



The Synodal Way and Dialogue

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Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

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.



Synod on Synodality

“Another enduring wound **widely reflected in synodal consultations** was the experience that the **Church is deeply divided**. Participants felt this division as a **profound sense of pain and anxiety**. ‘As one participant shared, **the divisive political ideologies** present in our society have **seeped into all aspects of our lives**.”

- National Synthesis of the People of God of the United States of America, quoting Region XVI synthesis



USA National Synthesis (cont.)

“People at both ends of the political spectrum have **set up camp opposing the ‘others,’** forgetting that they are one in the Body of Christ. **Partisan politics** is infiltrating **homilies and ministry**, and this trend has created **divisions and intimidation** among believers.”

- *National Synthesis of the People of God of the United States of America, quoting Region XII synthesis*





USA National Synthesis (cont.)

Closely related to the **wound of polarization** is the **wound of marginalization**. Not only do those who experience this wound suffer, but their marginalization has become a **source of scandal** for others, especially for some youth who perceive the Church as hypocritical and **failing to act consistently with justice toward these diverse communities**. Those who experience marginalization, and thus a lack of representation in the Church, fall into **two broad groups**. The first includes those marginalized who are made vulnerable by their lack of social and/ or economic power

- *National Synthesis of the People of God of the United States of America*



USA National Synthesis (cont.)

The second group includes those who are **marginalized because circumstances** in their own lives are experienced as **impediments to full participation** in the life of the Church. Among these are members of the **LGBTQ+ community**, persons who have been **divorced** or those who have **remarried** without a declaration of nullity “Throughout the synodal process, it was evident that most participants genuinely believe that **support for one another** is essential –laity and clergy; Churched and unchurched; and those in **need of healing.**”

- *National Synthesis of the People of God of the United States of America, quoting Region II synthesis*



USA National Synthesis (cont.)

Highlighting the **joys, hopes, and wounds** present in our Church, these consultations express a **deep desire for greater communion**. Several common themes emerged; while by no means a complete account of the varied topics and perspectives that arose in the listening process, they **express the fruit of listening, encounter, and dialogue** from communities diverse in culture, language, and social setting. This synthesis aims to provide the matter for **discernment as we continue this synodal journey**.

- *National Synthesis of the People of God of the United States of America*





In the Chat...

- Do you agree that polarization and division are a major challenge facing the Church and society?
- If so, why is it important that we address this?





A polarized Church. A divided nation. Pope Francis calls for “a better kind of politics.” How will you respond?

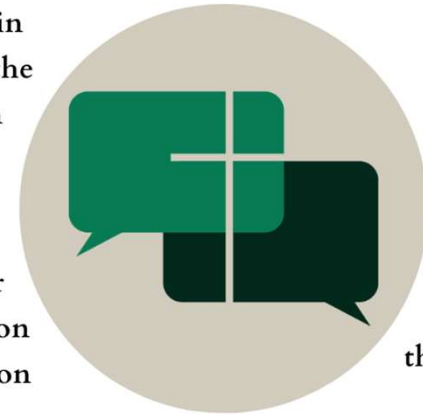
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Civilize It

Dialogue in
pursuit of the
common
good

Counter
polarization
and division



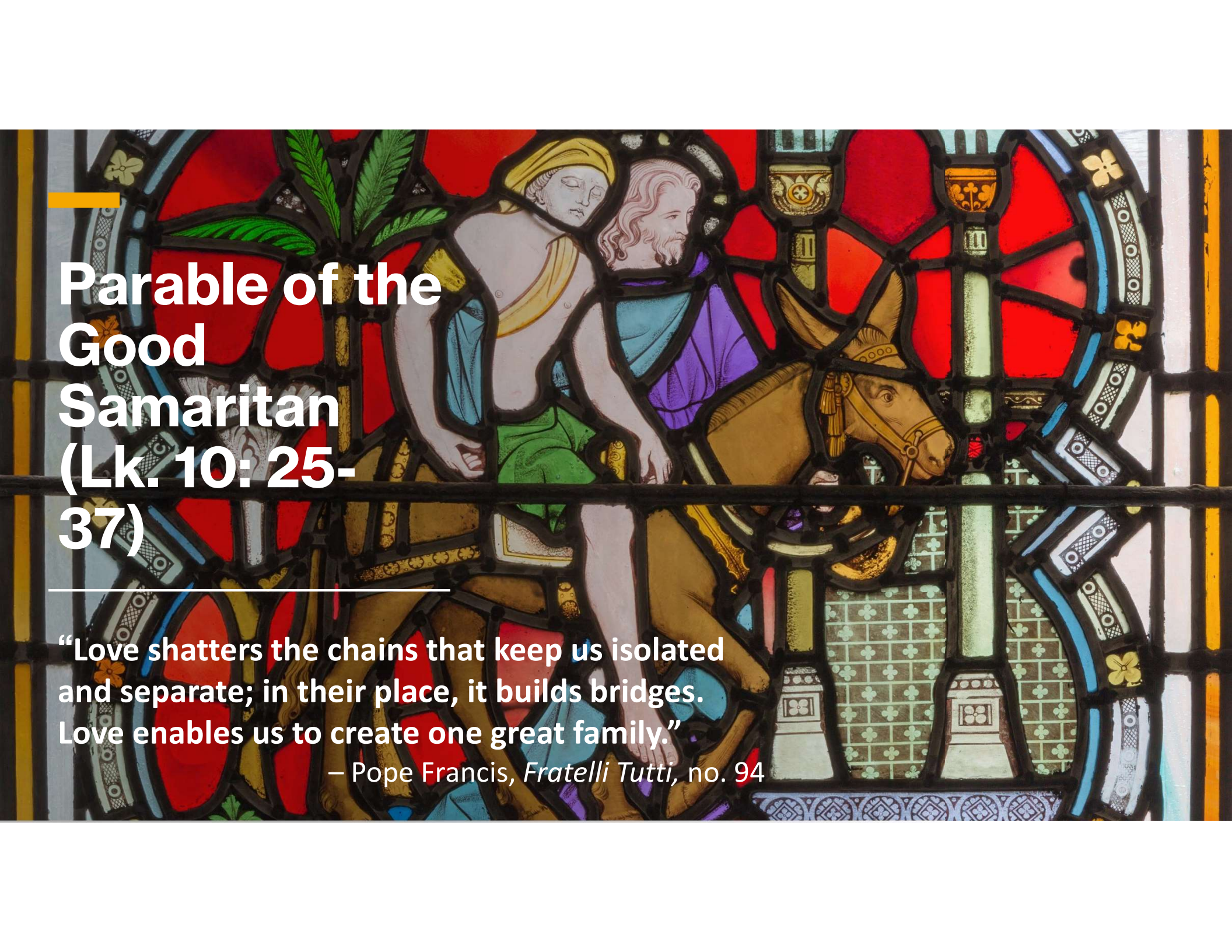
Cultivate
solidarity that
transcends
differences

Love your
neighbors
through dialogue

Build bridges
across perspectives



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A stained glass window depicting the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The scene shows a Samaritan on a brown donkey stopping to help an injured man lying on the ground. The Samaritan is wearing a yellow head covering and a blue tunic. The injured man is wearing a purple tunic and a blue sash. The background features a red sky, a green tree, and a patterned ground. The window is made of various colored glass panes held together by lead lines.

Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10: 25-37)

“Love shatters the chains that keep us isolated and separate; in their place, it builds bridges. Love enables us to create one great family.”


— Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 94

In the chat...

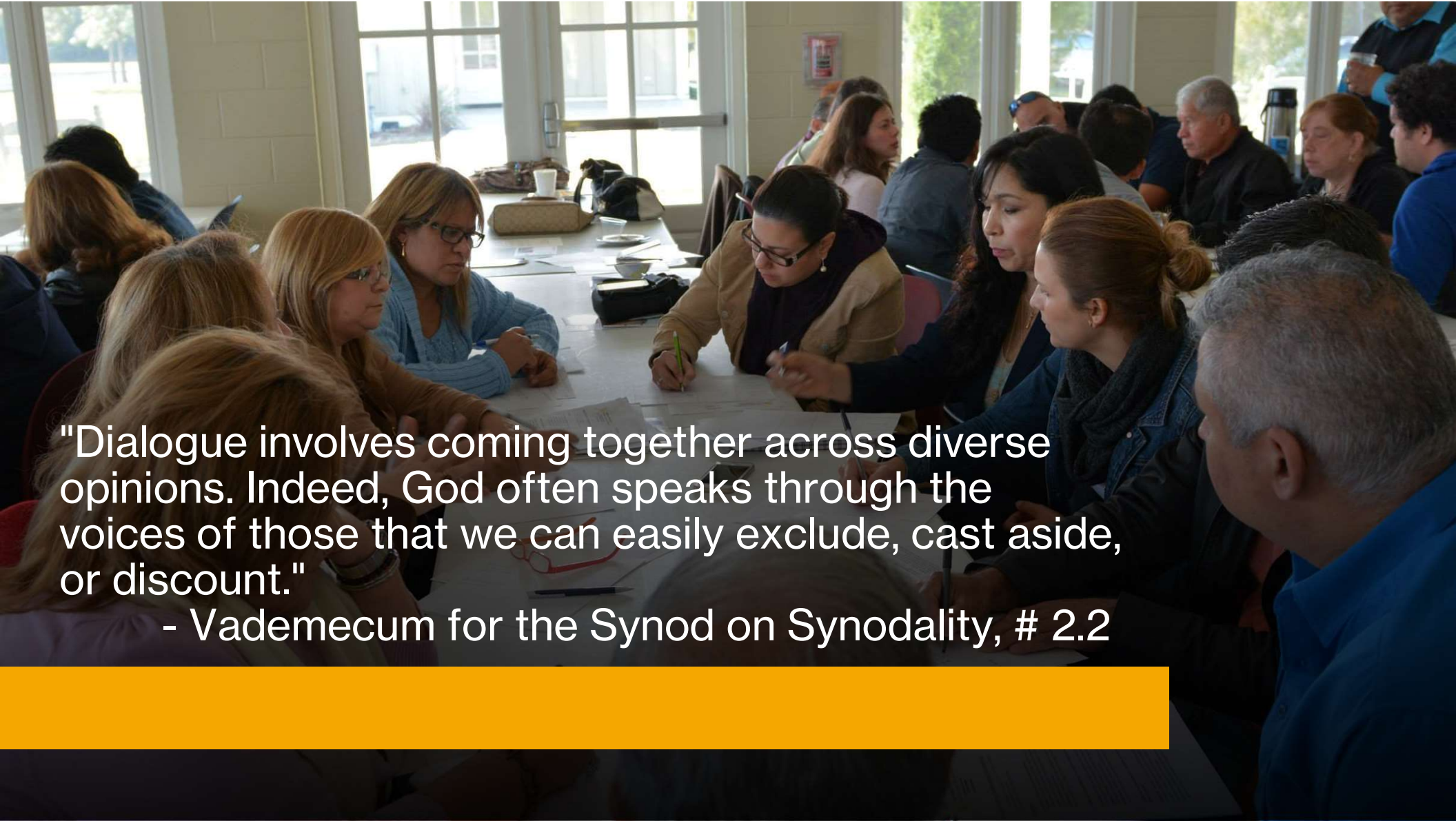
In a few words, share any graces you experienced during the prayer exercise on the Good Samaritan.

What spoke to you? What moved or challenged you? What did you think about in a new way?



A photograph of two women sitting outdoors, laughing together. The woman on the left is Black with her hair in braids, wearing a red sleeveless top and a necklace. The woman on the right is white with short grey hair, wearing a blue top. They are both smiling broadly. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a white fence. A small orange horizontal bar is in the top left corner.

**What is
dialogue?**



"Dialogue involves coming together across diverse opinions. Indeed, God often speaks through the voices of those that we can easily exclude, cast aside, or discount."

- Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality, # 2.2



Why Dialogue?



“It is not enough to have a synod;
you must be a synod.

The Church needs intense internal
sharing.”

- Pope Francis, *Address for the Audience with the Major Archbishop, the Metropolitans and the Permanent Synod of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church*, 5 July, 2019



We are a polyhedron.

“I have frequently called for the **growth of a culture of encounter capable of transcending** our differences and divisions. This means working to create **a many-faceted polyhedron** whose **different sides form a variegated unity**, in which ‘the whole is greater than the part.’

The image of **a polyhedron can represent** a society where differences coexist, **complementing, enriching and reciprocally illuminating** one another, even amid disagreements and reservations. Each of us can learn something from others.”

- Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 215



Artist: Meredith Garcia, 2019 CCHD Creating on the Margins contest

Seek to identify common values.

“Acknowledging the existence of certain **enduring values**, however demanding it may be to discern them, makes for a robust and solid social ethics. Once those fundamental values are **acknowledged and adopted** through **dialogue and consensus**, we realize that **they rise above consensus.**”

- *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 211

Learn (or re-learn) how to encounter.

“Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and to find common ground: all these things are summed up in the one word ‘dialogue.’ If we want to encounter and help one another, we have to dialogue.”

- *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 198





**Our pre-
conceived
notions vs.
reality**



More on encounter and dialogue

- Productive dialogue happens over time, not all at once.
- Start with easy points of connection.
- Practice good listening skills.
- Sharing is mutual.

A wooden podium with an open book and a microphone, with a blurred audience in the background. The text "Pause for Reflection" is overlaid in white on a yellow bar at the bottom.

Pause for Reflection



Now think about a time that you have engaged in a dialogue that was difficult.



Write 3-5 bullet points about your responses:

What happened?
What precipitated it?

If you were able to pause and practice good dialogue, be genuinely curious, or engage in some way, what helped you to do that?

If you did *not* engage in charitable dialogue, what could you do differently next time?



Be as specific as you can be.

Seek the truth.

“We must learn how to unmask the various ways that the truth is manipulated, distorted and concealed in public and private discourse” (no. 208), and to unmask media sources that are actually ‘powerful special interests that seek to tilt public opinion unfairly in their favor.’”

- Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 201

Photo credit: Philip Laubner/CRS. Used with permission.





**Additional
considerations**

Quiet Reflection

When have I NOT been willing to engage in dialogue when perhaps I should have?

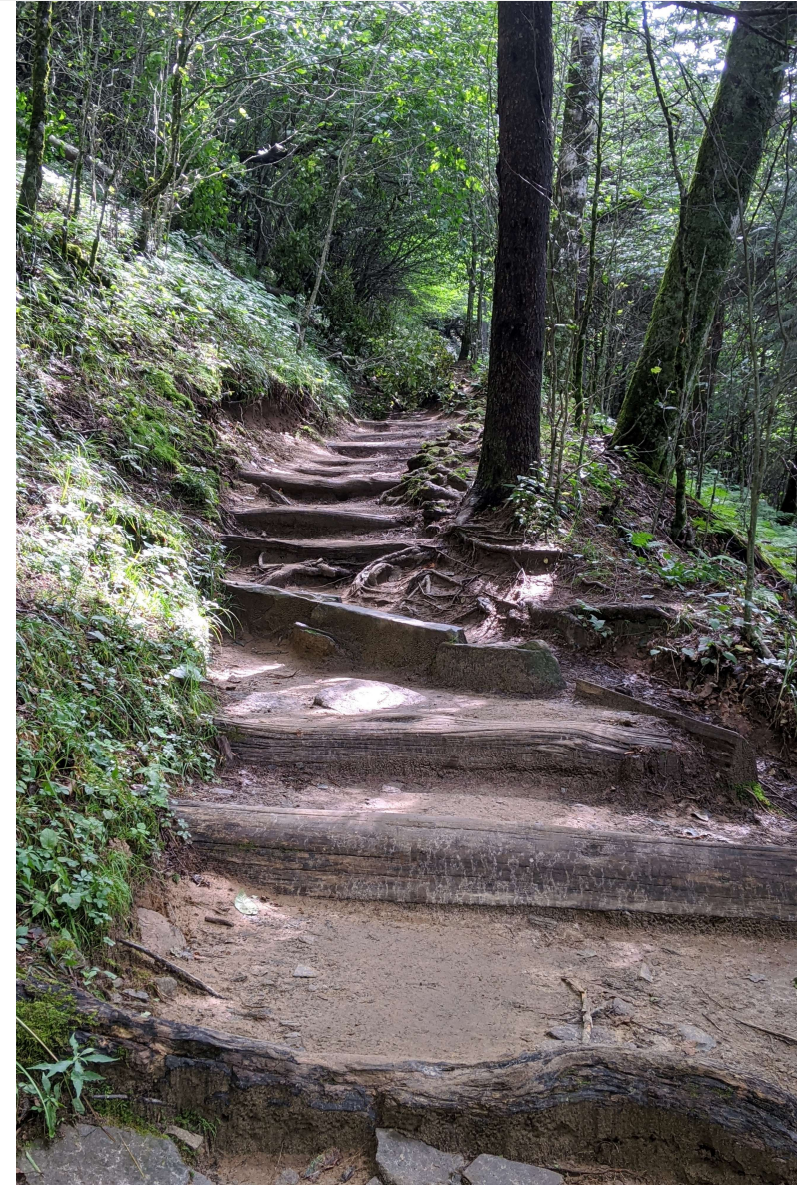
What did I or we as a Church lose by failing to be open to dialogue?

When have I made assumptions about or failed to give the benefit of the doubt to those with whom I disagree?

When have I presumed others' intentions or experiences before even hearing their stories or experiences?

In small groups

1. What did you hear today that was new, or that will help you approach dialogue differently?
2. Where or how do you plan to apply what you have learned?
3. Where are you feeling challenged, or what new questions have been raised for you?





Civilize It: A Better Kind of Politics - Pledge

Charity

To affirm through my words and actions the dignity of every person, each made in God's image. Even those with whom I disagree are made in his image.
To respectfully listen in order to understand experiences different from my own.

Clarity

To engage in critical examination to ensure that my perspectives are rooted in truth, that my sources of information are unbiased, and that I do not open myself to manipulation by partisan interests.
To be open to the process of dialogue that can require change of perspective—my own and others'—in service to the inviolable dignity of all and the common good.

Creativity

To be a bridgebuilder who participates in constructive dialogue based in shared values, a mutual exchange of gifts, and the humility to together seek the good.
To see differences in perspective as opportunities for creative tension which can yield solutions for the common good.



Practical Resources

- Prayer, Reflection, and Practical tools
- *Civilize It* Prayers
- Group or individual reflection guides
 - 5 Tips from Pope Francis
 - Loving our Neighbor through Dialogue
- Examination of Conscience
- All available bilingually and culturally adapted
- All at www.CivilizeIt.org
- Archdiocese of Washington - *Civil Dialogue Initiative*



A polarized Church. A divided nation. Pope Francis calls for "a better kind of politics." How will you respond?

As Catholics, we take to heart Jesus' invitation to follow the example of the Good Samaritan, who challenges us to "become neighbors to all" (no. 80). As a Church and a nation, we are polarized and divided. But as Pope Francis writes in *Fratelli Tutti*, we can seek "a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good" (no. 154). We can see ourselves as members of one family. We can seek to encounter and to grow. We can identify common values. We can listen to understand. We can seek the truth together. We can jointly come up with creative solutions to the problems that face our world.

[Read more >](#)

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Clarity

- To engage in critical examination to ensure that my perspectives are rooted in truth, that my sources of information are unbiased, and that I do not open myself to manipulation by divisive interests.

796 pledges of 5,000 goal


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“The union with Christ brought about by the Eucharist also brings a newness to our social relations”

A photograph of a church service featuring a diverse group of young people. In the foreground, a young man in a dark blue Nike jacket with a white 'V' logo and a young woman in a white sweatshirt with colorful lettering are looking forward with serious expressions. The background shows other congregants seated in pews, some with their hands raised. The church interior has dark wood paneling and white columns.

“The Eucharist is the sacrament of communion between brothers and sisters who allow themselves to be reconciled in Christ”



“...who made of Jews and pagans one people, tearing down the wall of hostility which divided them (cf. *Eph 2:14*).”

A photograph showing four people in a meeting. A man in a light blue shirt and tie is looking towards a woman in a blue plaid shirt who is speaking. A woman with long blonde hair is in the foreground on the left, and another woman with long dark hair is on the right. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“Only this constant impulse towards reconciliation enables us to partake worthily of the Body and Blood of Christ (cf. *Mt* 5:23-24).”

– Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 89

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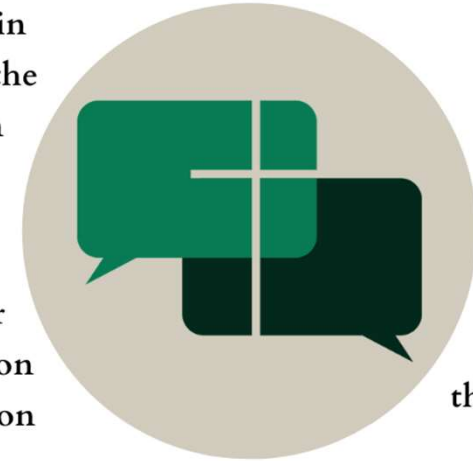
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