



CARMELITE  
MONASTERY of BALTIMORE  
Discover the Fire of God's Love

May 3, 2022

Archdiocese of Baltimore  
Synod Feedback

The Carmelite Sisters of Baltimore held five Saturday Listening sessions over Zoom. At each session a scholar examined the Sunday gospel through the lens of Synodality. Then small break-out groups met for sharing and reflection.

Since the Saturday sessions were attended mostly by older adults, we arranged for a sixth session for young adults that was held on a weeknight.

The dreams and concerns of the participants can be synthesized into five categories: welcome, inclusivity, contemporary understanding of human sexuality, non-hierarchical orientation, and justice related issues both within and outside the church. The specific articulation of these dreams and concerns have been summarized in the attachment below.

A total of 358 people participated in these sessions. If you would like to read the full list of comments, you can access them at <https://www.baltimorecarmel.org/synodality2023/>

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## Carmelite Sisters of Baltimore Synod Feedback

### Synod Feedback from the Adults

#### Dreams:

1. Young & old: There is an overwhelming and all-encompassing desire that our church be more welcoming and accepting of ALL: regardless of national culture, language spoken, age, gender, sexual orientation, or marital status. Follow the science! Develop a new ethic and theology of sexuality.
2. That ALL aspects of ministry be opened to women and married men.
3. That the hierarchical, patriarchal, and clerical structures of the church be deconstructed; so that the laity will become empowered to live the fullness of their baptism. In addition, existing and emerging structures should be evaluated periodically to determine best practices.
4. Young and old: That Black church members also be represented at all levels of church life.
5. That the communion table be an open one.
6. That homilies be theologically instructive, well-prepared and speak at an adult educated level to the social justice issues of our day: racism, sexism, white supremacy, white privilege, etc. [not just anti-abortion rhetoric and fundraising].
7. That social justice be incorporated into parish practice as well as parish preaching.
8. That the church will promote growth in our spiritual life, offer training sessions in prayer.
9. That contemplative discernment and a continued process of synodality be used to determine how the Spirit is moving among us now. Trust the Spirit.

#### Good Experiences

1. When there is an opportunity for encuentro and interpersonal connection: faith sharing groups, being greeted, welcomed, cared for, and connected; 'horizontal' including different voices and outlooks.
2. Zoom lectio divina has been very meaningful for listening to one another, learning to pray and forming community.

#### Additional Dreams for Women in the Church:

1. Restore to the lectionary those readings that describe the leadership of the early church women.
2. Learn from the experience of the Anglican church; don't reinvent the wheel.
3. Women should have a woman representative at the diocesan pastoral council who voices women concerns and issues about the church.
4. From both young and old: Can't just "add women and stir". Must address issues of male dominance and misogynistic attitudes among current clergy.
5. Change seminary education, teach servant leadership, promote learning about human development, return women to seminary professorships, address clericalism.

#### Concerns

1. Can we trust this process; will everyone truly be consulted, will our message get diluted?
2. Can we choose and trust this church given sex abuse, Native American genocide, and slavery?
3. From the young: Dreams of a church with different accountability measures built in.
4. From the young: History of colonialism needs to be redressed.
5. From the young: dreams of a church that is more aligned with the practices and philosophy of the Catholic Worker movement.
6. From the young: dreams of a church that does more consultation and dialogue before writing church documents so that they reflect the *sensus fidelium*.
7. From the young: dreams of a church that is artistic, intellectual, encourages creativity, exploration, and is open to challenging the tradition.
8. From the young: dreams of a space that is more about caring and embracing the fullness of life and not policing people.