



Memo

Date: December 4, 2017

To: Priests, Deacons, Parish Leaders and Campus Ministers

From: ‡ Wilton D. Gregory, *Archbishop of Atlanta*

Re: Young Adult Consultation Report & Recommendations

As a contribution to the preparations for the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, the Archdiocese of Atlanta collaborated with the McGrath Institute for Church Life to conduct a two-part, on-site consultation (March 30, 2017) focusing on parish ministry to young adults. The Consultation engaged representatives of pastoral leaders and young adults from the archdiocese.

Below is a summary of the consultation findings. From the surveys that pastoral leaders completed, the following results are the most common:

1. Pastoral leaders report that there are few to no existing programs or sustained efforts in their parishes specifically for the benefit of young adults.

- a. host semi-regular but informal gatherings for young adults that are more social in nature, possibly with a “spiritual touch”
- b. only real contact with young adults is relative to young parents whose children are in religious education programs
- c. express interest in trying to extend youth programming (ages 12-18) into the young adult realm

2. Pastoral leaders would like to be able to offer young adults:

- a. bible studies and/or faith sharing groups
- b. “field trips” (aka, pilgrimages) to Catholic places
- c. welcoming atmosphere

3. Pastoral leaders would like to see the archdiocese offer:

- a. training for ministering to young adults
- b. retreats (“Awakening,” our diocesan sponsored college student retreat was mentioned numerous times)
- c. pilgrimages

- d. educational opportunities, both for leaders and young adults (e.g. lectures, speakers, online resources, video resources, books)
- e. regular gatherings for those who minister to young adults

In response to the question about **what pastoral leaders think young adults need most**, there were three typical answers:

- a. Community: the belief is that young adults are looking for a place to belong, a place to get to know others and share their lives
- b. Sense of Purpose: the belief is that young adults are looking for how to live lives filled with meaning, where they believe in what they are doing and who they are becoming - looking for a “why” for “what” they do
- c. Mentoring: the belief is that young adults are looking for guidance from those who not only share valuable wisdom and faith with them, but also witness to what they profess in their own lives

From the **conversations and questionnaires gathered from young adults**, the following results were most common and noteworthy:

- a. Young adults agree that community is important and is something they want.
- b. Young adults desire mentoring.
- c. Young adults placed a distinctive and strong emphasis on the sacraments as important to their religious lives. They desire more access to the sacraments and to build their communities around the sacraments.
- d. Similarly, young adults pointed out the importance of devotions like Adoration, Stations of the Cross and the rosary for their religious lives. They want to increase their commitment to such devotions.
- e. Young adults placed a distinctive and strong emphasis on the desire to learn about the faith. They want to become knowledgeable about what the Church believes and be more informed and more articulate about their faith and the faith.
- f. Young adults placed a distinctive and strong emphasis on developing their lives of prayer. They want to become more consistent in prayer and learn how to “do it better.”
- g. Young adults placed a distinctive and strong emphasis on the need for accountability in their lives (as persons of faith) and developing strong habits (prayer, charity, liturgical participation, etc.).

The above conclusions from this consultation were created from at least four factors:

- a. Pastoral leaders representing parishes from throughout the archdiocese
- b. FOCUS groups of 100+ young adults from across the archdiocese
- c. Survey of the pastoral leaders who attended the consultation day
- d. Sociological research on the needs of and opportunities for young adults in the Church and data McGrath Institute collected from other Catholic community consultations (parish, campus, diocesan and national).

A complete copy of the Archdiocese of Atlanta's Catholic Young Adult Consultation Report and Recommendations conducted by the McGrath Institute for Church Life is available.

For more information or to receive a complete copy, please contact Amy Daniels, Director of the Office of Formation & Discipleship at adaniels@archatl.com.