

**VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY:
THE SYNTHESIS OF HONG KONG FOR THE SYNODAL CHURCH**

Appendix

(1) The Hong Kong Working Group

(2) Data Analysis Report

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(1)

The Hong Kong Working Group

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(2)

Data Analysis Report

(A) COMMUNION

1. The journeying companions

Q.1_1 In our local Church (diocese, parish, community, etc.), who are those who “walk together”?

1.1.1 It is generally agreed “Companion on the journey” includes parties holding a role (identity) within local Catholic Diocese: from individuals like clergy, the faithful and people working in Catholic organization, to Catholic groups or Diocese operating organizations such as parish, faithful group, Catholic schools, hospitals and charity organization.

1.1.2 Sometimes the feeling of “walking together” can be strongly reflected in doing charity work or spiritual practice with the “companion”.

1.1.3 As a spiritual group, God (Jesus and Holy Spirit) is usually mentioned as the “Companion on the journey” together with human beings.

1.1.4 These “companion” practice their faith by living in love and following the Church teachings.

1.1.5 People or organizations being regarded as “companion” are universal which include almost all parties possessing a role within local Diocese. It may reflect respondents are expecting everyone who practices his or her faith is responsible for participating in Church’s matters.

1.1.6 It is delighted for the researcher to find that God is being mentioned as a “companion” by many respondents. This suggests that, in many respondents’ perception, God is still guiding and is still leading the Church’s direction, which is in align with the Church teaching.

Q.1_2 Who are those who seem further apart?

1.2.1 “Companion on the journey” outside of the Church includes family members and neighbour around us who do not possess Catholic faith; people attending Catechism class; people with physical needs, people being served by Catholic organization such as Caritas, school and faithful group; Christian and non-Christian religious groups; and organizations or parties having authority or ability to serve the society regardless of with or without religious background, like Government and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs).

1.2.2 Although these parties may not have close relationship with the Church, they are sharing

the same goals or values with the Church and willing to love and serve those people in need.

1.2.3 Some respondents argued that “Companion on the journey” should not be classified as within or outside of Catholic Church.

1.2.4 In the topic of serving the society and people in need, with or without religious background is not a key consideration among respondents.

1.2.5 Catholic Church can collaborate with individuals and organizations without Catholic faith but share same values or goals with Her and willing to serve in good faith and love.

Q.1_3 What groups or individuals are left on the margins?

1.3.1 Generally, the underprivileged are considered to be left on the margin by the Church, such as the poor, people who busy for earning a living, elderly, youth, sexual or racial minority, mentally or physically disable and the sick.

1.3.2 If focus at the Church, these people include those whose lifestyles do not conform to Church’s teaching, hurt by the Church or hold views against the Church, non-Cantonese speaking faith group, lack of technology savvy for communication and believers who are not able to participate in Church activities due to physical disability.

1.3.3 “Elderly”, “the poor”, “the youth”, “sexual minority” and “people suffered from mental issues” are the groups being frequently mentioned among the responses.

1.3.4 Those who “left on the margins” are usually quiet, introvert and some may have difficulties in communicating with others.

1.3.5 Although the Church has already taken lead in serving the underprivileged, it is surprised to see many underprivileged parties are being mentioned in the responses which is contradicting to what we have believed and acted.

1.3.6 It may imply there are still rooms to improve and strengthen the services being provided.

1.3.7 The Church may even do it more explicit so that people can easily notice what the Church has contributed to the society and follow the steps of the Church.

1.3.8 Within the Church, it is advised to increase touch points to proactively reach out to those believers being mentioned in order to engage them and enhance their sense of belongings.

1.3.9 While the Church is working hard in using technology and social media to engage the faithful, one should bear in mind there are still minorities, like elderly and the poor, who are not

good at or cannot afford these kind of communication channels. A balance between technology and interest of the faithful should be taken wisely.

2. Listening

Q2_1 How does the local Church (diocese, parish, community, etc.) listen to the laity, especially women and young people ?

Formal channels in Diocese Level

- 2.1.1 In response to the issues of the universal Church, the Diocese has set up a task force to collect the views of laity through parishes and groups of believers.
- 2.1.2 The Diocese has also set up Commissions and Committees to seek for advice from laity in various areas.
- 2.1.3 The H.K. Central Council of Catholic Laity, whose members included the Parish Councils and the Diocesan lay associations which have been registered with the Central Council, as a channel for expressing their views.

Formal Channels in Parish Level

- 2.1.4 Parish Pastoral Council / Parish Council, Associations of the Faithful and other task groups collect opinions from the members at meetings, annual planning workshops
- 2.1.5 Parishes have set up opinion boxes, comments, suggestions and opinions are welcome.
- 2.1.6 Paper questionnaires are distributed after Mass, and recently there has been an increasing popularity through electronic questionnaires.
- 2.1.7 In general, Parishes collect the views of the faithful as a whole, less from specific groups, such as youth or women.
- 2.1.8 Quite a number of responses point out that these channels are mainly targeted at catholic leaders, core members, and active members, and as for ordinary Catholics, the channels for collecting opinions are not obvious.

Informal channels

- 2.1.9 For the general faithful, they express or reflect or share their personal opinions in faith groups through priests, deacons, nuns, and catholic leaders.
- 2.1.10 Members of the Association of Faithful visit families of the faithful and listen to the needs and opinions of the parishioners.
- 2.1.11 Catholics also express their opinions on electronic platforms, social networking groups, and Kung Kao Po / Sunday Examiner.
- 2.1.12 Parishes also organize basketball games, football matches, bands and other activities to gather the young people and collect their opinions at the activities
- 2.1.13 Retired women have more opportunities to express their views because of the extra time they spend in the church, and working women (especially those with children) may not have many opportunities to participate in parish life.

The Church's attitude of gathering opinions influences the faithful's willingness to express their views

- 2.1.14 Collecting opinions and expressing opinions are two sides of the same coin. Leaders in the Church (diocese, parish, community) must be open, sincere, humble, kind, willing to listen, etc., in order to encourage the faithful to put forward opinions. Once they have confidence in the Church and the community, they are more willing to express their personal views through formal

or informal channels.

2.1.15 Members of the Associations of Faithful in the Parish should take the initiative to reach out to the faithful and care for them in order to listen to their needs. The Church must take the initiative to go to young people and women, just as the Risen Lord took the initiative to walk with the two disciples of Emmaus and establish a relationship. After collecting opinions, there must be specific responses and corresponding actions to encourage the faithful to continue to express their opinions.

2.1.16 Some respondents point out that Diocese and Parishes are passive in collecting the opinions of the faithful, even if they do not see a positive response after listening.

Q2_2 How is the contribution of consecrated men and women integrated?

Awareness of the contribution of consecrated men and women

2.2.1 To adopt the opinions and contributions of male and female religious congregations, we must first know and understand the mission of their congregations. Quite a number of responses point out that they do not know much about Men and Women Religious Institutes.

2.2.2 They learned that individual congregations or federations of religious associations had re-elected presidents or made vows in Kung Kao Po.

2.2.3 In order to know more about the Religious Institutes, we can browse their website, participate in the lectures and social services they have hosted, and read their articles in the Kung Kao Po / Sunday Examiner

Appreciate the contribution of consecrated men and women

2.2.4 The charisma and spiritual experiences of the different congregations are treasure of the Church. It helps the faithful to grow in faith and draw closer to God through devotionals, the Word, prayer and contemplation.

Contributions of consecrated men and women

2.2.5 Over the years, the Men and Women's Religious Institutes have been actively involved in education, pastoral missionary, evangelization, medical care and care for the underprivileged. Their contributions to the Church and society are significant.

2.2.6 During the pandemic, the priests have given spiritual, ethical and emotional support through social media. We are happy to see the congregation walk with the laity in the practice of the Christian mission.

2.2.7 Quite a number of consecrated men and women participate in diocesan councils or working groups, to bear witness to the Lord. Cardinal Joseph Zen, SDB, Bishop Stephen Chow, SJ and Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha, OFM, contributed to the Diocese as members of the Salesian, Jesuit and Franciscan Orders, respectively.

2.2.8 Members of the Men's and Women's Religious Order assist the pastoral ministry in the parish and provide constructive advice.

2.2.9 Missionary priests are appointed parish priests. Sisters participate in pastoral work in parishes, nurturing the parishioners, serving local and Catholics of different nationalities. Male and female religious congregations are generally respected and integrated into the ecclesiastical community in parishes and in the congregation.

2.2.10 It is hoped that the members of the Men's and Women's Religious Orders will have more contact with young people in parishes and promote vocations.

2.2.11 Let different religious associations participate in and share the evangelization work of churches and parishes according to their own characteristics, including planning, implementation, conservation, etc. In mutual cooperation, the Church can be more communized and united. God ferments in different groups, produces different effects and performs different functions.

Q2_3 What space is there for the local Church to listen to the voice of minorities, people who experience marginalization, or social exclusion?

Existing space for listening to the voice of minorities

2.3.1 Caritas provides social services to ethnic minorities, deportees and excluded persons who can express their demands to social workers and staff.

2.3.2 The Diocese has different committees, such as the Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs, Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, etc., which are concerned about their demands. The commissions respond to and make recommendations on relevant government policies.

2.3.3 Diocese establishes Hospital Chaplaincies & Pastoral Care Units, Prison Chaplaincies, Chaplaincies to Catholics of Other Nationalities to take care of the sick, ethnic minorities and the disadvantaged communities.

2.3.4 The Society of St Vincent De Paul, Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong Lay Prison Evangelical Organization, Rev. Wotherspoon, John OMI, Dr. Jesus, the Parish Social Concern Group, the Basic Christian Communities, the Associations of the Faithful of the Diocese, and the Small Faith Group take the initiative to care for them and provide space for expression of their demands.

2.3.5 Clergy and laity organize voluntary groups to visit prisoners and carry out evangelization.

2.3.6 Some parishes have set up Social Concern Group and organize social services proactively, contact the live-alone elderly, ethnic minorities and homeless in the district through visits to listen to their needs and provide some assistance.

2.3.7 Catholic schools organize social service groups and religious groups, lead students to participate in services, and understand the life outlook and needs of grassroots and disadvantaged communities.

Create more space for listening

2.3.8 These people who need to express themselves, because of their dignity, their lack of courage, their taboos, they seldom voice out their needs. Parish must take the initiative to reach out those minorities, abandoned people and excluded people in a planned way, so as to open the window of their hearts and truly establish a space for them to effectively express their demands

2.3.9 Parishes may be more proactive in providing services, visiting them, organizing activities, opening up spaces for communication and encouraging them to express their demands to priests, clergy and the Church. We must continue to take the initiative to walk among minorities, the abandoned and the excluded, to know, to listen, to talk, to accept, to respect them, and to walk with empathy, just as Jesus cared for the despised in society at that time.

2.3.10 We, as members of the Church, should follow the example of Jesus taking the initiative to walk among the people and listen to their voices, and empathize with their situation, understand their difficulties and needs, and thus take the initiative to propose to the church community a plan to support them.

2.3.11 The Church seems to have less room for those who do not live according to the ethical and

moral standards of the Church, such as homosexuals, divorced people, to express their demands. The Church should not judge whether certain people live according to the Ten Commandments and the Statutes of the Church, but to receive all with the love of the Holy Trinity.

Q2_4 In listening to the voice of others, how can we notice the social and cultural background is affecting mutual communication?

Differences in social and cultural backgrounds

2.4.1 In response to different social and cultural backgrounds, there are obvious differences in the expression, language, way of thinking, customs, cultural characteristics and taboos, social systems, religious beliefs, life patterns and habits, values and beliefs, different ages and socio-economic environments, these may affect the quality of communication.

2.4.2 The use of words in the jargon or subcultural terms of dress and dress is showing the socio-economic status, religious beliefs, educational attainment, living habits, and language dialects of both sides. These differences are more likely lead to conflict of roles, differences of opinion, misunderstanding and suspicion. Message from the social media will also reinforce the differences.

Factors Facilitating communication

2.4.3 Understanding can build trust, when listening to the opinions of others, we must know more about each other's social and cultural background, expression and communication methods, with openness, objectivity, respect, empathy, patience, sincerity, listening to each other's deep meaning, tolerance, how Jesus did WWJD as the basis for listening and communication

2.4.4 Learn and practice attentive listening without judging

2.4.5 This requires knowledge and compassion

2.4.6 The Church is the universal Church, and God's salvation is given to all. Open our hearts, accepting and receiving all in the Holy Spirit

2.4.7 Experience and take care of each other's feelings, to put myself in others' shoes, seek common ground while reserving differences and build consensus.

2.4.8 We need to be humble to realize that we always have some things to learn from others who are different from us

Factors hindering communication

2.4.9 Preconceptions, stereotypes, labels, half-understanding, stubbornness, criticism, resistance, superiority (culture, language, living conditions, belief values...).

2.4.10 For our church to be good listeners, in addition to gathering opinions through different channels and platforms, it is worth to note that: Active parishioners in the diocese and parish have more opportunities to express their personal opinions. The general faithful are less aware that Diocese or parishes take the initiative to collect their opinions openly. General Catholics often give advice to priests, clergies, and catholic leaders in individual ways.

2.4.11 Churches (Diocese, parishes) should have an open attitude and listen to and accept the opinions of the faithful in a humble and sincere manner.

2.4.12 The hierarchical structure of the Church, the laity feel that it is more difficult to reach.

Priests and catholic leaders have to go into the crowd, listen to them, and respond to their needs.

2.4.13 Even if the Diocese has institutions and committees to care for minorities, deportees and excluded persons, the laity should take the initiative to take care for those in need. Know, listen, accept and respect them through parishes and faith communities, walk with them with empathy, and create more space for them to express their demands.

2.4.14 In a pluralistic society, when we come into contact with people of different cultures and social backgrounds, we must know and understand their backgrounds more, and get along with them with openness, respect, acceptance, honesty, benevolence and empathy. At the same time, we must let go of prejudice and avoid preconceptions and negative labels of them in order to start a conversation and build mutual trust.

3. Speaking out

Q3_1: What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church ?

Personal experiences

3.1.1 It is generally found that respondents were not very positive towards the current practices.

3.1.2 Some of them attributed the situation to the inadequate leadership in the parish, the Father was often taken as the key person whose attitude would determine the whole process of communication between the laity and the Church.

3.1.3 Some share their personal experiences: “I don't feel that there is an atmosphere that encourages free speech and sincere communication. My own experience is that some faith groups remain in the attitude of "talk less, do more" and lack (or discourage) communication.” (G162)

3.1.4 Some of them are rather positive: “The priest and the brothers and sisters in Christ are in cordial communion.” (G085)

Communal experiences

3.1.5 As far as the communal (collective) experiences are concerned, some commented that there was no such atmosphere, nor was there such a channel.

3.1.6 It seemed that some people were left behind in the communication process, the young people group was often mentioned as the people who were forgotten: “As far as I know, it has not been done, some people are able to speak freely, but others are not, especially young people in the parish.” (G089)

3.1.7 The effort of the parish office was appreciated by some people: “Although it is difficult to hold large-scale events due to the epidemic in the past two years, many faith groups have used social media to broadcast live broadcasts on IG to encourage members of the faithful, especially young people, to express their opinions to each other.” (G070)

Comment and suggestion

3.1.8 Some respondents did have good suggestions: “Discuss and communicate in groups. Do not rush to respond, collect opinions/arguments first, then start dialogue and discussion.” (G004)

3.1.9 The clergy, especially the fathers, are often cited as the important people who could bring significant changes: “The clergy must take the lead. Their attitudes are very important, and they form an ethos.” (G008)

3.1.10 A warning was made by a respondent: “The clergy must go first, or else?” (G031)

Q3_2: How does the relationship with the local media work (e.g. communication, co-operation and interaction)?

3.2.1 Overall speaking, there are not many replies to this question. For those who reply, good comments are not common. The following are three typical responses:

“The media is there, but it seems to be one-way or not necessarily known and understood by ordinary church members. Platforms outside the Church (unofficial) such as Facebook or WhatsApp are just one-way messages.” (E142)

“Diocesan-run media, such as Boiling Point, distribute a lot of useful information. It is rare to cooperate with the media outside the Church, and the communication is not in-depth, and it is impossible to see how to influence each other.” (E155)

“Not obvious to me, but we do enjoy freedom of press unless national security is threatened.” (GE035)

3.2.2 Nevertheless, some respondents commend the provision of online mass when the Church was closed. The use of social media to connect the parishioners and for evangelization (or for reconsolidating the laity’s belief), are also commended by some respondents. A respondent replies: “I appreciate the 3-minute Catechism which uses creative animation and enjoyable narration to evangelize.” (GE013)

New ways to go

3.2.3 Some respondents suggest that the Church should have regular contacts with the media, so as

to let the media “know and understand” the Church. Some concrete suggestions are as follows:
“Our parishes need to identify capable people to relate with the local media - PR service.” (GE031)
“Meet with the media every month or every three months to report on the situation of the diocese;
send the public education newspaper to relevant information to the media every week.” (M010)
"The Diocese has set up a Communication Office to coordinate the relationship with the media,
always pay attention to the outside world's views on the Diocese, and timely communicate to the
society and establish a positive image of the Episcopal Church." (Ma018)

3.2.4 Some respondents put forward a more realistic approach and think that we should first start
with our own media which have done a satisfactory job:

"We can first strengthen the power of the media in the diocese, such as the Kung Kau Daily, the
Internet, etc., so that the social media can also pay attention to the reports and messages of our media."
(G258)

3.2.5 As far as the replies suggest, it seems that our Church does not excel in handling the
relationship with the local media. Some respondents suggest that we should lay a better
foundation the communication with our society, such as:

“We need to upgrade communication skills e.g. through music, virtual technology, sound technology,
especially in church. “ (G699)

“Provide more support to groups and institutions for multimedia evangelization, especially in terms
of funds and talents. Let the talented people in this area have enough life and exert their talents, and
then there will be more media. It is proposed to establish a Multimedia Evangelization Fund for these
institutions and groups to apply. Seeing that there are many capable talents, but there is not enough
funds for them, then they can only serve outside the Church.” (G756)

Q4_1: How do prayer and liturgical celebrations (prayers of individual and community, celebrating mass, receiving sacraments etc.) actually inspire and guide our common life and mission in our community?

4.1.1 Prayers and liturgical celebrations have been inspiring and guiding our life and mission in
our community. Some respondents mention that they are encouraged to join different ministries
and participate in serving during liturgical celebrations. Formation are also provided for those
who want to become ministers.

- 4.1.2 Some complain that there appeared to be a culture of “club membership” in ministries that laity may serve, and the parishioners who are interested may find it difficult to join. It is, hence, often noted that the parish priests set the tone for the whole community and their presence encourages the active participation of the laity. Some respondents indicate that personal invitation, face-to-face contact, and trust of the priest plays an important part for them to start participation in the services.
- 4.1.3 “The parish priests set the tone - their words, their manners, their deeds - for the whole community. The influence of parish leaders play an important part as well. The whole vibe of the parish is something that's built up gradually in time. It is something created by each individual and each parish groups and association, but the parish priests- the shepherds - play the leading role. The physical presence of the spiritual guides - often the parish priests - encourages the active participation of all.” (Me007)
- 4.1.4 “In my impression, I participated in a mass many years ago. Before the beginning, a church member invited me to participate in the ministry of shepherding and consecration. His actions moved me, and I have such trust in a newcomer! It was a pity that I was still catechumens and unbaptized, so I declined. But this has deepened my determination to follow God.” (Me049)
- 4.1.5 Some respondents point out that catechumens must be taught the correct meaning of the liturgy and the Sacraments. On-going spiritual formation and regular renewal activities for members of the liturgical teams are vitally important. It will be very helpful if they can deliver short introduction before Masses to refresh the faithful’s awareness of the significance of the various parts of the liturgy and the rich symbols of the rubrics.

Q4_2: How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy? What space is given to participating in various ministries?

- 4.2.1 It is suggested that our Mass is still a kind of one-way communication model, it is suggested to make it more interactive to involve more people, especially the youth who may have new ideas. Some respondents think of different activities for different people in the Church and make it more inclusive than it used to be. Family Mass, children Mass are some suggestions. It is also suggested the Church to design a variety of activities to attract different segments of the community, such as to have different forms of music and songs for the young people. We need

to consider the needs of young people and make them understand the meaning behind Catholic liturgy.

4.2.2 It is suggested that the parish can consider to encourage the whole family to fully participate at Mass, for instance: the children can bring bread and wine with parents at Offertory, teenagers can be “trained” to be Readers and altar servers and with their parents.

4.2.3 A respondent point out that a coffee corner in the Parish premise, or a place where members of the congregation can encounter and socialize, is a powerful extension of the Sunday celebration for fellowship and enhancement of the community spirit.

4.2.4 “God-parents are the best companions of the newly baptized on their initial spiritual journey and on-going formation and put into practice their duties and responsibilities, not only during the period of preparation for Baptism of their god-children, but continue to be their guide and companions. By word and examples, they have to help the new members of the Church to be deeply aware of their dignity and mission as children of God conferred on them at Baptism.” (E116)

4.2.5 “In response to the repeated outbreak of the new crown epidemic, the faithful have to switch back and forth between participating in physical mass and online mass. However, during this severe epidemic, the church has not only temporarily closed to the public, but also cannot allow online mass to be held in it, which has made the faithful more alienated. Therefore, during the suspension of public mass, the photography group of the parish should play the role of a bridge between the parish and the faithful, so that the faithful can participate in mass or other liturgical activities online throughout the Sunday without leaving home. For young people whose participation in church activities is low, the parish can strengthen ties with Sunday schools and suitable associations, arrange social activities that suit the tastes of young people, and follow the example of the bishop of the diocese to call and attract more young people to come back to serve the Church. More videos and photos are used to record the touching moments of each liturgical activity in the parish, and through publications such as the parish newsletter, it will leave unforgettable memories for the parishioners and other believers involved, even if the years go by, it is worth looking back.” (G624)

4.2.6 “The pastor of the parish is very important, and if their attitudes and personalities are different, it will have different results. I think priests should have more reflection on their work, and the

diocese should also have proper supervision, to avoid them become “dictators”! The Dioceses can also make regular inquiries with regional parishes to know more.” (E766)

4.2.7 “In the past, priests would encourage the lay people who helped liturgical services to regularly participate in the nurturing activities of the diocese. When we did not do well, they would take the initiative to point out and help. We also had retreats for liturgical helpers. Different church groups also had opportunities for communication and learn from each other. In fact, it is very much relied on the priest. If they never pay attention and promote the service, those who have actively participated will become exhausted and burnt out, and the culture of service will disappear over time. Our parish is such an example.” (G628)

New ways

4.2.8 Some respondents suggest that the whole family should be involved, for instance: “Perhaps one consideration may be to invite/interest families to serve at Mass. Children, even if young, can bring bread and wine with parents at Offertory; teenagers can be “trained” to be Readers and altar servers and with their parents they can help collect offerings at Mass. This would also encourage the whole family to fully participate at Mass (formation opportunity to better understand the liturgy!) and not just an obligation of coming to church.” (GE026)

4.2.9 The attitude of the clergy is always a concern of the respondents. There are some suggestions in this area, for instance: “I think that the pastor and the parish council must establish and develop a "culture of caring and companionship" in the parish, in order to effectively help the faithful to continue to cultivate their own faith and extend their enthusiasm for the work of evangelization! ... Don't let the church groups to become an a “small circle” or an “independent empire”, and prevent new people from joining, so that in the parish there can be opportunities for sustainable development!” (E130)

4.2.10 Some insights can be found from the replies, what follows are some interesting suggestions: “Young people are the new force to promote the sustainable development of the church/parish. The priests must establish a relationship with the schools in the district, and cooperate with each other to hold various activities (especially Catholic schools), and become their companions on the way of growth. Need to work with the religious teachers, pastoral assistants and counselors in Catholic schools in the district effectively to develop school-based curriculum, and tailor-made curriculum and life education for schools that suit their students' characteristics. Moreover, at the same time, create

space for students to participate in liturgy and share the work of evangelization. We need to create a win-win situation! (For example: teachers who understand sign language and students will serve the hearing-impaired faithful at Mass together, and music teachers will lead students to sing or accompany students at Mass on special days).” (E130)

4.2.11 “I have done a lot of Bible studies and Liturgical Bible Studies – During these sessions, I have seen people who are hungry for the Word of God. Music is important but doctrine is equally important. People do not like a dump-down approach. Rather, if you bring up the level and go into the philosophy and theology, people are really interested. They want to see different viewpoints and this will bring them richness. Organize more small groups that meets more than once a month. These groups provide a safe place to share, gives you sense of belonging, and is wonderful community support to an individual. Group can have recreational aspect, like going out for dinner. More use of social media: Maybe the parish could use Instagram to provide the latest parish news, church schedule, the different type of ministries, and for sharing the latest events/talks.” (E039)

(B) MISSION

5. Co-responsible in the mission

Q5_1: Since we are all missionary disciples, how is every baptized person called to participate in the mission of the Church?

Participation: Church Mission

5.1.1 About half of the total Questionnaires received have replies to Question 5.1.

5.1.2 *Knowledge, Awareness:* Majority of the replies clearly express that every baptized must be aware of the baptismal mission of “priest, prophet and king” of Christ bestowed at the time of baptism, acquired through catechists’ teaching in catechism classes. For active participation in the Church mission, continuous formation after baptism is necessary.

5.1.3 *Experience - Spiritual Formation:* Some replies point out (i) many laities do not know the endowed apostolic role, (ii) the types of formation for responding to the calling to evangelize. Formation should be provided for preparing them to participate in the mission through “prayer, bible reading/sharing, meditation” for seeking God’s will and maintain a closer relationship with God, and through “learning” for deepening the faith in God and enriching religious knowledge.

5.1.4 *Experience - Actions, Involvement*: More than half of the replies mention some ways to help a baptized to evangelize, all which are noted having one thing in common - actions – on the part of the baptized himself or the Church, as plainly expressed in most of the replies. These ways include (a) Actions of the baptized himself, as they generally appear to be quite passive. The importance is clearly pointed out in some replies which cover: a Christian life in daily living at work / at home / in school; living the daily life with Christ in mind; be good model and conducting missionary work in family/community; (b) Supports from the Church: In some replies, the Church is referred to as “Diocese, parish, clergies, sisters, spiritual leaders, senior parishioners, or god-parents”, such supports are explicitly considered significant. The Church is expected to be there to “lead, hold formation seminars / sharing gatherings, encourage, motivate, teach the laities the missionary skills, equip the faithful in homilies, strengthen their faith” in order to respond to the call to evangelize. In one reply, extent of reliance on the Church is referred to as “priests are the main character in the mission of the Church”. (c) Supports from fellow laities: Some replies relate to this, which point out that joining “parish group, association, ministry, cell group, spiritual gathering” so that members can encourage each other to be missionary disciples and to have spiritual growth / faith deepening.

5.1.5 *Experience - Fruits, Difficulties*: A few replies express views on fruits obtained and on difficulties encountered in participating the Church mission. On fruits, (a) some on-line formation courses currently run by priests / laities have greatly helped to promote missionary role of the faithful; (b) some priests do always share in homilies the importance of missionary disciples. On difficulties, (a) not many laities evangelize; (b) high proportion of the newly baptized not going to Church soon after baptism; (c) evangelization mission is difficult and not easy to be fulfilled, with no one size fit all method ; (d) evangelization appears to be only the work of the educated / a small group / professionals; (e) relating to the Church/Parish: i) not communicating well with parish members, members are not in the right position to use their talents, and priests spending time mostly on work tasks but not on spiritual formation, ii) low sense of belonging, iii) members’ low confidence level due to change in political environment, iv) problems faced in pandemic, v) no formation for members on evangelization skills/methods.

5.1.6 *Experience - Ways to Improve Involvement*: A few replies express views on the ways to improve involvement of the baptized in evangelization, which include: (a) For the Diocese, i) more use of social media to share news, evangelize, and exchange views on hot topics, ii) formation must

aim at enhancing praying/spiritual experience and discipleship of the laities, iii) teaching the faithful the skills to evangelize, iv) listening and respecting voices/views in the Church, the need to strengthen faith and sense of belonging so as to restore congregation's confidence in the Church which should not be overshadowed by political stance; (b) At Parish level, i) the important missionary role of a baptized must be emphasized in catechism classes, ii) arranging prayer or liturgical gatherings for the newly baptized to confer the mission, iii) teaching parishioners the skills/methods to evangelize, in this, lesson could be learnt from fellow Christian church's experience, iv) training leaders to lead newly baptized to form cell groups, like the Christians' practice, v) more gatherings arranged for formation of god-parents; or setting up groups for god-parents of newly baptized for support/growth in each other; (c) For the baptized himself, i) sharing the words or Church information with friends via FB or websites; apart from evangelization to people outside Church, same action for fellow faithful is equally important, ii) participation in the Church mission both at home and abroad as a missionary. Prayer life and community assignments or apostolates should be the first priority and then, participation in Church events.

5.1.7 Though a baptized should have been taught in catechism classes and known the "prophet" mission of Christ bestowed upon baptism, for his active participation in the Church mission, continuous formation and learning after baptism is necessary. To go the extra mile in respect of formation, parish priest may consider requesting the newly baptized to join church group in the first half year period after baptism.

5.1.8 Catholics generally are passive to evangelize, with attitude of being content with live with Christ in mind and to be a good model. Such mindset generally exist in Catholic has to be changed, in particular for the newly baptized, (a) by paying more emphasis of the apostolic role to catechumens in catechism classes and (b) by arranging prayer or liturgical gatherings for the newly baptized to formally confer the missionary role.

5.1.9 In order for laities to gain awareness of and to be more involved in the Church mission, the Church shall arrange courses/seminars to teach the skills or methods to evangelize, gatherings for missionaries to share their evangelization experiences at home or abroad.

5.1.10 Parish priests should get a more balanced parish works pattern, which is better to be, more time spent on spiritual formation of the laities but not focusing on work tasks.

Q5_2: How does the community support its members who serve society in various ways (social involvement, scientific research, education, promoting development in society, caring for the environment, etc.)?

Supports from the Community

5.2.1 About half of the total Questionnaires received have replies to Question 5.2.

5.2.2 *Support? Recognition:* In the replies, “Community” is referred as (a) the Diocese, a Parish, or (b) an association/organization serving society. A few replies indicate the extent of Community’s support: no support, with support or not knowing if there is support. Many replies stress the importance of support and recognition, while some replies point out that support is clearly found when the Community is dealing with the forefront cares for the underprivileged and show concerns on social issues. Some replies express that the Community should recognize members’ beliefs and is expected be there to encourage, cooperate, listen and discuss, and to work as a team.

5.2.3 *For the Community Herself - Commit, Lead, and Provide Guidance:* Some replies indicate the general expectation for the Community to commit, lead and provide guidance. These include vision; humility; act as a role model and leader, to reflect people’s needs to government and resist when truth is distorted and justice is impaired; actively involve, subsidize and provide opportunities; keep abreast of developments on social issues; encouraging start-ups of social entrepreneurship; improve community’s resources for social services; the Diocese is also expected to take the initiative for more effective community development; and show concern on social issues; lead, promote, encourage the faithful to serve the society;

5.2.4 *For the Community Herself - Change, Development:* A few replies express the need for the Community to change herself and to have self-development. These include: systemize the management; be open and not only aiming at achieving quick result; allocate resources for important issues with priority; re-allocate duplicated resources; set up different organizations to recruit appropriate faithful volunteers from relevant professions to handle existing problems; examine whether the Church development could be maintained when religious freedom is constrained, and political environment is significantly changed; collect opinions from both Church groups and related stakeholders; improve the communication between ‘Church charity groups’ and ‘other social welfare groups for better support of each other; superiors and leaders actively listen to the faithful;

5.2.5 *For the Community Herself - Formation of Laity:* A few replies consider formation as important

and essential support to members. This cover teaching faithful the missionary role / discipleship / catechism knowledge / doctrines which are necessary to enable them to serve; and teaching laity the responsibilities / core values of citizens in society;

Supports from the Community to Members - Spiritual, Material

5.2.6 *New Groups*: Some replies propose to set up new social groups to focus on social issues. These are identified as issues requiring urgent support: free-meal-serving; families suffered from calamity /death /pandemic;

5.2.7 *Supports from Members Within*: A few replies point out this support is necessary: to enhance members the missionary role in their daily works; every member should begin with serving on small work according core values within the community, before he and the community progressively serving the society.

5.2.8 *Resources - Spiritual*: A few replies identify Community's support on spiritual resources, which include: formation/training for members' awareness of the importance in their serving society; formation of the faithful the missionary role / discipleship / catechism knowledge / doctrines necessary for serving the society; training courses on serving society according to Church teachings; support to promote Church image of the Community; opportunities for works/training; prayer support; support to young members from the experienced as mentors;

5.2.9 *Resources - Material (Professional, Financial)*: Some replies suggest a list of material resources, which include : supports through resources and connections the Community owned e.g. Caritas; channels to invite the faithful to donate financial / material / technical resources and the dedicated faithful with different professions to lead activities; for organizing activities by providing necessary information/platform, resources to coordinate relevant social groups; arranging thematic talks / seminars/ open discussions; ease of access to information/sources; church/organizations/groups to let people know more of their needs / good deeds and how ordinary people can contribute; training courses on serving society according to Church teachings; leading/encouraging/establishing new groups e.g. start-ups of social entrepreneurship;

5.2.10 *Support from Community – New Ways / Methods*: Some replies suggest new ways to give supports, which cover: outreaching services; free seminars; dialogues meetings; FB sharing; sponsorship; on-line religious activities; promotions by catholic celebrities; activities for different age groups; activities for meeting people of different levels in society; collecting opinions from both

Church groups and related stakeholders; more communications between ‘Church charity groups’ and ‘other social welfare groups’ for possible supports; thematic talks addressing hot topics; systematically inviting different professionals in the congregation to relevant committees for promoting faith and beliefs of the Church; establishing diversified groups connected with the Church; providing information for collaboration with non-religious NGOs; better use of the media for promotion of the community; setting up religious research centers for promotion of Church teachings; leading/encouraging start-ups of social entrepreneurship;

5.2.11 *Support from Community - Fruits, Difficulties*: Views expressed in a few replies. On fruits, (i) more use of on-line media providing means to serve during covid outbreak; (ii) the Church has already been active, have charitable organizations and done well in serving society; (iii) many organizations serving alongside with the aggregation spiritually, the education/health/charity sector in society, like, works of the bereavement ministries. On difficulties, (i) for some social services, development is hindered and with its effect becomes doubtful, under the political environment which has significantly been changed; (ii) some parishes pay little attention to social issues; (iii) duplicated/scattered resources in Diocese hindered development of services; (iv) as the leader has not reflected to government people’s needs and has not defended the truth and justice; (v) many parishes do not have manpower resources, and could only conduct minimal social services works; (vi) social services of the community is seriously affected under the difficult political situation and covid epidemic;

5.2.12 *Support from Community - Ways of Strengthening*: There are views in a few replies, (i) new opportunities through webinars, a new way of encountering, be adopted for new evangelization; (ii) new approach to serve by adopting social entrepreneurship; (iii) social activities for different age-groups.

5.2.13 Social service of the Church have successfully served the society through her charitable organizations. However, on the degree of community’s support to members, majority of the related replies express “no’ or ‘not knowing’. It appears that laities have little knowledge of, or misunderstand about the relationship of the community (Diocese) and members (Catholic organizations serving society in various ways).

5.2.14 Quite a number of replies express the wish for the Church to commit, lead and provide guidance in serving the society, not only to show concern on social issues, but also to promote, encourage, and teach the faithful the missionary role / discipleship / doctrines. which are necessary

for them to serve society according to Church teachings.

5.2.15 There are views expressing the need for the Community to change in herself and to grow, such as, systemizing the management, proper allocation of resources on social services, leading start-ups of social entrepreneurship, pastors and superiors should be open to approach and listen to the faithful.

5.2.16 Under the current situation where right of religion appears to be constrained and the political environment significantly changed – Could Church development could be maintained? Would development of the social services be hindered? As the Church is expected to be a leader to reflect people’s needs to the government and to defend the truth and justice, would the Church review her position to respond to the changes in a timely manner?

5.2.17 Members of the Community themselves should be reminded of the important missionary role in their daily life, as every member is in fact serving in doing the seemingly insignificant work according to core values of the Church, before the community progress to serve society.

Q.6 Dialogue in Church and Society

Q 6_1 How do we promote collaboration with neighbouring dioceses, consecrated and religious communities in the area, lay association and movements?

6.1.1 In general, most of the respondents show a positive attitude, and see the need for more collaboration, and make many good suggestions for enhancing collaboration. By proactively visiting other communities with open heart and mind for different views without imposing one’s own view, relationship could be built, after which collaboration could be explored. Many faithful expect the clergymen, deacons and leaders of the church to take the lead for collaboration. Ways are suggested to increase collaboration between different communities, and between Hong Kong and mainland church. The most important key for successful collaboration is to have change in heart and attitude and live in a Christ-like manner.

6.1.2 Majority of the respondents agree that collaboration with other dioceses and communities should be promoted. Some respondents suggest a “bottom-up approach” i.e. to encourage laity to start to make the change by taking part more proactively. But vast majority of the respondents support a “top-down approach”, whereby changes should be led by the clergymen. They stress on the importance of good pastoral leaders as many faithful look up to priests and the diocese to take the lead. Some faithful express their expectation that priest and deacon should become good role model,

by opening their heart and mind to different views, thereby sowing the seed for dialogue. A parish priest affirms that he should have more dialogue with the parishioners of his church, and to know more about his parishioners.

6.1.3 Some respondents experienced difficulties in co-operating with members even of the same community, not to mention members of different communities or dioceses. One respondent point out that the challenge is for the parishioners to live out the spirit in the gospel:

“There is very little cooperation among dioceses, with religious groups, philanthropic associations, and ecclesiastical movements. Some will even be mutually exclusive.... Each group has its own way and procedures of doing things, and is very stubborn and unwilling to listen to opinions. So cooperation is also very difficult. ...because there is not enough nurturing in spirituality, not enough love...Most of the spiritual activities do not teach how to live out the faith in life, but repeating in reading the Bible, repeating the high-profile values. So the faithful do not grow in spirituality.”

6.1.4 Many respondents emphasize on the need for the change in attitude, especially for the pastors and leaders in the Church. It is necessary to:- cultivate in our Church the culture of active listening, focus on the importance to open our mind and heart for better communication, learn humility and respect each other, learn the need to be truly converted and imitate Christ, and live out the true meaning of synodality; with the view to develop mutual trust and respect to open up the space for collaboration. A respondent pointed out that it takes courage to communicate.

6.1.5 Some respondents suggest visiting other communities and dioceses, to know them more and to establish mutual trust and relationship, and even to conduct “exchange student” or “internship” program, before we can collaborate. Some respondents affirm that the needs and views of local and other church/communities/its members should be carefully listened to and respected, with the view to build mutual trust and respect. Different members or communities would then be in the position to have genuine dialogue and to collaborate and journey together after relationship is built. It is also suggested to start by building relationship, by finding the need of the local community, gathering the people with similar mind set, setting up task groups, and fostering their vision. People with similar vision will come closer. With good leadership, support, and good communication, collaboration projects could be worked out. The social service and evangelization work of Legion and St. Vincent is appreciated, and it is suggested to enhance collaboration between their member group as a start.

6.1.6 A respondent point out that division is caused by the lack of a common goal. Organizing

events (serving the needy, evangelization and pilgrimage) are identified as opportunities to collaborate and journey together between different local churches of Catholic and communities of the faithful. Some respondents propose to organize spiritual gatherings for parishioners of different local churches. Some respondents propose to organize inter-association formation activities in order that the consecrated could learn from each other. A respondent urge every member of the consecration should be respected, not only the superior. It is also suggested to give more opportunities to the young parishioners to participate in the ministries of local churches.

6.1.7 It is proposed to set up inter-parish organizations to co-ordinate the work of ministries in different local churches, to take the lead for strengthening organization of similar events between different ministries, congregations, local churches and communities within the Catholic Church, and to practice living out the spirit of gospel in communion. While it is also suggested to have collaboration between different local churches on many areas and aspects including charity, architecture, cultural, spiritual, pilgrimage etc., with the view to strengthen the fraternal relationship. It is also suggested to organize more prayer meet to pray for the Church in the mainland, and to share our religious experience with faithful in the mainland. World Youth Day event is mentioned with applause. It is also suggested to organize evangelizing events together with different religious communities.

6.1.8 The need for pastoral care of the faithful who emigrated to overseas should be taken care of. It is suggested to have better use of internet, social media and communication tools, including YouTube and Facebook, and even the metaverse to collaborate with others.

Q 6_2 What experience of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other religions and with those who have no religious affiliation?

6.2.1 It is observed that we presently do not have a strong culture of conducting inter-religious dialogue, with persons with or without religious affiliation. As a result, laity generally do not have rich experience in this aspect. While few respondents do not see the importance or even the need to have such dialogue, an overwhelming majority of the respondents are positive in recognizing the need to collaborate and conduct dialogue, while many of them relate such need to evangelization. Some respondents think it is important to conduct synodal dialogue in the society in their daily life.

6.2.2 Many respondents see the necessity of change in attitude in order to conduct dialogue and

collaborate. The most important change would be becoming less judgmental and respect others including their belief and culture; to be open to enter into the world of others instead of just inviting them to enter into ours and be ready to learn from other. Some respondents see that truth exist in other religion. In the process of interacting with others, some faithful reflect upon themselves as to whether they could live out the gospel in daily life. In their view, it is important to relaunch our faith in today's culture of our society.

6.2.3 Some respondents point out that the dialogue has all along been conducting in daily life, with family members, colleagues at work, and friends as and when they are witnessing their faith in daily life. However, many respondents point out that the laity formation of Catholic do not equip them to conduct such dialogue. It is suggested that laity formation is important in order that:- (a) laity could be good witness of their own faith in daily life; and (b) laity would be equipped with the knowledge (especially knowledge of our own faith and belief) and the vision to appreciate the truth in other religion, develop the ability and readiness to have inter-religious dialogue, and conduct dialogue with persons with or without religious affiliation.

6.2.4 Organizing and participating in charitable activities in the local community is identified as the most common inception point for conducting dialogue. Dialogue could be conducted in the process of working for the same charitable goal with persons of other religious affiliation, as well as persons with no religious affiliation. Such dialogue would also be conducted with persons being served as well as the co-workers. It is suggested to participate charitable social services of Caritas by joining the Friends of Caritas. Many respondents stressed on the importance of listening to the voice of others and knowing their need, whereupon one would be able to share our experience and listen to theirs, then enter into dialogue, build up mutual respect and mutual trust, only upon which we can journey with others through collaboration.

6.2.5 Some respondents stress on the importance of living in harmony with Christians of other denominations before collaboration would work out. Some suggest we should organize prayer meets, and more collaboration projects on charitable works. Many respondents appreciate the form of prayer meet held in Taize, Hong Kong.

6.2.6 Some respondents propose to strengthen collaboration by organizing socializing or cultural activities including workshop on personal growth. Some respondents focus on the perspective of evangelization and suggest to invite non-Catholic to social and ritual activities of the Church, so that

they could open their heart to religious faith, when dialogue could be conducted through evangelization activities. A respondent suggests Catholic teachers to organize educational and experiencing activities in schools so that the students could be exposed to religious experience, and that would benefit their mind, body and soul. Nurturing students in religious atmosphere at schools could have profound influence on their lives in the future.

6.2.7 It is noted that the six religions in Hong Kong have taken joint action, including joint statements on issues. Some respondents propose to have more inter-religious dialogue through seminars, talks, and prayer meets, in order that we know more about each other through communication, and to learn from each other. But formalism should be avoided.

6.2.8 Some respondents reflect that the dialogue experience are linked to evangelization, and pointed out that evangelization should be rooted in our daily life. Some respondents agree that they have learnt from the religious experience of others in the course of conducting the dialogue. Some respondents experienced difficulty in conducting dialogue, which is caused mainly by their misunderstanding of the Catholic faith (justification by faith; salutations to Mary and rite).

6.2.9 In summary, most of the respondents are willing to collaborate and conduct dialogue with persons of other religious affiliation or with no religion. By having change in opening the mind and interact with others with humility, mutual trust and respect could be established, after which dialogue, and collaboration could be explored. Some respondents think that evangelization should be rooted in our daily life, and stress on the importance of living out the spirit of the gospel in daily life before successful dialogue could be conducted.

Q 6_3 How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society: the spheres of politics, economics, culture, civil society, and people who live in poverty?

6.3.1 In general, most of the respondents express that they have learnt from the experience in dialogue with other sectors of society, and make good suggestions for conducting dialogue more effectively. By proactively entering into the lives of the needy and the poor, the faithful could show them the love of God. Ways are suggested to increase the dialogue within the society, and the most common inception point is social services projects, whereby the co-workers could journey together for the same goal, and dialogue could be conducted with the needy being served. It is pointed out that the collaboration between members of the same community should be improved before collaborating

with others. Similar to the answers to Question 6.1, many respondents emphasize on the importance to have change in attitude with an open heart and mind for different views without imposing ours, conducting dialogue with empathy, understanding and humility, after which a mutual trust and respect could be built, and dialogue could be conducted. The most important key for success is to live out the spirit of the gospel when journeying with others as companion.

6.3.2 Some respondents point out that certain collaboration exist between some Catholic communities. Although some respondents expect the Diocese to take the lead for more collaboration, some respondents agree that more laities should be encouraged to be take part. Some respondents suggest that more work should be done on formation of laity, to equip them to face the challenge in the society in a Christian way. They suggest that members and communities of the Catholic Church should have better communication, to learn from each other, and build stronger communion, before reaching out to others for collaboration.

6.3.3 Vast majority of the respondents stress on the importance of openness in listening, with humility, sincerity and respect. Some respondents stressed on the importance to have change in heart to:- take active part in communication and enter into their world, communicate with a sincere heart, communicate by active listening with open mind, let down our own guard, avoid arguments, accept multiplicity in the society with humility, treat others sincerely irrespective of their status, respect others, see them as children of God, see things in the perspective of others with appreciation and without imposing our own view, see the goodness in others and learn from them, see things in the perspective of Christian, and become more Christ-like, be less judgmental and be guided by the Holy Spirit, reflect on the reason accounting for the difference in view with openness and humility, and speak up for the weak and meek. It is also suggested that members of the communities should be encouraged to hear the voice of the society and to know their needs, so that the Church could journey together with them: “Listen, respond, be sincere, humble, speak up for injustice, and live out the truth that Jesus Christ taught us”

6.3.4 Many respondents suggest engaging in attentive listening, to know them and their culture, to reach out to the poor and needy, to understand the difficulties of others, with the view to have in-depth understanding. Some respondents suggest sharing religious experiences with others, so that they can experience the love of God. Some respondents propose to invite others to our events, and to participate in the events organized by others, so that we can establish mutual understanding and trust

and learn from each other. A respondent pointed out he has negative experience in conducting dialogue with different sectors of the society, caused by social cleavage and the complicating situation. Nevertheless, he suggested to continue the dialogue, to understand the frustration, fear and hope of the marginalized persons in society, in order to walk with them.

6.3.5 In terms of action to be taken, most respondents suggest works on the common objectives and see the goodness in others, by paying visit and organizing forum, and to collaborate to work on issues in the society. Some respondents propose to collaborate on social issues by taking joint action. Some respondents suggest that the starting point should be collaborating on social service projects, as well as charity projects. Some respondents suggest collaborating with other religions on cultural aspect, including organizing concerts and seminars. Many respondents expect the leaders of the church to take the lead for collaborating with others.

6.3.6 A respondent proposes to build an on-line interreligious platform to enable different person to express their views and proposals, for better sharing and allocation of resources, and to have better use of on-line communication platform and media communication channel for communication. In particular, it is suggested to gather the view of the youth by electronic means including google form.

Q7-1: What relationships does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions and denominations?

7.1.1 Out of the total 1263 received, 620 (49.09%) respond to this question. More than half of them (55%) regard the relationship as “friendly and related”; while 15% of them “functional and temporary”, and even unlikely to develop. Still, some 30% consider that we have a close, “committed and lasting” relationship.

7.1.2 For the ‘friendly and related’ category, typical expressions are “good, friendly, though different”, “cooperating, joining activities together, be discreetly friendly”, and “not a strong relationship, communicated but not deeply connected”. Yet, the respondents take the relationship essentially as mere friends, accepting that we are God’s children, not different from other non-believers. There is no strong will and plan to deepen friendship or commitment.

7.1.3 For the “functional and temporary” or “unlikely to develop” categories, typical expressions are “just friends or friends in the Facebook” (G018), “bland relationship, for the matter of courtesy, not deep or positive enough” (G144); and 3% of them even unlikely to befriend (because they think

that “the Protestants are not sincere” (G119), “most of them are bad elements” (G015), “alienated” (G152) “estranged, ignoring each other” (G166). There are 3% even do not specify the relationships at all.

7.1.4 For the “committed and lasting” category, typical expressions are “mutual acceptance, mutual care” (G014), “acceptance and care” (G578), and stating clearly in support of “unity” (E023). More enthusiastic expressions are “We take the initiative to maintain mutual support, mutual acceptance, encouragement, tolerance for differences in teaching, appreciation and learning with brothers and sisters from other Christian denominations” (G481), “we are interrelated, same God with different worshipping rituals, joint celebration of wedding/masses” (GE016), “communion and unity” (G696). They are eager to deepen the relationships, look forward for it to be lasting.

7.1.5 There are many suggestions to further develop our mutual commitment in relationship: “Church leaders should also emphasize journey together and dialogues (ecumenism) in their preaching and formation for believers. Actions are convincing, Examples : “The priests should raise more of our concern when they say the homily, and teach the faithful how to treat Protestants in order to eliminate their rejection of Christianity...!” (G083); “Needless to say, for we do not have any instruction on this topic. For example, the Caritas Fair, will we invite Christian friends to join us next time? Or, in the Christmas Carole, will the Catholics and Protestants co-host a concert?” (E002); “...we need our leaders and our bishops to step up first to take the lead and to overcome their barriers of difficulties.” (E273)

7.1.6 Prayerful sentiment and action-based commitment are important. Examples: “Just let go of subjective views and bias, pray more, listen more, communicate more, and tolerate more” (M012); “In fact, it becomes difficult if everyone remains to be self-centered. It is when they are open and participate, they will gain from it” (Ma013); “Our group has also had many wonderful experiences in the past with different Christian groups in evangelism activities, such as Alpha Course, participating in seminars they hold overseas, etc.” (M016)

7.1.7 Conduct exchange or sharing sessions on spirituality or theologies, at all levels, parishes/communities, laity, and missionaries/friaries. Examples: “...should eliminate hostility, complement each other's strengths and weaknesses, and strive to resolve misunderstandings.” (G099); “...we can hold more promotion activities on the spiritual activities of Ignatius/Francis/Monastery. Protestant brothers and sisters are welcome to participate.” (G105); “...we can learn from each other

and walk together to discover God’s plans for individual Christian denominations.” (G440) ; “...For example: Can you join their group, learn more about and reflect their liturgical life, and even have in-depth religious conversations to eliminate misunderstandings and enhance friendship...” (G523); “...It seems that the Church community do not understand very well that the Christians are our sisters and brothers and we share the same Baptism. ...The Parish Priests and the community should be encouraged to participate and to know about the other Christian traditions and denominations and become friends with Christians of other denominations ...” (GE015)

7.1.8 To jointly carry out activities or evangelization events, thus foster closer relationships. Examples: “Let go of the historical burden. On the road towards unity, the translation of doctrines, rituals or even the Bible may not have external unity and consensus. But in celebration, spirituality, evangelization, and even charitable devotion, we do have a lot of room for fellowship and cooperation with different Christian denominations.” (S072)

7.1.9 To emphasize on positive pragmatic actions of charity rather than mere academic arguments over dichotomy on theology. Examples: “For the practical work, we can be more collaborative with each other, while the theological differences can be discussed by academic institutions.” (E076) ; “Focusing on evangelism and ministry may reduce theological controversy.” (E118)

Q7-2: What do we share and how do we journey together? What fruits have we drawn from walking together? What are the difficulties?

7.2.1 Out of the total 1263 received, 695 (55.03%) respond to this question. The illustrations on both the fruits (636) and hindrances (403) are bountiful. Looking into the illustrations, there is a sentiment yearning for Christian unity (ecumenism), the key step ahead is address and remove all respects of hindrances.

7.2.2 85% of the respondents consider that through journey together with other Christian denominations, believers’ understanding and appreciation of theology/beliefs are strengthened or deepened, communication and togetherness with them are strengthened. Although 65% of the respondents think that the perceived differences on theology and communication are hindrances, they provide lots of suggestions to overcome these hindrances. These respondents are positive and optimistic.

7.2.3 A few proportion (10%) of the fruits are related to “evangelization”, stating that the means

and strength of evangelization by other Christian denominations are much more effective, attractive, penetrating and lasting than the Catholic counterparts.

7.2.4 There are a couple of responses stating that the hindrances are due to historical reason, this should now be dis-regarded. Examples: “Get to know their minds, try to see things from a different perspective on some historical issues” (E203); “Their conception of the Catholic Church is still about the indulgence in the Middle Age.” (S064)

7.2.5 On the other hand, a few express that the organization and structure in other Christian denominations are better that the Catholics could consider taking heed. Examples: “All of us are members of the “Body of Christ”, part of the Mystery. Our common goal: to make it as good as possible and only God can complete it. Each of us must know exactly what is my role, with the Mystery as the center. How will my part works? And how to take the responsibility to perform my role in my own life as a part of this “great Mystery” (Ma020); “We cooperated with an inter-denominational evangelical organization (Hong Kong Inspiration) to make up for the inadequacy of our parish in evangelizing and pastoring the young people.” (E055); “The Protestants have a strong sense of belonging to the church they belong to, so they will be involved in the administration and management of the church organization. Most pastors of their churches are just employees, and they can be fired or their contracts not renewed if they don’t perform well. But in our Catholic Church, it is not as good as it should be in pastoralism, in cultivating the faithful, in promoting spirituality, or in administrative management. The pastor is still the “top manager”. There is no reward (or punishment) system like some Protestant churches and business circles.” (E112)

7.2.6 There are some responses with extensive elaborations that should be studied in depth.

7.2.7 There are insightful suggestions to enhance fruits or overcome hindrances: At the level of church leaders, to realize and advocate the direction and importance of ecumenism and journey together with other denominations. Church leaders should be humble and role models for believers. Examples: “In the 2018 Taize Hong Kong International Youth Meeting, it was a profound experience in recent years in which we connected with thousands of young people from different countries and denominations, and we were able to listen to and understand each other. It is a pity that there are too many Protestant denominations, and some denominations do not participate in the unity movement. In recent years, there have been some conservative Catholic groups and related ideological trends in the Hong Kong church. They also emphasize too much on the orthodoxy of the church, unknowingly

exclude other denominations, and hinder unity and dialogue.” (G070) “..... we need our leaders and our bishops to step up first to take the lead and to overcome their barriers of difficulties.” (G573)

7.2.8 “There are still believers who have the mentality of “I am the only one”, and there is absolutely no salvation except for “their own church.” (E100); “Because everyone feels that only their own sect can be saved, and because their sects are different, there is no need for dialogue, so they are self-enclosed, making it impossible to communicate with each other.” (E156)

7.2.9 Believers’ formations should be enriched and negative attitude be corrected, such that they are more eager and affirmed towards ecumenism. Examples: “For example, in the past, some Protestant friends questioned our recitation of the Hail Mary, and only later did I ask the priest about the meaning behind it. The church should provide more training for us.” (G161); “The number of people who actually go to church to attend Mass decreases every year, which makes us reflect on how we can strengthen Catholics' faith and participation in the Eucharist.” (G479) “Mutual respect for one's own faith, and sometimes with Protestant friends, refraining from talking about Our Lady.” (Ma011) “My worry was I do not have the ability to defend my religion especially about Our Lady Mary should conflict arises.” (E134)

7.2.10 Take soft-landing approach of joint activities or exchange visits with other denominations, to strengthen our ties, then foster our relationships. Examples: “We can have some “soft activities” to begin with so that we can come together, such as: concerts, charity associations of the Catholic Church, fellowship visits with Protestant and exchanges” (G046) ; “So it is best to start with some social services, we should avoid unnecessary disputes, and build the foundation of relationship and mutual trust first.” (G188)

7.2.11 The organizational traditions and significance in other Christian denominations are worth learning. Examples: “They stipulated the faithful to participate in worship (Catholic Mass) and fellowship (cell group), not allowing believers to only participate in worship without participating in fellowship, The Church know your entire family and understand the background of every believer. Sometimes when things happen, they can tell each other and offer a hand. It’s a bit like the situation of the early Church.” (E080)

7.2.12 As regards liturgy, extensive discussions and in-depth discernment have been completed, hence the sharing of eucharist should be further encouraged. Examples: “In the Eucharist, the faithful are united with the Bishop, through the incarnation of the Son of God, who suffered and

glorified, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, united with the Father and with the Holy Trinity,Some sacramental communion, where appropriate and approved by Church authorities, is not only beneficial for us and should be further encouraged.” (E100)

7.2.13 Some respondents state that the emphasis and persistence should be grounded on the Words rather than those of Church traditions or organizations.

(C) PARTICIPATION

8. Authority and Participation

Q.8_1 How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to reach them, and the steps to be taken?

Pray led by Jesus and the Holy Spirit

8.1.1 To identify common goals, way and steps, a majority of respondents suggested that we should pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is believed that discernment was actually the work of the Holy Spirit, especially when we had to work together as a group, with stakeholders of diverse backgrounds and belief.

More effective communication

8.1.2 A majority thought that more frequent communication was very important. The Bishop and Auxiliary Bishops should take initiative to approach the laity. Active listening, with an open mindset, to opinions and suggestions from all walks, including the lay ministries, the laity, the catechumens, and even the seculars was essential. It was also the prime responsibility of Parish Priest to build a safe and comfortable environment for parishioners to open their hearts, with bottom up channels so as to encourage everyone to speak up sincerely.

8.1.3 Platforms should be built to regularly collect opinions. Besides using the letter box, retreat, discussion, forum, focus groups etc. led by the priests and leaders the faithful were important means for identification. On-line platforms, especially questionnaire survey, could not be ignored, too.

8.1.4 It was recommended that the bureaucratic structure of the Diocese should be cracked down. Representatives from the top level should carry an open and humble heart, put aside prejudice, defer criticisms, and encourage positively to ensure that voices from the smallest and the least to be heard.

8.1.5 The importance of listening to the voices of the youths was also stressed. Involvement of students through education should be enforced. It was suggested that interschool religious activities and visits to schools by the Catholic Education Office could be conducted.

Proper dissemination & education

8.1.6 The meaning of voicing out opinions about the common goal should be clearly spelt out through messages from the Pope and the Bishop in related documents like the Encyclical and Sunday

Examiner, with explanations by the Parish Priests in Mass. Progress updates were needed, and a high degree of transparency was required.

Steps to accomplish consensus goal through strategic plans

8.1.7 Talking about the detailed process to achieve goals, some suggested that drafting well accepted 3- to 5-years strategic plans led by the Diocese was very important. Major concerns, specific objectives, detailed strategies, appropriate success criteria, clear timeline and available resources should be outlined clearly. Regular evaluation to collect feedback for modifications, and even re-identification of goals might also be needed.

Success relies on Effective Leaders

8.1.8 Many of the respondents thought that successful identification of common goals relies on the leadership of our spiritual leaders, and the whole exercise should be overseen by the Bishop. Leadership training should be provided.

Learning from Protestants

8.1.9 A respondent suggested that lay Catholics could reach out to Protestant and join their activities, as well as learning from their way of supporting fellow Christians.

Q8_2 How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted?

Strengthen relationship, commitments and sense of belonging in God's Family

8.2.1 To enhance motivation and willingness to serve, the vast majority opined that it was essential to make the parishioners feel that they were connected to one another physically, spiritually and psychologically as if they were members of the same family.

8.2.2 Compassionate familial relationship and stronger commitment could be built up by encouraging parishioners to attend the same mass in the same church.

Praying for Guidance of our Lord

8.2.3 Should ask the Holy Spirit to guide us the way.

8.2.4 Forum, retreat and other spiritual formation activities, e.g. Bible Study and group praying, retreat, etc., should be regularly conducted, so that the laity would understand that they were the limbs of Christ which should work complementarily to each other, and take the mission with greater confidence.

Breaking down the bureaucratic system

8.2.5 To promote the responsibilities of lay people, some thought that decentralization of power was needed. More involvement and empowerment of lay people, including women and the youths, in the decision-making process, management, and liturgies were recommended. The assignment of permanent female deacons was stressed

8.2.6 While some suggested that parishioners should participate on totally voluntary basis, many thought that the Diocese or Parish Priests should take initiative to invite them to get more actively involved in the planning and implementation processes of important issues.

8.2.7 A small number also emphasized that the Priests needed to be visible. They should take initiative to communicate, develop and support good leaders. Greater transparency in answering criticisms was necessary too.

Empowerment and encouragement through training and nurturing

8.2.8 Aligning with the principle of building on strengths, training courses should be organized,

mentors should be assigned, chunking up the jobs into smaller tasks, sharing, encouraging learning-by-doing with constructive feedback, rendering adequate support, appreciation and encouragement were all keys to success.

8.2.9 Half of the respondents emphasized the importance of training and empowerment starting from students in the school age.

8.2.10 It was also commonly believed that success of team work depended greatly on loving, passionate and effective leaders with open-mindedness and credibility.

8.2.11 Pilot schemes on specific tasks might be considered.

8.2.12 To nurture a serving heart in the kids, it was suggested that more family activities could be organized.

Serving period for newly baptized parishioners

8.2.13 A majority of the respondents proposed a compulsory serving period of one or two years for the newly baptized. Jobs might be assigned to them according to interest and abilities.

Set up more lay ministries

8.2.14 More lay ministries and small communities of faith should be established.

8.2.17 The experience of S. Korea, which has input a lot of resources in training up leaders and various roles to take charge of small communities, set a good example to follow.

Negative opinions

8.2.18 A few respondents exclaimed that it was a very difficult mission as most parish priests were very conservative, always followed the mainstream opinions, and seldom listened to the voices of the youths.

Q9 Discerning and deciding

Q9-1 What methods and processes do we use in spiritual discernment and decision-making? How can they be improved?

Methods and processes used

9.1.1 Only about 20% of the respondents respond directly to the first part of the question. Most state that in their communities, they meet to share, listen, explain and discuss the issues concerned. In the process, they pray and meditate to discern the will of God and seek guidance of the Holy Spirit. Decisions are made normally after consensus have been reached.

9.1.2 Some communities arrange special retreats/prayer meetings for spiritual discernment before deciding on the concerned matters. Some try to seek advice from spiritual directors and/or consult parishioners through questionnaires and other formal/informal channels.

Spiritual discernment not being practised:

9.1.3 A few state that spiritual discernment is not practised in their communities/parishes at all. Instead, a top-down approach is usually followed, with decisions made by the clergy, the Parish Council, or a few “experienced” parishioners, and then communicated to the rest of the community. Most of the faithful are either unenthusiastic or have little chance of involvement in the process.

9.1.4 A few respondents comment that the opinions of the small parishes, the quiet minority and the youth tend to be neglected.

Reservation about lay involvement:

9.1.5 Several respondents express reservation about lay involvement in spiritual discernment and

decision-making. They believe that the clergy, being specially called and trained to lead the Church with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are in a better position to do so, thus the laity should trust them and follow their decisions.

Ways to improve in terms of attitude:

9.1.6 Many respondents comment that the clergy and laity should build up mutual respect and trust. Their sense of mission and communion could be strengthened. They could be more receptive, willing to listen attentively, less judgmental, understanding and collegial. They should respect decisions reached by consensus.

9.1.7 The clergy is expected to be humble, accessible and down-to-earth servant leaders. They could encourage and appreciate more expression of opinions and contributions from laity as well as listen to the voices of the minority especially those of the youth.

9.1.8 The laity should have a stronger sense of belonging and understand their mission in the church. They could be more enthusiastic, collaborative, willing to take initiative and speak out candidly.

Ways to improve in terms of spirituality and lay formation:

9.1.9 Many believe that growth in prayer life and deeper union with God is of prime importance to the faithful. Spiritual exercise (e.g. bible reading, meditation, adoration of the Eucharist) before meeting and spiritual conversation during the process are recommended.

9.1.10 Some respondents stress the need to enhance spiritual formation of the laity on such themes as prayer (e.g. Ignatian Prayer), spiritual discernment, evangelization, Church Magisterium, etc.

9.1.11 Many express that spiritual conversation is a good way to listen, share and discern together, and that it should be further promoted.

Ways to improve in terms of concrete measures:

9.1.12 More two-way communication channels and publicity, both formal and informal, are needed. e.g. diocesan/parish websites, Kung Kao Po, pamphlets, on-line social media, etc..

9.1.13 The church leaders could try to collect lay opinions through questionnaire, voting, meetings (small group meetings preferable), informal gatherings and individual contacts. It is also expected that the Bishop would have more contacts with and listen to the faithful at different levels.

9.1.14 Parish priests could explain/clarify matters of concern after Mass. This is best done during the consultation process.

9.1.15 Clear and transparent procedures for consultation and decision-making should be established.

Q9-2: How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchical structures of the church?

Suggestions for promoting participation in decision-making

9.2.1 Most respondents put forth suggestions, instead of relating the current practice, for promoting lay participation within the church hierarchy. Many suggestions are similar to those in response to the second part of question 9.1 (please refer to 9.1.6 - 9.1.15 for details).

9.2.2 Besides, a number of respondents mention the need of widening the scope of consultation and providing more platforms for lay participation in decision-making. The laity could be encouraged

to express their opinions through questionnaire, voting, opinion submission via on-line media as well as other informal channels. They could also be invited to serve in different church groups on both diocesan and parish levels.

9.2.3 Some emphasize that delegation of responsibilities and empowerment of laity (especially the younger generation) are essential to promoting participation. Increasing the number of lay representatives in various church councils could be considered. Rotation of leadership may also encourage more active lay involvement.

9.2.4 Many believe that the encouragement and personal contacts of the clergy, in addition to their exemplary, mean a lot for promoting lay participation. It is important to let the faithful know that their opinions and contributions, irrespective of their position, age and gender are valued.

9.2.5 Some express that voices of individuals, minority and youth are not sufficiently heard. A bottom-up process for consultation and decision-making is recommended (but some doubt whether this is possible within a hierarchical structure).

9.2.6 Many consider that continuous formation for both clergy and laity (especially parents, God parents, teachers, catechists, newly baptized) is essential. It should be understood that all baptized are called to participate in the mission of the church, and that their contributions, being parts of the whole, are complementary within the body of Christ.

Reservation about lay participation in decision making

9.2.7 About 20 respondents opine that there is no need to promote lay participation in decision-making as they trust the leadership of the clergy and above all, the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They remark that the existing practice is fine.

Other related suggestions

9.2.8 There is the suggestion that the church hierarchy needs to be reformed as a timely response to an ever-changing world. More democratic practices could be followed in decision-making.

9.2.9 Two or three respondents suggest that there should be deaconess to serve in the church.

9.2.10 A couple of responses emphasize that lay participation in decision-making should be restricted to non-political issues.

9.2.11 Some respondents comment that this questionnaire on synodality is a good attempt of the Diocese to solicit lay opinions.

10. Forming Ourselves in Synodality

Q10_1 How does our church community form people, especially those who shoulder responsibilities in the community, to be more capable of “walking together,” listening to one another, participating in the mission, and engaging in dialogue?

HK Catholic Church

10.1.1 The Church can hold regular retreats, trainings, workshops, lectures, activities, prayer meetings, seminars etc., to nurture people’s abilities in walking together, listening others, engaging in dialogue.

10.1.2 The content of training can be on (Catholic concepts) faithful, bible studies, theology, spirituality (Ignatian, Benedict, Franciscan, etc.), spiritual conversation, Eucharistic Adoration, vocation.

10.1.3 Furthermore, if we can strengthen our relationship with God, communicating with others, listening, walking together, can be made much easier.

10.1.4 Bishops and priests need to be the role models with open-mindedness and willingness to listen to the laity’s opinions. Further, we shall encourage laities to express their views about the Church and their faithful group.

10.1.5 There is a problem of “inheritance” in both Diocese and parishes, so that there will not be gaps between different generations. In this sense, mentoring is important.

10.1.6 Diocese, parishes and groups should be walking together, within itself and also among others.

Catholic schools

10.1.7 Catholic schools can build faithful groups and give trainings to students.

10.1.8 Besides, parishes and schools are essential parts of the Church, where senses of belongings in those groups are crucial, especially for youth.

General leadership / management

10.1.9 Referring to point 10.1.1, however, the training of the content also can be on something more general other than those Catholic terms, e.g., leadership, time management, psychology, social work, reasonability, team building etc.

10.1.10 We can also share experiences among others as a form of training.

10.1.11 Role models with open-mindedness are needed in leadership and management.

10.1.12 Less hierarchical mentality is important in our Church.

10.1.13 The attitude in communication is important, such as being humble, enthusiastic, empathetic, tolerant, and concrete in response and acceptance.

10.1.14 We also need a broader horizon and bigger heart.

Q10_2 What formation is offered to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a synodal way?

HK Catholic Church

10.2.1 We can add those content on discernment, and thereby exercising authority, etc, into the catechism class as part of their curriculum. Further, related examples in daily life are needed to

illustrate those concepts and theories.

10.2.2 The idea of nurturing laity concepts of discernment and the exercise power can be discussed in the Priests' homilies.

10.2.3 In addition, training in communication, leadership, catholic social ethics, church teaching, and catholic five core values (truth, justice, love, family, life), pastoral training, regular formation, and practice after learned can be included.

10.2.4 Walking together with Holy Trinity, prayer and spirituality are essential part in the Catholics' life. And, training in the spiritual conversation is also needed.

10.2.5 In the regular formation meetings within our Church, we invite different experts to share in their field. Empowering these speakers in their field of apostolate works help the whole church grow, especially in our spiritual life.

10.2.6 We need to build up different kinds of groups within our Church, such as faithful group, Basic Christian Committee, etc.

Catholic Schools

10.2.7 Diocese can provide related training for teachers before delivering it to students.

10.2.8 Education towards students in school by teachers is necessary.

10.2.9 Teachers in school can be leaders and role models, letting the students to know their values and learning how to respect others.

10.2.10 In this society of secularism, we need to promote sacred education.

10.2.11 We need to provide training in school time, and start it since kindergarten.

General Leadership / Management

10.2.12 First, clear objectives / goals need to be spelled out.

10.2.13 And, knowing each self, responsibilities, and reflections are needed in the training.

10.2.14 The relationship among people is an essential item, especially the relationship with God.

10.2.15 We can invite some oversea speakers to give speeches via internet.

10.2.16 We should provide the training about attitudes such as respecting others during the cooperation, humilities, and patience during listening

END