



# ARCHDIOCESE OF PALO

Palo, Leyte



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

## SYNTHESIS REPORT PART 2





## REPORT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PALO



### INTRODUCTION

The Synodal Team of the Archdiocese of Palo has introduced the SALOK Lenten Activity. It has been adapted in the archdiocese of Palo and the format has been translated into the local languages, hence SAROK (Binisaya/Waray) and KABO (Cebuano). This was a great opportunity for the participants not just to avail of an unusual method of Lenten recollection but also to deepen the synodal experience of discernment. It has been recommended in the parishes - among the parish councils and ministries and even among vicariate leaders. Among the parish leaders, those who participated included chapel officers, BEC leaders, members of the different Lay Organizations, Movements and Associations (LOMAs) and church ministers (liturgical, catechetical and social), young people and even ordinary parishioners. Many of them have undergone the first part of the synodal process.

Most of those who have undergone it were excited in having been tapped to take part, even grateful for having their voices and sentiments heard. In fact for some, it was like a conversion process towards a deeper understanding and realization of what the Church is all about. And they truly understood what it means to be a Church. From the output of the group sharing, one can glean their desire to make the church more relevant especially in the life of everybody, most especially the young and the unchurched. The concerns ranged from their personal involvement and experiences in the parishes to their vision or goal to make every baptized get involved in parish life and activity. Through the process of prayer, spiritual conversation and openness to the Spirit, the participants have been all optimistic for a better future of the Church in their archdiocese and in the world.

The following contains the diocesan synthesis of the sharing of the various groups on number 18 of the Synodal Report “Weaving Bonds, Building Communities.”

### MATTERS OF CONVERGENCE

1. There is a stronger awareness among the participants of their being a Church. As baptized they have a sense of duty to participate in Church activities and her mission to evangelize.

2. The usual participation of the laity in the Church's life is through their involvement in church ministries, membership in church organizations and devotional groups or ecclesial movements and their regular participation in church liturgies, especially attendance in Sunday masses. Generally, active and regular participation in these activities have helped the lay in their faith life.

3. Everybody is in agreement that many or the vast majority of the lay people, even those supposedly active in parishes, still lack the commitment to live out fully their being a Church. The challenge remains in the parish, diocesan and universal level on how to make the vast majority get involved and to reach out to the unchurched. A pastoral plan for all is in order.

4. The role of church leaders – clerics and lay – is crucial in making the Church truly synodal. Everybody should have a uniform mind and vision as to what the church should become. The synodal way of listening, reaching out and welcoming others should characterize the life of church leaders – clerics and lay – who are expected to lead by example; and like the Good Shepherd, they should be accountable for those whom God has entrusted to them.

## B. MATTERS OF CONSIDERATION

1. People in irregular relationship (previously married, same sex relationships) may be given a regular status in church organizations, even in pastoral councils, provided they exhibit zeal and commitment in the specific task entrusted to them; otherwise, many of them shy away from the Church, instead of being helped by the Church in the process.

2. In order to demand responsibility and exact accountability among all church members (clergy and laity) there should be a clear structure which should legislate the functions and duties of each one in relation to the group (or parish) or even the entire church, especially those in positions of authority.

3. Despite the hierarchical nature of the church, all decision-making which affects the lives of many should be participative. This goes true not just among the clerics but even more importantly among lay church organizations and ministries.

## C. PROPOSALS

1. Integral Christian formation is imperative for all. This includes a deepening of the understanding of the proper role of each baptized in relation to the Christian

community; thus Christian life becomes more Christ-centered not priest-centered or lay leader-centered. Formation programs should not just remain as classroom-type or lecture-type instruction but should acknowledge the diversity of peoples and their dispositions; thus these programs should be more creative in order to delve deeper into the experiences of each one vis-à-vis the gospel message.

2. Christian formation should be grounded on Scriptures and on the Tradition of the Church. It should also include information on various programs and ministries available and even create other relevant programs for all walks of life and concerns - age level, social and financial status, sexual orientation, including areas affecting the total well-being or health of the individual.

3. There is a need to strengthen the Christian family; so that families will be involved in church life and activities.

4. House visitations should be of primary importance; in fact, all ministries and church groups should embark on this activity in order to make others, especially the unchurched and marginalized (poor, deprived, oppressed and exploited) become aware of their being a Church and feel part of the parish or Christian community.

5. Competition among church leaders, clerics among clerics, lay among the lay and even between clerics and the lay, should as much as possible be checked and avoided, even reprimanded. Dialogue and interdependence should be the norm. There should be no room for rash judgments and outright condemnations.

6. There is a need to overhaul the composition of parish governing bodies, such as pastoral councils. Parish Pastoral Councils should be truly representative of the parish. Members need to be properly formed and trained.

7. Everybody, especially those in leadership positions should be trained in discernment. In fact, each leader should be able to know which role fits him or her better (and not necessarily be a concurrent leader or officer in several parish organizations). Leadership in the Church is God-given, not self-sought.

8. The Church should as much as possible serve the needs of all, even physical, emotional and psychological and even financial and material. The lay should never be left with the feeling that they are considered active church members when they can still contribute physically or financially to church activities.

9. Each and every baptized should cultivate a pastoral mind. One is a Christian not just for one's salvation but should also reach out to others and journey with them. Hence, clerical groups and lay organizations, movements and associations

should not be obsessed with their particular charism or apostolate but should complement one another by never losing sight of the larger pastoral vision of the parish, diocese and of the universal church.

10. Christian groups and ministries should as much as possible coordinate and be in harmony with local government authorities but without giving up their prophetic role in announcing the Gospel Message and denouncing whatever is contrary to the Gospel in the larger society.