



Archidiocèse de
Saint-Boniface
Archdiocese

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL MTG

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Diocesan Center

NOTES FROM GROUP EXERCISE: CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT

Synthesis Report, Section 16, Matters for Consideration L

Listening requires unconditional acceptance. It does not mean compromising proclamation of the Gospel or endorsing any opinion or position proposed. Jesus opened up new horizons and pathways for the people to whom he listened unconditionally, and in order to share the Good News of salvation with those we encounter we are called to do likewise.

Question 1: In our parish context, how can we ensure all who come to us feel welcome?

Table 1: Being a welcoming parish can take several forms and involve various means. Listed they include: a strong welcome ministry, ushers (or other veteran parishioners) acknowledging newcomers, the provision of registration forms and people to conduct follow-ups, having a guestbook in the parish space, having a web presence and integrating social media, and having the priest's involvement in welcoming visitors.

Table 2: Being a welcoming parish should also extend not only to new-comers, but to everyone in such practices as a return of physical handshakes, language difference accommodation, clarity on the parts of the liturgy and vocabulary use.

Table 3: A welcoming parish should acknowledge all its parishioners, invite their involvement, consider people's preferences and concerns, and provide a comfortable physical environment, particularly for the differently-abled. In some cases it might extend beyond the premises, such as going for coffee, or it might call for a respect of that person's preference for privacy and space.

Synthesis Report, Section 16, Proposal N

What would need to change in order for those who feel excluded to experience the Church as more welcoming? Listening and accompaniment are a form of ecclesial action, not just the actions of individuals. They must therefore find a place within the ordinary pastoral planning and operational structuring of Christian communities at different levels, making full use of spiritual accompaniment. A synodal Church needs to be a listening Church and this commitment has to be translated into practice.

Question 2: In our parish context, who are the excluded who do not come to us? How can we reach them?

Table 4: Imagining those persons who might feel excluded from a parish can lead to making a distinction between those who carry a legacy of hurt (exterior or interior). Therefore, ways of reaching out should match the issue at hand. Opportunities such as life events (baptisms, marriages, funerals), and hospital visits are moments to reach out. Practical approaches could mean masses at different times of the day. We are called to being people of joy and light in a world of difficulty and darkness.

Table 5: Considerations for feelings of exclusion include cultural differences and generational divides, language and natural affiliation. Developing personal relationships is a remedy to this.