



**FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH
COMMUNION
PARTICIPATION
MISSION**

IN OUR OWN WORDS

Four members of our parish family participated in the gathering at the Public Auditorium on June 11th: Charlotte Brown, Margarete Smith, Rosalind Whatley, and Erin Whatley. Each one of them has written a short reflection based on their experience and impression of the day-long gathering. Those reflections have been shared here in our bulletin over the last few weeks. Today's reflection, the final one in the series, is written by Erin Whatley.



For the synod, I was unable to stay for the entirety of the session but I was able to contribute to the initial conversation of communion. At my table we had an extensive conversation that boiled down to one thing, taking people as they are. Regardless of age, sexual orientation, the way they are dressed, and their face. We spoke about the feeling of judgment some of us felt walking into the more ethnic churches, those churches that were home to Hungarians, Polish, etc. We talked about allowing people, especially young people, to come to Mass dressed as they please and deem appropriate without shaming them for it. We also touched on how to get our youth involved across all parishes. How can we meet the youth where they are? Can we engage them without forcing our way onto social media? How do we preserve the future of our church and ensure that everyone feels welcome when they come into a Catholic church regardless of the core congregation? We came up with the solution to have a seminar with all of the parishes where we discuss the elephant in the room, the biases we impose on those around us, and how we can overcome them. We decided to truly move past these biases; we cannot ignore them or pretend they don't exist. We must tackle the issues, move through them, and grow through them. While I was there a short while I think my group started the day with an informative and helpful conversation.