



Session 3: Participation

07/06/2025

Consolidated response from Listening & Discernment Session

The Catholic Youth Assembly hosted a listening and discernment session focused on exploring how a synodal approach—fostering prayerfulness, listening and discernment, and conversion of hearts and minds—could encourage greater participation in the life and mission of the Church amongst young people. Grounded in a reflection on Acts 2:1–4, 12–18, participants were invited to consider how the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost could speak into the present-day context of youth involvement in the Church.

Throughout the session, a deep desire emerged for authenticity, spiritual depth, and real listening. Young people expressed concern over the erosion of self-worth that many of their peers face in today's secular and digitally saturated culture. They identified a loss of identity and human dignity as one of the key barriers to faith engagement, noting that the Church has a crucial role in helping youth rediscover their value and purpose through the lens of faith. The presence and support of the Church in the lives of young people were seen as essential—not only for spiritual formation but also for restoring a sense of human dignity.

Participants reflected on the challenges that come from widespread misconceptions about the Church. They acknowledged that many young people are hesitant to engage with the Church due to negative portrayals or misunderstanding of its teachings and mission. However, this concern was met with a hopeful response: the Church possesses a rich heritage—rooted in catechesis, tradition, art, architecture, music, and culture—that can be drawn upon to reintroduce people to the beauty and relevance of the faith. They saw value in re-presenting this richness in a way that is accessible and meaningful in contemporary culture.

There was a shared emphasis on creating spaces that are low-barrier and welcoming to those who may be unsure or distant from Church life. Participants called for the use of

existing Catholic practices—such as pilgrimages and processions—that, when revitalised and approached creatively, could become powerful avenues of outreach and invitation. The need for community was strong, but it was paired with the need for personal formation. Youth emphasised the importance of nurturing their own relationship with God and being grounded in prayer in order to discern how the Holy Spirit is working in their lives.

One of the most compelling themes to emerge was the role of the Holy Spirit. Participants described the Spirit as a flame—alive and transformative—and themselves as candles that must first be lit in order to light others. This image captured the relational and contagious nature of faith. It also pointed to the belief that no special qualification is required to be part of the mission; what is required is openness, passion, and genuine love. They drew upon the story of the Good Samaritan to affirm that God does not wait for perfect people—He empowers the willing.

The youth and young adults also expressed the need for a Church that listens. They were clear in stating that if the Church is to serve young people well, it must first hear from them directly—not assume their needs, but enter into dialogue. The belief that “the youth are the reason we are doing what we are doing” was repeated in both words and tone, indicating a desire not simply for programs or initiatives, but for authentic accompaniment and attention.

Finally, participants acknowledged that not everyone will respond to the invitation of the Spirit—some may reject it or turn away—but that should not deter the mission. If even a portion of youth are transformed, that transformation can spread. They were hopeful and confident that the Holy Spirit is active and present, and that through openness, community, and prayer, a “New Pentecost” is possible—one in which young people are not only participating in the Church, but are setting it alight with new energy, love, and witness.