



Answers to Questions Asked by Delegates

With this document, we are providing answers to the questions asked at the delegate orientations. Please note, we did not respond to every individual question. Instead we group similar questions together into the set of questions you find below. Thank you.

1) With the shortage of priests, where are we with women priests and married priests?

While the Diocese of San José does not have a shortage of priests at this current time, we expect a significant number of priests to retire in the next ten years. The Universal Synod was tasked to respond to these types of doctrinal questions as part of the worldwide synod. These questions cannot be addressed at a local diocesan level. These questions/concerns have been sent to the Vatican through the Universal Synod Report.

2) Why do we put such high barriers to Hispanic vocations to the priesthood that the men go elsewhere or give up?

The seminarian admissions process is likely to be addressed under the proposal theme of "Cultivating Leaders."

3) Would religious communities will be able to help with the lack of priests, like Dominicans, Marists, Franciscans, etc?

We have a number of religious priests in our diocese, but religious communities are also struggling with low numbers for new vocations.

4) What is the role of the online survey, given that we have completed the parish sessions and already have 3000+ suggestions? Can you please address the relationship between the data being collected to the work we are doing?

The data collected from the consultation sessions and the general survey has been tagged by parish, theme, and topic. In the end, there were over 7,500 suggestions and comments. This data was closely reviewed by an 8-member proposal-writing group tasked to write the summary proposals in the most objective manner possible. To do this, they reviewed all recommendations, determined the recurring themes, tagged recommendations by sources, pillar, question, and theme, and sorted the recommendations by theme and topic. From there, they drafted proposals for the General Assembly. The Bishop and the Steering Committee will review the proposals. Next, these proposals, including theological reflections and supporting data, will be provided to the delegates in the final format before the January 27th General

Assembly for the delegates to review and discern. Finally, the delegates will collaborate to prioritize the proposals through consensus building at the assembly.

5) Regarding identifying major themes from the 3500 comments and suggestions made, would you include the # of times each recommendation was mentioned so we know how "popular" they are?

We will ask the delegates to consider these proposals, not based on the number of responses but on a broader understanding of the Diocese and additional information about the Diocese, other dioceses, and national trends.

6) Are any of the delegates under 18? How will youth be part of the process?

We did not include youth in our delegate group due to Safe Environment requirements that would be required for all 200 delegates; however, we are looking to create a Youth Advisory Committee that will be involved in the Pastoral Planning process. We have also intentionally included over a dozen Youth and YA leaders from our diocese as delegates. Finally, there is a proposal for the delegates to consider separate and additional youth-only and young adult-only consultation sessions to gather their critical perspectives.

7) Do you consider consolidating churches to save costs & solve the shortage of priests?

There were many ideas around consolidation options in the consultation and survey process. These ideas will be considered in the proposal process for delegates. Based on the prioritization by the delegates at the assembly, the pastoral planning team will develop a plan for how best to structure the Diocese with reasonable goals and objectives.

8) You mentioned two dioceses going through a similar process as this. Are there others? How far along are they in their process and implementation? Has the steering committee taken learnings from these?

Yes, the Bishop has spoken with the bishops of a few dioceses that have begun this process. One diocese started this process ten years ago, and another began it six months ago. The Steering Committee has been reviewing the process and materials from a handful of dioceses that have started such a process. We have included links to information from some of those dioceses in the Delegate's further reading webpage.

9) Requests for the plans on various topics – What are the plans to increase the usage of underutilized facilities? Is there any plan to resolve the shortage of priests in the future? What is the plan to better market / promote the good our Church is doing to offset all the negative press? What is the plan to implement programs to reach out to non-Catholics and invite them into our Church? What is the plan to address cultural differences? What is the plan for lay apostolic administrators leading parishes? What are the plans for youth engagement and youth faith formation? What plans do we have to support parents in forming their children? etc...

Many of the questions about plans, goals, and desired outcomes will be developed by the pastoral planning team based on the proposals the delegates prioritize and the Bishop ultimately approves.

10) How will the implementation team be put together? Doesn't really address the implementation team. Suggestion below

After the Synod Assembly, the work of the Pastoral Planning Commission begins. The Diocese of San José Pastoral Planning Commission members were nominated by the Synod Steering Committee and appointed by Bishop Oscar Cantú. The commission consists of approximately 26 people representing the diversity of the diocese (e.g., generational, language, ethnic and racial background, various ministries including formation, liturgy, youth, and young adult, as well as legal, finance, and corporate perspectives). There are 13 men and 13 women. Of those, there are 10 Caucasians, 10 Hispanics, and 6 Asians. 9 commission members are also General Assembly delegates, and 6 are clergy. The approved Pastoral Plan will dictate the nature, timing and extent of the required implementation and related resources. We expect the implementation to take five to ten years and require a significant investment of experienced resources.

11) Can delegates add new proposals/ideas to those gathered thus far? How/at what point will any new ideas be used? What if delegates have new or different approaches/suggestions, especially as to specific action items?

Delegates should have completed the survey and participated in a parish or school consultation session to have their personal feedback included in the proposal writing process. At the assembly, delegates are to prioritize the proposals that have surfaced through the 7,500 recommendations from the general survey and consultation sessions and the 2,000 universal synod comments.

12) Will we be able to vote/express approval/disapproval on action items?

Delegates will participate in a consensus-building voting process for all proposals.

13) Use of facilities is not synonymous with church building usage? What is being measured by the 20% statistic?

Our churches are currently filled to about 25% capacity on average on any given Sunday.

14) Where can we find information about the changing demographic of our diocese?

This information was included in the delegates further reading materials webpage at: <https://www.dsj.org/synod-delegates-reading-list/>

15) Does the Diocese provide financial assistance to struggling parishes and schools?

Yes. We have the annual appeal structured so that if a parish exceeds its goal, it keeps 100% of that excess to devote to projects at its location. In the past two years, \$3.1 million in 2021 and \$2.9 million were returned to parishes. Additionally, during the pandemic, an additional \$500K (roughly) was returned to parishes as designated by a committee of the Priest Council.

Our diocesan stewardship and development department works with parishes to improve their weekly offertory. In the past year, we worked with nine of our parishes to help them increase their yearly offertory by just over \$1.4 million, or almost a 33% increase.

Parishes and schools of the diocese received a total of \$872,000 in debt forgiveness from a Jubilee program organized by the San Jose Catholic Account for Parishes and Schools, more colloquially known as the Deposit and Loan corporation.

In addition, the Diocese has advanced funds interest-free for struggling schools over the last several years that at the end of fiscal year 2022 (net of repayments) amounted to \$2.3M. Parishes directly were occasionally advanced funds interest-free on a much smaller scale.

Every year, we receive a grant from the Catholic Foundation allocated to schools primarily to alleviate health and safety concerns. In the prior fiscal year, almost \$104,000 was given through this program.

16) You mentioned that Facilities are 30% of operating costs. What is the target?

Our Pastoral Planning process will address this question as they develop SMART goals and measurements.

17) How is the capital campaign from Bishop PJ doing? Does the principal remain untouched?

The Capital Campaign that Bishop PJ started five years ago was in the silent phase and did not actualize because the Bishop became ill. In addition, a new Bishop was appointed during this time. This campaign is no longer active. The funds collected were dispersed by the Catholic Foundation or kept in an endowment as requested by each donor. Endowments are kept for perpetuity, and only 3-5% of the interest can be used by the diocese each year.

18) What are the current demographics of students in our Catholic Schools?

As reported to National Catholic Education Association (NCEA):

Elementary schools:

Asian	27%
Black/African American	2%
Native Hawaiian/Pac. Islander	1%
White (including Hispanic)	52% incl. 31% Hispanic/Latino
Two or more races	11%
Unknown	6%

High schools:

Asian	33%
Black/African American	2%
Native Hawaiian/Pac. Islander	1%
White (including Hispanic)	46% incl. 22% Hispanic/Latino
Two or more races	9%
Unknown	8%

19) What are the long-term numbers for children enrolled in CCD? What is happening to Catholic School attendance?

The trend numbers for both are included in the proposal packet under the theme "Thriving Catholic Education in Parishes and Schools."

20) What is the coordination between Catholic Schools?

The Catholic elementary schools partner closely with the Department of Catholic Schools and one another. The elementary school principals collaborate weekly, and the teachers and staff across schools collaborate up to monthly. Cohesive supports and systems are developed in response to common needs that surface. The retention and recruitment managers also meet monthly to collaborate on best practices, share ideas, and troubleshoot issues to increase enrollment.

While most Catholic high schools have independent governance, their principals and other key stakeholders also connect at key points throughout the year.

21) Do we know the percentage of school students whose families actively participate in a Catholic parish?

Presently, there is no formal tracking of this information; but there is room for significant improvement as noted in the proposals under the theme “Thriving Catholic Education in our Parishes and Schools”.

22) Do we have statistics on how many Catholic youth drop out of the Church after attending Catholic K-8 or Catholic HS vs. public schools?

Not locally, but there are national statistics published by NCEA, which can be found on our delegates' further reading materials webpage at: <https://www.dsj.org/synod-delegates-reading-list/>.