

## Five Lessons From Restorative Justice for the Synod on Synodality: *Webinar Transcript*

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

My name is Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, and I serve as the Executive Director of Catholic Mobilizing Network. Thank you for joining us for Five Lessons from Restorative Practices for the Synod on Synodality. Over a thousand people have registered for this webinar today indicating the overwhelming interest and enthusiasm for this topic. Glancing at the registration list, we have quite a bit of representation from the depth and breadth of the US Catholic community from diocesan leaders to a wide variety of congregation of sisters, deacons, pastors, and parishioners to Catholic School Faculty and Catholic Ministry Leaders.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

We are grateful that you all have joined in to take a deeper look at this intersection between the global Synod on Synodality and its resonance with the elements of restorative practice. For more than a decade, let me get my note here. For more than a decade, CMN has worked to end the death penalty and promote restorative justice. Since its inception, CMN has amplified restorative approaches that emphasize inclusion, equity and healing of people instead of the punitive dehumanizing and often racially by a system of punishment that pervades our criminal legal system.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Similarly, the Synod on Synodality that Pope Francis launched in October of 2021 also centers on people and relationships. The holy father has invited the global church to enter into a process of deep listening about how we are journeying together and on this path seek to rebuild trust, repair, and restore the church through transformative encounters that model Jesus's reconciling way. In essence with the Synod, the entire church has been called to discern how the holy spirit is moving through and with the body of Christ.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

The Synod's purpose has been described as aiming to inspire people to dream about the church we are called to be. To stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships. This is an inspiring goal. And at the same time, a tall order, it's fair to acknowledge at the outset that this historic Synod is taking place during a notably challenging time in the history of our church and world.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

This process arrives at a time when our church continues to recover from the broken trust of sex abuse scandals. As we grapple with isolation and loss and distancing caused by the global pandemic and



during a period of enormous polarization in this country, especially in the areas of racial reckoning and political divisions. These are also very real wounds and difficult realities to face.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

With the Synod listening sessions and parishes and diocese across the country, Pope Francis has invited the church into what is fundamentally a process of healing, both from wounds suffered inside the church and those experienced in areas of our lives and relationships other than the church. The Synod's emphasis on sharing from our lived experiences, uplifting the voices of those often excluded, emphasizing the need for deep listening and holding space for wounds as well as joys resonate with restorative practices and the transformation approaches that are allowed.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

I believe Pope Francis's call for the Synod relies on the holy spirit that has taken root in each of us, giving us a unique purpose and enabling each of us to partake in God's reconciling work in the world. It's our hope that today's panel empowers us to do our part in the Synod. Could it be that incorporating restorative approaches where we can in this Synod process can create a profound open-heartedness that welcomes the movement of the holy spirit especially in the areas that carry pain and woundedness?

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Our incredible presenters today will illuminate how approaching the Synod from a restorative approach can allow space for the transformative work of the holy spirit to fill spaces fraught with confusion and uncertainty in order to create something unifying and new. May it be so. I'd like to welcome Sandra Coles-Bell, the Executive Director of the National Black Catholic Sisters Conference who will open us in prayer today with we stand before you holy spirit which is the prayer historically used at councils and Synod and other church gatherings for hundreds of years. Sandra.


Sandra Coles-Bell:

Thank you Krisanne. In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy spirit, amen. 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.

Sandra Coles-Bell:

Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor impartiality influence our actions. Let us find in you our unity so that we made 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. In the name of the father, and of the son and of the holy spirit.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:



Thank you Sandra. Our first presenter is Father David McCallum. Father David, you have been a friend since we first back in theology school a couple decades ago. You are a Jesuit priest serving as the founding Executive Director of the Program for Discerning Leadership, a special project of the International Association of Jesuit Universities and the General Curia of the Society of Jesus which provides leadership formation for senior Vatican officials and major superiors of religious orders.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

And you are also a consultant to the secretariat of the Synod of bishops and a member of its methodology commission focusing on the Synod. Father David, can you describe this prophetic moment in the church? What is possible in this historic Synod and what fruits do you think it might bear Father David?

Fr. David McCallum:

Thanks Krisanne. Great to be with you. Great to be with this larger community that you've convened. It's a very inspiring moment, isn't it? To see this upwelling of interest and a sense of possibility at Pope Francis's call to this Synodal journey. Krisanne in so many ways shared many of the factors that we experienced today as the context, and I don't know how many of you have been either burdened or blessed by Jesuit education, but you know Jesuit's like to start with context to kind of put things in a frame because frames help us to organize and to focus ourselves.

Fr. David McCallum:

And this particular moment we're living in needs a frame because it's confusing. It's tumultuous, it's filled with the distress and pain that so many people experience because of social injustices and then exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. Pope Francis has actually made this comment that these times we're living in, they're not just an epic of change, that we're actually experiencing a change of epoch.

Fr. David McCallum:

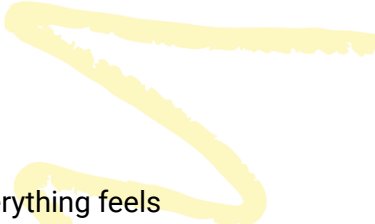
And what do we mean by that? What do we mean by this sense that we're actually you going through a historical moment of deeper transformation societally, globally. As many of you are familiar with the ways in which Western civilization has been understood, it's passed through so many very distinct eras, the classical age, the middle ages, the Renaissance, the modern period.

Fr. David McCallum:

What's happening beneath our own feet right now is the emerging wave of a new period, and we don't quite know what it looks like yet, but we know what it feels like as the solid ground of the past is slipping away from us. Institutions we used to find reliable and predictable are no longer so. There's a sense of volatility that change happens so suddenly and in such a disruptive way that we don't know how to predict the future.



Fr. David McCallum:



There's a sense of uncertainty, there's a sense that everything is connected, and so everything feels overwhelming and complex, and we're not sure what sense to make of it all in terms of discerning a path forward. In fact, as Krisanne pointed out, we're living through a time where these conditions are creating a sense of panic and anxiety and for many people, that fear is leading to people retracting themselves, hunkering down, protecting what they have and really isolating.

Fr. David McCallum:

And in that polarized environment we're experiencing, it's very difficult to even talk about the common good, but Pope Francis at this particular juncture of time when things are so confusing and so fast-changing has discerned that this is also the moment to dig deep into our tradition as Catholics, and to summon up from that tradition, the resources of our Catholic social teaching.

Fr. David McCallum:

To draw forth a sense of energy and purpose from the values that bring us back to a sense of the dignity of one another. And as Krisanne was saying, to the repair and the healing of social relations. In so many ways, this time we're living through has brought to light even more powerfully the ways in which power is abused and the way that authority is often misused, and that this is a time of awakening.

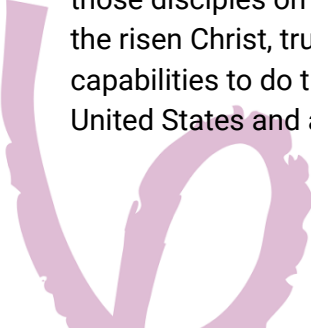
Fr. David McCallum:

This is a time of coming to consciousness about the ways in which the effects of this abuse of power need and call for a deep systemic change. So as Pope Francis has called the church into Synodality, he's also calling the church to conversion about its own ways of using and abusing power. Pope Francis is calling us to look very carefully at the margins and the ways in which those margins haven't just happened, that people pushed to the peripheries are now the focus of our intention is church in a very distinct and new way.

Fr. David McCallum:

And at the heart of it, Pope Francis is calling us to something very simple, but not easy. To rediscover the fundamental dignity that each of us have. To in a sense, reweave the social fabric of our society at this moment when especially in this United States, our individualism has been taken to such an extreme and our desire for Liberty without responsibility for our brothers and sisters has left us lacking a sense of belonging and a sense of community.

Fr. David McCallum:



Pope Francis's call to Synodality is a call to heal all of that and to walk together on this journey. A lot like those disciples on the way to amaze, not just together on the road sharing our stories, but walking with the risen Christ, trusting that the Christ walking with us will lift our hearts and our imaginations and our capabilities to do this healing work, to do this deeper repair and transformation of our society, both in the United States and around the world.



Fr. David McCallum:

And we do this as a church, not only for ourselves, but for the world. So a few thoughts from 30,000 feet about the connections between Synodality and this deep and very important work of restorative justice that you all are undertaking. I know that my friend and colleague Sister Nathalie will further unpack the Synodal call of the church in these times, but I hope that you and all of us are more in touch with the sense of possibility that comes with this change of epics.

Fr. David McCallum:

The possibility for something better and for something that we are co-creating. not simply passively slipping into. That we're co-creating as protagonists, the future that we desire for ourselves, and for one another. Thank you very much.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Thank you so much David. Very inspiring. Thank you. Just thank you so much. Sister Nathalie, I am honored to welcome you to be with us today. You are a French religious sister with the Congregation of Xavières or the Xavier Sisters. You were recently appointed by Pope this as the undersecretary of the general secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, a role that is essential to the preparation of the global Synod on Synodality.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

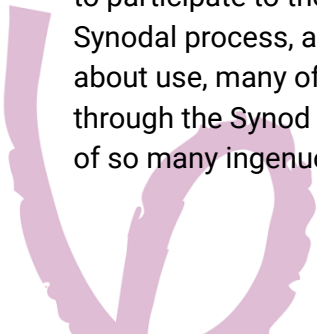
You were the first woman to hold this position and therefore will also be the first woman who will vote at the Synod of Bishops, so congratulations. Sister Nathalie, can you tell us about the key themes on the Synod and this invitation from the holy father and share a bit about the concept of Synodality that why we are called into this process? Welcome Sister Nathalie.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

Okay, thank you so much Krisanne, and all the team of Catholic Mobilization Network, I'm very grateful for this event and to have this chance to reconnect with so many people from United States as I arrived here in Rome after more than one year in Boston and also Chicago, so greetings from Rome. And as you can see on this logo that try to express what is synodality and what is the Synod about.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

It's about walking together, churning together led by the holy spirit, and you can see that at the front, you have the smallest and you have all kind of people. And from my experience as I was very gifted or lucky to participate to the Synod on news, and then to the Synod on the Amazon, I can really testimony that a Synodal process, and those form of Synods have been sound bites for victims because when you talk about use, many of them are victims of so many difficulties, and that's the first voices we have heard through the Synod on news and through the Synod on the Amazon, we have already listened to the cries of so many ingenuous people living difficult situation.



Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

So my experience and what I have seen is that Synodal process is a process to listen to the victims, the poor, the smartest at the center, listen to them and to walk together in a past of eating and reconciliation. So there are a lot of resonance with restorative justice, and we can go on the next slide please.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

To understand that synodality, with Pope Francis in this step of the reception of Vatican II means not only the synod for bishops or something to sometimes as an event, but it's for all the church all of the time. And we understand synodality as a process, and it's very important. It's not just an event, it's a process. Next slide please.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

Mainly focus as we have already said on it's a process of listening, of reciprocal listening to truly listen to the holy spirit. And what's former Synod produced as outputs? You can see on the next slide please is truly that today we understand that synodality is a way of being the church today according to the way of God in the dynamic of discerning and listening together to the voice of the holy spirit.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

That means Synodality is the way to be faithful to what is the church from the beginning, but in this changing world, in this changing of epoch Father David took us about. So we can say it's a way to be, and to leave the church, the vocation of the church in this context of today you have talked about. So next slide, please? Synodality expresses the nature of the church, its form, its style, its mission.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

It's a constitutive dimension of the church. It's really to live, to understand the church and to participate as a protagonist in the church, we are all together the church. Not only the religious, not only the category of people, but it's about being an inclusive church, a relational church. Next slide please.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

To rediscovering the primacy of the ecclesial we. Sometime I say to put it in a nutshell, synodality is passing from the eye, the earth because as a church as. We are first part of the community, and so synodality is a process to foster, to awaken, to strengthen this ecclesial we, this communal dimension of life and not only for the church, but for the society. It's about building a we together in our common home.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

So we can continue next slide please to understand that the synodal vision is ready to highlight first the baptism call of all of us that's baptized, and it's about understanding and looking at the church who the

lenses of ecclesiology of the people of God as we have seen in this logo. So now, we are going to more precisely into how to be part of the Synod.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

Next slide please, because as the preparatory document that is a roadmap for the Synod and I already encourage you to read the preparatory document for the sin if you haven't read it yet. And also the handbook to discover how to put into practice the synodal process. All the church of God is converting synod, and that the after so many years? And some theologian said it's the most important event now after Vatican.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

So next slide please. The aim of the Synod, participate to the Synod is ready together to relearn synodality that was the [inaudible 00:22:07], but we are cool to reread our practice of how already we journey together and how we can journey together better, what steps the holy spirit is trying to call us. So it's truly a passive change, a passive conversion to become more and more this church called by God to be a Synodal church.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

Next slide please is the key words, and that the aim of the Synod is to foster communion, to call for the participation of all within the church, and not only to be better church at intra for better internal organization, it's always for the mission to serve the society, to serve this world. So we will skip the next slide and go to the one after just to give you a very short look at the objectives of the Synod and to highlight that everyone, especially those who are for various reasons find themselves on the marching are called to be part of the Synod and it's a way to recognize the variety of gifts and charisms that the early spirit is giving into our church.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

So also, the gift and the charism you bring to this network. And next slide please. It's truly about ... Next slide please. There's a main question we are asked to look at together is this fundamental question for the consultation. So for all our listening sessions, how this journeying together is happening today in our church, and what step does the spirit invite us to take in order to go in our journey together?

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

So that's the main question. It's very simple. And then on the next slide, you will see that there are 10 teams, 10 topics that we can explore as 10 lenses. We can say to look at what is synodality in practice in the different dimension of the church. So you can share one, two, three or all the teams, and I now already contribute with this invitation to ready foster a wide participation into the process.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:



Next slide please. So that you are all promoter of the synodality because it's truly a call for a pass of communion, participation mission that is pass of reconciliation and a pass of unity. We are called to build day after day as a Christian. Thank you for listening to that.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Thank you Sister Nathalie. I can see why Pope Francis tapped your vision and leadership and wisdom, and we're so glad he has. Next, I'm pleased to introduce a dynamic duo of restorative practices and wisdom specifically from the Catholic community, Joe Cotton. Joe is the Director of Pastoral Care and Outreach for the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

He oversees the archdiocese and criminal justice ministry which provides chaplaincy programs to jails and prisons. And you're also a professional ecclesia lay minister Joe for over 20 years in parish youth ministry, social work, international missionary and juvenile detention chaplaincy. So welcome Joe. And then Caitlin Morneau is the Director of CMN's Restorative Justice.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

She is responsible for program development that increases awareness of restorative justice engagement in Catholic contexts. And Caitlin led the creation of paths of renewed encounter. CMN's new restorative justice engagement guide for Catholic communities. So Joe and Caitlin, between you two, you have at least two decades of experience using restorative justice approaches and practices with Catholic communities and ministries. What lessons and learnings from restorative practices might be beneficial for facilitators and participants of the Synod? Welcome to you both.

Caitlin Morneau:

Wonderful. Thank you so much Krisanne. It's such a joy to be part of this conversation and thank you Father David and Sister Nathalie for helping us get attuned to this momentous process and how its aims align with core aims of restorative justice broadly. So first, we wanted to, to share a bit about some of the terminology we're using here if it's helpful.

Caitlin Morneau:

Restorative justice is a victim-centered approach to justice that emphasizes living in right relationship and repairing harm as a community. Its principles resonate deeply with Catholic social teaching and gospel values. Then restorative practices are structured dialogues that give all involved in a situation an opportunity to be heard and contribute to finding a way forward.

Caitlin Morneau:

So increasingly, these are applied in criminal justice settings and schools and our indigenous brothers and sisters show us how this is also a way of life capable of holding space for all manner of difficult



conversations. So shortly after the Synod on synodality was announced, we heard from a number of diocesan and ministry leaders, some of you who are on the line with us and Joe included with hopes and ideas for the intersection that we're discussing today. So Joe, can you say more about why you believe that restorative practices are so relevant to this process?

Joe Cotton:

Yeah, and thank you Caitlin and hello everybody. I think the reason restorative justice is so relevant to this Synod process really has to do with trauma. And there is so much trauma that has gone on in our church. There is so much trauma that's going on in our world that we're experiencing that is producing a lot of suffering for people, and I think that's tied to the change in epoch that Father David was talking about.

Joe Cotton:

Father Richard Rohr likes to talk about how suffering not transformed will always be transmitted. And that there is a tendency in human beings to transmit or to multiply trauma or to multiply suffering. And really, the gospel is about how do we not transmit our suffering, but how do we bring it to God such that it can be transformed and we can produce new life and goodness, and forgiveness and healing into the world, just as Jesus modeled on the cross?

Joe Cotton:

Taking on all of that suffering and refusing to transmit it and instead transforming it into forgiveness and love. And I think that's what Krisanne talked about the Synod being about healing. And so restorative practices is all about a structure, a system of principles for a way, a path for that healing to unfold. And for us to manage this trauma collectively in a way that we can transform it into new life and into goodness.


Joe Cotton:

And here in the archdiocese of Seattle, we have been able to engage in some restorative circle processes which is just a one method of restorative justice to actually resolve some felony level crimes in our juvenile court system in lieu of traditional court incarceration. We had a couple young men, one young man was David, one young man was Ramon, they were both 16 years old.

Joe Cotton:

One was gang affiliated, the other was not. Both were coming from very poor background. Both had committed a robbery in the first degree. And they were invited by our courts and with the participation of the local church community to rather than going through the traditional court system which often incarcerates people, which is just yet another way of transmitting harm, they were invited to sit in restorative circle for over a year to transform their trauma, to transform the trauma of the victims that were impacted by their crimes to transform the trauma of the community.

Joe Cotton:



And one of the things that restorative practices makes possible is it allows for the kingdom of heaven to unfold. So these two young men went through that circle process for a year dealing with all of their own traumas and everything that was involved in their crime. And at the end of the process, one of the young men, the community needed to bring the case back to judge and say, "Here's how we have resolved this matter using this restorative circle process. Does the court accept our resolution?"

Joe Cotton:

And the judge who was skeptical of these restorative processes at first said to the young man, "I have never in my career seen such transformation in a defendant that has come before me than what I have seen in you this last year, and I'm wondering if it might be okay if I stepped off the bench and gave you a hug?" And then all of a sudden, the judge stepped down off the bench and pulled this tattooed gang kid into an embrace, and they hugged in the courtroom. And I'm in the back going, "That's the kingdom of God." That is what restorative practices makes possible. And the Synod is all about healing and bringing forth results like that.

Joe Cotton:

Things that you might not think would be possible, a judge and a gang member hugging in a courtroom. And the other young man, he encountered his victim some months later when he went to order food at a fast food restaurant, and it just so happened it was his robbery victim taking his order and the two connected and Ramon was so grateful that the victim gave him this opportunity that the two came out and embraced in the middle of a fast food restaurant, victim, and Robert embracing. That is the kingdom of heaven. This is what restorative practices makes possible and why it's so important Caitlin.

Caitlin Morneau:

Yeah, thank you so much, Joe. And thank you for sharing those stories to help us create an image and a picture of what this can look like. And so we recognize that folks will be participating in the Synod process in a variety of ways and formats and dialogue types, but that whether we're facilitating or participating, that there are elements of restorative practices and, here's make reference to circle process as one of these that can help create an atmosphere for open and generative sharing to allow that transformation to take place.

Caitlin Morneau:

And so the first lesson we wanted to highlight was around creating a safe enough container for us to come into these conversations. So we acknowledge that for many, the Synodal conversations might be unfamiliar territory where we're asked to bring the fullness of our hurts and our hopes. And that's a really vulnerable place to be. So anticipating this vulnerability, restorative dialogues begin with the group co-creating a list of shared values and guidelines.



Caitlin Morneau:

And so time is spent naming and then building consensus around how we aspire and plan to be present to one another and honor each other's dignity while we're together. This is important to set and communicate expectations about how we interact during this time so that everyone can share openly without fear of judgment. And so we might all consider how the guidelines that are created for our respective processes are inclusive and trauma-informed and adaptable to the needs of the group. So that's one element of creating a safe container. Joe, can you say a bit about how ceremony and prayer help to create this container?

Joe Cotton:

Absolutely. I think it is so important as we go into these synodal listening sessions whether we're coordinating them or facilitating them, or even just participating them, really grounding them in ceremony, in ritual and prayer. Number one, it really honors the native traditions from which these restorative practices come from, but it also honors our own Catholic tradition.

Joe Cotton:

And how do we ground ourselves in God and ground ourselves in that which is so much greater than ourselves to really bring us into the present moment, to really allow us to be in God's presence, to meditate, to reflect. To really be grounded and rooted in who we really are as created beings in God. So we show up to be our best selves and grounding ourselves in prayer in an opening ritual helps to do that and that's why we do the curia and mass every day to ground in who we really are, let go of that which might take us in directions that could harm and instead, show up in a real way so that prayer in that ceremony is crucial.

Caitlin Morneau:

Thanks so much Joe. And do you want to kick us off on our lesson two?

Joe Cotton:

Yeah, so we'll head to the next slide. Lesson two is about equalizing power and voice, and this is something that restorative practices does so naturally. And so it makes perfect sense for this to be part of the synodal process as well. When we were engaging in some of the circle processes with Ramon to work through the harm that he had caused committing a robbery degree, when we got towards the end when it was time to work on ... How is Ramon going to be held accountable for having caused this harm? And how is he going to repair this harm?

Joe Cotton:

And before we got into the conversation in circle about how he was going to be held accountable, we started off with the question in circle that day, and the circle question for all of us was when was a time that you had had caused harm and the hammer never fell? You were never held to account or you were let off the hook when you had done something that had caused harm. And everybody had to go around and share their response to that.



Joe Cotton:

That included the judge, the prosecuting attorney, and what that did is all of a sudden, everybody went around sharing vulnerably about where we had been sinful, where we had missed the mark, where we had caused harm. And when we experienced grace and that equalized that this was no longer about Ramon, the terrible person that committed a crime and us righteous people in circle.

Joe Cotton:

No, no, no, this was all of us showing up as equal. We were all showing up as fellow sinners that were doing that transformation work together alongside Ramon. Restorative practices lends itself to that kind of equalizing power and being able to elevate the voice of all. Some of the tangible things that we do in circle, we often have a talking piece that gets passed and for us here, we always pass in a clockwise direction to symbolize moving with the natural flow of the spirit as opposed to going against the flow of the spirit.

Joe Cotton:

But that talking piece allows a process where everybody gets a turn to share. If you have the piece you're talking, if you don't, your job is to give your entire focus and attention and listening and presence to whoever is speaking and it helps facilitate time and make sure everyone's voice is elevated. Everyone can be heard and that we're all equal across the board. These are all really helpful things I think we can incorporate.

Caitlin Morneau:

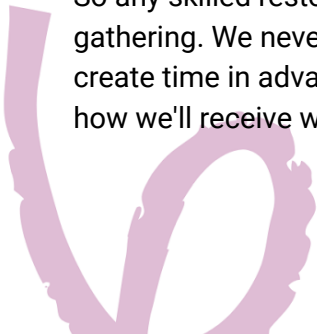
Awesome. Yeah, I think these techniques really help us walk our talk and can be relevant whether we're meeting in person and have the ability to pass a physical talking piece or virtually and adding names in a speaking order in the chat. That planners and facilitators certainly have a particular responsibility and opportunity here.

Caitlin Morneau:

But as a participant, especially if I am a person of privilege or authority in my institution, I can ask myself how much time and space am I taking up with my response and how am I noticing who has not yet had the mic and the opportunity to speak and how do I ensure that maybe I passed to them? So moving on to our third lesson which Joe made reference to earlier, arriving as our best, and I would add whole selves.

Caitlin Morneau:

So any skilled restorative justice facilitator will tell you that preparation is crucial to a successful gathering. We never just sit people down without them knowing what's about to take place. And so we create time in advance for participants and ourselves to think through our contributions and consider how we'll receive what we hear from others.





Caitlin Morneau:

So whatever role you're playing, I encourage you to spend time in prayer and discernment with the questions of the Synod before arriving at the listening session. And if the specific questions of your local process aren't advertised, ask for them. Consider how you'll remain centered and grounded. If you hear something it's upsetting or challenging to you, really, I come back to this question of how am I prepared to be a vessel for the holy spirit and the face of Christ for others in this process.

Caitlin Morneau:

And so one other practical tip would be if during the session, the conversation seems to be remaining at a surface level. That the way we share can bring it deeper by making an example with our own response, or if the conversation seems to be maybe going off the rails and off topic, we can intentionally share in a way that helps to bring it back on track and into balance. Joe, do you have anything to add particularly from this facilitator standpoint?

Joe Cotton:

Yeah, only to add that as facilitators of these synodal listening sessions, how important it is to really model responses that we're asking of the remaining faithful. So the length that we share, the depth, the level of vulnerability that we show. If we show up in a real way as facilitators, and we're honest about what's going on for us and model that for other vulnerably, other people are going to a follow suit. And so that is so important for us to really model in that way.

Caitlin Morneau:

Awesome. Thanks so much, and I'll let you kick off our lesson four.

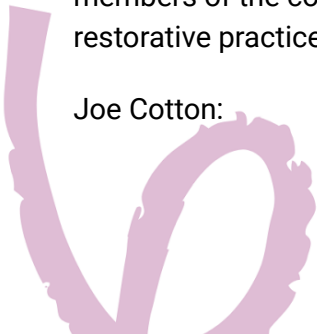
Joe Cotton:

All right, you've got it. So next up is our lesson four, and that is relationships before issues. I'm reminded of, again, the circle process that we used here in Seattle with the court system, it came to us from the Tagish [inaudible 00:42:41] first nation people of the Yukon territories. It was a particular model that they gave as a free gift to the world where that community essentially said, "This is an ancient practice that our tribe has been using. We gift this freely to the world to use." And that's what we used.

Joe Cotton:

And so I also want to name sitting here in Seattle. I just want to be able to name that I am currently sitting on the native ancestral land of the Duwamish people. And I just want to say that so that our native members of the community are seen and heard knowing that they really are who gifted us with this, these restorative practices to begin with.

Joe Cotton:



And one of the things that they incorporate is the medicine wheel which is thinking of these processes in four quadrants. The baby, the adolescent, the adult, and the elder. Meaning, there's kind of a stage to these things where you start at the baby level or the introduction level, and this is getting acquainted. This is what we're doing when we first get into the listening session, moving into that adolescent phase or this phase we're talking about now around building, understanding and trust.

Joe Cotton:

Building relationships with each other before we start tackling issues. This is important because we need to recognize that our shared dignity as human beings first, and to get underneath what's really going on for all of us, our own woundedness, our own humanness, our dignity. Connect there first, then we can move on to those adult in those elder stages which is arriving at issues and exploring options and possibilities, and then moving to seeking solutions in that elder phase. So that is just so important I think to make sure that we're putting time and effort intentionally into building those relationships first and building that into our processes. Caitlin?

Caitlin Morneau:

Yeah, I think this really can't be emphasized enough and how building the relationships first helps us see how we're connected beyond the things that grieve or divide us. And that this isn't just about exchanging pleasantries, but acknowledging that my humanity is inextricably bound up in yours in the words of Desmond Tutu that I am because we are. And so finally in our lesson five, I feel like, "Oh, each of these have built to this lesson five of just being able to listen well and share from the heart."

Caitlin Morneau:

And so as we've discussed how these pieces set us up for this, and so the only piece I want to add here is how I think sometimes it can be tempting to rest on our credentials, our opinions, or positions that we're at the ready to argue, but stories move us beyond our platforms and into the depth of our belonging to one another.

Caitlin Morneau:

So on a practical level, I'd invite you to invite others or prepare to share stories from your own experience that illustrate the point that you're trying to make. And I'll pass it over to Joe, see if there's anything you want to add to this.

Joe Cotton:

Nothing from me, but I'm ready to go on to the next one.

Caitlin Morneau:

Oh, I'm sorry. And that was a segue into less and five around listening well, and sharing from the heart is our last one and then we'll wrap up.



Joe Cotton:

Yeah. So do you want to start, or do you want me to go?

Caitlin Morneau:

Well, I already offered my beginning, so whatever you [crosstalk 00:46:29]

Joe Cotton:

Oh, got you. You did. Thank you. So really, just to bring it home with this one, listening well and sharing from the heart, someone was quoted as one saying, "Being listened to is so close to being loved that most people can't tell the difference." And that I think is at the heart of healing, being listened to, creating that safe space. And that's really I think Pope Francis in his wisdom is that is what he is deploying into the world is this healing listening.

Joe Cotton:

And so really, the key to that is how do we when we show up in these Synodal listening sessions, how do we show up in such a way that our goal is to listen to understand? Meaning, when someone is sharing, regardless of whether or not we might agree with of them, our job is not listening to develop a rebuttal or to respond or to go on the attack. Our goal is to listen such that we can reflect back to them what we heard them say.

Joe Cotton:

And even more, I think that the skill that we're all being called to is not just being able to summarize what they said, but listening for what's underneath. What's driving the sharing that they're ... What perhaps are the wounds that are underneath that are driving the sharing? What are the underlying value that are driving what they're sharing?

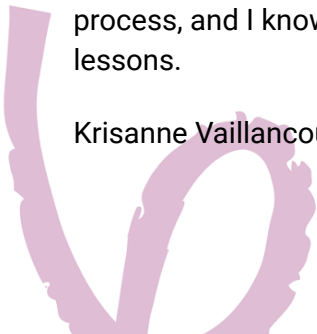
Joe Cotton:

We may find that people that we disagree with, we actually have more in common than we think. But again, we're listening at this deeper level listening to understand, not to respond. And again, listening for those underlying values, being able to name that. If we can do that for each other as church, we can heal each other in the way that this whole Synod is calling for.

Caitlin Morneau:

So we pray that these lessons from restorative practices may breathe life into this collective synodal process, and I know I'm eager to hear about next steps and reflections and your questions about these lessons.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:





Well, thank you Joe and Caitlin, just scratching the surface of restorative practices for the Synod. Thank you so much. Our final presenter is Julia McStravog. Julia, you serve as a Consultant and Project Manager for the Synod on Synodality for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and you are part of a small, but mighty team that's providing a hub and resources to amplify and support and elevate Synodal processes in diocese and parishes and national ministries around the country.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Julia, I think so many people are probably wondering, "All right, how do I get involved from a practical standpoint as a layperson and maybe as religious and beyond?" We know that every diocese is handling the synod differently. Can you share a bit about how folks can get involved in the process? Thanks for coming.

Julia McStravog:

Thanks Krisanne, and I just want to say how glad I am to be here with everyone today to listen and learn with you and start this Synodal process. And this is one of the wonderful examples of creative ways that organizations have taken initiative to say, "We want to be part of the synodal process. We hear Pope Francis's call and we want to participate in." So I want to thank Krisanne for inviting me to be here with you all today.

Julia McStravog:

So as mentioned earlier, one of the things that when we talk about the Synod is that it doesn't end when in 2023, when we have the Synod of bishops in Rome that this whole project is a generational project to shift the paradigm of how we interact with one another. And so when I talk about this and think about it, I like to encourage people that it's going to take creativity, curiosity, and collaboration with ourselves, with God, and with others along with a great deal of patience as we move forward along the Synodal path and discover and delight in all the things that the holy spirit is going to work with us.

Julia McStravog:

And so with that, if we can go to the next slide, we have some ways that you can obviously get resources, stay updated. I very much encourage people to subscribe to the Synodal Journey Newsletter, and there are resources at [usccb.org](http://usccb.org). You can always get in touch with the Synod team at [synod@usccb.org](mailto:synod@usccb.org). And so one of the ways to really get involved is to reach out to your diocese and ask the diocesan Synodal rep or the diocesan synodal team how you can be involved and another way is to invite.

Julia McStravog:

If you see something that sparks your interest that speaks to your heart, that speaks to your charism, and you want to hold a listening consultation to invite your parish priest in is to invite your Bishop in and say we're working on this and we're doing this. And another way that you can also get an involved is we are working with national organizations just like Catholic mobilizing network to see how national

organizations who play such a vital role in the life of the church in the United States can contribute to reaching out to the margins with their different charisms and their different ministries.

Julia McStravog:

Also along with that, we are in the process of creating a portal to collect all of the reports that we'll be getting from diocese, but this will also include a space for groups and individuals who maybe aren't able to connect with their diocese, or are not able to connect with the national network in that way to also share their experience and their hopes and their vision and dreams for the church.

Julia McStravog:

So just a word of encouragement that this will be a long process, and I encourage you all to take the long view, but know that the seeds that we are sewing today in these conversations and in the next few months will be the foundation of the Synodal church that Pope Francis is calling us towards in the future. So thank you, Krisanne.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

And thank you Julia. I know we're running short on time. I promised an incredible panel and I think that you're catching wind of just the wisdom that we have in the room. I'm going to ... For those who can stay on the line, our panelists have agreed to stay on the line for about 10 more minutes so we can have a little bit of a Q&A, and we also want to bring back in the graphic scribing so you can visually see where we've gone, where Drew's listened in.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

But and I do want for those who can stand for the Q&A, please put your questions in the chat, but just like in 60 seconds or less, Sister Nathalie, Father David, anything you'd like to punctuate or underline or highlight from what you've heard from the panelists? Sister Nathalie?

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

Yes. Thank you so much for all these inputs. That is a marvelous example of what is synodality about. It's about network, encounter, the secret of synodalities, the secret of length. And I would like just to highlight two or three things very briefly. You talk about the experience of restorative justice with this idea of circles and circularity, reciprocity are the key images for understanding synodality.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

So it's yes, reciprocity, and it's a process of transformation and a synodal church is a relational church. It's about to put the relations at the center and share that with us to really be this church of people of God, not with different categories, the pastors on one side, the Bishop and the other, the religious there. How we connect and we transform our mindset to really think about we are all part of the people of God as missionary pilgrims working together.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

So I really hope that we can continue this process that is first and mainly the spiritual process, and you have emphasized very strongly the need to be rooted in prayer, in self-reflection and that's the key part of the Synod. So it's a path of personal and communal conversion, and we all have to embrace this path, that is in fact to Pascal journey. Thank you.

Fr. David McCallum:

I would just build on Sister Nathalie's points and say, I don't know about you all, but I find myself incredibly moved and inspired by the gifts of our friends who have just given their own perspectives on these practical means of creating safe spaces for vulnerability and courage to be manifested. And for this reweaving of our social fabric as church to take place.

Fr. David McCallum:

There's a sense of youthfulness and capability and a sense of a can do spirit. And I think that Julia so beautifully expresses the receptivity that she and her colleague Richard Cole at the USCCB have to the outreach and the input from across the US church. So I think that as I read the chat, I hear there's fear, there's cynicism, there's distrust. And certainly, there's all kinds of reasons for those dispositions.

Fr. David McCallum:

However, synodality will depend on each of us having the courage to move past our skepticism, our fear, and our distrust to summoning up the courage to keep moving forward. And for me, the image of the Synod as Julia was reminding us, it's a generational project. It's not going to be completed in two years or 20 years.

Fr. David McCallum:

It is like a river that's beginning to tumble down a dry riverbed, and there may be stones and obstacles of resistance, but eventually the water will pass through and around and continue on forward. Let's be like that water and continue to really bring a sense of hopefulness, a sense of resilience, a sense of courage and pace ourselves because the expectations are naturally very high at the outside of a project like this, and this will take time. So let's remember that, let's encourage each other and let's be part of this journey as good companions on the road together.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Thank you Father David. Thank you Sister Nathalie. For those of you who can stay on, hang tight, we're just going to put on some music and we're just going to take a contemplative pause. We have heard so much. Our hearts are soaring, our curiosity is peaked. Let's take a look at what Drew's been doing and just pause in this contemplative moment. (silence).

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Beautiful. Thank you for that pause. We are just going to ... I think I'm going to stick with one question because we really don't have much time and it's a question I've seen come up several times. Father has emphasized hearing voices from the margin and bringing in voices of those who are excluded. Can you just offer some best tips on how to do that and those who are marginalized, including young people in the church, just looking at who else here, it's a certain age set and there's been questions about how to bring young people into the Synod as well. So any in insights from our panelists and how we can do that?

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

Yeah, I would just share two ideas. If you want to reach the mountain of the people, I think the main road is two networks, organization charities, different who are already working with them, and there are many, where are the young people and you have to partner with that kind of organization to reach young people and to build things together, and what is very important also, I will encourage you to read the handbook for the Synod or the very good matter shared by USCCB team with Julia and the team, but it's very important to have the idea that not everybody has the same language, the same way to express voices.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart:

So we have to use a wide range also of approaches, methodologies. Synodality is not a technique with only one way to do it. So to be aware of the diversity of ways to listen and to help people to speak up and to share their voices.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Thank you Sister Nathalie. Father David, how about you?

Fr. David McCallum:

I think that we don't have to look far to find people who have felt alienated by the church. Sometimes they're within our own families. So if people feel a little bit strained in how they do the outreach, I would say talking to our own friends and family who have become disaffected from the church is a good start. And then, raising the question with colleagues at work and close to home.

Fr. David McCallum:

I think that one of Joe's points that I really wanted to emphasize is that relationship has to be the, sort of the context in which some of these harder conversations take place. And if we don't have a close, intimate relationship with people, it's hard to raise these questions or for them to feel like the invitation is trustworthy. So I would say start close to home as well. So networks and right within our own families and amongst our own circles.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Thank you.

Caitlin Morneau:

Could just have another thought. I'm thinking about the core questions of restorative justice being what was the harm, who was harmed and what needs to be done to make it right? And I'm thinking especially about the word needs, and how folks have different needs in order to be able to access the process itself. And so how are we in the relationships that we have asking folks, what do you need to be able to be a part of this process and shaping the invitations around, and even maybe the physical spaces that host dialogues around the needs of those at the margins.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Indeed. Thank you Caitlin. Well, thank you everybody. Before we log off, these are some important thoughts to keep in mind, some housekeeping details. Many of you have asked about the webinar recording. We will make that available to you within the next 48 hours so that you can revisit or pass along the content. We're also having a transcript, a formal script made, and that will be on the webinar website on CMN's webpage.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

So check back for that formal transcript if you so choose. We'll also include Drew's graphic creative about this conversation in that followup email. So we will pass that along. We'll also when the webinar comes to a close after Fatima, praise us out, we'll keep the platform open and then we'll enlarge Drew's graphic. So again, you can sit with it while all this is settling in your spirit and current in your mind.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Also, well, last but not least, special thanks to our presenters today from Rome, from Seattle, from Washington. Deep gratitude to the team behind the scenes today, the CMN crew, thank you so much and Drew for your creative genius. An enormous thank you also to everyone who has spent this hour plus together, really showing your curiosity and your enthusiasm and willingness to approach the Synod from a restorative place.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

So it's fitting that we come to a close as the way we began in prayer. And so I think it is only fitting that we have asked Fatima Torres, she's the Consultant with CMN and she works on Special Projects. She has just recently graduated from the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania. So congratulations Fatima, and you're a first generation college student or recent grad, a young Latina, and you are representative of the future of the US Catholic Church. So welcome Fatima, and thank you for offering our closing prayer.

Fatima Torres:

Thank you. This has been such a great webinar. And so to start, in the name of father, son, and holy spirit. Holy spirit, make yourself at home in our hearts. Holy spirit, we are gathered in the name of Jesus as this gift to us, guide us, make yourself at home in our hearts, our homes and churches. You who fill the world, holy spirit, fill our minds and hearts.



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Fatima Torres:

Show us the way you desire to renew the church and give us courage to walk it. Let us find our way to harmony and unity, truth, and self-knowledge. May we run the way together in a renewed and relevant church in the world and to eternal life. Amen. Father, son, holy spirit.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy:

Thank you Fatima. Thank you everyone. Let's take a look at Drew's graphic. (silence). I don't know about you, but I have found there to be ex extraordinary solidarity even just pondering this creative with you all on the line. So thank you for staying on. We're going to send this to you in an email along with the recording, along with other important links. Thank you. We're going to close the room in about 10 seconds. So take a long look. Thanks everybody. So good to be with you. Blessings on this journey. Thank you.

