transformation, faith and justice.”

Many have articulated that the vision of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippine Church as a “Church of the Poor” will find more concrete expressions through synodality. In line with this, the majority of the dioceses mentioned that among their top priorities is to revitalize and strengthen the BECs. As the “new way of being Church,” BEC is the proper space on which we can cultivate a culture of encounter and through which we can reach out to sectors, especially those marginalized and neglected.

The synodal journey has brought out the innate synodality in the Filipino culture. Indigenous symbols and images help explore the depth of communion, participation, and mission in Filipino culture.⁴ With Filipino traditions and values being awakened by the synodal process, several dioceses propose that it be strengthened through the exploration of cultural values and their integration in the practice of the faith. For example, how can practices such as “*bayanihan*” (solidarity) and hospitality promote prayer and sacramental life? How can the Filipino value of “*malasakit*” (compassion) find concrete expressions in our ministry to the marginalized?

Synodality is manifested especially in practical concerns such as the management of finances. With the repeated clamor of many respondents for more transparency and accountability, many recommend putting financial structures and processes in place. One diocese sees the need to implement “a standardized living allowance” for the clergy. In one metropolitan province as well as in many other dioceses, it is the synodal process that has succeeded in pushing them to finally implement the abolition of the arancel system and to have a “no-fixed rates policy” for the administration of the Sacraments.

Through the synodal process, they have also urged for the renewal of ecclesiastical structures, ministries and the necessity of giving due attention to different groups within the church. To improve the coordination of pastoral programs, vicariates can help “expedite communication, consultation, monitoring and evaluation of ministries.” Likewise, they have appealed to support mandated organizations and Catholic movements so that they can reconnect with the local Church and discover how they can put their particular charisms and gifts at the disposal of the Church. They also call for the creation of new ministries such as the social communications, research, and community development, as well as the clustering of existing ones. Some dioceses are setting up desks in parishes to receive complaints and suggestions from the people, following the spirit of the synodal consultation.

Structural renewal may not find deep roots if it is not grounded on spirituality. Forming ourselves in synodality calls for conversion and a renewal of catechesis and faith formation for both the clergy and the laity. Synodal methodologies and approaches can renew catechesis, and our manner of conducting retreats and recollections, as well as the formation of lay ministers. Communal discernment which has been found to be lacking in all levels of ecclesial activities can be strengthened when every pastoral activity is seen to foster deeper listening, inspire communal discerning, and facilitate collective action.

Synodality can also be mirrored by transforming church activities as spaces of dialogue inspiring communion and participation. They recommend that regular meetings of ministries and groups should become opportunities for people to listen not only to business concerns but also to personal stories and the discernment of societal issues in the light of the Word of God. In this way, they develop practices of communal discernment and communal decision-making. One suggests the need to pay particular attention to parish frontliners and to equip them with skills to inspire dialogue and develop friendships with the people they are in touch with. Parishes can also create spaces for healing and reconciliation especially in instances of conflict and misunderstanding, and where discrimination, elitism, and divisiveness have been experienced by some sectors.

The celebration of the Sacraments, liturgies and prayer form us in synodality. “A well prepared and meaningful celebration of the Eucharist is a source of inspiration and renewal of faith in the parish.” An urgent call is to make the Eucharist accessible to all especially to those in the peripheries. The creation of liturgical teams is being considered, in order to assist the presiders in coming up with well-prepared homilies and facilitating the “full, conscious, and active participation” of the faithful in the

⁴ See Attachment 3 for the National Synodal Consultation - Metropolitan Cultural Symbols

liturgical celebrations. In the same way, it will be good to also revisit how lay leaders can facilitate Services of the Word with Communion so that the community can be more dynamic in their life of worship and liturgy. There is a call to go back to the Catholic traditions, which have kept the faith alive especially during the pandemic. In addition, fostering popular religious devotions can inspire deeper communion and promote synodal values already present in the Filipino culture.

Dioceses strongly recommend that programs be adopted that can further develop ecumenical and interreligious dialogue in our ecclesial life. Aside from celebrating with other Christian denominations and other faith communities, especially on their feast days and respecting their tradition, many sectoral needs and issue-based concerns can be best addressed through collaborative endeavors with them. Religion is usually not an issue when we are faced with life and death situations, when we respond together to calamities, when we fight for justice, and when we care for our common home. We need one another.

The synodal process inspires all to look, listen and discern, as well as walk together with those not heard, with the voiceless, and the marginalized sectors of Church and society. During the national synodal consultation, some of these sectors were revisited to facilitate a new way of looking at them with the guidance of the Spirit.⁵

In the conclusion of the national synodal consultation, after sharing the fruits of the synodal journey and discerning the Holy Spirit speaking to us as a local church in the Philippines, the bishops, priests, and lay delegates representing eighty six dioceses in the country stand firm together as they manifest their convictions.⁶

Loving Father,
you have awakened us by the call to become a “corporate Christ”
and to “make a way where there seems to be no way,” together.
As we opened the door of dialogue through the experience of friendship,
mutual listening, discernment, and prayerful worship,
you gave us the grace to enter into life-defining doors
that embolden us to traverse unexplored and promising pathways.

Today, the walls are broken down!
Our Faith has been awakened! Our hope has come alive! The fire of love is burning!
May this *kairos* become for us the seed for
deeper communion, more authentic participation, and border-crossing mission.
Make us disciples together to become a renewed Church,
redefined, reaffirmed, and revitalized — a Synodal Church!

We implore the prayers of Mary, *Ina ng Simbahan* (Mother of the Church) to lead us in this difficult but fulfilling journey.

We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord, *ang aming Dakilang Kalakbay* (our great Companion in the journey), and the Holy Spirit, *ang aming Lakas at Gabay* (our strength and guide). Amen.

⁵ See Attachment 4 for Sectoral reflections

⁶ See Attachment 5 for the Opening New Doors (JOHN 20:19-31) National Synodal Consultation Statement July 4-7, 2022, Tagaytay City

ATTACHMENT 1

PAGSALUBONG: Promoting Synodality in the Philippines Unique and Innovative Resources

The Synodal Process

The call for pre-synodal consultations was welcomed by the eighty six dioceses in the Philippines, but many expressed initial shock and mixed reactions regarding the process. Though ready to undertake what was expected of them, it was a monumental task to carry out in the midst of an ongoing pandemic and the campaign period for national elections in the Philippines.

To begin with, each diocese created a synodal team to understand the process and developed a roadmap for themselves. For many, it was a team headed by the local bishop, and composed of representatives from the laity, religious, and clergy. Some dioceses appointed their pastoral departments to spearhead the process. There were also varied ways of choosing the people who would compose the parish synodal teams with five to twenty members. Catechists, BEC coordinators, leaders of various mandated organizations, and other lay leaders were usually chosen. For some, it was an opportunity to tap lay people with experience in conducting such processes, as well as young people who had the capacity to help out. In some instances, the synodal teams were provided with travel and meal allowances.

Orientations about synodality and the roadmap ahead were given on many levels: national, regional, diocesan, vicarial, down to the parish levels. Most of the vicarial or parish-level meetings involved the different ministries and parish groups/organizations, while most of the diocesan-level meetings were participated in by religious congregations, schools, and other Catholic institutions. Most synodal teams created committees that attended to various concerns: program, communications, spirituality, synthesis drafters, content, facilitators, respondents, IT logistics, secretariat work, documentation, etc.

Dioceses developed innovative culture-based campaign approaches in the form of posters, radio and social media promotion, talks in video format, and songs. Some dioceses integrated the campaign during the observance of Lent and Holy Week, annual retreats of the diocesan clergy and religious communities, lay leaders' training, as well as within the pastoral visits of the bishops in parishes. One diocese launched its synodal journey through an ecumenical and interfaith gathering which was replicated in all the parishes and chapels thereafter. The very act of praying together of the different Christian Churches, religions, faith groups and the poor inside the church building was a symbolic opening of the Church's doors, not only to welcome those who wanted to join in the synodal journey, but also for the Church to go out in order to reach out to those in the peripheries.

The *Vademecum*, the synodality prayer, and other related resources were translated into the local languages. In many parishes, the synodality prayer was prayed during the Sunday Eucharistic celebrations. To develop the format of the consultations, some dioceses sought help from materials already prepared by other dioceses. Many designed their own questionnaires from the ten themes which they pilot-tested and further refined. Some also conducted intensive training and enhancement workshops as well as designed monitoring processes to equip the synodal teams' skills.

RESOURCES

I. Instructional Resources

1. Explanation and Invitation of Archbishop Gilbert Garcera

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26Gh0_MIbcY

2. Explaining Synodality and what to expect from the "pre-Synodal" phase here in the Philippines

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65VNTA1Z_Qs

3. Philippine Conference on New Evangelization

Session One: Synodality in the History of the Philippine Church

<https://www.facebook.com/opnercam/videos/278865627392039/>

Session two: Synodality in the Philippine Church Experience

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMcREIHtMXg&t=5507s>

Session Three: Synodality in the Filipino Culture

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QKXkSGxkCs&t=4923s>

II. Diocesan and Metropolitan Reports

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1agiOOkUmWOTXLkbzHrnoiLThSovy7hPu?fbclid=IwAR2T6t8P02xd6X22xB2SsPCA-u2s6ddUsepZ_vE8gls3koXQyJCsGngT9B0

III. National Synodal Consultation Resources

1. Creative Introductions

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uBn8M5TWMjDzhXGzD2u1foGjHEDv_A6z?usp=sharing

2. Metropolitan Province Presentations

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_4Urqy09O1-a6tOwqM8MjzZRW9Pi31JP?usp=sharing

IV. Synod Songs and Videos

1. Uban Ta Bay - Official Synod Song of San Carlos Diocese

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6WDLJMfPM4>

2. Together - Official Synod Song of the Diocese of Malolos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGDb9IFx8LQ>

3. National Synodal Consultation Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBIvmKuhvnm&t=32s>

ATTACHMENT 3

METROPOLITAN CULTURAL SYMBOLS
National Synodal Consultation

METRO	CULTURAL IMAGES/ SYMBOLS
CAGAYAN DE ORO	<p>“Dayong” means “to help each other,” and is our local version of bayanihan. <i>Dayong</i> (literally, “to carry together”) also presents an image of people in a unified effort to carry things together. As one diocese describes: “This is the best symbol to capture a Synodal Church; <i>Simbahan nga hiniusang nagalakaw kauban sa katawhan ug nagtinabangay sa misyon sa pagtukod sa Kristohanong Katilingban</i>. (A church which journeys together as one with the people and helping each other in the mission of building up the Christian community). <i>Dayong</i> is a common Filipino practice also prevalent in our parishes and dioceses, where communities pool whatever available resources to assist those in need (e.g., medical expenses, burial assistance, etc.).</p> <p>“Balanghay” (ancient <i>balanghay</i> – boat) is another important cultural and regional symbols that reflect the unique geographical features present in the Metropolitan province including the Agusan River as well as the bountiful seas and waters. Hence, the imagery of the church as a barque sailing together with Christ at the helm amid the rough storms (cf. Mk. 4: 35-41) as well as the creative acronym of S.U.R.F. (Selfless and Untiring/Unlimited Renewal of the Faithful) were respectively deepened.</p>
LINGAYEN-DAGUPAN	<p>“Paglilingang ng Lupa” or cultivating the soil. This image articulates our experience of synodality as it is “the arduous process of preparing the soil for planting” which involves clearing the fields of any debris, refining, and tilling to make sure that the seeds planted will grow well and bear good fruit. The soil refers to the people who needs to be prepared in order to be a fertile ground for the Gospel to bear fruit. “<i>Paglilingang</i>” was experienced as a process of openness, encounter, humble listening, and dreaming together for the Church. Being a predominantly farming society, “<i>paglilingang</i>” paints a clear picture of the experience of synodality as a necessary first step to a renewed evangelization for a more synodal church.</p> <p>Boat - Another is the life of faith likened to a boat, which according to responses, “journeys in one direction” but will not get to desired location and goal “if everyone is paddling in different directions”. In the journey, it is also said that “some people are left out [in the journey] even if we know that we must be in the same boat”. This image is a familiar geographical landscape. The boat of <i>communio</i> must continue to progress in advance with the “Holy Spirit steering the wheel for directions” in ways that are inclusive, consultative, and synodal, bearing with it all the lights and shadows, new perspectives, and common aspirations. All are called to be “fishers of men”, and synodality invites all to share in the journey of faith where no one is left out, but is part of the pilgrimage journey for after all, the mission is ultimately heavenward. Third, the Eucharist and the community as Body of Christ as the sacrament of love and mercy that gathers and inspires the faithful. It is also the fount where ministries for the service of the Church and the needy are nourished, enriched and sustained.</p>
COTABATO	<p>“Salo-salo” (banquet, eating together) It is like a <i>salo-salo</i> where by gathering around the table, and sharing experiences our bonds grew. It is like a living tree, grounded in Christ whose roots are fed by the spiritual energies of the Spirit, where the dry branches and leaves give way to fresh shoots. It is like the worldwide web, where the three dioceses are separate but inter-connected. It is like a renovated building where some of the old are retained and some new things are added.</p> <p>“Walis-tingting” (Broom made of coconut leaves) The synodal experience shows the church as a bound “<i>walis-tingting</i>” where unity gives strength even if individuals are weak. We are all companions on the journey. ONWARD SYNODAL CHURCH.</p>

“INA” (mother)- Our Lady of Peñafrancia. The Blessed Virgin Mary, in her title as Our Lady of Peñafrancia, is the Patroness of Bicolandia. She is “INA” to Bicolanos. To her we go for intercession. She is the rallying point behind all our efforts. Like a true mother, she is the principle of unity among bishops and priests, the consecrated persons and the laity of the region. The various fish in different colors represent the different kinds of people in terms of religious, economic, political, and socio-cultural states and orientations. Mary brings us together and accompanies us in our journey of faith. Unto her we entrust all our pastoral concerns. She is our model and inspiration in pursuing a truly synodal church in the Bicol Region!



With Mary, our “Inâ” and united in mind and heart, we journey towards the **COR**, our continuing **C**onversion, greater **O**penness and deeper **R**ootedness in the Lord with **HOPE**. We move forward to grow in synodality with **H**umility to acknowledge our sinful failures to love and our need for forgiveness and healing. We walk in **O**bedience to God that is complete, constant and consistent. We live in the spirit of synodality with **P**erseverance because conversion does not happen overnight and synodality is always a work in progress until the Lord returns. And, finally, we journey with total **E**ntrustment to the Lord, our Good Shepherd, who encounters with us in the Jerusalems and Emmauses of our life.

“**Puso**” (heart). For the Archdiocese of Cebu, what best captures its synodal journey is the “*puso*”, a symbol of the core of life and a staple for the Cebuano meal. It is wrapped by interwoven coconut leaves that symbolise the unity of the people of God that must be strong and tight enough to hold the “rice” of Grace that gets cooked and expands with the “water” of man’s cooperation. In their synodal journey, Cebuanos gradually become what they consume, i.e. rice wrapped in their synodal experiences with each other, weaved by the master plan of God who leads us to Himself, a provision that is suitable for any journey and a staple sustenance for the mission ahead.

Wheel of St. Catherine. The Diocese of Dumaguete takes the **wheel of St. Catherine** as its image, a symbol of the selfless act of discipleship which St. Catherine modelled at her death as a martyr. The wheel is a circular continuum – without beginning or end. Thus, a unity of communities unfolds an interrelated contribution to make the Church come alive through speaking, listening, relating, worshipping, and serving others. Dumaguete as a local church journeys together in communion towards the Kingdom of heaven with Mary as Mother and guide.

“**Sandugo**” (one blood). The Diocese of Tagbilaran chooses the “*sandugo*” which means “one blood” as a tradition in the island of Bohol. *Sandugo* is a solemn pledge that marks the bond of friendship. In history, the most famous Sandugo was performed by Bohol’s Datu Sikatuna and the Spanish explorer Miguel Lopez de Legazpi on March 16, 1565. That marked the formal arrival of Christianity in Bohol. It continues to symbolize the pact of unity among Christian communities in Tagbilaran, bonded by God’s covenant with man in the blood of the sacrifice of Jesus. Contracting parties partake of the cup of blood to affirm their commitment to each other towards a life of communion, participation and mission in synodality.

Cross. The Diocese of Maasin takes the cross as its central image, which symbolises the arrival of Christianity through the celebration of the first Holy Mass, on Easter Sunday on March 31, 1521 in Limasawa, an island off the tip of Southern Leyte. Another symbol is “*ajunay*” which etymologically means “agreement” from the root “*ajun*” which means “mutual understanding.” More than just an emotional feeling, it is equivalent to the Tagalog “*bayanihan*” which involves helping one another as best portrayed in the picture of barrio folks carrying a nipa hut, an almost impossible task made possible by mutual help. The faithful of Maasin help to carry the cross of Christ in all aspects of their lives, to continue to live out the meaning of the cross in communion, participation and mission towards the fulfilment of their synodal journey.

“**Heart**”. For the Diocese of Talibon, it is the “heart”, which best signifies LOVE, the very nature of the Diocese’s Divine Patron, the Santissima Trinidad, the central mystery of the Christian faith, for “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8). A local Boholano historian, Fr. Jose Maria Luengo, claimed that after the death of Magellan on April 27, 1521, the surviving crew of the Spanish fleet fled. The crew of the galleon “Trinidad” allegedly stayed and intermarried; thus, leading to the Holy Trinity becoming the titular patron. In 1596, the first Jesuit missionaries of Bohol reached Talibon, which was then called “Las Minas de Talibong” (the Mines of Talibong) due to the abundant gold reserves found in the mountains. The local folks, then called “Lavadores de Oro” (gold washers) suspected the intention of the missionaries. But the Spanish priest Padre Torres who was among those who survived the fleet, took a handful of gold dust in his hand, cast it to the ground and ground it underfoot, showing that he was not after taking gold but sharing the Gold of Love to God’s people. Now, the faithful of Talibon continue to adore the Most Holy Trinity, the destiny of our synodal journey, as they seek to live out Trinitarian love in their, hearts and homes, communities and workplaces.

Sto. Nino. The most distinctively unique cultural image of the Metropolitan Province of Cebu is also the most popular devotion of the Philippine Church, the Sto. Nino. We hail the Sto. Nino as the Batobalani sa Gugma, the Magnet of Love. Our ancestors fell in love with Him the first time they saw him. Because of him, our ancestors choreographed a unique prayer dance called sinulog which is best done in unison with

	<p>others. Now, Sinulog is the festival of the entire region. It is really the Sto. Nino that draws us together in Communion and Participation. It is also the Sto. Nino that sends us in Mission for love of Him who first moved us. The Sto. Nino leads and directs our journey towards union with God while being united with each other, together with the poor and the marginalized. We first received the Sto. Nino as a gift, now as a synodal Church, that just celebrated 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines, the Sto. Nino is our gift to the world.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA</p>	<p>“Kumbachero”. The Sun, the Mountains, Rivers, Land and their fruits – Fish and Harvest - ang <i>Kalikasan na Kaloob ng Diyos para pagyamanin (Paglilinang ng Lupa) at ipapamahagi</i> as depicted by the Kumbachero in the Spirituality of the Synodality of the Virgen de Los Remedios, by her example of visiting her children and generously sharing the gift of her Son, the Sto. Cristo Del Perdon as the true LAMAK or gift to all her children.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">DAVAO</p>	<p>“Tagbo” or “Bayanihan” (Unity in carrying out a task) There is Fiesta Assembly before the celebration. In this gathering, checking of membership is done, checking the number of children to be baptized, and the number of children and teenagers to be confirmed. Also in this gathering, a pre-baptism seminar is given to parents and godparents, giving catechesis to the youth, catechists, and lay ministers. The culture of “Tagbo” or “Bayanihan” is also revitalized.</p> <p>Celebrations like the most popular <i>fiesta</i> in the Philippines mirror an individual’s religious and social nature. This type of celebration seems to be an inseparable element to a person and the society. Food, faith and fellowship are three major aspects primarily associated with <i>fiesta</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A <i>fiesta</i> entails a showcase of food. During feasts, bountiful food is served as expression of gratitude to God for His abundant favors and blessings. • <i>Fiesta</i> is a profession of faith. It is an occasion for the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, matrimony, and reconciliation. It also animates efforts of evangelization, and catechesis. The celebration of these sacraments is a recognition of the Lord’s sovereign power and the submission to such power. Thus, the institution of the <i>fiesta</i> protects, renews and strengthens the religious and spiritual value of Christianity. • <i>Fiesta</i> is a fellowship. This represents a communion of believers to fortify bonds and relationships. Feasts serve as an avenue for conversion, reconciliation, and conversation. Hence, one of the most important functions of <i>fiesta</i> is the strengthening of bonds, relations between people, very often in collective effervescence, regardless of the place, culture or time, as the famous sociologist Emile Durkheim said. • <i>Fiesta</i> is always organized around a special value which is important or even venerated by a group or groups of people, often manifested symbolically. In a Christian way, <i>fiesta</i> may mean three (3) things – the food, faith, and fellowship. But more than these, feasts are celebrated in declaration of the Lord’s grace, the abundance of the blessings received, and the profession of Christian faith in its truest essence.
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">JARO and CAPIZ</p>	<p>Two cultural images that stood out for the majority in the plenary speak of the gift of a sense of community which has been widely felt in the local synodal experience.</p> <p>“Pamukot” is a fishing method that uses a dragnet or a seine. The dragnet is hauled across the sea to catch fish, and this has to be spread and supported by a group of people. Like ‘<i>pamukot</i>,’ synodality is not a solitary exercise but is a way of life that can only be carried out by a community. For a region surrounded by waters, ‘<i>pamukot</i>’ is a symbol that is familiar to the communities of Western Visayas.</p> <p>A “lingganay” or church bell is another symbol that best describes the synodal experience in the region. A church bell tolls to signal calls for prayer, for celebration, or for mourning. The synodal process, like the ‘<i>lingganay</i>,’ has helped awaken the whole Church to rediscover her gift for a broken world.</p>

The “*malagkit na kakanin*” (glutinous rice cake) stood out as a cultural item most expressive of a synodal Church in the region. Many of the delegates introduced their respective local Churches through their own version of *malagkit na kakanin*. The *malagkit na kakanin* is produced through a process which involves patience and hard work just like our formation in the spirit of synodality. It is also partaken of in a meal which is usually also a place of dialogue, of storytelling, of sharing. Our journeying together is facilitated by these simple conversations which can bridge gaps and create friendships.

There are those which are of different colors (e.g., *sapin-sapin*), representing the variety of persons. Its glutinousness represents the closeness (*pagiging dikit-dikit*) of the people among themselves despite differences and of the people with the Triune God in such a way that they are inseparable—descriptive of the union desired in a synodal Church. This delicacy is also sweet, a characterization of the harmony which the Church seeks to achieve through synodality. We hope that, just like the *malagkit na kakanin*, our bond as members of the Body of Christ may be strong and sweet, founded on deep encounters, a product of our endeavors initiated and guided by God’s grace.

“**Tuba.**” Another cultural symbol proposed is the tuba, an alcoholic beverage made from the sap of coconut tree and a notable product of the region. Drinking *tuba* gives a feeling of warmth to the body, symbolic of the warmth of the unity and love, and the ardor for service of the faithful which will contribute to bringing to fulfilment the aspiration for a truly synodal Church.

“**Boat sailing.**” The journey of the Church in the region may also be represented by a boat sailing through a river. The river is symbolic of the inhabitants of the ecclesiastical province whose ancestors used to live along rivers and thus came to be known as “*taga-ilog*” (people of the river) and eventually Tagalog. The waters of the river also call to mind the baptism through which men and women become Christians and receive new life in Christ. Being a body of flowing water, it represents dynamism which is a sign of life. The water is always made new through this flowing action, a sign of renewal and purification. The Church in the region is the boat in which all the faithful sail together through the river of a new life in Christ marked by constant renewal and purification.

“*Lambat ng Pamalakaya*” (Net for the Catch)

We take inspiration from the fishing communities that are present in almost all the particular Churches in our ecclesiastical province. Like our fisherfolk who bravely put out into the deep in order to catch and share the gift of the sea, we envision our synodal Church to be a community of apostles who joyfully reach out to the peripheries in order to gather and welcome people into the Lord’s net (cf. John 21:11).

We desire to be a Church that mends the cuts on our nets, filling the widening gaps between life and faith, between the Church and un-Churched, between the rich and the poor, between morality and societal life. We must be mindful of the gaps in our nets so that we may gather and embrace the little ones.

Like fisherfolk who fix the knots on their nets after the catch, we hope to be a Church that untangles and sets free God's people from their poverty and sufferings.

Like the first disciples who were also fishermen, we will follow Jesus in his missionary journey, urged by his call for us to be *mamalakaya ng tao* (cf. Mt 4:19).

“*Banig ng Pagtahan at Paghilom*” (Mat of Healing and Consolation)

Like the *banig* skillfully woven by the artisans among us, we desire to be particular Churches who weave together our experiences, insights, and hopes so that they may form a rich tapestry of communal and personal encounters with the Lord. As we weave our local tapestry, we bear in our minds the vision of Jesus for our church.

We commit to “thinking and acting in terms of community” (FT 116) so that, just as the *banig* cradles our *anawim* and comforts them amid their labors, our Church may become a refuge of peace and consolation (*pagtahan*) and healing (*paghilom*) for the wounded, the poor, and the marginalized in our world (cf. Mark 2:1-12).

Traslacion with Jesus towards Synodal Conversion

We also take inspiration from our processions so devoutly practiced by our people in order to express and celebrate their faith. During processions, we are quite literally journeying together on the road (*syn-hodos*). In every procession, we help each other experience the love of our Lord, and accompany each other until we all reach our heavenly home.

Our Lord Jesus himself leads our processions. Like in the celebration of the *Traslacion* of the Black Nazarene, we experience him journeying with us in our life's processions. We strive to walk humbly with him, and we feel him walking humbly with us (cf. Micah 6:8). He guides, supports, and accompanies us. He impels us towards solidarity and companionship with each other in the journey towards holiness and the fullness of life.

Traslacion also means “crossing over” (*pagtawid, pagpapaibayo*). Jesus is inviting us to cross over with him (cf. Mark 4:35). He is calling us to cross borders, transcend comforts, be open to conversion, transform society, penetrate walls of division, and build bridges of solidarity. Our synodal journey has led us beyond our petty ambitions, conventions, and comforts, towards building communion, inviting participation, and going on mission. The Spirit of the Risen Lord is expanding our vision, making us see beyond personal interests, blood ties, locality, business gains, and political parties. Jesus is always accompanying us in the path of conversion, towards total dedication to the service of God and neighbor.

Pueblo Amante de Maria

Our dear Mama Mary has often been portrayed as a journeying companion in our popular devotions. She is Nuestra Señora de Guia who offers guidance along the way. She is Nuestra Señora de Paz y Buen Viaje who guides and protects navigators. She is Nuestra Señora de Salambao who accompanies fisherfolk in their expeditions. She is Virgen de La Naval who offers support for defenders of the faith as they sail. Virgen del Santísimo Rosario-Reina de Caracol and Virgen de los Dolores de Pakil who joins us as we dance the *caracol* and the *turumba* on the streets. Our churches are sanctuaries of Marian images. Truly, many images but one Mother.

Our synodality is expressed by our loving relationship with Mary; we are *pueblo amante de Maria*. We gather as families and communities to pray the Rosary together, and we entrust ourselves to her motherly care and intercession.

The EDSA People Power Revolution in 1986 was a historical testament to her maternal presence in our synodal journey as a people. During that crucial moment in our national history, Mama Mary guided us and helped us to be steadfast in truth, justice, and charity. She inspired and protected us so that no blood was shed during those difficult days. With Mama Mary accompanying us Epifanio de los Santos Avenue has literally become "a venue for the epiphany of saints", a place where Filipino piety and synodality were displayed before the world.

Sana All Version 2.0! For All Yarn!

In the words of our young people, the Holy Spirit bids us: "*sana all!*" The Church is "catholic", that is to say, "*for all yarn!*" Joyfully, we accept the mission entrusted to us by our Risen Lord to "proclaim the Good News to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Our encounter with the Lord and with each other has transformed us. We are not the same anymore because God has turned us into a "*version 2.0*" of ourselves and of our Church, and our acceptance of the synodal mission is the sign of our spiritual conversion. We are not just mga *kamanlalakbay* who have passively received the Good News. Gifted to give, we have become *mga mamamalakaya ng tao*, missionary disciples who are journeying together to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 27:19). To your mission, Lord, we give our "Yes!" Sana all!

Bayanihan. Aduyon/Alluyon. Binnadang These are some of the cultural images that articulate the diocesan experience of synodality. *Bayanihan. Aduyon/Alluyon. Binnadang*. This refers to the willingness of the members of the community to help one another. Usually, the work done is given as free and loving service to the neighbor. *Adivay*. This term refers to a gathering together for a fellowship and celebration. It can be in a more formal way, gathering a large number of people for a particular celebration or in an informal way that happens among family members, circle of friends, or among neighbors. *Um-ummong* is done by a gathering of the elders or leaders of two communities who are in conflict to solve the problem and be united again. The concept of *Inayan* can likewise be an image that articulates synodality for it also encompasses reverence for the Unseen (God), respect for fellow human beings as well as respect for other created realities allowing a harmonious relationship with God, with others, and with nature. We would like to believe that these cultural images are enshrined in the local musical instruments of the indigenous peoples of the Local Church. The *solibao* (drum), the *gangsa* (gongs), and the *pattitik/takik* (2 metals) are played together to produce the rhythm and sound for the dancing of the *tayaw*. These instruments have to come together, played in different manners, each sharing its own sound to form one tuneful rhythm. When it is heard, it marks a celebration, fellowship, and synodality.

Hence, this image:

In the *solibao* (drum) is the sense of *inayan*. The *pattitik/takik* in a cross sign is the *um-ummong*. In the *gangsa* are the values of *bayanihan*, *alluyon/aduyon/binnadang*, and *adivay*.



Likewise, the Ilocano has a strong faith that thrives through devotions and the natural inclination to the Divine. This personhood of the Ilocano makes her altruistic, humane and neighborly. This is manifested by an Ilocano’s frequent expression when asked about his plans: “No ipalubos ti Apo,” literally translated as: “If God allows it”.

“**PADIGO**”. Having this cultural context in mind, the nearest cultural expression of the Synodal journey and consultation of listening is “**PADIGO**.”

PADIGO is a composite of two words. “*Digo*” which literally means soup, hot soup to be more precise. When “Pa” as connected to the root word “Digo” we get a word which means “sharing one’s “hot soup” with one’s neighbor. The benefactor, the one who has the “*digo*” shares his “*grasya*” or blessing to his neighbor. Being a good neighbor is spontaneously and unselfishly sharing what I have.

It is the closest cultural manifestation of the whole process because it speaks of the Ilocanos’ concern for neighbor in need. It is an act of compassion and communion with others. It is an unselfish act to value one’s brothers and sisters. It is about strengthening relationship and developing trust amongst community members.

“**PADIGO**” is, unfortunately, slowly being forgotten because of some “modern” factors like materialism, secularism and conflicts that politics bring, making it a thing of the past. The Synodal Journey seeks to revive and refreshed this cultural practice of Ilocanos. What “the sharing of the bread” of the Semitic culture may have been, in our own culture we have this “**PADIGO**,” our way of sharing what we have with fellow journeyers!

This “**PADIGO**” cultural value participates in the Gospel value taught by Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The one who truly loves God is the one who loves his neighbor, whoever that neighbor might be – friend or foe, “*kailian*” (countryman) *wenno ganganaet* (foreigner stranger). It is wonderful to realize that our Ilocano “**PADIGO**” is very evangelical! His holiness, Pope Francis, has brought the Gospel of the Good Samaritan into our ecclesial conversations lately in his “FRATELLI TUTTI.” We pray that the Holy Father may bless us for re-discovering

and describing our synodal journey with our own cultural Gospel of “becoming good Samaritans” through our “*PADIGO!*”

One unique presentation to preserve Ilokano’s culture is symbolized through a *DANIW* (Poem).

**Ramen Panagkaykaysa, Saramsam – Daliasat,
(Tinubong, Bibingka, Kalamay, Suman, Kornik)**

Diket nga awan baurna nabellaay,
Getta ken lasag ti niyog, asukar man wenno tagapulot,
Lengnga ken ramen nga agduduma naigamay
Agkaykaysada a maitubong bulo maiyurno
Bara ti bumegbeggang a darang parnuayenna,
Ayamuom a maka-ay-ayo, tignayenna ni Karayo,
Ayat, rumkuas, agadiwara gagar makiranod,
Taraon: malutluto, maibibus!

Kasta man kaiyarigan ti tinubong
Pannaka-allukoy, pannakatubay tunggal maysa tapno agkikinnamayet,
agkaykaysa

Iti synod, agririnnanud, iburay pampanunot
Nadigem, nadekket, naparbeng, nadarisay nga ayat
Agkikibin panagdaliasat.

Partuat ni Ilocano, saramsam nadumaduma
Adda dita ti bibingka, ti suman, ti kalamay ken daduma pay
Pannakaisagana, ramramay, taktakiag ti pamilya, kagimongan nga agdadanggay,
Ramen a naitapog, aglalaok, maikiwar, agtutugmok
Anian a nagimbag a pagsasangoan!

Imet a kapadasan, kapanunotan ken tagipatgen inranud iti Synod,
Pannarabay ti Espirito Santo, baro nga agsapa tumpuar, agalinaga,
Aggaraw, maibiag, arapaap ken sirmata, biag a nawaya, natalinaay, awan
Pagkuranganna, Anian a nagimnas a karikrikna!

Ni managsukisok nga Ilocano, agbariw-as,
Agbirok iti naisangsangayan, agtakuat,

Wenno maidasar iti lamisaan a panganan,
Ngem ti kornik, mais a naparsik nalaokan ti puraw a balitok iti Amianan,
puguam man? Wen, bawang!
Saan laeng nga iti Kailukoan wenno, iti sibubukel a pagilian, nagdaliasat pay
daytoy iti entero a Sangalubongan!
Kas ti bukel ti Synod a naitukit, iti puso ti pamilya, a maiyarig!

Taraon a masaramsam a pagraranudan.
Nagtaud iti kinaimbag ti DIOS, sagut ti nakaparsuaan
Panangisagana, simbolo ti panagkaykaysa nga agraranud ti eukaristia.
awan t makurangan, amin ket maibingayan.
Apuy a mangluto ken manglinay ti taraon ipasimudaagna ti ayat a mangtunton
ti kinapudno ken agtakder ti kinalinteg a pagbatayan panagkaykaysa.
Espiritu ti gimong biag a nainkabsatan,
Agkaykaysa, agkukuyog iti daliasat misyon pagarian ti Dios.
Biag a nagin-awa. biag a nawaya,
Biag a natan-ok a ladawan ti biag nga agnanayon.

The combination and harmony of GANGSA AND SALIBAO; the PADIGO, are invitation for the people to come, to share and celebrate together; the native delicacies, food for the table and sweet strawberry fruits sustain healthy nourishment of body and spirit; and strengthen fellowship within the family and community of the faithful.

	<p>These cultural instruments, the songs, the dances, the Daniw, and the abel are symbols of rich culture and valued traditions, somehow provide meaning of Synodality in the life and mission in the Metropolitan Church.</p>
<p>OZAMIS</p>	<p>“PANAGDAIT” — This is a Bisayan term for peace or goodwill. If language reflects worldviews, then <i>Panagdait</i> reflects the aspiration of the DOPIM Church — having concretely experienced the evil of arm conflicts — to live in a community where peace and harmony prevail. However, in the DOPIM synodal experience, peace is not just an absence of war; it is also eradication of poverty. <i>Panagdait</i> is sanctioning perpetrators, while healing the innocent victims. <i>Panagdait</i> is condemning violence, while forming good consciences. <i>Panagdait</i> is when the Church stops talking for a while, so it can listen well to the voices of its suffering members. <i>Panagdait</i> is when the Church is seen in the peripheries and be transformed by the lifestyle of the poor. <i>Panagdait</i> is when we see the face of Jesus smiling, because the least, the last and the lost have finally occupied the best seats in the Church.</p> <p>“HABAL-HABAL” — This is an improvised motorcycle that can accommodate 3 or more passengers, including their baggage. <i>Habal-habal</i> can reach far-flung barangays that cannot be reached anymore by a four-wheel vehicle. People from the barrios who are used to just hike or walk for how many kilometers in going to the town proper and going back home, use <i>habal-habal</i> as their means of transportation. Since <i>habal-habal</i> can reach the outskirts —despite the rough and muddy road, or no road at all — it is commonly called the transportation for the poor. The synodal Church is like <i>habal-habal</i>. Despite the rocky, muddy, dirty or no road at all, the Church has to reach out to the outskirts and search for its flock. The synodal journey is a journey especially for the poor. It is in the Church that the poor can “ride” because the Church is also essentially a Church for the poor.</p>
<p>PALO</p>	<p>The distinguishing cultural image that could illustrate the experience of synodality in the ecclesiastical province of Palo is the bridge, with the rising sun over it and a boat underneath. Since it is in the Orient where the sun rises, the sun is an apt symbol of Eastern Visayas, a symbol of new beginning and new hope which the coming Synod brings to the Church.</p> <p>Aside from the image of the Church as the “Bark of Peter”, the sea vessel is also symbolic of the history, culture, and faith of the people of the region: the ancient “karakoa” used for trading (even raiding) to reach other peoples (and cultures), the boat which people use to go places especially along the coastal and riverine communities in Samar-Leyte and Biliran, the fishing boat which until now is still used as means of livelihood by many, and the ship which brought the Christian faith and landed 500 years ago first in Homonhon island (off the larger Samar island) and eventually made stops in various coastal communities in Leyte</p> <p>The San Juanico Bridge and Biliran Bridge are the bridges that connect the islands of Leyte, Samar, and Naval – the Archdiocese of Palo with her suffragans. The path of synodality behooves the faithful of the dioceses to overcome division and estrangement by creating connection, genuine relationships, and communion among the members of the local Church and with society in general. In fact, the ministry of the bishop (and the Pope) as pontifex – builder of bridges – is so congruent with the baptismal dignity of Christians being sharers in the priesthood of Christ, the one mediator between God and man.</p>

TUGUEGARAO	<p>“BINALLAY” is a delicacy in the Cagayan Valley that is best made by hand. Many hands go into planting the glutinous rice and then preparing it to be milled and then cooked into this delicacy. It represents not only the “coming together” of many but also represents the people’s popular religiosity – since this delicacy makes its appearance usually in Holy Week.</p> <p>“GANGSA” is a musical instrument of the highlands. Its sounds assemble in festivity. It is the instrument of a celebrating people. The gangsa is never played alone but is usually part of an ensemble of other gangsas accompanying the dancing of indigenous Filipinos. It represents the goal of synodality to reach out to heretofore marginalized sectors.</p> <p>“AMARIONG,” or the carabao’s horn, was used in ancient Cagayan – as in other places in the Philippines, to summon people to important assemblies. It, therefore, symbolizes our aspiration to be not only a “gathered” Church but truly an assembly in the Lord, a deliberate, planned, willed, and holy coming together of God’s people to listen to his Word.</p> <p>“BUNUBON” (budding rice seedlings) for signifies new hope, new growth</p> <p>“CAGAYAN RIVER” – the river that runs through the Cagayan Valley brings life and livelihood to our people. It is also through this river that the intrepid missionaries brought the Gospel to our land. Moreover, it poses a challenge to us to protect, promote and nurture integral ecology to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change and environmental degradation.</p>
ZAMBOANGA	<p>“Vinta with layag” (sail) The colorful Vinta with Layag (sail) represents the cultural diversity and unique faith of the Metropolitan province of Zamboanga. This is a representation of journeying together with its different cultural contexts, geo-political challenges amidst trials and difficulties represented by the waves as the vinta sails. In order to reach the common destination and vision of the Mother Church, the Zamboanga Church needs to have an organized and synchronized rowing of its Vinta with its firm sail that represents oneness in the journey. The interwoven design represents the colorful and meaningful co-existence of everyone living their faith and culture. The multicolored Layag and Vinta speak about narratives of realities.</p>

ATTACHMENT 4

SECTORAL REFLECTION – NATIONAL SYNODAL CONSULTATION

SECTORS	LOOK AT LIFE Share stories and experiences of sectors	LISTEN TO GOD If God were here, what would God say? Share stories from the Bible	LOVE IN ACTION What can we do?
OFWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Filipinos leaving for overseas work but carry with them take psycho-emotional baggage from home. Coping mechanisms abroad lead to other problems such as gambling and other vices. <input type="checkbox"/> Absence of Catholic church and priests to minister to OFWs hungry for spiritual guidance and especially in cases of depression <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino seafarers desire to celebrate online mass and Bible study. <input type="checkbox"/> Stories of migrants supporting Filipino priests studying abroad. <input type="checkbox"/> Need to provide support to OFW families through formation, community, and practical training. <input type="checkbox"/> OFWs unable to come home for the funeral of their family members and thus rely on recorded celebration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Like the Holy family's flight to Egypt and the story of Joseph in the OT, Filipinos are forced by circumstances to work abroad. Israel is supposed to be land of milk and honey but they had to go to Egypt. It is hoped that there will come a time when Filipinos don't have to leave. <input type="checkbox"/> The story of Philip bringing Nathanael to Jesus mirror other Christians bringing OFWs closer to Jesus <input type="checkbox"/> Jesus after feeding the multitude went to other villages too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of companionship for OFW's and their families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry for OFW children in schools. <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal management/financial education for families so they will live simply. <input type="checkbox"/> Bible sharing kits for lay. <input type="checkbox"/> Online mass for OFWs/zoom prayer meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry for the families of the OFWs' in the Philippines. <input type="checkbox"/> Personal prelature for OFWs. More Filipino priests' presence and ministry for OFW's and their families. Incardinate priests and missionaries.
WOMEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Stories of abused wives who are involved in the parish and who prefer not to leave abusive husband despite advice to flee for her safety. <input type="checkbox"/> Parish support for women - a temporary shelter for abused women and counselling services for those in need. Reports of young women assisted to go back to school. <input type="checkbox"/> Women in red light district areas supported by counsellors and religious sisters who conduct ongoing formation for volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Non-government organization personnel shares how they handle trafficking of children and women. <input type="checkbox"/> A story about a woman who became suicidal despite being active in the Church. She started questioning God and due to unfortunate circumstances has left the church. <input type="checkbox"/> We need to un-box the structures of society that continue such abuses. There is a gross lack of support from government as funds for women are sometimes misappropriated into other projects and psychosocial issues and mental health are not provided with concrete support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Good Shepherd – we should take care of the women and children in the neighbourhood. <input type="checkbox"/> Church as a good Shepherd. The story of the Lost Sheep and "let those who have not sinned, cast the first stone." Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not fear". <input type="checkbox"/> Rising from the Dead and Death of Lazarus. <input type="checkbox"/> Creation of Man and Woman-they complement each other; no one is better than the other. <input type="checkbox"/> In John 19, at the foot of the Cross, Jesus entrusted Mary and John to each other. In his diocese, one bishop, told the women laity to check, remind the clergy of any observed wrongdoing/mistakes and vice versa. <input type="checkbox"/> Good Samaritan – women with mental illness thirst for healing than can be given by the Church. <input type="checkbox"/> The stories of women disciples who stayed with Jesus even during his time of suffering and death. <input type="checkbox"/> Samaritan Woman and other stories of encounter of women with Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Revisit church and government policies and make them gender sensitive and research based. <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen the catechesis and formation of both women and men. <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Programs and ministry to women should be more pro-active but also personal especially abandoned and abused women. <input type="checkbox"/> Formation and training for those who assist women <input type="checkbox"/> Family ministries to support single women <input type="checkbox"/> Respond concretely, intended ministry for women with mental illness/mental health concerns. <input type="checkbox"/> Make the Church a safe space for female employees. <input type="checkbox"/> Sustain support for existing centers like "kahupayan center in Cebu and women ecological center in Davao. <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership with government agencies and NGOs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Church's patriarchal structure and lack of empowerment for women also contribute to this problem 		
IPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Stories of discrimination; prejudice; bullying, development aggression; exploitation; commodification of cultures; pre-arranged marriage; militarization; exploitation of ancestral domain; poverty; underdevelopment; recruitment of other sects. <input type="checkbox"/> In many dioceses, they ask the church to lead and protect them from oppressive structures and from oppressors. However, there is a need to consult them regarding what they need and want. <input type="checkbox"/> Need for culture sensitive education; feeding and nutrition programs, adult education for parents, preservation of culture; identity and self-determination. <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty of: simplicity of life of IPs; generosity, ecological wisdom, awareness and empowerment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creation story <input type="checkbox"/> The story of Ruth. <input type="checkbox"/> The Exodus. <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 15 and other stories of discrimination against the Gentiles <input type="checkbox"/> "No room for them" – friends of the paralytic brought him to Jesus. <input type="checkbox"/> Samaritan woman in the Well; The woman stayed- Jesus became the teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Help the IP to protect the ancestral domain. <input type="checkbox"/> Send priests to the IP communities to understand their life of being marginalized. <input type="checkbox"/> Education for IP community. <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral conversion. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Galugarin</i> (explore) their culture, context, and needs <input type="checkbox"/> Ecological conversion. <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial assemblies specific to IPs. <input type="checkbox"/> Systematic response. <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion in parish and diocesan programs
ECOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Problem of ecology is connected to politics. Environmental concern should be a political criterion. <input type="checkbox"/> Small time fishermen are affected <input type="checkbox"/> Issues on the build, build, build program. <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable smuggling- farmer throw away their crops due to low prices and high competition and supply of agri-produce. <input type="checkbox"/> Coal mining/Mining and related issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Real issue on mining in Cagayan Valley; Sibugay island <input type="checkbox"/> Child Labor <input type="checkbox"/> Dilemma that the mining industries are giving millions to the populace – but destructions are immense. <input type="checkbox"/> Del- Koronadal (Tampakan Nickel Mining) – 70B dollars open pit mining. Ban was lifted lately (Gov. Tamayo). Giving <i>suhol</i> (bribes) to the indigent residents so they would agree. Some of them are members of the BEC. <input type="checkbox"/> In Leyte, there is money involved in mining and illegal logging. People are offered scholarships and jobs by the companies. <input type="checkbox"/> Silent practice of leaders of society in open-pit mining at Ayala, Zamboanga(Ayala Water Shed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> God speaking through natural calamities. How do we listen to God's voice through creation? <input type="checkbox"/> Befriend the miners so that they would head the people's plea. <input type="checkbox"/> Tell them that the natural resources are for everybody. <input type="checkbox"/> Story of creation. <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship <input type="checkbox"/> Love your neighbour as you love yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelize politics - culture of politics. <input type="checkbox"/> Educate the people; create awareness through BEC and social media. Education on proper waste disposal for all sectors. <input type="checkbox"/> God wants the Church to continue doing things against the destructions – even those little acts we can be able to sustain the activities. Small victories count. <input type="checkbox"/> 3R's –Re-deuce, Re-cycle, Re-use. <input type="checkbox"/> Each one can contribute a little for saving energy/stewardship/disposal of waste. <input type="checkbox"/> "Think globally; act locally." <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/religious traditions must undergo education.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are many casualties due to flood and landslide, danger of ash/dust to health and environment. <input type="checkbox"/> In many cases, people's collective action have succeeded to stop the operations. <input type="checkbox"/> Logging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In Malaybalay – from thick forest to "kalbo" (denuded). Though there is log-ban now in Bukidnon. <input type="checkbox"/> Story of success in Lamo Sur where all church workers manned the barricade. <input type="checkbox"/> Logging affecting the lives of the farmers' water supply Liguasan Marsh (Cotabato) as fuel reserve <input type="checkbox"/> Issue of climate change, no more trees, problem of floodings (majority affected are the Muslims) <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of awareness regarding ecological issues of many Catholics. <input type="checkbox"/> Missionaries receiving death threats for their fight against environmental issues 		
POLITICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Politics is actually for the common good. <input type="checkbox"/> There is recognition of what is good in politics. "Kaibiganin" (befriend) not for selfish reason. <input type="checkbox"/> When the Church speaks some politicians listen. <input type="checkbox"/> Politicians and Church leaders work together. Leaders consult the priests; they are there also to support the Church. <input type="checkbox"/> There is collaboration happening in many places and in responding to needs like mental health, social action, and other concerns for the common good. <input type="checkbox"/> But at times, when faith is compromised, the Church has its own position. <input type="checkbox"/> We have the tendency to engage and disengage with politics. <input type="checkbox"/> During the past elections, the Church has been challenged. <input type="checkbox"/> There is a call or humility and perseverance of the Church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The challenge to see that the Church is not just for saints but also for sinners. <input type="checkbox"/> People listen more to politicians than priests because politicians are more present in the grassroots. <input type="checkbox"/> There is lack of political education. <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes the Church viewed as "holier than thou". <input type="checkbox"/> The Church is more challenged to be a symbol of "unity". <input type="checkbox"/> "give to Caesar what is due to Caesar..." <input type="checkbox"/> The Church should be politically engaged. <input type="checkbox"/> The Call of Matthew. <input type="checkbox"/> "Sick people need doctor" Let us seek for the wounded. <input type="checkbox"/> The story of Pilate – the Church should engage in formation especially the proclamation of the Kingdom of God <input type="checkbox"/> The Story of the centurion – to see or affirm their desire to help the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Political education should not just be during election. Bring back the "conscientization" of the people. <input type="checkbox"/> Formation that can be done monthly not just during election. <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic schools should also focus on formation of values. <input type="checkbox"/> Give spiritual formation to politicians. <input type="checkbox"/> Connect once again to the grassroots. <input type="checkbox"/> Church as a welcoming Church. <input type="checkbox"/> There is a continuous need to "strive" for holiness and renewal. <input type="checkbox"/> There are suggestions to evaluate the role of Church in the "digital world".
FARMERS/FISHERFOLKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Farms and fishing equipments are devastated by the typhoons. <input type="checkbox"/> Attending liturgical celebrations – usually wives only because the husbands are working daily for livelihood. <input type="checkbox"/> Local tourism affecting the natural environment. <input type="checkbox"/> Badjao community in Basilan are small scale fishermen. <input type="checkbox"/> "Hand to mouth farming?" – livelihood vs big-scale farming/fishing. <input type="checkbox"/> Dependent/controlled by middlemen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parable of the sower – what kind of "fertile" soil are we going to provide so that they can flourish. <input type="checkbox"/> Multiplication of Loaves – give them something to eat. <input type="checkbox"/> "Big Catch" – openness to the guidance of the spirit to experience having a catch. <input type="checkbox"/> We are stewards of the earth. <input type="checkbox"/> You are your brothers and sisters' keepers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership – Church and local government – for unifying concern. <input type="checkbox"/> Propose NASSA to provide to social action programs for farmers and fisherfolks <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelization of culture. <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative positive solutions – organic farming. <input type="checkbox"/> Balanced Farming – Educating people/farmers/fishermen. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage formation of cooperatives <input type="checkbox"/> Faith and Values Formation for farmers and fisherfolks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Militarization of farmers vs oligarch (red tagging/killing) <input type="checkbox"/> Farmers/Fisherfolks - "baon sa utang" (buried in debt) <input type="checkbox"/> No land to till and doing illegal fishing. <input type="checkbox"/> Displacement of houses and livelihood due to urbanization and development. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen linkages with LGUs <input type="checkbox"/> Support BEC organizing.
UNDOCUMENTED PERSONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Those not covered by the law /not registered as residents/nameless/ no identity/illegal migrants/street dwellers/exploited during elections. <input type="checkbox"/> Illegal Filipinos in Israel rejected offer of 5,000 dollars just to go back to the Philippines. <input type="checkbox"/> Filipinos in Rome get married to Italians just to acquire citizenships even if they are married in the Philippines. <input type="checkbox"/> Rural poverty is worse than urban poverty so people go to the cities where they become undocumented. <input type="checkbox"/> Displaced people they were driven away because of land grabbing by some politicians/businessmen. <input type="checkbox"/> "kapit sa patalim" (clutching a knife blade) to survive <input type="checkbox"/> Cases of undocumented foreign nationals who are "hiding" in the Philippines due to crimes committed abroad. <input type="checkbox"/> Some become documented due to criminal records (used by govt/NPAs as guides). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Gen. 4 (Cain and Abel) – "am I my brother's keepers?" <input type="checkbox"/> Stories of un-named/unknown like the Parable of the Good Samaritan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To be in touch with them.
SENIOR CITIZEN/ELDERLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Story of Pope John Paul II – I am not old, I am still young because I can still accept Christ. <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of entitlement of the seniors. <input type="checkbox"/> If you reach that age, are you happy? <input type="checkbox"/> Near death experience of the elderly. <input type="checkbox"/> Bahay Aruga in Calapan is without support. <input type="checkbox"/> A lot of elderly feeling left out. <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly without sacraments. <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity to the needs of the elders. <input type="checkbox"/> Support that needs to be given to the elderly. <input type="checkbox"/> Home for elderly/sick priests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> "Honor your father and mother." <input type="checkbox"/> Living faith as an elderly. To be an elderly is to trust in God. <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual evangelization for the elderly <input type="checkbox"/> Uphold the dignity of the elderly <input type="checkbox"/> Gift of patience and understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership with government agencies and NGOs for programs to protect and support elderlies. <input type="checkbox"/> Family ministry programs to evangelize senior citizens and engage in faith formation and to help families prepare for old age.
LGBTQIA+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A very difficult topic that is neglected <input type="checkbox"/> Family member – they are in the family / with the family We have all the experience of having an LGBTQ in the family or among our relatives. There is a real clamor to give to give particular care to them. Stories of parents who have gay sons understand and love them. They also have a strong desire that their sons may one day find real joy in the faith. <input type="checkbox"/> The Catholic doctrine is painful for them. How to deal with the dichotomy of them being faithful in their ministry at the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Jesus stories of healing. Touching and healing a leper. <input type="checkbox"/> Go and make disciples (Mt. 28, 19) <input type="checkbox"/> All are justified in Christ <input type="checkbox"/> Rm 8, 38 "You were born in the womb of your mother ... you are wonderfully made <input type="checkbox"/> Love one another as I have loved you (Jn) <input type="checkbox"/> Like everyone else, they are gifted and are called to vocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue / increase dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> Stop discrimination – promote acceptance. (Process of acceptance and culture of acceptance) <input type="checkbox"/> To establish a ministry for the LGBTQIA+ community (CBCP) <input type="checkbox"/> Person to head / handle should be competent. Need to prepare future pastors to minister to LGBTQ++
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> same time, they know that something is wrong in how they live. <input type="checkbox"/> Need to be accepted and for people willing to listen to their stories, questions, and needs. <input type="checkbox"/> More awareness in the community about their presence and their situation. <input type="checkbox"/> Need for integral formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Church needs to accept that we don't know. We are all called to discern since this is not a black and white situation. <input type="checkbox"/> We have to really invest in helping them. To really take interest in helping them and sustain programs for them <input type="checkbox"/> We need to learn to see them as persons who want to serve the Lord despite their orientation. We need to assist them in their process of finding their identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Institutionalize a ministry that will take care of their brothers and sisters in the LGBTQI community; CBCP will have a program / ministry to address LGBTQIA <input type="checkbox"/> Maximize their gifts
FAMILY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Broken families <input type="checkbox"/> Distance – betrayal <input type="checkbox"/> Results: Single Parents / Single Mom <input type="checkbox"/> Survival <input type="checkbox"/> Illnesses <input type="checkbox"/> Affected are children who become wounded or addicts <input type="checkbox"/> Root cause: Lack family formation / weak foundation <input type="checkbox"/> Family economic status <input type="checkbox"/> Civil marriages, cohabiting couples <input type="checkbox"/> Children of broken families <input type="checkbox"/> Single motherhood <input type="checkbox"/> Teenage pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> Children of OFWs <input type="checkbox"/> Separated couples <input type="checkbox"/> Third party relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Indifference of youth to marriage <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Christian Formation for families <input type="checkbox"/> Parents just allow their daughters to go with their boyfriends on overnights <input type="checkbox"/> Gender identity <input type="checkbox"/> Over stimulated due to too much gadget-use <input type="checkbox"/> Quality time in the family <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee parents <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of family ministers <input type="checkbox"/> Influence from Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to stories gave us the realization that everything is grace. The stories of infidelity, physical and verbal abuse and most of all, leading a community with couples having marital issues opened doors and windows for more understanding of God's love which is greater than we can imagine. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not judge (psychology /family counselling) <input type="checkbox"/> Advice not to do it again ... instead do the right thing <input type="checkbox"/> Hosea: "Come back to me" <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 8:20 <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 8:29 (Luke 9:20) <input type="checkbox"/> John 2:5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have a more concrete, structured and inviting Pre-Cana program. The present Pre-Cana program is seen only as a pre-requisite to marriage and not as a ministry for couples to-be <input type="checkbox"/> Family counselling in every parish. Couples for Christ, etc. are trans-parochial and seldom seen in parish concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Family counselling <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthened family life apostolate <input type="checkbox"/> Programa 'BuhayPamilya' (Program for Families) <input type="checkbox"/> Review the Pre-Cana Module <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal from self to the family, also a synodal process <input type="checkbox"/> Continue walking with people, journey with them with passion and compassion <input type="checkbox"/> Conversion <input type="checkbox"/> Train priests who could help – family and life ministry <input type="checkbox"/> Training of family counsellors <input type="checkbox"/> Institutionalizing family and life ministry <input type="checkbox"/> Integration of Family formation <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Moral Formation <input type="checkbox"/> Training for listening for Family and Life Ministry
YOUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Struggles of the young people <input type="checkbox"/> The need for accompaniment <input type="checkbox"/> Bad effects of the social media <input type="checkbox"/> Sacramentalized but not evangelized 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Kuentuhan sa pananampalataya (faith-sharing) <input type="checkbox"/> Learning the language of the young as a way of accompanying them in order to enter into their world <input type="checkbox"/> Establishing relationship with the young <input type="checkbox"/> Youth ministering to the youth
PDL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners raised a child not of their own <input type="checkbox"/> Despite of their situation, there is an innate goodness that prevails <input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Image of the crucified Jesus saying to the other crucified person, 'Today you will be with me in paradise' <input type="checkbox"/> Image of the Mass <input type="checkbox"/> Mary Magdalene wiped the feet of Jesus <input type="checkbox"/> Let the children come to me <input type="checkbox"/> To be crucified is to be identified which means 'solidarity' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Personal level and systemic solution <input type="checkbox"/> Organization of ministry <input type="checkbox"/> Youth involvement <input type="checkbox"/> Intensified programs and connections

PWD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> PWD - Hemophilia –physical disability – this was a rare disability and few people know this disease, has been recognized as PWD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 2:3 – The Healing of the Paralytic <input type="checkbox"/> They came bringing to him a paralytic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reciprocal loving <input type="checkbox"/> Compassion – for PWD persons – given us, as gift of love <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing and planning program with PWD within the Churches <input type="checkbox"/> Informing the community – evangelizing
LABOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers’ ‘migration’ – from private to public schools <input type="checkbox"/> Low salary <input type="checkbox"/> Political accommodation <input type="checkbox"/> Workloads <input type="checkbox"/> Reduces quality time for the family <input type="checkbox"/> Reduces quality of education <input type="checkbox"/> Too much paperwork <input type="checkbox"/> Operator-based system <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers suffer on boundary system <input type="checkbox"/> High price of oil <input type="checkbox"/> Lay formation (“Singhot sa Palengke” Marketplace) <input type="checkbox"/> Vendors– Always busy, do not participate in masses <input type="checkbox"/> Skilled workers (electrician, mechanics) trust to the love of God and blessing for the family <input type="checkbox"/> Tricycle drivers’ fate <input type="checkbox"/> The story of a teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic Social Teachings – referring to human dignity <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 11:28-30 <input type="checkbox"/> ‘Come to me all who are tired and I will give you rest.’ <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 118 <input type="checkbox"/> ‘My yoke is easy, my burden is light’ <input type="checkbox"/> Corinthians: Market Place (visit to groups / pastoral visit, conduct masses for these people; listen to their stories) <input type="checkbox"/> Gospel of Matthew Chapter 25 (last judgement) <input type="checkbox"/> Reminder that salvation is an act of love <input type="checkbox"/> Formation as evangelization through social action <input type="checkbox"/> Reorient people; formation of leaders to embrace social action <input type="checkbox"/> The Good Samaritan – labor sector having good heart; being generous through small meaningful journey with these kind of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Livelihood / Skills Training sponsored or spearheaded by the Church; coordinate with government agencies & NGOs <input type="checkbox"/> Discount on tuition fees for parish workers <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue between the Church and the Government <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual formations for teachers and transport groups <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsors to help transport groups have their own pedicabs <input type="checkbox"/> The Church must help in promoting and attaining enrollment for Catholic school <input type="checkbox"/> Institutionalize interventions on humanitarian and developmental services <input type="checkbox"/> Intensify humanitarian services; sustain livelihood assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Conducting rigid Catechism and educational formations
PEOPLE WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> CARE for Patient- Family- Community : An Integral Rehabilitation Program <input type="checkbox"/> LOVE of the Church – listen to them, bring their stories to the Synod <input type="checkbox"/> Particular person who went to the parish, asking ‘I want to be saved, please help me’ <input type="checkbox"/> Church – addressed it, connected all stakeholders, and put all efforts together <input type="checkbox"/> Problems with the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> “Everyone is God’s precious child, He loves us all.” <input type="checkbox"/> “It is the sick that needs a doctor – Matthew 9 – Call of Matthew <input type="checkbox"/> Lost Sheep parable <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning the Temple <input type="checkbox"/> Widow of Naim – Jesus bringing life to the son and a widow <input type="checkbox"/> Father – gives life <input type="checkbox"/> Road to Emmaus – Journeying with the people with substance use disorder <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness and Patience – Forgiving 7 X 7 X 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Start with the family and understanding from the family (Jesus growing in Nazareth with wisdom with the family) <input type="checkbox"/> Good Shepherd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitate the whole community – for the addict and its family, the community, and the Church itself <input type="checkbox"/> Formation program to help the ‘addicted’ <input type="checkbox"/> Use the template: “Kalookan – Salubong Program” In partnership with Kalookan Stakeholders: different communities / NGOs, universities <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Drug Abuse Office <input type="checkbox"/> Help from Universities – De La Salle, Ateneo <input type="checkbox"/> IDEALS – young lawyers <input type="checkbox"/> Family / community should realize the reasons for the root causes. Understand and not be judgmental <input type="checkbox"/> A love in action <input type="checkbox"/> Person should also be able to seek help initially from a BEC <input type="checkbox"/> Venue to tell the story / their issues <input type="checkbox"/> After spiritual, what would be the action? Ans – livelihood program

STREET DWELLERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Result of migration to the cities <input type="checkbox"/> Older generation is still religious but with the younger generation, city culture dominates <input type="checkbox"/> Cause of street dwellers, local migrants / informal settlers is poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Cause of poverty is malnutrition. At age 0-6 is the brain development of a child... If a child is not fed properly, she/he does not have energy to study; If one does not study well, she or he will not graduate; if she or he cannot graduate, she or he cannot find a job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> It is God’s will that all will have enough to eat and no one will go hungry <input type="checkbox"/> In Jesus’ time, meal is always sharing <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis “You may eat”; Exodus “eat before the crossing over”, Isaiah 1: God will prepare a banquet for everyone... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with NGOs and LGUs to address the condition of the informal settlers <input type="checkbox"/> More support for feeding program (reactive approach); before feeding them, we could also teach them about hygiene, then after feeding them, there can also be some formation programs <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage them to plant vegetables, e.g. malunggay (a proactive solution)
WOMEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Abused women in the parish <input type="checkbox"/> Story on red light district about women; support from an organization with counsellors and religious sisters who conduct ongoing formation for volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Violence against women; sexually abused and their mental wellness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Samaritan Woman; women who are wounded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> That there should be a ministry for women, esp. abandoned and abused women <input type="checkbox"/> Formation for those who assist women <input type="checkbox"/> Support institutions that help women <input type="checkbox"/> Family ministries to support single women <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health ministry <input type="checkbox"/> Diocesan centers to handle abused women and children with counsellors; healing <input type="checkbox"/> Partner with government (Social Work Department)
HUMAN RIGHTS VICTIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can diocesan social media release issues / stories on rights violation? <input type="checkbox"/> There is a general feeling of fear for one’s safety <input type="checkbox"/> Children tend to accept that human rights violation are ‘normal’ <input type="checkbox"/> Justice system is oppressive of the poor. The police have become instruments of human rights abuses and no one holds them accountable <input type="checkbox"/> Cases are not investigated (Cavite priest who was missing for 3 days, no investigation happened) <input type="checkbox"/> Martial Law victims need the Church. The Church has to reach out to them. Victims are still crying for justice. <input type="checkbox"/> EJK (Extra-judicial killing) is a violation of human rights, systematic killing done against the poor. <input type="checkbox"/> Media is a minority. Red-tagging of media has chilling effect, there is a feeling of helplessness. Who can we turn to? Bishops tend to be silent and give priority to their relationships with politicians. Catholics do not seem concerned about human rights violations. <input type="checkbox"/> CARITAS is more focused on charity and not yet justice <input type="checkbox"/> EJK victims should not be reduced to statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Holy Spirit does not polarize. There is always collective discernment <input type="checkbox"/> In prayer, the Spirit moves us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral letter to be discussed first among clergy (collective discernment). <input type="checkbox"/> There must be constant reform and vigilance. <input type="checkbox"/> BECs should be grounded in the Gospel <input type="checkbox"/> CARITAS should work for justice and liberation <input type="checkbox"/> EJK victims need to be recognized; they should have a face in the Church

ATTACHMENT 5

PASTORAL LETTER OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission
Synod
2021
2023



OPENING NEW DOORS (JOHN 20:19-31)

National Synodal Consultation Statement

July 4-7, 2022, Tagaytay City

At the UPPER ROOM of the Carmelite Missionaries' Center of Spirituality in Tagaytay, we, 87 lay women and men including youth, 46 clergy and religious, and 87 bishops, gathered together representing 86 dioceses in the country. We relived the experience of the earliest community of disciples, through prayer, spiritual conversations, mutual listening, and communal discernment. We did so to respond consciously to the invitation of Pope Francis to grow into a more synodal Church by learning to WALK WITH our Risen Lord on the way to the reign of God. The tapestry of culture, language, music, dances, and narratives, as an expression of our unity in diversity, indicated our maturity in the gift of Faith that we have received 500 years ago from Spanish explorers, and later pioneering missionaries.

The Church is alive! It was a Spirit-led and Spirit-filled gathering of passionate listening disciples desiring to seek God's will in the voices of the people, especially those who live at the fringes of society. Acknowledging our failures and division, our shortcomings and imperfections, through the Holy Spirit we have experienced what it means to be the Corporate Christ, head and body together. New doors have been opened as he breathed on us the Holy Spirit. We have entered into a COMMUNION with him and with one another, sharing his manifold gifts to grow together as one body, through PARTICIPATION in the life of the Trinity, and carrying on the MISSION of Christ's work of redemption.

Putting forward the fruits of our synodal journey from our dioceses and metropolitan provinces, we LOOKED more deeply into the realities and signs of the times, we LISTENED TO and DISCERNED God's voice in all these realities, and together express our LOVE in concrete action by dreaming and walking together.

WE LOOK TOGETHER

In these days, we heard and shared the life-giving stories of faith as well as the struggles, conversions, hopes, and dreams of the faithful from all the parishes around the country. We rejoice in the best practices of the particular churches, and the inspiring commitment of ordained ministers and consecrated persons. We laud the examples of many lay faithful, especially women, who generously give their time, treasures, and talents in building up the church Jesus dreams for us.

We realize that the Church is still **MALAYO** (*distant*) from the faithful, especially to those in the "existential peripheries," because of our absence or lack of presence in their daily life concerns, **MALABO** (*ambivalent*) because of our inconsistencies and lack of witnessing, **NAKAKALITO** (*confused and confusing*) because of our disorganized and uncoordinated efforts in mission.

We consider our pastoral programs and catechism to be too theological, heavy, and lacking a biblical foundation. We have not fully utilized popular religiosity as a powerful vehicle for catechesis and faith formation. We fail to maximize the use of new technology and social media in our work of evangelization.

Though there is great intent to be open for all, we remain self-referential, exclusive, hierarchical, and authoritative. The poor, in many places, still feel that they are not welcomed, nor do they feel they belong, or are even wanted. It shows that the Church has no sustained intervention to make the poor self-reliant and inter-dependent. Sectors such as those who identify themselves as LGBTQ, families

in irregular situations (dysfunctional families, broken families, and single parents), differently-abled persons, victims of human rights abuses still feel alienated from and abandoned by the church. People lament the lack of a more aggressive and systematic approach of the Church to the national issues involving extra judicial killings, fake news and trolls, and massive corruption. Though the youth seem always recognized for the gift that they bring, their prophetic presence and leadership in church and society should be continually harnessed and nurtured.

We dare to look at the sin of clericalism that continues to divide: when the pastor is close only to the rich and lives a lavish lifestyle that betrays the vision of a church of the poor; when he fails to “walk the talk” and “walk the walk” he vowed to follow; and, when the Sacraments are merely officiated and not celebrated meaningfully by the lack of bridging between faith and daily life.

Awakened by the “stubborn faith” of a local church in proclaiming the Gospel amidst extreme fundamentalism, terrorism, and discrimination, we realize that we have not fully taken up the mission of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

We find more glaringly the need to go out and work with the different sectors of society, including the government, realizing that we are not alone in the vision of a better and just world, and that we have much to learn from them as partners and collaborators.

WE LISTEN AND DISCERN TOGETHER

Like Thomas, we have doubted our faith in Jesus, yet the gathering disposed us to be more sensitive to the movement of God’s Spirit in our sharing of experience of sadness and joy, woundedness and healing, despair and hope, failures and victories, and our dying and resurrection. In the presence of each other, Jesus has touched our wounds as individuals and as communities, has revitalized our fidelity to him, and rekindled in us a vision of a missionary Church that gives priority to the “existential peripheries.”

By learning to listen, we are transformed together as a community like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus who exclaimed, “Were not our hearts burning while listening to him?” (Luke 24:32). Coming from different contexts, like the early church leaders at the first council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) we listen to one another and discern God’s direction for us.

Jesus reminded us of our utter lack of sensitivity to the cry of the poor, to the feelings and conditions of others, and the countless gaps in our midst: between the poor and the church authorities, the faith and justice, catechism and social engagement, sacraments and mission, and many other destructive gaps. We realized that the ultimate cause of all the cracks in our Christian life is the gap between God and us. We need to transform our **loob** before we can even change our **labas**. If we are deeply rooted in God’s presence and love, we become sensitive to His **kaloob** (graces). With our awareness of God’s movement in our hearts (**our loob**), we become sensitive to the **Loob** of others and see God’s **kaloob** in each other. This is our way to **pagbabagong-loob**.

In these four days of grace, like Moses (Exodus 3), we stumbled on a “holy ground” that disposes us to open our hearts and hear the pain of others, see things from others’ perspectives, and walk in others’ shoes. In this “sacred place,” we have heard the Holy Spirit speaks audibly to the Church. *Christ has Risen!* So that even with the doors locked because of fear, Christ came and stood among us, telling us: *Peace be with you!* As a result, the chasm has been dispelled, the gap has been filled, and the bridge has been built! We are healed of our blindness caused by our self-centeredness and begin to see new doors to enter, doors that need to be closed, and to look for new doors that may bring resurgence and renewal to the Church. For truly, in this communal spiritual journey, like the disciples at the Upper Room, we exclaim “we have seen the risen Lord!”

WE LOVE TOGETHER

Like the disciples and Thomas transformed by the Risen Christ in their midst,

We commit to be signs of Jesus’ presence by living synodality! A synodal Church has the features of prayer, mutual listening, communal discernment, and dreaming together that leads to the practices of stewardship, consensus-building and collegial decision-making.

We call on the urgency of realizing the PCP II’s vision of *Church of the Poor* by renewing and intensifying BECs, as the local expression of the church, in all parishes, to empower grassroots communities towards sustainable development and social transformation.

We commit to become an inclusive, politically engaged, and participatory people of God, where the laity, religious, clergy and bishops work and as one faithful community, in the life and mission of the Church for the world.

We call on the renewal of the clergy to transcend clericalism and the sense of entitlement.

We commit to renew catechesis in all levels that transforms the faithful to become co-responsible members of the Church.

We call upon the laity to speak boldly, and to give voice to their visions and their hopes, their frustrations and their sorrows as full and active members of the Church.

We join hands with other Christians and those from other faiths in our common concern and care for our common home, in attending to the needs of those who suffer, in alleviating the misery of those who have been left by the wayside in the steady march to progress.

Finally, we call on us all to make synodality our way of life by cultivating a “culture of encounter,” and to create spaces of conversations and dialogue towards our interior movement of conversion from **kamanlalakbay** (fellow pilgrims) to **mamamalakaya** (fishers of people).

OUR PRAYER

Loving Father,
you have awakened us by the call to become a “corporate Christ”
and to “make a way where there seems to be no way,” together.
As we opened the door of dialogue through the experience of friendship,
mutual listening and discernment, and prayerful worship,
you gave us the grace to enter into life-defining doors
that emboldens us to traverse unexplored promising territories.

Today, the walls are broken down!
Our Faith has been awakened! Hope comes alive! The fire of love is burning!
May this kairós become for us the seed for
deeper communion, authentic participation, and border-crossing mission.
Make us disciples together to become a church
redefined, re-affirmed, and re-vitalized—A Synodal Church!

We implore the prayers of Mary, **Ina ng Simbahan**, to lead us in this difficulty journey.

We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord, **aming Dakilang Kalakbay**,
and the Holy Spirit, **aming Lakas at Gabay**. Amen.

For and in behalf of the Delegates to the National Synodal Consultation,

+ PABLO VIRGILIO S. DAVID, D.D.

Bishop of Kalookan

CBCP President

July 7, 2022