

# 2024 Catholic Partnership Summit

## Expanding the Tent: Young Adult Leadership and Co-Responsibility in the Catholic Church

Arlington, VA  
February 28 - March 1, 2024

### Resources & Recommendations for Expanding the Tent

For leaders of the Church, young adults are top of mind in nearly every sector – it is a matter of deep concern for bishops and pastors, as well religious brothers and sisters, and leaders of Catholic organizations. Of all the issues facing the Church, young adult leadership is one of the few that is galvanizing, that unites Catholics across divides. As we consider the future of the Church, there is concern for the pipeline of leadership, for formation of emerging lay leaders to serve in critical roles. There is concern for recruitment and retention, specifically of young adults to leadership positions, and for developing a culture that has a diversity of thought, representation, and action. **Young adults are not an addendum to the leadership of the Church – they must be afforded a central role.**

During the 2024 Summit, five significant overarching topics include:

- Belonging
- Trust
- Mental health and its impact on young adults
- Mentorship and formation – pipeline of leadership, recruitment, and retention
- Lived faith experiences.

For each of the four sessions, you will find a description of the session, resources for pre-reading, and recommendations for action. These recommendations represent a sample of the best practices available to our Church. We offer them to aid the discussion during the Summit, as well as in your local faith communities. Participants will be invited to lift up actionable recommendations that will support living synodal leadership. Leadership Roundtable will gather the top recommendations into a report that will be shared with the wider Church to advance the conversation.

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# Guiding Principles

Leadership Roundtable developed the following guiding principles for any recommendations that are considered. Recommendations should:

1. Impact the Catholic Church based on three principles: accountability, transparency, and co-responsibility
2. Shape the leadership and management culture of the Church, in line with Catholic beliefs, ecclesiology, and canon law
3. Restore trust in the Church based on measurable, visible outcomes
4. Engage both ordained and lay Catholics, working together for the mission
5. Lean forward into new possibilities
6. Be realistic and able to be translated into practical strategy and implementation

The resources in this document may also be accessed at:  
[summit.leadershiproundtable.org/resources](https://summit.leadershiproundtable.org/resources)

## A Listening Church

**“A synodal Church needs to be a listening Church and this commitment has to be translated into practice.”** — “A Synodal Church In Mission,” General Assembly of The Synod of Bishops First Session

Synthesis Report

**Four ways the Catholic Church can actually listen more to young people**

**The Editors. America Media, August 9, 2023**

Off the heels of World Youth Day and in anticipation of the General Assembly of the Synod on Synodality, this article provides suggestions of how the Church can listen better to and properly accompany young people.

# KEYNOTE: Young Adults in a Synodal Church

Speakers: Sr. Nathalie Becquart, XMCJ and John Grosso

The Synod on Synodality has elevated and made space for young adult voices, their experiences, what they care about, and their role in the Church — more than ever before. The Synod is bringing to fruition the vision and aims of previous movements, which were the foundation for synodality.

This Keynote will highlight the connections between prior movements, such as the Synod on Youth in 2018, and the ongoing Synod on Synodality to provide important context for the unprecedented moment before the Church to accompany, mentor, and form young adults for leadership, while creating a synodal Church where everyone can belong.

## Resources

### Synod on Young People

- [U.S. delegates say young people want mentors, a voice in church](#)  
**Cindy Wooden. Catholic Philly, March 22, 2018**  
At the Vatican's pre-synod meeting, U.S. delegates reported that young people in the Catholic Church seek trusted mentors for guidance in faith and life decisions. They desire authentic, personal relationships with faith mentors to discuss complex issues like Church teachings and modern life challenges. The young adults emphasize the need for more inclusive and frequent parish involvement, suggesting advisory roles for young people in parish councils.
- [The Synod on Young People: What does the Final Document Say?](#)  
**Vatican News. October 27, 2018**  
Summary of the final document approved from the 2018 Synod on Young People. The first part considers concrete aspects of young people's lives, the second part focuses on accompaniment and discernment, and the third part focuses on walking together.
- [The Synod on Young People, a Laboratory of Synodality](#)  
**Sister Nathalie Becquart, XMCJ. International Bulletin of Mission Research, October 8, 2020**  
Sr. Nathalie Becquart, XMCJ, delves into the 2018 Synod on "Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment," emphasizing the importance of young people's co-responsibility and engagement in the Church, underlining their vital contributions to developing a truly synodal Church, essential for the Church's transmission of the faith to the entire People of God in the third millennium.

### Christus Vivit

- [The Clear Message of Christus Vivit](#)  
**Vincent J. Reilly. Church Life Journal, April 10, 2019**  
Excerpt from Leadership Roundtable's guide for Facilitating Synodal Consultations that presents the ten elements of synodality set forth in the Vatican Synod handbook.
- [Presentation of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit of Pope Francis: A call to live with Christ in friendship](#)  
**Sister Nathalie Becquart, XMCJ. National Religious Vocation Conference, 2019**  
A 1-minute video clip of Brownsville Bishop Daniel Flores encouraging us to listen without interrupting one another.

## Synodality

- [What it's like giving a speech inside a synod of bishops](#)

**Jesuitical Podcast. America Media, October 11, 2023**

Julian Paparella shares his experience of addressing hundreds of bishops at the youth synod in 2018 when he was 25 years old.

- [U.S. National Synthesis 2021-2023 Synod](#)

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, September 19, 2022**

The National Synthesis summarizes the input of Catholics across the United States on the synod process highlighting the desire for greater communion, participation, and mission, as well as the need to address wounds from the sexual abuse crisis, political divisions, and marginalization. Young people voiced a feeling of exclusion and desired to participate more fully as members of the parish community and leadership.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the above resources:

- Actively create opportunities for deep listening and spaces for quiet and silence.
- Intentionally seek to foster relationships with people who hold different perspectives and come from different backgrounds.
- Offer formation for leaders in silence, listening, and discernment, as well as opportunities to practice both.
- Set a benchmark to include young adults at parish, diocesan, and organizational decision-making tables.

# SESSION 2: Today's Catholic Young Adults: Engaged. Diverse. Questioning. Caring. Passionate.

There are many misconceptions about young adults today and their relationship to the Church. While topics such as perceived disaffiliation and concerns for younger generations' future involvement in the Church often sit top of mind, there is so much more to the story. Young adults are, in many places, already vibrant members of our faith communities and a great source of both tapped and untapped leadership potential for the Church. This panel will look at:

- the landscape of where young adults are in relation to the Church
- the diversity of ways they live their spiritual lives, uniting the richness of communities and cultures
- where and how they relate to the Church, and in particular Church leadership
- the importance of speaking openly about, supporting, and addressing mental health.

## Resources

### Landscape of Catholic Young Adults

- **Encuentros: Learning from 50 years of synodal experience – if we've been paying attention**  
**Hoffsman Ospino, Ph.D. National Catholic Reporter, December 8, 2021**  
Highlights the 50-year history of the Encuentros within the U.S. Catholic Church, particularly among Hispanic/Latino Catholics. These synodal processes have fostered discernment and dialogue, emphasizing a more collaborative and inclusive Church. With five national summits since 1972, Encuentros have greatly influenced ecclesial life and evangelization, focusing on the integration and needs of Hispanic Catholics.
- **Understanding Former Young Catholics: Findings from a National Study of American Emerging Adults**  
**Nicolette Manglos-Weber and Christian Smith. University of Notre Dame, 2020**  
This article discusses the reasons why roughly half of Catholic teenagers lose their Catholic identity by their late 20s. The article also explores what these former Catholics believe and how they feel about religion. Many of them find organized religion alienating and illogical in modern times. However, many still believe in God and pray. The article concludes implications for forming committed Catholic youth.
- **Mobilizing the Field Hospital: Pastoral Care as a Paradigm for Ministry with Young Adults**  
**Paul Jarzembowski. Religions, November 19, 2020**  
When considering the Church and young adults, marketing or educational approaches are often used; however, these are inadequate to address the realities facing people in their 20s and 30s, including mental health, economic conditions, and racial and cultural injustice. What is needed is the development of a new ecclesial paradigm based on Pope Francis' "field hospital" analogy, which emphasizes pastoral care as a primary step in ministerial accompaniment.  
**Additional resource available for Purchase:**
- **The State of Religion and Young People: Navigating Uncertainty**  
**Springtide Research Institute, 2021**  
Explores the state of religion in relation to young people to understand why young people, even religious young people, aren't turning to religion in times of uncertainty or difficulty. It introduces Faith Unbundled, a framework to help leaders better understand the way young people are constructing their religious and spiritual lives by drawing on a variety of sources and offers insights from experts across religious, spiritual, and secular traditions about how to connect with Gen Z in

light of—not despite—this emerging, unbundled approach to faith.

## **Healing the Body of Christ: Uniting the richness of communities and cultures**

- **Synod and Young People: Healing the Wounds of Distrust**  
**Brenda Noriega. Commonweal, November 29, 2023**  
Explores the challenges faced by young people in participating in the synodal process, highlighting the skepticism young people feel towards the Church's commitment to listening to their concerns and their experiences of feeling unheard and silenced by Church leaders. Factors like fear of repercussions for speaking honestly, lack of transparency in the synodal process, and a sense of not being taken seriously are cited and it concludes with a plea for the Church to create a safe and inclusive space for young people to share their voices.
- **Ministry with Young Hispanic Catholics: Towards a Recipe for Growth and Success**  
**Principal Investigator: Hosffman Ospino, Ph.D. Boston College, February 7, 2023**  
Boston College, with the support of Porticus, engaged in a process of consultation in a multi-phase research study of twelve Catholic organizations working with young Hispanics or advancing Hispanic ministry efforts. This published study's findings include Pillars of Success in Ministry with Young Hispanic Catholics, Emerging Insights, and Areas that Require Attention and Investment.
- **La Década de la Pastoral Juvenil Hispana: Protagonistas de la Esperanza (bilingual)**  
**LaRED National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil, 2023**  
The document discusses the importance of young people being involved in the Church. It details goals and strategies in a ten-year plan to revitalize Hispanic/Latino youth. Some of the goals include creating networks and communities for young people and promoting their leadership and formation. *English text begins on page 79.*
- **Amid national exodus, Black Catholic young adults gather to plan renewal**  
**Nate Tinner-Williams. Black Catholic Messenger, November 20, 2023**  
Black Catholic young adults, faced with alarming rates of disengagement among their peers, are advocating for change on local and national levels, calling for a more inclusive, responsive Church aligned with Pope Francis' vision. The young adults formulated an action plan with recommendations for parishes, dioceses, and national organizations to re-engage the Black Catholic community.
- **From Surviving to Thriving: Once Refugees, Vietnamese Catholics Make Up Vibrant Part of US Church Today**  
**Susan Klemond. National Catholic Register, August 25, 2022**  
National Catholic Register details the thriving Vietnamese Catholic community in the U.S., highlighting their growth from refugees to vibrant members of the Church. It focuses on their strong faith as a source of hope in times of adversity, dedication to passing on their culture and values to younger generations, and contributions to the Church, particularly in terms of priestly vocations. Weaving together statistics and personal narratives, the article portrays the impact of this resilient Vietnamese Catholic community on the Church in the U.S.
- **Indigenous Catholics should 'have a seat at the table' in the church, said two bishops**  
**Gina Christian and Kate Scanlon. OSV News, October 10, 2023**  
This OSV News article discusses the efforts of two bishops to ensure Indigenous Catholics have a voice in the Church. Archbishop Paul G. Martin of Wellington, New Zealand, and Bishop Chad W. Zielinski of New Ulm, Minnesota, are affirming the Church's commitment to healing and reconciliation with Indigenous communities, recognizing the need to address past harms. They emphasize the importance of dialogue, cultural catechesis, and ensuring Indigenous Catholics have a presence in leadership roles.

- **Journeying Together: A National Catholic Intercultural Encounter for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults**

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, April 2022**

Details the results of the intercultural and intergenerational encounter process between young adults, bishops, and pastoral leaders. It represents a concerted effort to engage in a synodal process of reflection, dialogue, and accompaniment, addressing the concerns, hopes, and desires of young people. Guiding this process are several key principles, such as inclusion, ensuring that everyone could share each community's story, and sacred listening.

**Healing the Human Person: Addressing mental health as part of ministry**

- **Two U.S. Bishops Launch National Catholic Mental Health Campaign And Novena Amid Crisis**  
**Gina Christian. OSV News, October 10, 2023**

Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development and Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth launched the National Catholic Mental Health Campaign to address the global crisis in mental health, recognizing that "we are in a moment where mental illness is particularly acute in teenagers."

- **There's a mental crisis among teens. The Catholic Church needs to respond**  
**The Editors. America Media, April 20, 2023**

This America Media article discusses the mental health crisis among teenagers and how the Catholic Church can respond. It explores the causes of the crisis, such as the disconnect and isolation brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, and suggests ways that the Church can help, such as meeting people where they are, providing mental health resources, and creating a more welcoming environment for young people.

- **Diocese's historic mental health initiative reaches one year with plans to grow**  
**Jeff Grant. The Catholic Sun, December 18, 2023**

The Diocese of Phoenix's mental health initiative, led by Bishop John P. Dolan, expanded its Office of Mental Health Ministry to 15 parishes and trained 138 individuals in Mental Health First Aid. This comprehensive program emphasizes education, support, and advocacy for effective mental health policies. The initiative, responding to the amplified mental health crisis, aims to further extend its outreach and training, reflecting a holistic approach to mental health within the Catholic community.

- **In open dialogue with Pope, ten young people ask tough questions**  
**Felipe Herrera-Espaliat. Vatican News, April 5, 2023**

Summarizes a documentary featuring Pope Francis in conversation with ten young adults from around the world, including Catholics (both practicing and non-practicing), a former religious sister, an agnostic, and a Muslim. They discuss their generation's pressing concerns, such as sexual abuse within the Church, institutional transparency and accountability, the role of women, and key social issues affecting their generation and highlight their diverse, lived faith experiences.

- **Ministry with Young Adults: Toward a New Ecclesiological Imagination**  
**Tracey Lamont. Religions, November 2, 2020**

This article advocates for a transformative approach in engaging young adults in the Church, recognizing the feelings of alienation from the Church, loneliness, and societal struggles faced by young adults. Lamont emphasizes the importance of synodality, urging ministry leaders to foster a more collaborative, inclusive Church community that creatively meets people where they are.



### **Additional Resource Available for Purchase:**

- **Belonging: Reconnecting America's Loneliest Generation**  
**Springtide Research Institute, 2020**

This study reveals epidemic levels of isolation among young people and demonstrates why participation does not equate to belonging and how the presence of just one trusted adult in the life of a young person cuts severe isolation in half. It also details how to cultivate thriving, relationship-driven programs that truly connect with young people.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are drawn from the above resources:

- Acknowledge the lived faith experience for young adults, seek to understand the barriers for their participation, and together take action to address those barriers.
- Adapt ministries to align with the breadth of today's young adult vocational paths.
- Create spaces for intergenerational dialogue and accompaniment.
- Create and normalize pastoral ministries that address mental health challenges including isolation, loneliness, and others.
- Reform leadership structures to include young adults and build a sustainable leadership pipeline to retain them.
- Learn from the V Encuentro process, how it engages young people, and work to implement its successful synodal model.

# SESSION 3: The Church We Want to Be: An authentic place for all to belong

Taking a deeper dive into belonging, trust, and how the Church can ensure the leadership tables of its parishes, communities, and ministries are spaces where all young adults truly belong.

The Catholic faith is a place where young adults seek belonging and spiritual growth during times of great transition in their lives. Belonging is more than just feeling welcomed, it is creating communities and spaces that foster authentic relationships and encourage open and honest dialogue on difficult topics. It is actively working to build trust through mentorship and communities, and openly including those whom the Synod process identified as experiencing marginalization and thus lack of representation in the Church: women, people of color, LGBTQ Catholics, persons with disabilities, and individuals with different experiences in the life and leadership of the Church. This panel will build upon the concepts introduced in Session 2 to take a deeper dive into belonging and how the Church can ensure the leadership tables of its parishes, communities, and ministries are spaces where all young adults truly belong.

## Resources

### A Time of Transition

- **Key findings about Catholic youth and young adults**  
**National Religious Vocation Conference, November 2, 2021**  
The article discusses the results of a study by the National Dialogue on Catholic Pastoral Ministry with Youth and Young Adults. Approximately 75 Catholic organizations participated in this process, which highlighted the desire of young people for a new approach in vocation ministry, focusing on mentorship and accompaniment during life transitions and emphasizing a more integrated, relevant approach to faith and everyday life.
- **Realities Facing Youth and Young Adults in the United States**  
**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, December 29, 2020**  
This document discusses the changing demographics of young Catholics in the U.S., including the realities and challenges faced by each community. It concludes by offering recommendations for ministering to these diverse populations based on their expressed needs.
- **From Change to Transformation: Living Synodality in Ministry with Young Adults**  
**Tracey Lamont, Ph.D. Religions, February 27, 2023**  
This article explores the challenges of ministering to young people in a changing world and proposes a new approach to catechesis based on a theology of synodality. It suggests moving away from traditional instructional methods and towards more open and dialogical approaches to create a more welcoming and inclusive Church community for young people.

### Come as You are: Authentic Engagement with and within the Church

- **How We Gather**  
**Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston, 2015**  
An in-depth report by Harvard researchers into the organizations drawing non-religiously affiliated Millennials into community and the implications for both Churches and non-religious organizations. The report examines ten organizations, focusing on six common themes among them,

to understand how they serve and attract young adults and question how, together, they might consciously form a movement for personal spiritual growth and social transformation.

- **Watch Dr. Josh Packard and Tim Coons talk about belonging in an age of social isolation and disconnection**

**Springtide Research Institute, October 2021**

Springtide Research Institute's Josh Packard interviews Tim Coons on the concept of belonging and community. Coons has created a podcast called "Weld Found" that explores belonging in a local community, emphasizing storytelling and personal connections rather than academic theory. He also discusses the power of commitments in shaping identity and fostering belonging, using personal examples and stories from his podcast. The conversation highlights the essential role of relationships and community in creating a sense of belonging and overcoming isolation.

- **If church membership is not the metric for young people, what is?**

**Heidi Schlumpf. National Catholic Reporter, April 19, 2023**

The National Catholic Reporter article highlights the problem of young people leaving the Catholic Church, arguing that mere membership numbers are insufficient indicators of their engagement. The article proposes that building meaningful relationships and addressing young people's concerns, rather than focusing on statistics, is a more effective strategy to foster a sense of belonging and engagement.

- **Accompaniment as the Model of Evangelization with Paul Jarzembowski**

**Ave Explorers Podcast. Ave Maria Press, November 19, 2021**

Paul Jarzembowski, Assistant Director for the Laity at the USCCB, joins host Katie Prejean McGrady to discuss *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on evangelization. Paul explains how accompanying people, meeting them where they are, and inviting them to encounter are the key elements of modern evangelization.

- **Evangelii Gaudium**

**Pope Francis, November 24, 2013**

Pope Francis' 2013 exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, urges a revitalized Christian outreach based on joy, empathy, and a focus on core gospel messages. He calls for renewal at all levels, criticizing complacency and bureaucracy while advocating for creativity, social justice, and a "pastoral conversion" towards deeper connection with the faithful. This renewed evangelization, rooted in spiritual conversion and structural improvements, aims to share Christ's joy with the world in a way that resonates with modern life.

- **Call Me By Name: Spiritual Accompaniment in a Digital World**

**Jonathan Lewis. OSV Talks, Our Sunday Visitor, June 19, 2023**

Jonathan Lewis, Vice President of Customer Operations for Catholic Faith Technologies, shares about the importance of parishes and dioceses prioritizing spiritual accompaniment into all ministries and aspects of parish life to respond to the crisis of young adults and middle-aged adults drifting away from their faith.

- **A New Lens for Seeing: A Suggestion for Analyzing Religious Belief and Belonging among Emerging Adults through a Constructive-Developmental Lens**

**Theresa O'Keefe and Emily Jendzejec. Religions, November 2, 2020**

This study from Boston College's School of Theology & Ministry examines how emerging adults find belonging and meaning through religion. It suggests a constructive-developmental framework to better understand how young adults engage with, interpret, and derive meaning from religious beliefs and practices. This approach is particularly aimed at those working with young adults in religious settings, offering new insights into their spiritual development and community involvement.

## Building Trust and Dialogue Across Divides

- **Study shows younger people lack faith in religious institutions**  
**Charles C. Camosy. Crux, February 17, 2021**  
Charles C. Camosy analyzes a study revealing that younger generations have diminishing trust in religious institutions, particularly among Catholics. It highlights the growing trend of young individuals distancing themselves from organized religion, yet maintaining personal spiritual beliefs. Camosy argues that religious leaders must adapt to this changing landscape by prioritizing “building bonds of trust” as a key strategy to engage young people.
- **Most young Catholics say they are spiritual or religious. That doesn’t mean you’ll find them at Mass**  
**Michael J. O’Loughlin. America Media, February 24, 2022**  
Discusses how many young Catholics identify as spiritual or religious, but don’t attend Mass regularly. The report also explores how young Catholics find their own way to practice their faith, often outside traditional institutions. The article argues that the Church should focus on engaging young people by meeting them where they are, accepting them by who they are, and addressing their concerns.
- **Dear Alana,**  
**Simon Kent Fung. 2023**  
*Content Warning: Bullying, child abuse, sexual assault, self-harm, religious trauma, suicide, homophobia, and conversion therapy are discussed in this podcast.*  
This podcast explores the tragic story of Alana Chen, a Colorado teenager who grappled with faith, sexuality, and mental health before her death in 2019. Alana, a devout Catholic that dreamed of becoming a nun, confided in her priest about her attraction to women at 14. This led her down a path of secrecy, covert pastoral counsel, and ultimately, conversion therapy. The host, Simon, a former tech executive with an eerily similar past in religious suppression, unravels Alana’s story and confronts his own experiences, seeking answers and understanding. Their intertwined narratives shed light on the devastating consequences of internalized shame and the urgent need for acceptance and compassion.
- **Ellen Koneck: Engaging the Young Church**  
**The Catholic Leaders Podcast by Leadership Roundtable, October 27, 2023**  
*Content Warning: Suicide is briefly mentioned in this episode.*  
Ellen Koneck, Executive Director of Commonweal, joins hosts Kim Smolik and Kerry Robinson to discuss female, young adult, and lay leadership and engagement in the Catholic Church.
- **U.S. Catholics are more liberal. Young priests are more conservative. Can the synod help us overcome our divisions?**  
**Bill McCormick, SJ. America Media, November 20, 2023**  
Discusses a national survey revealing a divide in the U.S. Catholic Church: young priests are more conservative and traditionalist, while the wider Catholic community is increasingly liberal. This ideological split raises concerns about unity and the potential undermining of Vatican II’s reforms. The Synod on Synodality is seen as an opportunity to address these divisions, calling for greater clergy participation in dialogues to rebuild trust and communion within the Church.
- **Risking Our Significance: A Review of Polarization in the U.S. Catholic Church**  
**Meg Stapleton Smith. Daily Theology, November 8, 2016**  
Reviews “Polarization in the U.S. Catholic Church,” a book addressing the Church’s deepening divides, highlighting the tension between church teachings and modern societal issues like LGBTQ rights, gender roles, and racial justice. The book, comprising essays by various Catholic theologians,

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the above resources:

- Create spaces in the Church that are unique to where young adults are in life and are broader than ministries focused only on marriage and parenthood.
- Adapt ministries to not relegate individuals to the margins, but welcome them and encourage them to share in their spiritual journey as a part of the whole.
- Prioritize Christ-like compassion, vulnerability, and inclusion by leadership at all levels of the Church that creates a culture of compassion and accompaniment.
- Provide and practice formation in generous listening and generative dialogue that is open and nonjudgmental.

# SESSION 4: An Expanded Tent: Church Beyond the Parish Walls

The Catholic Church is more than just its parishes, it is a vibrant patchwork that also includes nonprofit organizations, institutions, ministries, initiatives, and digital communities that all work for the mission of the Church. Most young adults intentionally live their faith beyond the walls of the parish, giving their time, talent, and treasure to the Church in ways unique to their generation. This panel will build further upon the previous panels to explore the Church of today and lived faith of young adults, including the role of digital media and technology in forming and sustaining faith communities, and how parishes can adapt to meet young adults where they are within the Church of today.

## Resources

### Lived Faith: Intentional ways young adults practice and live out their faith

- **Prayer, Meditation, and What's In-Between**  
**Hannah Connors. Springtide Research Institute, June 1, 2022**  
In Springtide's report "The New Normal, Updated & Expanded," young people reported engaging with a host of new spiritual practices since the beginning of the pandemic, the two most popular among them including prayer (51%) and meditation (45%). This article goes into the findings of that report.
- **Synthesis Report A SYNODAL CHURCH IN MISSION**  
**Vatican Media, October 28, 2023**  
The Synthesis Report from the First Session of the Synodal Assembly at the Vatican in October 2023 reflects a comprehensive approach to the mission and structure of a synodal Church. It emphasizes inclusivity and universality, advocating for a church that encompasses "every tribe, tongue, people, and nation." The report also recognizes the importance of adapting to modern challenges, including integrating the digital environment to advance its mission and the need for collaborative responsibility in the Church, involving all baptized members. *See sections: 8e, 14e, 16e, and 17d.*
- **Many Catholic students fill 'gap year' with faith-based service**  
**Leslie Miller. Catholic Herald, September 21, 2021**  
A growing number of college students have been taking a timeout from academics for a year to gain hands-on learning experience in the world outside the classroom. This article explores some of the year-long service opportunities where young adults serve and live, often in community.
- **69% of young people experience 'sacred moments' in nature, says new poll**  
**Adelle M. Banks. National Catholic Reporter, November 9, 2023**  
Examines a recent study conducted by Springtide Research Institute regarding where young people experience "sacredness." The study found that even young people who consider themselves non-religious often experience moments of sacredness or divinity in nature, in their own home, and at social gatherings.

## Digital Media and Technology

- **Catholic influencers or digital missionaries? Bringing the synod to the internet Jesuital Podcast. America Media, October 20, 2023**  
Discussion with José Manuel de Urquidi, founder of Juan Diego & Co and the multi-platform Juan Diego Network on his work to collaborate with marketing leaders to engage Latinos in Catholic content. José talks about how, in preparation for the Synod, he partnered with the Synod secretariat, promoting the event on numerous digital platforms. This collaboration led to the creation of a “continental” digital Synod document, highlighting the perspectives of those often marginalized or excluded from conventional Church structures.
- **Towards Full Presence: A Pastoral Reflection on Engagement with Social Media Dicastery for Communication, May 28, 2023**  
Pastoral reflection published by the Dicastery for Communication explores the complexities of using social media for evangelization within the Catholic Church. It acknowledges both the challenges and opportunities presented by social media, emphasizing the need for responsible and ethical engagement while building online and offline communities. Ultimately, it encourages leveraging social media’s potential to effectively share the Gospel message.

## Emerging Communities for Young Adults

- **Helping Catholic Students Remain Catholic in a Setting of Nietzsche and Beer Pong Samuel G. Freedman. New York Times, May 20, 2011**  
Highlights Marysa Leya’s journey in maintaining her Catholic faith at Yale University and her involvement in “ESTEEM,” a program created through a collaboration of Leadership Roundtable and the Saint Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University. ESTEEM seeks to keep Catholic college students engaged in their faith post-graduation was key to her college experience by offering mentorship and relationship-building opportunities.
- **The Church Is Young and Alive! FOCUS Gathers 17,000 Young Catholics at #SEEK23 Amy Smith. National Catholic Register, January 6, 2023**  
Summarizes key takeaways from the FOCUS SEEK23 conference, an annual gathering of young Catholics. It emphasizes the theme of synodality, highlighting the call for deeper listening and collaboration within the Church. Several speakers urged young people to courageously share their voices and actively participate in shaping the Church’s future. The article concludes with a call for young Catholics to be bold witnesses and agents of renewal in the Church.
- **The Catholic Climate Covenant with Elena Gaona Ave Explorers Podcast by Ave Maria Press, April 21, 2021**  
Elena Gaona discusses the mission of Catholic Climate Covenant – which has a dedicated young adult ministry – where she serves as Director of Communications. In her conversation with host Katie Prejean McGrady, Elena highlights how the organization works to bring solar power to parishes, create climate care teams for dioceses, and encourage the faithful to care for the earth and slow the effects of climate change.
- **Nuns & Nones brings together religiously unaffiliated young adults and Catholic sisters Yonat Shimron. Faith & Leadership Leadership Education at Duke Divinity, June 11, 2019**  
Details the innovative Nuns & Nones project, where millennials without a fixed religious affiliation engage in a six-month residency with the Sisters of Mercy in California. It explores the evolution of this national movement, focusing on intergenerational relationships and shared values in social justice. The initiative, reflecting a shift from traditional religious practice, emphasizes collaborative learning and spiritual community-building, appealing to idealistic millennials and allowing aging nuns to transmit their wisdom and experiences.

- **New Directions in Youth and Young Adult Ministry Leadership: Where Have We Been and More Importantly Where Are We Headed?**  
**Charlotte McCorquodale. Religions, February 24, 2021**  
Focuses on the evolution and future trajectory of youth and young adult ministry leadership. It examines historical approaches and contemporary challenges, aiming to identify more effective strategies for engaging younger generations, including walking alongside youth and young adults, acknowledging their unique perspectives and experiences, and adapting leadership styles to resonate with the realities of today's rapidly evolving world.
- **Integrating Ministerial Visions: Lessons from Campus Ministry**  
**Maureen Day and Barbara McCrabb. Religions, December 1, 2020**  
Examines the integration of ministerial visions within campus ministry. Focusing on the challenges and opportunities in harmonizing different ministerial approaches, Day and McCrabb provide insights into effective campus ministry practices, emphasizing the importance of adapting to diverse student needs and fostering an inclusive environment. They suggest integrating various ministerial perspectives can enhance the spiritual and communal aspects of campus ministry, making it more responsive and dynamic.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the above resources:

- Identify avenues and spaces to engage in active dialogue with young adults who generally do not participate in the life of the Church.
- Provide opportunities for volunteer service coupled with intentional spaces for reflection and prayer.
- Offer ongoing formation and professional development for campus ministers.
- Facilitate and promote mentor-mentee relationships for young adults.
- Embrace digital culture and work to elevate the leadership of young people who have profound experience of it and who often are best suited to carry out the Church's mission in the digital environment.
- Provide avenues for young adults to accompany pastoral leaders and the broader faith community to become more familiar with digital culture and technology.
- Welcome creativity in establishing ministries according to the needs of faith communities, with the intentional involvement of young adults.



# Addendum

## Examples of Organizations and Initiatives that Engage Young Adults beyond Parish Walls

### Campus Ministries

**ESTEEM** – Leadership formation program for Roman Catholic young adults on college campuses, focused on preparing young adults to be engaged leaders in faith communities after graduation.

**FOCUS** – A ministry that seeks to make disciples for Christ by inviting young adults into a relationship with Jesus in the Catholic Church, accompanying them along their journey, and equipping them to share the faith with others too.

### Volunteer and Lay Mission Groups

**Catholic Volunteer Network** – Fosters and promotes full-time domestic and international faith-based volunteer service opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and skills. CVN supports and enhances the work of our members through volunteer recruitment, training and resources, networking opportunities, and advocacy.

**Response Directory 2023 | Catholic Volunteer Network** – Comprehensive guide to faith-based service that lists hundreds of volunteer programs to serve across the U.S. and abroad.

**Maryknoll Lay Mission** – A Catholic mission-sending community committed to nonviolence through the prevention, intervention, reconciliation and restoration of all creation that consists of long-term missionaries and missionary families in nine African, Asian and American countries. Striving to create an inclusive and anti-racist world, Maryknoll Lay Mission lives with those most excluded in society to transform unjust structures together.

**Jesuit Volunteer Corps** – The Jesuit Volunteer Corps, through solidarity and service with local communities, fosters the formation of young people dedicated to a faith that promotes justice.

**Franciscan Mission Service** – As Franciscan followers of Christ, FMS builds partnerships with Catholic women and men who are inspired to live and serve in solidarity with economically poor communities across the globe – and to bring the transformative experience of mission to North American societies and churches as advocates for peace, justice, reconciliation and care of creation.

**Bon Secours Young Adults** – Bon Secours Young Adults works with the Holy Spirit to foster the Charism of compassion, healing, and liberation of the Congregation of Sisters of Bon Secours, in young adults. As a global community committed to being “Good Help,” we journey with each other to engage, live, and share this gift with the world.

### Professional Networking

**Young Catholic Professionals** – Offers a generation of restless young workers in their 20s and 30s a way to go deeper in faith, life, and work. Together, YCP members seek authentic friendships, a richer sense of purpose, and both personal and professional excellence.

**The Given Institute** – The GIVEN Institute (“GIVEN”) is dedicated to activating the gifts of young adult women for the Catholic Church and the world. Through leadership training, faith formation, and dedicated mentoring, GIVEN forms women for mission and for life.

## Social Action

**Franciscan Action Network** – The Franciscan Action Network is a collective Franciscan voice seeking to transform United States public policy related to peace making, care for creation, poverty, and human rights.

**Salt and Light** – Part of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University, Salt and Light Gatherings regularly brings together young Catholics in Washington – those under 40 years old who work on Capitol Hill or in the administration, other branches of government, or public policy organizations – to explore links between faith, Catholic social thought, and their lives and work, especially on public policy.

**Catholic Climate Covenant** – The Catholic Climate Covenant mobilizes U.S. based young adults ages 18-39 and from across the umbrella of the Catholic Church around care of creation through webinars and weekend retreats, curriculum for college and parish settings, and year-long leadership formation programs. It offers young adults and those who work with young adults resources to organize for climate action through a faith-based, Catholic perspective.

**Laudato Si Movement** – Laudato Si Movement seeks to inspire and mobilize the Catholic community to care for our common home and achieve climate and ecological justice, in collaboration with all people of good will.

## Outreach and Community

**National Institute for Ministry with Young Adults** – The National Institute for Ministry with Young Adults seeks to transform the current state of the Catholic Church's efforts with young adults by equipping ministry leaders for excellence in their work through pastoral formation, spiritual accompaniment, intergenerational and intercultural competency, and academic study.

**Iskali** – Iskali forms, empowers, and equips young Latinos to become transformative leaders. It seeks to empower young people to realize their full potential, and to invigorate the Catholic Church, infusing it with vitality and strength through their talent and gifts.

**Nuns and Nones** – Nuns & Nones is an intergenerational, spiritual community dedicated to care, contemplation, and courageous action in service of life and liberation.

**Ignatian Young Adult Ministries** – The Office of Ignatian Spirituality's Ignatian Young Adult Ministries initiative invites young adults to deepen their faith through the practice of Ignatian spirituality and to live as women and men for and with others.

**RENEW Theology on Tap** – RENEW Theology on Tap is an invitation for young adults to learn more about their faith and to share in the Catholic community, and it should serve as a springboard for other young adult initiatives.

## Online Community

**Grotto Network** – A faith-founded team of creators with a passion for storytelling and serving young adults that seeks to be a space where young adults can come as they are and find what they need. They are welcome to seek freely and wonder openly.

**The Catholic Young Adult Network** – Search engine by the Mary Foundation to find young adult groups near you.

**The Voices of Young People Podcast** – A podcast by Springtide Research Institute that listens directly to young people as they respond to the organization's research and share about the issues impacting their lives.