



## 2018 SYNOD SURVEY RESULTS

To see detailed Synod Survey Response Results, [click here](#).

### 1. In what manner does the Church listen to the lived situations of young people?

On a scale of 1-10 the average response to the question of “How well does the Church listen to the needs of people your age?” The following results are reported:

The mean response was 4.89, with a median response of 5 out of 10. The average scores were as follows:

- 14-18 year group was 4.58
- 19-24 was 5.00
- 25 to 30 was 6.07
- Over 30 was

### 2. What are the main challenges and most significant opportunities for young people in the United States today?

#### Challenges:

##### 14-18 Year Old

- 1) Pressure - fitting-in, school, parents, grades, drugs, alcohol, sex. A concerning challenge for 10% of this group was Depression.
- 2) Relationships - Family relationships, friends, divorce, self-confidence.
- 3)

##### 19-24 Year Old

- 1) Pressure – social media, drugs (heroin), sex, employment, financial debt, societal influences.
- 2) Relationships - Family relationships, friends, divorce, finding life partner with shared values.

##### 25-30 Year Old

- 1) Financial Challenges – Student debt, financial obligations and cost of living, independence from parents
- 2) Relationships- Finding a life partner, dysfunctional families, sense of belonging and meaningful relationships

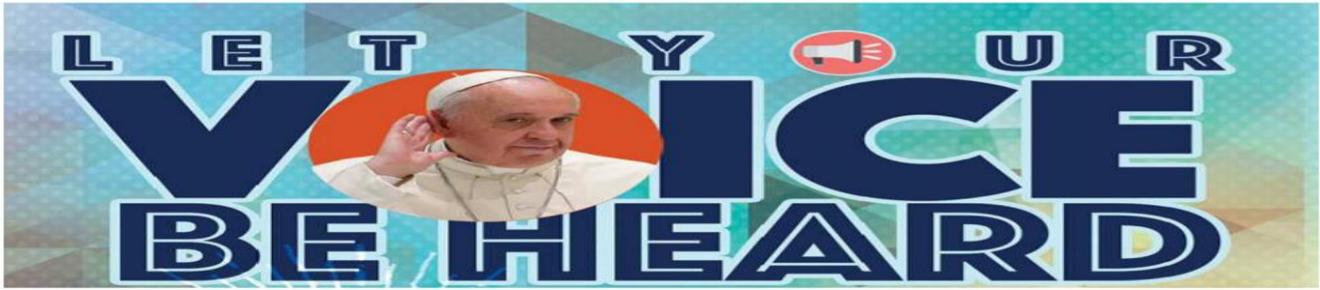
#### Opportunities:

##### 14-18 Year Olds

- 1) Service – serving others in the community and serving the church and its various ministries. Offering their ideas, energy, and talents, participate in youth ministry
- 2) Evangelization – talk about God, attend Mass, pray.

##### 19-24 Year Olds

- 1) Energy and Talent- Enthusiasm to share their faith and relevant and contemporary gifts with the church and others



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- 2) Service, Youth Perspective, and Evangelization/Faith – These priorities are equally important to this demographic. There is a great sense that a youthful perspective is critical.

### 25-30 Year Olds

- 1) Service – willing and able to serve church and community
- 2) Energy and Talent – very enthusiastic to share their youthful energy, a fresh perspective, and skills (tech) to help the church become more relevant

To see detailed Synod Survey Response Results for Question 2, [click here](#).

### 3. What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success *within* the Church, and why?

#### 14-18 Year Olds:

- 1) Antioch, Youth Group and Confirmation retreats have resonated with this age group.
- 2) Attending Mass or serving as a lector, Altar Server or musician.

#### 19-24 Year Olds:

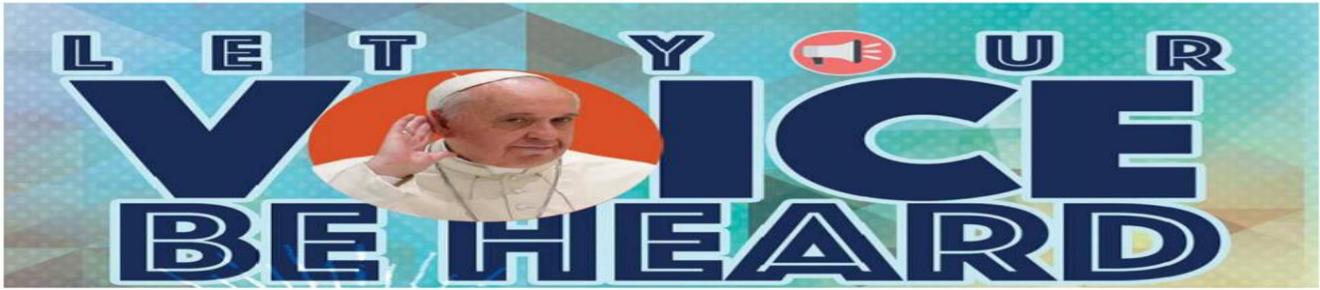
Adult Groups primarily reached through the college or University; both faith sharing community and service and caring for others made an impact on this group.

- 1) Campus Ministries
- 2) Catholic student association at Rutgers (Rutgers)
- 3) JusticeWorx
- 4) Center for Faith Justice in Lawrence Township, NJ
- 5) CSA/Young Adult groups at St. Peters
- 6) Saint Paul's Outreach
- 7) The Catholic Student Union at Florida State University
- 8) The Young Adult Men's Group at St. Peter's
- 9) Catholic bible conference

#### 25-30 Year Olds: Retreat/Conference, Caring for Others, Youth/Adult Groups

Adult Groups/Organizations and opportunities made an impact for many during their college/post college years:

- 1) Catholic Student Association (CSA) at Rutgers
- 2) Engaged Encounter
- 3) Women's Group



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- 4) Approach Retreat (College Kairos Retreat)
- 5) Salesian Lay Missioner program
- 6) Guatemala Mission Trip 2014

### 4. What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success *outside* the Church, and why?

Below summarizes the results of responses for all under 30.

- 1) Service and Caring for others through various organizations have been successful with attracting (age appropriate youth). Such organizations as:
  - Interfaith Hospitality Network
  - Habitat for Humanity
  - Workcamp
  - Helping veterans
  - Helping in Soup Kitchens
  - Visiting Elderly
  - Serving in Community Organizations
- 2) Interfaith Groups/Organizations
  - Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship (Assemblies of God)

To see detailed Synod Survey Response Results for Questions 3 & 4, [click here](#).

### 5. What do young people really ask of the Church in the United States today?

#### 14-18 Year Olds

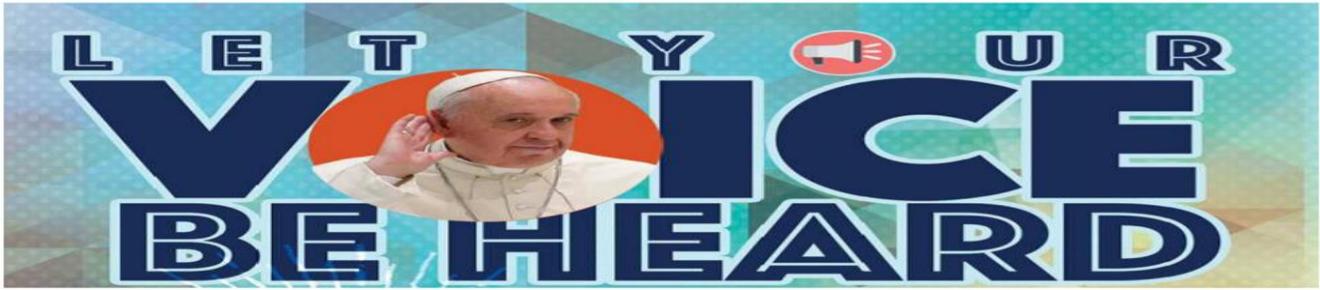
- 1) A majority were very satisfied with what their local church offered or did not have a strong opinion either way. *"I can't think of anything. There is nothing I would want to change."*
- 2) A youth group. *"Some kind of a youth group where I could talk to other kids my age about my faith and beliefs and not feel like I'm being judged or spoken down to by adults."*

#### 19-24 Year Olds

- 1) A majority would like a Young Adult group with an opportunity for faith sharing. *"A vibrant young adults group that meets regularly for faith-sharing, community, scripture study, service, and worship."*
- 2) The remaining over 20% are satisfied with their local church offerings. *"My church satisfies all of my faith based needs."*

#### 25-30 Year olds

- 1) Young adult ministry topped the list.



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- 2) Young adult events. “Groups/Events geared at young adults. There are ministries for youth, and groups that tend to be concentrated with older adults. There is not the opportunity to question and explore Catholicism in the modern-twenty-something experience.”

Further to what are young adults looking from the church today, more specifically:

What do you want Pope Francis to know?

Age 14-18 year olds

- 1) Many struggle with Church doctrine; lack of acceptance of all people regardless of gender preference. *“It is hard to accept a church that doesn't accept gay people because they are also children of God and the church should be able to accept any willing followers of God no matter gay or straight”*
- 2) Faith is very important, but can be a struggle and we need support. *“It can be difficult to find God when surrounded by so many pressures.”*

Age 19-24 year olds

- 1) We struggle reconciling Church doctrine with our beliefs. *“We want to be engaged, but we need to feel like our voices matter. Our questions on the church's teachings should not just be ignored, they should be openly discussed because it's important that we rationalize our personal beliefs with that of the church's in order to create a strong base to build up our faith.”*
- 2) Young people are looking for support and a place to fit in the church *“Young people have tremendous faith we just don't have the outlet to express it.”*

Age 25-30

- 1) Many feel Catholicism is lacking relevance *“My generation is moving away from faith, not because values are degrading; instead, it is because many feel there are other sufficient ways to live a moral life, and that organized religion is no longer relevant.”*
- 2) Many want a strong stance from the Catholic Church, an opportunity to serve, and return to traditions that seem to be getting lost or ‘watered-down’ Some feel there is no place for them with older generations not making room for younger generations looking to serve. *“We are ready for the fullness of truth. We want to lead through service. We want to become the best versions of ourselves. We don't want a lukewarm Catholicism or a liberal spirituality. We want fullness of faith.”*

To see detailed Synod Survey Response Results for Question 5, [click here](#).



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### 6. What possibilities for participation exist in the United States for young people to take part in the life of the ecclesial community?

Over 20 survey respondents 'skipped this answer' which is an indication of uncertainty or possibly lacking opportunities. The majority of people that did respond in all age groups felt their parish offered opportunities to participate in parish life.

Age 14-18 year olds

- 1) Altar serving opportunities, choir and volunteer opportunities were identified as the primary parish outreach to this group. *"Altar serving, youth group, church teen choir"*
- 2) Youth group and events, clubs, camps *"There's youth group and retreats and a camp over the summer"*

Age 19-24 year olds

- 1) The response was almost the same as the previous age group; liturgical opportunities and young adult groups/events. *"The youth group, mass, prayer service"*
- 2) More young adults in this age group noted 'Mass' as an opportunity to participate in church, which is clearly a distinction from the younger group, which noted as opportunity to SERVE at Mass or a youth Mass. *"They offer daily mass, retreats, etc"*

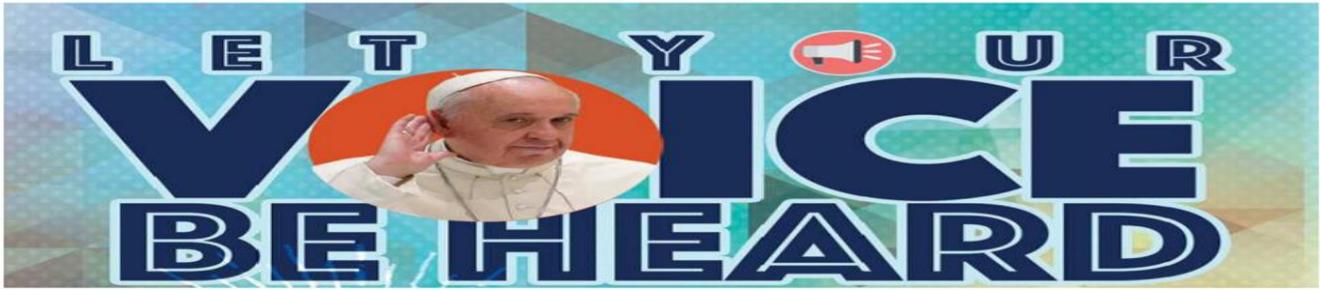
Age 25-30 year olds

- 1) This age group also mentioned Eucharistic Minister as a liturgical opportunity to serve, along with many other opportunities *"extraordinary ministers, readers, parish council, YA leadership, etc"*
- 2) There is a sense of welcome to participate in ministries and committees; although there was a lack of time for some or interest, due to demographics. *"Bible studies - but only old people attend."*

**To see detailed Synod Survey Response Results for Question 6, [click here.](#)**

### 7. How and in what manner is contact made with young people who do not frequent Church surroundings?

Sadly, the overwhelming response in all categories was "they don't know" or "they don't do anything". The college age students (19-24) had the most outreach from campus ministry and programs with intentional evangelization.



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### Ages 14-18 year olds

- 1) Over 65% of the respondents weren't sure or said there was no outreach. *"That's an issue. After elementary school, my parish is silent when it comes to young people."*
- 2) The outreach that did occur was through activities where people are encouraged to bring a friend. Other forms of outreach included social media, emails and church bulletins. *"Through the kids inside our church, we invite others to come experience our faith."*

### Ages 19-24 year olds

- 1) 50% of the respondents weren't sure or said there was no outreach. However, this group of college age respondents reported effective campus ministry outreach through groups, ministry fairs, retreats and programs. *"By providing college and on campus outreach ministries."*
- 2) This group was eager to offer suggestions on how the church could outreach: *"I would think through mainly social events that can then draw people into a one on one conversation and a authentic relationship."*

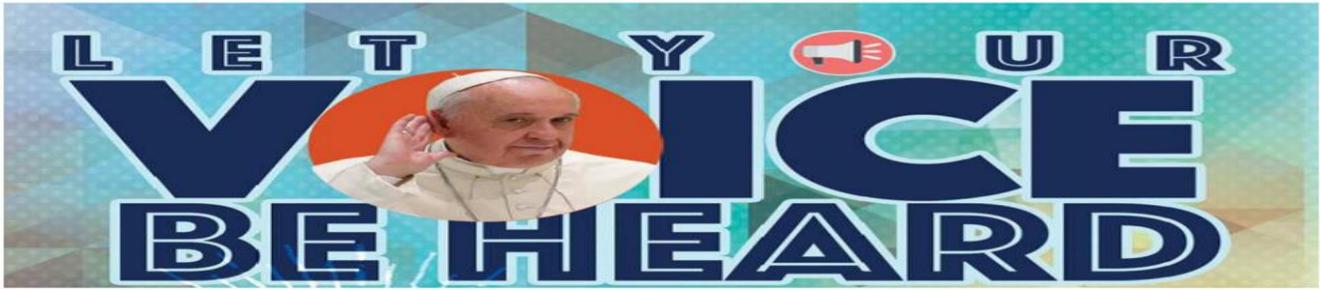
### Ages 25-30 year olds

- 1) Over 72% of the respondents in the group reported 'they don't' or 'they don't know'. *"This survey is the first hand that extended to me. Our church seems very passive at times."*
- 2) This group recalls campus ministry outreach or is aware of social media/bulletin outreach *"Some dioceses do strong social media outreach, Theology on Tap, etc. Diocese of Metuchen has improved in some ways on this. Generally, though, the Church does not do so."* *"They reach out to high schoolers through the bulletin. Older than that and they get left out."*

**To see detailed Synod Survey Response Results for Question 7, [click here](#).**

### **8. How does your community care for young people who experience extreme violence (guerrilla warfare, gangs, prison, drug addiction, forced marriages) and accompany them in various ways in their life?**

The majority of responses in each category indicated they either 'didn't know' or felt 'it wasn't something that was a problem in their area; it was not something their community dealt with. Of the community that did respond, outreach services, such as community resources, AA or NA, food pantries, shelters, support groups, etc.



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### 14-18 year olds

- 1) Over 53% of the respondents were unaware of support or did not think their community dealt with the issues.
- 2) Of those that recognized there were issues, they felt their community offered some type of community support through outreach services and prayer to those in need. *"My community offers many facilities to support these people that are put in these difficult situations. Also, many support groups have been created to help these people."*

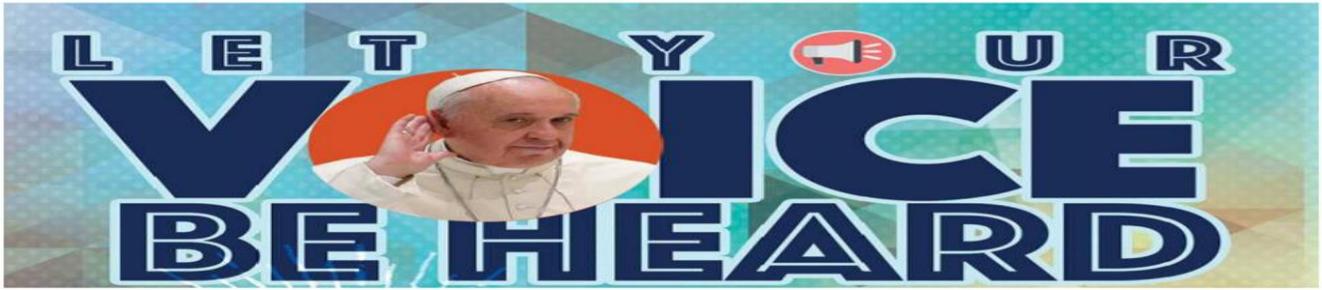
### Age 19-24 year olds

- 1) While many of this group 'did not know', most recognized that these issue were addressed with some type of outreach. *"My community cares for situations like these through social service agencies, mental health agencies, hot lines, community task forces, and food banks."*
- 2) In addition to outreach services, there is community/prayer support, along with pastoral care. *"My community cares for people who have experienced difficult situations by supporting them and praying for them."*

### Age 25-30 year olds

- 1) Almost 45% of those that responded were unaware of any support or assistance from the church. *"Not very well - usually responds well to tragedies involving these things but the Church often doesn't have on the radar the people who are experiencing them."*
- 2) Of those that recognized support, most was in the form of community resources, food pantries, AA, shelters. The church community offered prayers and some offered parent education *"My community offers many resources, my church does not."*

**To see detailed Synod Survey Response Results for Question 8, [click here](#).**



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9. What formation is offered to support the engagement of young people in society and civil life, for the common good?
10. In a world which is greatly secularized, what pastoral activities are most effective for continuing the journey of faith after the Sacraments of Christian Initiation?