INTRODUCTION

“Too often we talk about young people without allowing ourselves to be challenged by them... Some might think it would be easier to keep you at ‘a safe distance’, so as not to be provoked by you. But it is not enough to exchange the odd message, or share nice photographs. Young people must be taken seriously!... In the Church — I am convinced — it should not be this way... We are in need of this: to hear of your journey in life. What do you seek? ... In order to tune in to the same wavelength as the younger generations, intense dialogue is of great help.” — Address of Pope Francis at the Pre-Synodal Meeting with Young People, March 19, 2018

Heeding the call of Pope Francis for taking young people seriously, the church in America is engaging in a National Dialogue with young Catholics. This effort includes conversations with those who are, and those who are not, practicing the Catholic faith. We need to hear their stories, share the love of Christ with them, and learn what we can do as a church, both on the local and national level, to accompany them in their journey and more effectively share with them the beauty, truth and freedom that only Christ offers.

GOAL OF THE NATIONAL CONVERSATIONS
The current research is clear: many youth and young adults are becoming less engaged in and/or are walking away from organized religion. Through the conversations of this National Dialogue, the Church hopes to identify how we might transform our ministry practices to more effectively accompany all youth and young adults in their journey of life and faith and facilitate their growth in becoming missionary disciples, reversing the trend of dis-engagement and disaffiliation.

FACILITATORS FOR THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION
What is needed from those who will lead these national conversations are people with an open and listening heart, filled with the love of Christ, willing to sit down with and dialogue with youth and young adults. Facilitators will receive training and resources to help guide them in leading these conversations. This National Dialogue is a huge endeavor. Without people from parishes, schools, campuses, and dioceses serving as facilitators, this will not come to full fruition. Do not fret the future, be a part of the solution. Help shape the future of the church. Let yourself be moved by the love of God to be the hands, feet, eyes, and ears of Christ. To sign up to join the National Dialogue as a facilitator:

https://www.nationaldialogue.info/

SELECTING QUESTIONS FOR YOUR AUDIENCE
The questions for the national conversations have been arranged by the major audiences (youth and young adults, parents, and ministry leaders) that we hope to engage in dialogue. Each set of questions have a process and script to help facilitators introduce the conversation, make transitions between questions, and close the conversation. The questions to be used in the conversations with youth and young adults are further arranged into two groupings based upon how most of the participants in the
conversation would describe themselves: (1) non-, former, or marginal Catholics, and (2) active and/or engaged Catholics. This is not a label we would tell the people we are in dialogue with, or a scientific category, but a method to ask the most appropriate questions for the participants and to analyze the content of the conversations.

The following offers a brief description of each category:

• Category 1: NON-CATHOLIC: Never has been Catholic. FORMER-CATHOLIC: At one time was Catholic, but now has left the church. MARGINAL CATHOLIC: They marginally identify as Catholic, maybe because their family is Catholic. Occasionally goes to Mass on holidays. General belief in God. Not excited about faith or regularly active.

• Category 2: ACTIVE CATHOLIC: Glad to be Catholic and self-identify as one. Faith is part of his/her life, but it does not have much to do with daily activity. Goes to Mass on fairly regular basis. Believes in God and in Jesus. Catholicism mainly comes from family/culture. ENGAGED CATHOLIC: Faith is guiding principle for decisions. Prays often. Committed to the mission of the church. Discerning vocation. Active in sacraments. Wants to share faith with others.

PREPARING TO LEAD THE DISCUSSIONS
For facilitator instructions and tips on how to be a good facilitator please read the Facilitator’s Guide that can be found on the web site: https://www.nationaldialogue.info/conversation/ The website also has a copy of the National Dialogue Prayer and more suggestions on how to prepare and lead a discussion session. Also please see the Conversation Recording Guide found on the website.

NATIONAL DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

The questions below are organized by the type of conversation participant. The numbered questions are the base questions to be asked, and the lettered questions are sub-questions that are optional based upon the flow of the conversation.

Questions to be used with Groups of Youth and Young Adults who are NON-, FORMER and/or MARGINAL Catholics

1. What brings you joy in your life right now? 2. What challenges are you facing in your life right now? 3. What can the Church do to support you in your life and/or your Catholic faith? a. Are there things the Church should stop doing? b. In what ways could the Church support you in making your important life choices?

Questions to be used with Groups of Youth and Young Adults who are ACTIVE or ENGAGED Catholics

1. Please describe a time when your Catholic faith made a difference in your life. a. In what ways do you grow in your Catholic faith? b. How would you describe your relationship with Jesus? 2. What three words would you use to describe your experience of the Catholic Church? 3. Why do you remain Catholic or active in your Catholic faith? a. What do you enjoy about being Catholic? b. What don’t you like about being Catholic? c. Why do you think some people decide to stop being Catholic? 4. What can the Church do to support you in your life and your Catholic faith? a. Are there things the Church should stop doing? b. In what ways could the Church help you listen to and answer God’s call for your important life choices?
Questions to be used with PARENTS and FAMILIES of young people

When answering these questions, call to mind your son(s) or daughter(s) who is/are between the ages of 16 and 30 (and in their youth or young adult years), or grandchildren or other family members who are currently within the youth and young adult age range.

1. Please describe a time when your Catholic faith made a difference in the life of your son/daughter/this young person. a. In what ways does your son/daughter grow in their Catholic faith? b. How would you describe their relationship with Jesus? 2. (For families of active or engaged Catholic youth/young adults) Why do you think your son/daughter/this young person in your family chooses to remain Catholic and active in their faith? a. What did you do to encourage them to remain actively Catholic? b. What challenges did you face in passing along the faith to them? c. Why do you think some young people have left the Church? 3. (For families of non-, former or marginal Catholic youth/young adults) Why do you think your son/daughter/this young person in your family is no longer active in the practice of the Catholic faith? a. What do you think may have cause this disconnection? b. What challenges do you face in connecting with your son/daughter/family member about faith issues today? c. Why do you think some young people remain active in the Church? 3. What can the Church do to support you and your children and other youth and young adult family members, both in your lives and the practice of the Catholic faith? What do you need? What do they need? a. Are there things, from your perspective as a parent or family member of young people, the Church should stop doing? b. In what ways could the Church help your son/daughter/this family member listen to and answer God’s call regarding their important life choices?

Question to be used with MINISTRY LEADERS

1. Please describe a time when the Catholic faith made a difference in a young person’s life. a. In what ways do see young people grow in their Catholic faith? b. How would you describe their relationship with Jesus? 2. Why do you think some young people choose to remain Catholic and active in their faith? a. What do you do to encourage them to remain Catholic and active? b. What challenges do you face in passing along the faith to them? c. Why do you think some young people and adults have left the Church? 3. What can the Church in your local setting do to support young people in their life and Catholic faith? a. Are there things the Church should stop doing? b. In what ways could the Church help young people listen to and answer God’s call in their important life choices? 4. What support do you need in your ministry with youth and young adults, and their families? 5. What do you think most needs to be transformed in your local ministry efforts with youth and young adults?

In addition to submitting your responses to the national site, please share them with the Diocese of Columbus, Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry to assist us in compiling a report that will give us a picture of the local situation. Email your results to mhall@columbuscatholic.org. Thank you!