

**Synodal Consultation Meeting Synthesis**  
Religious Sisters of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau

<b>Date</b>	Saturday, February 19, 2022
<b>Location</b>	St. John Vianney Parish – Mountain View, MO
<b>Number of Sisters present</b>	36
<b>Number of Communities represented</b>	14
<b>Number of Discussion Groups</b>	7
<b>Amount of time in small group discussion</b>	50 minutes
<b>Amount of time in large group sharing/report</b>	40 minutes

**Overview of Schedule**

8:30 – 9am:	Gathering/Check-in/Morning Refreshments
9-9:45am:	Housekeeping/Introductory Remarks/Introduction of Communities
9:45-10:00am:	Overview/Purpose of Synod
10-10:50am:	Small Group Discussion
10:50-11:30am:	Large Group Sharing
11:30-12:30pm:	Holy Mass
12:30-1:30pm:	Lunch
1:30-2pm:	Closing Remarks / Ending Prayer

**GROWING IN HOLINESS**

1. **How does your apostolate encourage you on the path to holiness and deepen your relationship with Christ in southern Missouri?**
  - To grow in holiness, we are called to spend quality time with the Lord, to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist, to bring the needs of those we serve to prayer so that we can be an instrument of the Holy Spirit. We are reminded to recognize the culture of Southern Missouri. Consequently it is important to listen, to find commonalities with those we minister to, and to be another Christ.
2. **What could the diocese do better to foster and encourage your growth in holiness?**
  - Provide more opportunities for sisters to gather for retreat, workshops, bonding/recreation besides an annual meeting.
  - Gentle reminder for priests to prepare homilies as we are in a mission territory and for many people, the Sunday Mass is their only time they are being spiritually fed.
  - The world of a religious sister can sometimes be “pampered” if we don’t go out to encounter people.

**FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES**

3. **In what ways does your experience of parish life/community life help you on the path of intentional discipleship?**
  - Presence is critical. No one can be holy without a community. As sisters, we need to build community, especially because we have experienced community ourselves.

**4. Who, in your experience, does not feel welcome or excluded from the life of the diocese?**

- The elderly and handicapped: Provide some kind of transportation for the elderly and handicapped, keeping in mind liability guidelines. Sometimes communion schedules become outdated – please follow up on the arrangements for the homebound.
- The divorced, widowed, grieving – Is there any way we can offer some kind of groups/support for them?
- Growing number of Hispanics in our diocese – Can we offer more Masses for them? Translations into Spanish of Mirror articles? Address their concerns?
- Youth and young adults – May there be more retreats, resources, activities for them?
- LGBTQ community and those of different political/social views – reaching out to them and breaking barriers of prejudice
- New people and getting them involved – providing personal invitations and not just making announcements
- Non-Catholics, migrants (those without legal status), the homeless, and those outside the sacramental life of the Church

**5. What positive suggestions would you make for how the diocese more effectively form intentional disciples?**

- Provide formation through spiritual experiences for the pastoral council and parish groups so that they can motivate others to encounter God and others.
- Have gatherings that recognize cultural connections
- Have consistent young adult ministries
- Particular faith formation for parents and gathering opportunities for families
- Offer retreats for all groups: married, single, youth, men, women, etc.
- Include the voices of women/religious/others in the Mirror

**BEING SENT TO WITNESS**

**6. In your experience, are you aware of any ways the diocese fosters healthy relationships within the larger surrounding community and with other Christian churches?**

- Yes, many of our parishes/missions contribute towards a soup kitchen with other Christian churches. (Ex: Well of Life, Life House, etc.). We also have a ministerial alliance. Perhaps we need to advertise/promote this information on our websites so that it is accessible.
- We have inter-religious prayer groups such as the Good Friday Stations of the Cross.
- Suggestion: Have an open invitation to other denominations to celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other events together.

**7. How does your charism contribute to being the hands, feet, eyes, ears, and heart of Jesus?**

- In nursing, we are giving direct care, spiritual support, presence. In education, joy and simplicity is our apostolate. It is to be present to families in their struggles. We are an extension of the kingdom of Christ through prayer, action, sacrifice in communion and fidelity to the Church.

8. How would you recommend we reach out to help those most in need (physically and spiritually)? How do we intentionally welcome and minister to those considered to be marginalized or left out?

- Hold Eucharistic adoration/procession – form people and invite them to participate
- Encourage a spirit of acceptance, to branch out to people you don't know and/or of different backgrounds
- Invite/encourage hospitality ministers
- Convey availability of resources (spiritual direction, spiritual talks, groups)

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

- In light of the conversation and suggestions, Bishop Rice is offering a workshop/retreat to all the sisters in the diocese. To ensure good stewardship of resources, registration of 25 sisters will be needed for implementation. This workshop/retreat will not replace the Sisters' Annual Gathering with the Bishop.
- If any religious community would like to contribute an article about their congregation to the Mirror, please contact Sr. Janine to begin the process.
- The large group photo will be used for a diocesan vocations poster for religious sisters. More information will be shared.

Written by Sr. Janine Tran, CMR  
03/01/2022