Synod of Young Adults Proposed Actions

The Synod of Young Adults Assembly, held on February 14, 2026, was the conclusion of a year-long process of prayer and discernment by young adults and led by young adults in response to questions regarding life, family, and relationships posed by Bishop John Dolan. It was composed of diocesan leadership and a strong representation of young adults. The discernment process leading up to the Synod Assembly followed the Synod on Synodality's process of Conversations in the Spirit. The result was a report that identified five converging priorities: belonging, healing, formation, accompaniment, and safety (see Appendix B).

The Synod Assembly accepted the report and deliberated on it during the Assembly proceedings. During a day of prayer and discernment, the Assembly produced 29 possible actions to respond to the needs of young adults in the diocese. Of these, they voted on moving forward on 10 recommendations (see Appendix A). On the advice of the Diocesan Pastoral and Presbyteral Councils, these recommendations were taken back to young adults for their discernment and prioritization. At the conclusion of this process, the young adults identified the following areas for parish and diocesan attention to support young adults in their faith journeys.

Parish Level Actions

At the level of the parishes, young adults would like parishes to:

- Create regular spaces for the young adult community
- Develop cultures of personal accompaniment
- Provide Christ-centered small groups, meals and retreats
- Engage young adults in parish traditions and community-building
- Introduce young adult-led conversations about healing.

These recommendations are offered to Deans, pastors, and parish pastoral councils to see how they can be instituted in the parish environments.

Diocesan Level Actions

At the diocesan level, the young adults support several of the proposed activities. After studying this input at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, the staff feels that the needs that the young adults identified can be addressed, at least in the short-term, by two major activities:

1. A Young Adult Festival of Faith on the Solemnity of Christ the King
2. A Young Adult Hub at St Francis Xavier Parish (Deanery 11) and/or St. Mary's Basilica (Deanery 10)

A Young Adult Festival of Faith that is the first step toward establishing a young adult hub at St. Francis Xavier Parish and/or St. Mary's Basilica would begin carrying out various priorities identified by young adults following the February 14, 2026, Synod Assembly. The festival would gather young adults for worship and fellowship; the hub would provide a continuing community for prayer, sharing, healing, and

mentorship. The descriptions below explain what is planned at the outset, how it helps meet other identified actions, and what could be added as each initiative develops.

1. **Young Adult Festival of Faith** (In 2026 at St. Francis Xavier Parish)

The Diocese of Phoenix proposes an annual Young Adult Festival of Faith on the Solemnity of Christ the King. The first celebration would take place on November 22, 2026, at St. Francis Xavier Parish. Future celebrations could move to other parishes, inviting wider participation and giving different communities a role in welcoming young adults from across the diocese.

The festival would include Mass, a procession, opportunities for Confession, and praise and worship.

These elements would invite young adults to encounter Jesus Christ through the Eucharist, reconciliation, prayer, and the witness of a gathered community. The celebration would be bilingual, with food trucks and time for fellowship creating opportunities for participants to meet, share a meal, and begin friendships. The celebration will participate in the annual global celebration of youth and young adults promoted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Pope Francis moved the local observance of World Youth Day to Christ the King beginning in 2021. The USCCB identifies November 22 as the 2026 celebration date and provides English and Spanish resources for local communities.

- *Young adult leadership and continuing participation*

To carry out the Assembly's request, young adults should help develop and lead the festival, with diocesan staff, clergy, and parish leaders providing support. Their responsibilities could include planning, outreach, hospitality, music, and opportunities for fellowship. Young adults should also help evaluate the experience and decide how it develops.

The festival should offer a clear invitation to the ongoing community. Participants could meet the hub's young adult leaders and receive information about a specific next gathering. Prayer intentions gathered at the festival could continue to be remembered at the hub and in participating parishes. Beginning annually would allow the diocese to establish the celebration and develop leadership, while retaining the goal of quarterly liturgical experiences. The initiative could lead to more frequent, year-round young adult-led liturgical celebrations, like roving young adult Masses that move from parish to parish, which could facilitate this effort.

- *How the festival fulfills recommended actions (based on the Synod's five converging priorities)*

***Safety — Diocesan liturgical experiences and ongoing prayer*.** The Assembly requested assistance for young adults to create an inviting and encouraging quarterly liturgical experience with ongoing prayer for young adults. The festival directly begins the liturgical component through Mass, a procession, Confession, and praise and worship. Its bilingual character and personal welcome can help participants experience the

Church as a community in which they belong. An annual festival is an initial implementation; continuing prayer and a path toward quarterly gatherings are needed to carry out the full request.

***Belonging — Spaces where relationships can form*.** The Assembly asked for regular parish spaces in which young adult groups can form organically and authentically. Fellowship around the festival gives young adults an opportunity to meet others and discover an existing or emerging community. Personal introductions and invitations to the hub or local parish gatherings would help those first encounters become lasting relationships. The festival supports this recommendation but does not itself establish regular spaces in every parish.

***Healing — Experiences of healing and renewal*.** Confession offers a direct sacramental opportunity for reconciliation and renewal. Prayer and a welcoming community can also provide a setting in which young adults feel encouraged to seek support. The festival could introduce participants to the hub's healing journeys and mentorship opportunities. This contributes to the Assembly's concern for healing, while the sustained accompaniment requested in its mentorship recommendation would take place beyond the festival.

***Formation — Consistent opportunities for young adult engagement*.** The festival would establish a recurring diocesan opportunity for worship and engagement. Involving young adults in its development would also give them experience in ministry and leadership. Connecting the celebration to the hub would help sustain participation throughout the year. This supports the formation recommendation for consistent events, although the requested deanery infrastructure would require further development.

***Accompaniment — Feeling known, seen, and loved*.** The Assembly also called for peer leaders trained to have deeper spiritual conversations. Young adult hospitality teams could help newcomers feel noticed and welcomed, and trained peer leaders could offer opportunities for conversation and prayer. These are recommended additions to the festival's preparation; participation in a large event alone does not ensure the personal attention described in the recommendation.

- *What remains to be developed*

The festival would fulfill the central purpose of gathering young adults around Christ in an inviting diocesan celebration. Its fuller implementation would require meaningful young adult ownership, prayer that continues between festivals, and a review process with young adults to determine when additional liturgical gatherings can be introduced. Future parish hosts could broaden participation, while local gatherings would help those for whom travel to a diocesan event is difficult. It should be noted when publicizing the Festival of Faith, as well as the Diocesan and Parish Action Plans that the 2025 Diocesan Synod of Young Adults was foundational in developing these initiatives.

2. Young Adult Hub at St Francis Xavier Parish and/or St. Mary's Basilica

The Festival of Faith would be used to launch young adult hubs in the diocese. Working with the young adults after the Festival, a synodal process could be used to develop a plan and the structure of hubs. A young adult hub could start at St. Francis Xavier Parish and/or St. Mary's Basilica would provide an ongoing setting where young adults can build community, share their experiences, deepen their faith, and accompany one another. It would initially welcome young adults from across the diocese, with the possibility of developing additional hubs at the deanery level as leadership and resources grow. The hub will also offer opportunities in Spanish for Spanish-speaking young adults.

Young adults would lead the hub through a formal committee of young adult leaders. Diocesan and parish staff would support their leadership and help provide the practical resources needed for continuity. The hub would need a dependable place to meet, a regular calendar, clear leadership responsibilities, and resources for communication and activities. These arrangements would turn a gathering place into the sustained infrastructure requested by the Assembly.

- *Sharing healing journeys and mentorship*

The proposed hubs would offer opportunities for sharing, healing journeys, and mentorship. Regular gatherings could include prayer, conversation about faith and daily life, and time to build friendships. Participants should have a voice in shaping the gatherings so that the community responds to their experiences and allows relationships to develop naturally.

Potential partnerships with the Office of Mental Health Ministry and the Photina Center could support healing journeys and help connect young adults with appropriate resources. The nature of those partnerships would need to be agreed with each organization. Peer leaders would need preparation in listening, accompanying others, and recognizing when someone needs additional support. Mentorship could include young adults accompanying one another as well as relationships with older adults and families. Mentors could support participants through questions of faith, relationships, vocation, and daily responsibilities. Formation and ongoing support for mentors would help make these relationships dependable and responsive to the needs that young adults express.

- *A starting point for wider parish and deanery participation*

The diocesan hubs could provide a place to develop young adult leaders, learn what kinds of gatherings sustain participation, and share practices with other parishes. As that experience grows, young adults could help establish gatherings and hubs closer to their own communities. Connections with representatives from other deaneries should begin early so that the initiative reflects needs beyond the host parish.

- *How the hub fulfills recommended actions (based on the Synod's five converging priorities)*

***Formation — Hubs developed and run by young adults*.** The Assembly requested a deanery model that

builds infrastructure for consistent events, with a young adult hub in each deanery. A young adult-led hub at St. Francis Xavier and/or St. Mary's Basilica directly begins this work by providing a regular location, leadership, and ongoing activities. It can develop a model and leaders for future hubs. One diocesan hub is a first phase, however, and does not yet provide the local access envisioned in the deanery recommendation.

***Belonging — Regular spaces and mentorship*.** The hub responds to the request for spaces where groups can form organically and authentically. Returning to a familiar community allows young adults to be known and to develop friendships over time. Its mentorship opportunities also support the recommendation for peer and intergenerational accompaniment. Including older individuals and families would more fully reflect that recommendation, while links to parishes would help extend belonging into local communities.

***Healing — Mentorship for healing and renewal*.** Sharing, healing journeys, and mentorship closely reflect the Assembly's request for a mentorship program by and for young adults. With trained peer leaders and support from potential partners, the hub could help young adults walk with one another through difficult experiences and find further assistance when needed. The emphasis should be on continuing relationships, with participation in sharing guided by each person's readiness.

***Accompaniment — Equipping spiritual leaders*.** The Assembly called for mentorship by and for young adults that cultivates spiritual leaders capable of offering personal guidance. The hub could identify emerging leaders and provide formation, practice, and ongoing support for this ministry. Its regular rhythm would make follow-up possible, helping accompaniment continue beyond a single conversation or event. Foster spiritual enrichment through spiritual direction by certified spiritual companions.

***Safety — Deeper spiritual conversations*.** The hub is a natural setting for the requested training of peer leaders, so young adults feel known, seen, and loved. Preparing leaders to listen carefully, facilitate respectful conversations, and handle personal sharing responsibly would help build trust. This training should be an intentional part of the hub's development.

***Safety — Ongoing prayer for young adults*.** A regular prayer component at the hub would extend the festival's spiritual life throughout the year. Praying with and for young adults would help fulfill the ongoing prayer element of the liturgical recommendation and could support the eventual development of quarterly liturgical gatherings.

***Accompaniment — Help with practical problems*.** The hub could later host professionals such as counselors, lawyers, or housing specialists, as the Assembly requested. This would be an additional program element, rather than an activity already included in the initial proposal.

The annual Festival of Faith and Hubs would reinforce one another. The festival would introduce young adults to the continuing community; the Hubs would sustain relationships and help prepare future celebrations. Hosting both efforts initially in central Phoenix would make that connection easier to establish, while maintaining the longer-term goal of broader local access. Neither initiative by itself carries out the separate recommendations to revise sacramental and vocational formation or launch an annual

diocesan Ministry Month. They could provide participants, leaders, and feedback to support that future work.