Local Synod Consultation – Holy Disciples and Our Lady of Good Council Parish Summary Observations

What were common or important themes that emerged from the listening sessions?

Leadership

Women need to have a larger role in the Church and the hierarchy. Women priests and deacons should be permissible. The Church hierarchy should no longer exclude women's talents and voices.

Priests should have a choice to be married. This would help with the priest shortage.

We need more deacons to support our priest.

The Church hierarchy lacks trust. They need to take responsibility and establish more transparency in issues of governance, decision-making, and accountability for a variety of scandals such as sexual abuse. All levels of the Church hierarchy need to share and communicate consistent messaging on our faith with one voice.

The laity needs to be listened to have a greater role in Church hierarchy and structure. Feedback provided by the laity with responsiveness by the Church hierarchy is critical to maintain credibility with the faithful.

Welcoming Community

The Church is home. It is warm, friendly, and welcoming. Parishioners feel loved and respected. The community is particularly important for support and engagement.

The participants really like small groups based in faith and desire more. Activities that bring people together are especially important and they want more of them. It is important to have ongoing social opportunities for all ages.

We need to make sure we are being inviting and welcoming to the new parishioners. Reach out and offer gatherings that make them feel part of the Church. We also need to be reaching out to Catholics who no longer are practicing the faith.

Diversity Outreach

More engagement, inclusion, and outreach to marginalized (LGTBQ, poor, homeless, women, and different ethnic groups or people of color) is necessary to better understand their circumstances. Increase the social justice programs so we are reaching out to the disabled,

poor, homeless, elderly and mentally ill.

Youth and Young Adults

Youth retention is particularly important to the future of the Church. There is concern that we are not doing enough to relate to and connect with our youth and young adults at their level. There is concern that so many of our youth are leaving the Church after they graduate high school.

Education

Religious education for all age groups is extremely critical. We need relevant training to continue education past school age. Adults are lacking in depth knowledge of their faith.

Which particular stories or real-life experiences were shared related to the way our Church currently journeys together? (Give examples with identifying information, but without names – e.g., a young Hispanic woman shared a story of her faith in God increasing as a result of her First Communion or a middle-aged African American man saw his faith grow through participation in a faith-sharing group.)

Generational foundations at the Church makes us feel so blessed. It is a joy to watch the children grow.

It is fun to be with the whole family. Church is the only time we are all together since we are so busy.

I realized I needed to have structure and ability to help others after my wife died. Now I understand why God took her.

Feels good to get together and meet and share like-minded faith, especially the Lent and Advent small faith groups.

A parishioner who is not into "tattoos" was able to engage in a conversation with a heavily tattooed person with "Lady of Guadalupe" tats.

When you have a bad day, you still have something that is constant. I have this positive community to talk to and share with.

When I am around other believers, we have a basis to share our experiences with, we have something in common.

For its moral conscience, the Church must look at past injustices and find ways to acknowledge this to begin moving forward.

When applicable, the Hierarchy needs to stand up and apologize for what our faith has done to people and their families.

I do not know how people without a faith community handle life.

I need to be able to see myself in the Catholic Church and to be represented. As a Gay man I do not feel this.

Society has a different view of the world than Catholics. My faith and beliefs contradict what society wants to follow. I find that confusing.

Us! you should hear from us! (Jr High Student)

The bible influences our life and what we can and cannot do. I wish all of society could come together and unite in what we have in common.

The Church has in the past provided a community and at times can be a source to organize support for those of neglect and marginalization (building homes for people in underserved communities, food/clothing banks etc.

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When issues come up let us hear from the top on the Catholic view.

Use the information received from this Synod, including calling a Council in a few more years.

What dreams, desires, and aspirations for our Church were expressed by participants?

Maintain our strong sense of friendly community, shared faith experiences, community service, and joy of working together to serve.

That youth and young adults remain in the Church. Infuse the youth program by making investments for things such as pilgrimages, mission trips, education, conferences, etc. Look at

what other Churches/faiths do to retain youth. Provide youth a voice and offering youth Masses.

Increase the leadership role for women in the Church and its hierarchy.

The laity are listened to and allowed to participate in the governance of the Church, in equity with clerics and the hierarchy. There are better communications at all levels of the Church.

The Church grows in diversity, equity, and inclusion of its members, so all people feel welcomed.

Disenfranchised Catholics return to the Church. We want families and youth.

Greater outreach and desire to help in the communities that we are part of.

The Church hierarchy takes responsibility, establishes more transparency, and accountability in its governance. All levels of the Church hierarchy share and communicate a consistent message on our faith with one voice.

The Church has sufficient priests (men and women) to lead congregations without them feeling overwhelmed and stretched to their limits.

Encourage and expand the role of deacons for both men and women.

Offers diverse, relevant, and engaging religious educational opportunities for all ages.

Music at Mass offers more variety for worshipers.

Continue to expand small groups opportunities and offer a variety of social functions to bring people together.

The Church hierarchy and its priest use the input received from this Synod process and are responsive to the laity.

What challenges or opportunities do these reflections pose as we journey together?

The Church's patriarchal hierarchy will continue to be resistant to any changes proposed to traditional practices. However, the opportunity for greater laity involvement in governance and specifically inclusion of women could help with the issues of trust, credibility and transparency that are lacking with the hierarchy and clericalism.

The retention of youth and young adults will require greater efforts to build relationships, connection, understanding, transparency, and communication to make their faith relevant. The challenge of living in a secular society with different norms from Church teachings has never been more difficult. Youth are the future of our Church.

The Mass needs to be more engaging for the youth. A youth Mass would address this issue.

Music ministry is especially important. People want energizing and engaging music. They would like to see a highly active choir. Those who are in the choir love the experience.

The Church must look at past injustices and find ways to acknowledge them to begin moving forward. Taking responsibility, holding individuals accountable and making apologizes to those impacted is a good first step. This provides opportunities for healing and forgiveness.

Shortage of priests could be lessened if they could marry and if women could become priests. An effort to recruit deacons both men and women would also help in ministry and reduce the burden on priest.

The diversity of views on our faith by bishops and priest can make understanding our faith confusing. All levels of the Church hierarchy need to share and communicate with one voice a consistent message on our faith. Challenges to the Pope by various bishops only complicates the issue for the faithful.

The participants really like small groups based in faith and desire more. Activities that bring people together are especially important and they want more of them. It is important to have ongoing social opportunities for all ages. These desires and natural tendencies to interact socially and in small groups provide continued opportunities especially since Covid. Long-term relationships are formed and nurtured in our local faith community. We need to empower parishioners to take the lead on new initiatives and new groups.

Human nature and truly living the Gospel's message is a challenge for all of us. We need to find opportunities for more engagement, inclusion, and outreach to the marginalized (LGTBQ, poor, homeless, women, and different ethnic groups or people of color). Increasing social justice programs are necessary so we can reach out more to the disabled, poor, homeless, elderly and mentally ill.

What did participants share related to the question of "what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together"?

The participants are genuinely concerned about the youth and young adults and that we are not doing enough to engage, connect with, and understand them. We need to focus our efforts on

this group so that they do not leave the Church when they get older. We need more programs and activities for the youth. We need to make the Mass and the Church in general more relatable and applicable to their lives.

Women should have a larger role in the Church. Many felt that women should be allowed to be deacons and priests. The concern about gender inequality was prevalent in the responses.

Priests should be allowed to marry. We need more deacons.

Concerning the hierarchy of the Church (bishops, Pope) - they need to empower the lay community more. There is mistrust because of lack of transparency and mixed messages. Participants want them to speak with a clear and consistent voice and to take a definitive stand on issues. They want full disclosure on finances (at all levels) and the sexual abuse problem/scandal. Some participants felt that the Pope is too political and needs to focus on spiritual issues. Others supported Pope Francis. The sexual abuse scandal is not being managed well by the hierarchy.

The Church must look at past injustices, take responsibility, hold individuals accountable and make apologizes to those impacted to seek healing and forgiveness.

Man made rules in the Church were concerning. Many felt we need to stay closer to the biblical teachings and not impose or add man made rules to our teachings. For example, priests not being allowed to marry, and women not being allowed to become priests, or deacons.

We are lacking solid and continued education in the Church. Continue education beyond high school. We do not know our faith like we should. To address secular issues and to live a faith filled life, we need to impart education to our followers throughout their lives.

We must do more to welcome the LGTBQ community and help them feel part of the Church. Clearly portray a welcoming message.

We are all journeying together on the same road, equal to each other, supporting all in struggles along the way. We all need to recognize our human dignity.

The Synod process is the beginning of "letting the laity speak." We hope there will be an acknowledge and positive response from the Church's hierarchy.

We need to all live the Gospel message as challenging as it is and to seek unity.



Session _	Holy Disciples 3/14 at 6:30
6:00	Arrival and Check in
6:15	Facilitator Training - Geri Note Taker Training - Roger
6:30	Large group - Welcome Message from Father Matthew - Roger
6:35	Large Group - Opening Prayers and Overview Gospel - Sheri 1 minute Silence Words of Pope Francis - Roger 1 minute Silence Goals, Ground Rules, Small breakout set up - Geri
6:50	Small Group Breakouts Group facilitators take participants to assigned rooms/table if applicable Prayer – "We stand before You, Holy Spirit" handout for all to pray 2 minute silent reflection and listening for the Holy Spirit
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A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, 'journeys together.'

How is this 'journeying together happening today in your local church?'

What steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"?

8:00	Small Group Breakouts - Prepare info for the reporting back to large group. Identify spokesperson, may be notetaker. The spokesperson will simply report the contents of the session, this is not a time for more sharing.
8:05	Return to Large Group for Reflections Welcome group back to the Larger group – Geri
	Ask each table to report out a few comments - Geri

8:25 Large Group - Closing Prayer & Dismissal
Gospel - Geri
30 seconds Silence
Prayer and Response - Sheri
Group Prayer - Sheri

Sharing and Listening:

Thank group and remind to leave all notes, drop off demographic form and take home follow up questions. – Sheri

OPENING PRAYER

Leader welcomes and invites everyone to a moment of quiet reflection... Silence, 30 seconds

Reader 1 makes the sign of the cross, leads a short passage:

+In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

From the Gospel of Luke.

That very day, the first day of the week, two of the disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?"

Silence, 1 minute

Reader 2 reads passage from Pope Francis:

The words of Pope Francis:

As we initiate this process, we are called to become experts in the art of encounter... taking time to encounter the Lord and one another... devoting time to adoration, and to hearing what the Spirit wants to say to the Church. Time to look others in the eye and listen to what they have to say, to build rapport, to be sensitive to the questions of our sisters and brothers, to let ourselves be enriched by the variety of charisms, vocations and ministries. Every encounter – as we know – calls for openness, courage and a willingness to let ourselves be challenged by the presence and the stories of others.... the experience of encounter changes us; frequently it opens up new and unexpected possibilities.

Silence, 1 minute

Reader 3 leads the Adsumus prayer, invites all to join in:

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.

Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.

All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader invites all to a moment of quiet reflection. 30 seconds of silence.

Reader 1 reads:

From the Gospel of Luke.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"

30 seconds of silence.

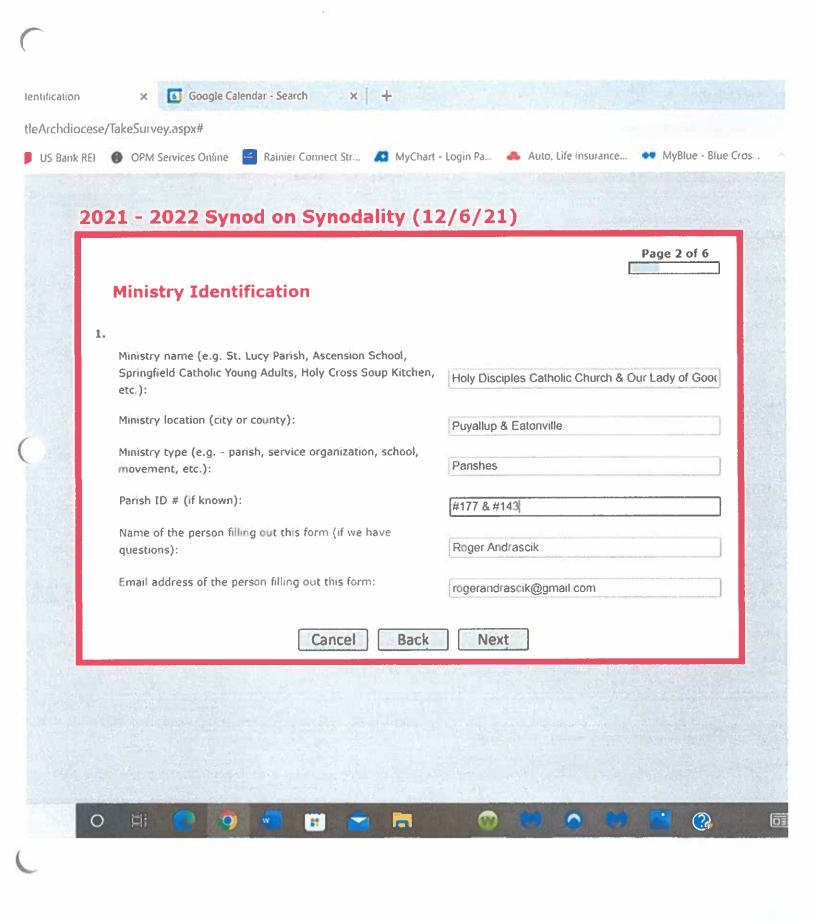
Reader 2 leads the following prayer:

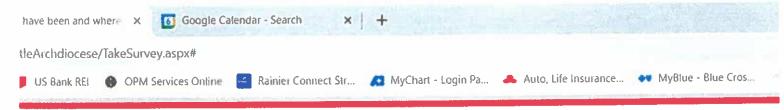
- V. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,
- R. And kindle in them the fire of your love.
- V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
- R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

+In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.





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Where we have been and where we are going, invited by the Holy Spirit.

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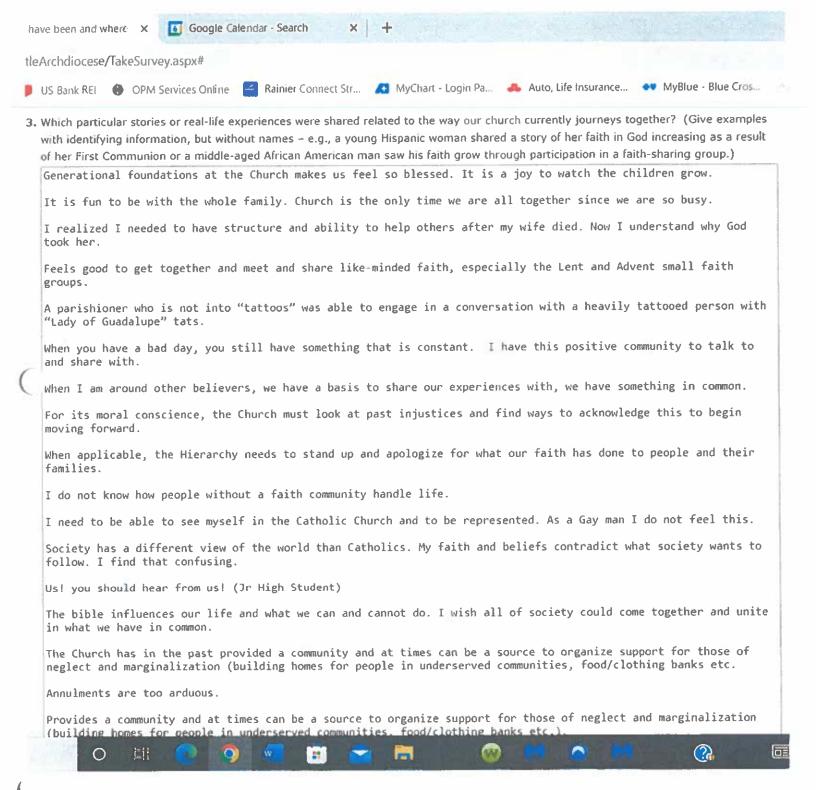
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4. What dreams, desires, and aspirations for our Church were expressed by participants?

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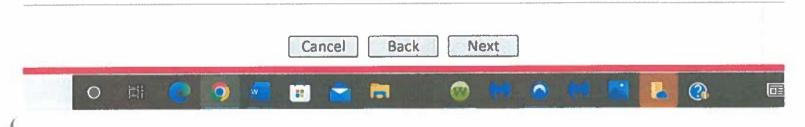
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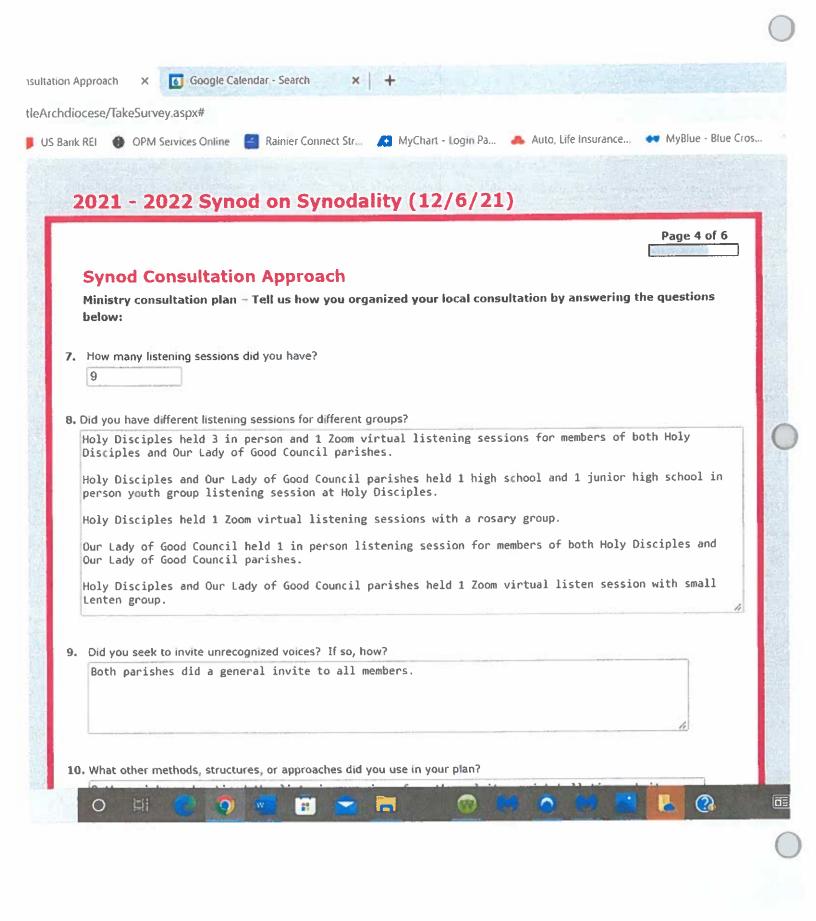
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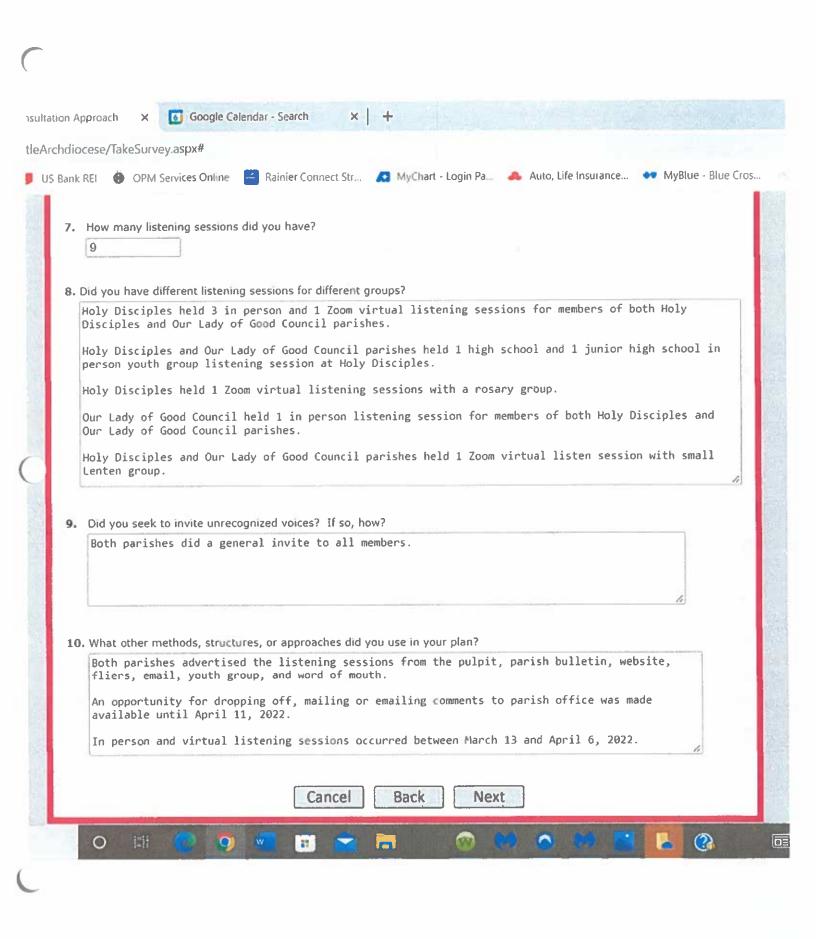
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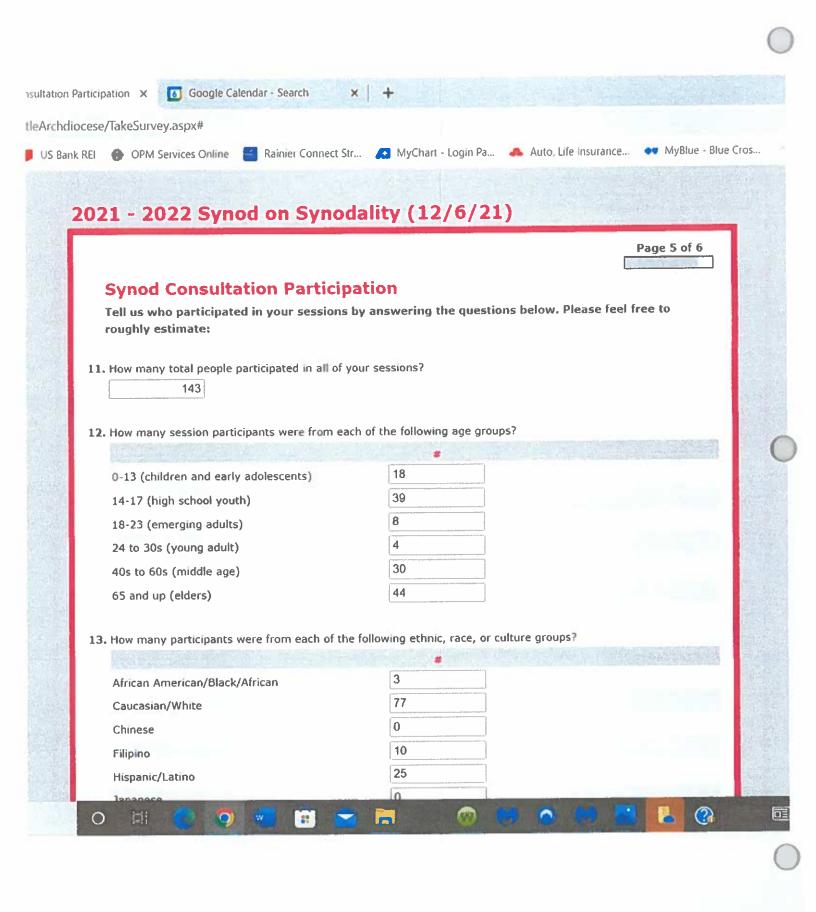
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13. How	many participants were from each of t	he following ethnic, race, or culture gro	oups?
Africa	an American/Black/African	3	
Cauc	asian/White	77	
Chine	ese	0	
Filipii	no	10	
Hispa	anic/Latino	25	
Japai	nese	0	
Korea	an	1	
	re American/American Indian/First ons/Alaskan Native	1	
Pacifi	ic Islander or Native Hawaiian	9	
Vietn	amese	1	
Multi	-Racial	6	
Othe	r/Unknown	10	
14. How	many participants were from each of	the following gender groups?	
Fema	ale	81	
Male		62	
4 F Wh-4	Alban annua una unique de notable	in their participation? (Describe and lis	t the number of participants)
		th groups met and are included i	
			- te
8			