

**Questions for Ecumenical Partners in West Virginia Council of Churches
as part of the Catholic Church's "synodal process"**

Spring 2022

Dear brothers and sisters in the faith of Jesus Christ,

Pope Francis has asked the Church to engage in a synodal process – basically, discussions held seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit – to consider our experience of following Jesus Christ together in the Body of Christ. The hallmarks of the synodal process are *communion*, praying, listening and speaking with others in a respectful manner; *participation*, casting a wide net to engage as many people as possible, including Christians of other denominations; and *mission*, whose goal is to bring the Gospel of Christ to others with renewed energy.

In the light of Pope Francis' request, I invite the members of the WVCC to offer their views of the Catholic Church. Acknowledging that there are significant differences in doctrine, morality and ecclesial organization among our Churches but also substantial areas of agreement and unity, I would be happy to incorporate your views in a report I will make in June, 2022, to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, who will forward the US responses to Rome in anticipation of the Synod of Bishops scheduled for the fall of 2023.

You are welcome to answer the following questions anonymously and make other comments as you see fit. You can send your responses to Rev. Jeff Allen at the WWCC office, who will forward them to me. It would be helpful if they were received by April 30. I am most grateful for your cooperation.

1. What is your overall impression of the Catholic Church, especially in West Virginia and nationally, in proclaiming the Gospel, fostering the holiness of God's people through the sacraments and shepherding them rightly?
2. Do you see two or three significant positive impacts of the Catholic Church and Catholic individuals and groups in the world, the nation, West Virginia?

3. In your view, are there negative impacts of the institutional Catholic Church and her members in our society?
4. What do you think of Catholic Church governance and the participation of the laity in decision-making?
5. Does the Catholic Church serve the poor, the sick, the marginalized?
6. Are Catholics, clergy and laity, good ecumenical partners?
7. Do you have any recommendations for improving Catholics' experience of their Church life in liturgy, religious formation, social service or other areas?