

Challenge #1

There is a Need to Create an Understanding and Acceptance of Social Justice not only as a Gospel Mandate but as a Lived and Personal Experience.

76% Accept as is;

18% Accept with modification;

6% Do not accept

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- Preferential option for the poor should perhaps include the definition of the "poor" to include not just those in need of financial assistance
 - The Poor are the Sacrament of Jesus's Presence among us (what you have done to the least of my brother). So every Catholic needs to serve the poor.
 - The words " social justice " can cover a multitude of sins. Lets define social justice in the context of Catholic thinking and make sure ALL aspects of that thinking are understood.
 - How do we get all priests and parishes to participate, even if it means acting together as a group? In order for our Youth to do acts of Charity, we need to have them experience working in Soup Kitchens, visiting Nursing Homes, etc. However, right now we are prevented from doing this because of all adults needing to have Training for protecting God's children. We need to look at working on some modifications in this area in order to take youth into places where those supervising them will all have had the training but just not the adults in the places that they need to go.
 - I am concerned about the concept of "social justice" and how it is defined. I think this needs to be clarified. Perhaps language needs to be used that is less politically charged.
 - What did Study Group use for definition of "Social Justice"?
 - Need to distinguish between Catholic social justice and the more generic term social justice.
 - Replace "Social Justice" with "Corporal Works of Mercy." The term "Social Justice" has political overtones, and is reminiscent of the leftist "liberation theology" movement condemned by the church in past decades.
 - I don't disagree with the challenge--I'm just wanting to make sure that Love of God is first and that love of neighbor flows from this. Personal experience of Jesus makes us -- impells us forward -- nothing else. Perhaps just clarify it more to show that is is really Christ centered service.
 - Is the word service the right word, especially with the youth?
 - This challenge has an undertone of political conformity that I think we should avoid. At first I thought to labor to reword it, but I actually think we don't need it at all. If we focus on the other challenges you have listed, this goal will necessarily be developed. If we do want to keep it as a defined challenge, I would focus on the lived and personal aspect and drop the words understand, accept and educate from the stated goals here.

- Not only does this need to be a lived experience, but we need to ensure that social justice is rooted in a lived relationship with Jesus, and is inspired by that faith relationship.
- The term "social justice" is vague. Its definition needs to be clarified- as it contains connotations beyond religious and tends to be more political in nomenclature. The term "social justice" doesn't itself occur in the scriptures, so I find it hard to be considered at "gospel mandate". I propose the use of the term "charity and justice". Or perhaps the expression "Catholic social teaching" should be used instead, although not scriptural this term doesn't contain political connotation.
- I have one addition to this challenge which is the importance of personal discernment... Each of us has unique talents and gifts with which to help, and none of us can do it all. Sometimes I feel the perception that we have to lend a hand anywhere and everywhere, can be daunting and utterly overwhelming, which ends up watering down our efforts, and at an extreme, the efforts we do put forth become invisible or ineffective.
- Both Challenge 1 & Challenge 6 use the term Social Justice which has meaning within the Catholic Church and meaning in the secular, political and governmental world. It is important to define Social Justice for our purposes, especially when we are reaching out to other faiths and potentially secular organizations.
- Add to the end of the statement: "that brings individuals closer to God."
- I feel that in the area of Social Justice, the parishes and the diocese, especially Catholic Charities do a phenomenal job of serving those in need. However, I believe that Christian service must first flow out of an outpouring of love for Jesus Christ and understanding his mission. We absolutely need to serve the poor and continue to support the good works of Catholic Charities, the parishes, the schools, and religious communities like the Missionaries of Charity. However, I think that the major problems such as lack of faith, mass attendance, religious education failures & doctrinal confusion much outweigh the issues of social justice. Increasing evangelization efforts and improving catechesis will help improve the quality and depth of social justice.
- How do we reach people to create understanding, etc?.....again this should begin at home with family.
- "In the Diocese of Bridgeport, within Fairfield County, there is a need to recognize the drastic economic changes that have occurred in parish families. There are many individuals and families in local parishes struggling in this economy. These parishioners do not fall into the marginalized category. Nevertheless, they are struggling due to job loss for long periods of time by one or both spouses. When they are able to obtain a job at a much lower scale they are drowning in debt from previous loans either for school and/or mortgages. These parishioners have to reduce their tithing to their churches according to their reduced income; Veterans who return to family and cannot find work, or injured in so many different ways; rise of healthcare costs for individual families including senior citizens. Families are already contributing to the marginalized through the increase in their own healthcare costs to cover marginalized members of the County."
- See other challenges as deserving greater focus, ie, C2
- Somewhere we need to say that Service (good works) to others is a loving response to the gift of faith

- This challenge does not resonate with as worded because any naturally good person could have a personal experience helping needy but as Catholics we need to do it with ardent love for our neighbor as reflecting the face of Jesus and made in His image. The wording of challenge "lived and personal" is ambiguous. Uniformed Catholics could be misled to think that this is all that is necessary for salvation, their spiritual growth etc.
- What resonated with our table was the need for education of the general populace about what the social teachings of the Catholic church are and perhaps a coordination of the effort through the parishes by the priests who are all on the same page as the overall church. Perhaps weekly themes to discuss provided by the diocese to the local parishes.
- Another question - how to gather Catholics as a motivating force to express and drive social justice POLICIES through our political system? To date, Catholics are mostly seen as a voice against abortion, and has done a good job at that. However, broad issues such as poverty, immigration, hunger, minimum wage, income equality for women - we need to mobilize through a community organizing model and to feed into organizations such as CONECT. Unfortunately, our political parties pick a hot button issue that trumps all others (again, abortion) and as voters we're faced with a schizophrenic choice - vote Republican and we support a pro-life (or perhaps pro-birth) position, but stand against gun control, minimum wage and social safety nets. Vote Democratic and you're pro-abortion, but support policies that help the poor and disenfranchised. Why can't the Catholic Church, as a powerful block of voters demand (and put forth) candidates that stand for BOTH.
- I continue to believe that the Charity and Justice Study Group (I am a member of that group) must be the center of all discussion with the other study groups. And I would recommend that a member of the Charity and Justice Study group be assigned to each of the other study groups to bring that focus to their work.
- People don't know the gospel mandate as it pertains to social justice. If they did it would be a personal and lived experience. The priests need to lead from the pulpit to achieve the social justice that Christ himself preached.
- need to balance Catholic Social Teaching with concerns and costs of modern life. Should be careful not to perpetuate a guilt complex. People need to want to give time talent and treasure.
- I accept with modification because I do not see mention here of a need to develop a consensus as to exactly what we mean by the term "Social Justice." I am afraid that there is not unanimity of thought on whether particular actions in fact effect justice for all concerned. For example, some argue that Social Justice demands that America's white population pay reparations to its black population for having subjected their forebears to slavery. My forebears did not emigrate to the USA until long after slavery had been abolished here. So, how is it just that I and my family should be required to pay reparations to the descendants of U.S. slaves? Similarly, many believe that our government-run welfare programs achieve social justice for the poor, while others point out that the practical effect of such programs over the last 50 years has been to discourage the poor from working to improve their lot in our society -- keeping them poor. So, no consensus there. If we do not have a clear picture of what we are trying to achieve in the

name of "Social Justice," we will fail to develop meaningful recommendations and plans as a result of the Synod.

- I dislike the phrase "Gospel mandate" because it implies that there is a rule in some book that all Christians must follow. That's not true. We are not called to address or obey a Gospel mandate, but rather a love mandate, and that's a huge difference. Jesus said "If you love me you will keep my commands" (JN 14:15). "Gospel mandate" is churchese and we must speak instead in the language of Jesus. I do, however, like the phrase "a lived and personal experience," because that comes as a result of knowing, and responding to, Jesus. It not only allows us to express the love we have received from Jesus; it forces us to seek deeper love from Him to offset those times when our efforts at social justice are rejected or misunderstood, which leads us to face the temptation of abandoning the work.
- It is not understanding and acceptance that is needed. It is actionability that will make the difference. The supporting points are not really support points as they talk about education.
- Rephrase the challenge for clarity - There is a need to create, among all Catholics, an understanding of Social Justice, both as a Gospel mandate and as a lived, personal experience.

Challenge #2

There is a Need to Use Charitable Service to Help the Believer, the Non-Practicing Believer and those of Good Will to Discover Jesus.

80% Accept as is;

13% Accept with modification;

7% Do not accept

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- Need to consolidate supporting info. Last point should go with challenge 5
 - Challenge is so vague and all encompassing that we could devote significant resources to something that is not clearly defined. I am concerned that our resources would be diffused. I voted no on this challenge.
 - Supporting info stresses engagement of Catholics... CAUTION: "and those of good will" can imply proselytizing of non-catholics
 - this is about bringing the broader Church(devout and less devout) to meet the Crucified and Risen Christ in the poor and forming Church as we minister to the Poor. "The poor our masters" said Vincent of Paul.
 - Appreciate the link between service and evangelization, but find this particular phrasing a little muddled. While some of those receiving charitable service might well discover Jesus through that exchange, Christ's command to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, instruct the ignorant, etc. is absolute, given with no expectation of reward or good outcome. (So we can't seek to serve solely for the sake of drawing others to Christ.) And this current phrasing overlooks the significance of Catholic believers themselves finding Jesus in those whom they serve. The marginalized can be mighty evangelizers.
 - People who dug deeper into Catholic Charities and CCHD found reasons for them to leave the Church. Unless those practices are changed further growth of those programs will not be a positive in the eyes of many. Some people prefer to stay away from the enormous mega million charities and work more closely with those truly in need.
 - I can accept w modifications. I would consider changing the word "use" throughout this whole challenge. In my life I believe service work has always been "used" in the church as a means to get something back. Ex: service hours for Confirmation, service hours for parents instead of tuition increases. In my opinion this model does not inspire or build a lifelong desire to serve the poor it results mostly into a business transaction. I would stay away from action words that resemble the worldview such as legislate or incorporate and consider the word "live". "live charitable serve, live the experience." Also, many of the challenges sound like commercials for Catholic Charities. It is not the only agent of the church in the Diocese that promotes social justice and charity. If one is mentioned, then others must be mentioned as well.

- Need to share best practices among parishes. Pastors need to be willing to share ideas and be open to collaboration with other parishes in the Diocese.
- Catholics are historically service driven providers--hospitals evolved from Catholics who saw the need and gave of themselves. I think it should be prayer first and then service--that's how it traditionally has been. Without a relationship with Christ, service is for me, not for another.
- I would only use point three down.
- Charity & Justice Committee - There is a catalyst through the powerful and personal experienceChallenge 2 speaks to "using" Charitable Services to help The Believers etc.....That is not a primary purpose of Charitable Services. The context is I believe saying that it provides an opportunity for personal experiences for empowerment and transformation. Recommendation: edit by removing " to use" and replace with "to realize that". Further: remove "to" before "help" with " can". Edited version would then read: There is a need to realize that Charitable Services can help the Believer, the Non-Practicing Believer and those of Good Will to Discover Jesus". I believe this is closer to the intent and doesn't misconstrue the Charitable Service's main purpose. Yes a secondary result of such opportunities is as a teaching or learning tool, a "welcoming" tool.
- As it stands could be phrased to speak for a greater clarity about why we are servant disciples. There is a need to facilitate discovering and deepening our relationship with Jesus through charitable service for evangelization and catechesis.
- Service requirements are counterproductive and do not create an environment of invitation to encounter Christ in the poor. Students must not be forced into it, and service requirements foster a service enforcement bureaucracy. A service bureaucracy!! That is ridiculous. End service requirements and have faith that the students will respond to the invitation.
- We must openly celebrate Christ in our works of charity - daily prayer, sacramentals, speaking openly about Christ and his teachings. The vulnerable need Christ more than anything else.
- We have to teach the difference between ministry vs. volunteerism. In ministry we understand that it is primarily self-giving (as opposed to volunteerism (that tends to be, while helpful, self-satisfying - done for a sense of feeling good about the activity and our part in it.)
- Most important challenge in this committee.
- On this life journey, service to your fellow woman or man is a way to discover "the face of God" or an entry into the Mystery of God's plan but I only accept this pragmatic approach partly because it is about opening of hearts and minds challenged by encounters that may help people understand the journey and begin to see the need for companions and a destination, if only dimly.
- Charitable service does not empower someone to "discover Jesus." It may open a person up to that possibility but Jesus must be approached directly, with the encouragement of believers. "God loved us first" (1 JN 19). God must love us first BEFORE we can love anyone through works of social justice. And love is the key requirement. As Paul writes in 1 Cor 1:13, no matter what we do, if it's not done out of love, we gain NOTHING from it.
- There is no evidence given or implied that mandates carrying the challenge to non-practicing believers which suggests everyone. Let's work on Catholic Youth, their families, our parishes. If

we are successful with these, we can broaden the focus to outside the Diocese and our Faith. As written, this challenge is too broad and unrealistic.

Challenge #3

There is a Need to Better Identify & Respond to Unmet Needs Across our Diocese and Beyond.

70% Accept as is;

20% Accept with modification;

10% Do not accept

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- Also - we need to look at the Prison Ministry - the Catholic Priest in charge of all of this in CT is an obstructionist, turning away volunteers who strive to serve. At the Bridgeport North End Prison Catholic men never have the opportunity to attend mass or receive the Eucharist. I know that our St. James prison ministry has tried to discuss this, has offered to find a priest to go and offer mass, and are chastised, and told, "We're aware of the situation." He's been aware of the situation for over a year, and still this vital need is not being met. Really shameful.
 - The sexual abuse scandal allowed victimization in our diocese and beyond. Nothing specific has been said about those victims even though the process that created them (individual priests and quiescent hierarchy) have cost the Church vocations, moral authority, people in the pews and gobs of money. But what about the healing of the victims? Why are their number not included among the marginalized and vulnerable? How would they be prioritized against the incarcerated (for some of the abused have ended up in prison because of substance abuse and crime to support it), the immigrant, the mentally ill, etc.?
 - Too broad foci. Not measureable / doable without clarifying 'no one else wants to respond to.'
 - In our table discussion, several delegates spoke of the need for much broader sharing between parishes of what each is doing, where they need help, ideas....and where they might share best practices, etc. There are some parishes in which members are very involved in social justice ministries, others in which there is little hands-on ministry to the poor and vulnerable. All agreed that better communication is critical, developing a comprehensive data base in which the variety of services and ministries being offered throughout the diocese is made clear. This will provide a solid foundation on which to implement your response to all charity and justice challenges.
 - The definition of "marginalized and vulnerable" might be extended to include "poverty of the spirit" which Mother Teresa described as a particular affliction of the West, worse than the poverty of Calcutta. I was distressed at the resistance expressed to looking "beyond the diocese." Yes, we have extraordinary need here. But because of the cost-of-living disparity, a comparatively modest investment in Third World projects can have an outsized impact, and knit together our world church a little more closely.
 - needs to be re-worded: "unmet needs" sounds rather broad.....can we meet all the needs that are not being addressed?

- We have to see to the needs of our parishes first.... our parish's needs had been shepherded by the Franciscan Order for 90 years. Recently, the order has pulled out the Franciscan priest and the bishop replaced him with a "part-time" priest. This priest has two other (and probably more) needs he has to attend to. Our parishioners feel they are the low men on the totem pole!
- There will always be "unmet needs" and sometimes the way we meet those needs results in greater unmet needs. When a Diocese says it has difficulty with its deficits and its outstanding debt. When it reports its members have been and are leaving the Church in very large numbers, it may be time to focus on its own unmet needs.
- Regarding unmet needs across and beyond our Diocese, I believe since this is a Diocesan Synod we should stay focused on Bridgeport. Exactly which immigrants are we talking about? We've seen the tragic consequences of neglecting the unmet needs of the mentally ill so I would be very supportive.
- Change to "There is a need to better identify & respond to unmet needs across our diocese." (remove "and Beyond"). Not to sound uncharitable but this is a Diocesan Synod and there are MANY needs in our diocese that we are responsible for before we begin reaching outside of that. Mother Teresa said "Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time and always start with the person nearest you." I believe the Diocese is nearest to us at this point.. and we can work our way out. Also, Pastors hear and see many needs- they will be paramount in "identifying" the needs. How do we assist our Pastors who may be burdened or overwhelmed by many needs?
- As government services grow and expand - often without increasing in efficacy - how do we position ourselves to serve the needs that government services ignore or deprioritize? We have Christ to offer, and therefore serve the vulnerable in a way no secular organization can. I.e.:At our best, we see the dignity of each human person in the way government agencies don't. How do we make sure we can fill the gaps and, in everything, provide something "different" given we have the Gospel guiding us?
- I generally agree with the challenge except that I believe for our purposes, there are so many unmet needs in Fairfield County that I would eliminate the word "beyond". We are certainly called to serve our brothers and sisters wherever there are needs, but we don't have to look very far. If there ever comes a time when there are no homeless or abused people in Fairfield County, I am all for expanding the scope to include beyond.
- I feel that our Diocesan members should be served first because if the house of the Lord is not in order how can we fix others?
- We should prioritize identifying and responding to unmet needs WITHIN the diocese only. We have much to do here. Let's start here first.
- Finding someone who is available to help with a problem or "crisis" is rare. People hear "your problem is not covered in our program". Hence programs are not always flexible, and personal. It would be great to be available/free to serve those who come to us --these people have been entrusted to us, and we must respond.
- Let's tend to the needs in our Diocese first. Then as we build a stronger Diocese we will be better able and equipped to help others outside the Diocese.

- Concentrate only within the diocese....beyond is not reasonable.
- I think the other proposed challenges can easily fall under this one – in other words, as we embrace our Catholic identity (we serve others because we are Catholic, not because they are Catholic) and go after the unmet needs of others who are often neglected by the culture and/or even within our faith because of fear, we will engage and impassion others, we will appeal to fallen way Catholics and non-believers, and we will reach across the generations.
- There are more Lay Organization, not just Catholic Services, CAPP, K of C, ect. These groups are front line evangelization. These groups are not either known by the Synod nor acknowledged.
- The scope of the work of the Synod is the Diocese of Bridgeport. It had been stated that issues beyond the Diocese, and issues of the universal church are out of scope.
- I would stress the second line (from the supporting info)
- There is a need to focus on the unmet needs of our diocese and beyond. However we should focus on ourselves before we go 'beyond'. charity starts at the home
- Was there a hint to unquestioningly support illegal immigration in this challenge? Obviously as Catholics we must support all good will efforts to aid immigrants looking for a better life, but the way this was inferred in the presentation made me slightly uncomfortable. Just seeking clarification.
- There is a need to better identify and respond to unmet SPIRITUAL and MATERIAL needs across our diocese and beyond. I believe we need to more clearly include Christ in this area, so that we can better integrate THE factor that motivates us, namely our faith in Jesus Christ.
- Clarify "unmet needs" more specifically. Many needs fall within the social mission of the Church, whereas others do not. For ex. Refer to Mt. 25, etc. Kathy identified some of these needs in her talk; perhaps they should be enumerated in Challenge 3. This should have ecumenical repercussions. Building a network ought to include various Christian denominations.
- Please address the needs of our diocese first and do not bite off more than you can chew
- I voted against Challenge 3 because I believe we do these things well now and we should be focusing on things in the diocese and not beyond it.
- I had hoped that when we had the presentations from the Charity and Justice Committee, they would have mentioned the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy which they are doing so well. I am genuinely interested in seeking info as to what our Diocese is doing for the incarcerated.
- Delete the bullet that talks about how to meet a responsibility to minister to needs outside of the Diocese or clarify needs such as Missions
- The need is to better deal with the way we execute what we already do than there is to take on more needs. This also fails to recognize that there are others meeting many of what we would call 'unmet' needs. How do we fit that into the discussion?
- Without clarity re: the "who" and "what" of Diocesan needs and the nature of resources required to meet such needs, it is not realistic to reach out beyond our Diocese. Such will drain attention and resources from parish and diocesan needs.

Challenge #4

There is a Need to Create an Inter-Generational Diocesan Wide Volunteer Network

77% Accept as is;

12% Accept with modification;

10% Do not accept

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- Strengthen Parish volunteer network; Parishes with programs already in progress can then be made known to diocese.
 - If you can identify priority problems, issues and concerns that open hearts, then passionate adherents will recruit their own networks, resources, and ministries. That has been my experience. Of course it may seem more direct to gather a group of volunteers, but without the priority mission and passionate leadership the volunteers are not likely to follow, are they?
 - Supporting info does not relate to challenge
 - Make this challenge a priority and work from there
 - not sure we need to create a diocesan wide network of volunteers, unless what we mean by that is to better organize and turbo charge outreach activities in every parish
 - Superfluous challenge - can be incorporated into other challenges. Also - shouldn't youth be large part of this .
 - I like the idea of using Catholic Charities as a means to engage Catholics in works of charity. not just the organization that takes our charitable contributions and does the work, but a means to engage with people in our parishes. perhaps Catholic Charities could create a framework /structure for how parishes organize their outreach activities (so that we don't re-invent the wheel in every parish). with same structure across all parishes would also make easier to work together across parish boundaries.
 - There is also a real need to share among the parishes...we keep reinventing the wheel!
 - Promoting face-to-face service is an excellent goal. Just wanted to hear more details. With all these "challenges" would love to see individual parishes "pilot" a program for 2 or 3 years then train others and expand it.
 - How have we survived 2000 years without one? How many people will the Diocese hire and how many priests will spend time coordinating a volunteer network? Why does everything have to get bigger and more central in the Church? Why not work to promote more charity at the parish level? Why not first provide charity and volunteer support to those members of the parish that are in need?
 - his inter-generational Diocesan Wide Volunteer Network can also in turn, inform those in need of what is available to them.
 - Begin by building on strengths of each generation first. Let these groups strengthen individually first, and then find a common ground among the groups.

- I think that my personal experience is that the older generation are working for social justice but the younger generation are doing "service" because mandated either by CCD or Schools with a number of hours in mind. Once reached service does not continue.
- I don't feel we need to develop an inter-generational DIOCESAN wide network
- Awesome idea. People of faith feel alone in the world and there must be a way to meet others who believe as I do. On last Saturday we had 70 people to volunteer--people long to give of themselves and finding themselves in a gift of self, and finding others is life giving and community building.
- Too much overlap with challenge 2.
- I feel that it is important to build a diocesan network of service opportunities that is easily accessible. Our youth should be able to participate in service trips within the diocese.
- Paying particular attention to opportunities for young families with young children. (Evangelization for the parents)
- Not a bad idea but unnecessary
- I would stress the third line (from the supporting info)
- I think consolidation and collaboration can lead to efficiency but I fear it also leads to indifference. A "let them do it" mentality. If we believe we need to make social justice a lived and personal experience then we need to keep things small and personal. So I agree with this goal but I would amend it by making it twofold. To create a diocesan network while still empowering and promoting efforts done better on smaller more personal levels.
- Concept of why inter-generational is part of challenge is not clear and does not seem to relate to supporting info.
- I voted against Challenge 4 because I do not know what it means. Since I cannot explain it to myself it may not be a challenge at all.
- I accept with modification because I object to the notion that we need to discern how to attract and engage only older/retired Catholics into service. We need to attract and engage all Catholics into service, particularly young Catholics. They are the future of the Church.
- At about this point in the presentation, I and the others at our table began to look at each other and say, "Where is Jesus in all of this?" In this specific challenge, the objective is a volunteer network. The goal really should be to bring together those who share of love of Jesus Christ and want some way to express that love to those who are in need. They may need help and encouragement from others because, as Challenge 47 notes, "There is a need to overcome our individual FEAR of evangelizing ..." Therefore, rather than the word "network" I would propose "support system."
- "Modify to include: Volunteers must be a mix of professional and non-professionals consisting of those who are working or who have previously worked in not-for-profit organizations. This group should be managed at the diocesan level and its leaders a collective mix that can guide this group.
- There is also something to consider as a support tool for several of the Synod Committees.... An already established tool available in our dioceses (at the parish level) called ParishSoft. If used properly and regularly updated, ParishSoft can track different levels of parishioner information:

education, work information, track committee and religious group involvement and, through the Time and Talent section, it can build and foster a strong volunteer base at the parish level that can be used for the diocesan volunteer network."

- This is a solution which may or may not be needed.

Challenge #5

There is a Need to better Inform the Populace about Catholic-Sponsored Services

78% Accept as is;

16% Accept with modification;

6% Do Not Accept

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- Reaching beyond our diocese or country. A challenge is to partner with parishes in third-world countries. A huge responsibility since we live in one of the wealthiest counties in the world.
 - I disagree with Challenge 5 and it may have to do with the fact that much of what Catholic Charities does is accomplished by accredited individuals with government grants. How dependent is their mission on dollars from governments as opposed to private gifts, or diocesan dollars? What would it look like to sum the effect and variety of parish engagements and the example of people in the pews engaged in all types of meaningful activity that are not branded as Catholic sponsored? Isn't the point that the needs are respected, listened to and indeed assisted in their lives by average people without professional degrees?
 - Please define populace.
 - I feel that Challenge 5 should be added to Challenge 2. If we make challenge 5 the main focus then we will be able respond to the items listed in challenge 2. By coming up with ways to better deliver the services between the Catholic Charities and the Parishes we can approach all generations within the church and ask for the service. We can also ask for the service of our surrounding neighborhoods
 - Are you intending to tell the populace about ALL services that are Catholic sponsored? I assume you are not going to tell the populace about the millions that went to ACORN or to the numerous grants that go to organizations that are pro-abortion, that push birth control, that support gay marriage, that help establish trade unions, that promote one sided voter registration etc. Even if you only inform the populace of the very many good things that are done, how would that appear? WE give this, WE give thatWhy does everything need to be "coordinated" at the diocesan level? Has Catholic Charities ever granted money to a poor Catholic parish empowering the parish to help those in need local to the parish? Could Catholic Charities have helped the diocesan nursing homes stay a part of the diocese? Could help from Catholic Charities have kept some of our Catholic Grammar schools from closing? Could CC help finance youth group activities in poorer parishes?
 - I think this challenge can be solved in the inter-generational Diocesan Wide Volunteer Network that is talked about in Challenge 4. This network can also in turn, inform those in need of what is available to them.
 - I see red flags when we speak too much about "marketing" and "public relations." People in need should know of our services - definitely. But making our work look good - motivated by a

sort of defensive need to be better understood - is misguided. Christ told us we will always be misunderstood. Let's focus most on our work, not our image.

- Are we looking to get "credit" or inform people of availability? We should inform people so they get the help & resources they need. Don't focus on PR just to get the Catholic Church's name associated. I do see that it's helpful to let people know about the good the Church is doing, but that association is secondary to the purpose of ministry
- Certainly important but again overlap, this one with communications committee.
- If we succeed at other challenges this will not be necessary. We can drop this for simplification and to focus our efforts.
- I feel that it is important to separate how to inform those who wish to serve, and those in need of service.
- Again only Catholic Charities are considered as a resource
- are our people aware or confused with all of the diocesan collections and where they go? do they think this is meeting all the needs?
- I will likely disagree with this challenge with some hesitation however...I believe that self-promotion has an evil presence in our society, and my ideal scenario would be that continued Good works will build and grow stronger and speak for themselves. Again, I am hesitant as media has such a presence in our lives it is very difficult to compete without being drowned out completely??
- With Regards to Challenge 5 - I see the benefit of putting together a listing of parish level resources/programming and establishing a system that is outlined in C-4 that could be utilized to cross-reference and foster a spirit of Catholic collaboration in promoting works of Charity and Justice. Would it be beneficial to establish a network that is divided by Vicariate lines that reports to this larger organization?
- concerned about the idea of "advertising" and how that might lack humility in a sense- to make the ministry or charity known is a good thing, but we should avoid the need to "get credit for the work." - vanity, of sorts. Awareness is important! But maybe start within the parish and let people know what is available. For instance- Catholic charities encompasses much more than most are aware. Awareness over vanity. This would be great for the new communications/tech committee to take up.
- My comment is that this should be to let people know of our service - not in a fashion which is designed to have us compete with other faiths or organizations as to which group is "better" or "holier".
- Aside from Catholic Charities, there are other organizations like the Knights of Columbus, etc. that should be included as well.
- Rather than needing to "better inform the populace about Catholic-sponsored services" the focus should be on informing the populace about services that demonstrate the reality of Jesus' love to those in need. Nobody who uses Catholic Charities' services goes there because this organization is Catholic; they do so because CC has the services they need. It is incumbent upon CC to say who is providing those services: Jesus.
- Of which populace do we speak? The support point and the challenge do not connect.

- "Suggestion (not really a modification).... Creating a link to coordinate Catholic Charities & Parishes
- means that each parish must document their needs first. ParishSoft (as I described in my
- modification to C-4) can be used to identify those needs at a parish level. If each parish can create a
- list of who parishioners are that require addition service AND who the parishioners are that can
- provide additional service (as a personal/professional expertise), that can be consolidated at the
- diocesan level."
- Should also promote as open to all and not just Catholics and is about service and not to proselytize. Good publicity not for accolades but to expand reach to others in need.
- I agree that general public and Catholics in our Diocese should recognize the extent of time, effort, and money devoted to the needs of the poor, needy, etc. But to what end? Needs to be re-written accordingly.

Challenge #6

There is a Need to Build & Leverage a Network of Interfaith Communities Working for Social Justice

68% Accept as is;

17% Accept with modification;

15% Do Not Accept

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- Both Challenge 1 & Challenge 6 use the term Social Justice which has meaning within the Catholic Church and meaning in the secular, political and governmental world. It is important to define Social Justice for our purposes, especially when we are reaching out to other faiths and potentially secular organizations.
 - The donations to Catholic Relief Services are given on an individual basis. Catholic Relief Services and Church World Services could help those coming across the border. These two organizations are already working together outside of the USA. (This knowledge I acquired from my involvement with Church Women United in CT, Newtown Unit.)
 - From East Haven CT to Norwalk CT CONect has been offering interfaith communities working for Social Justice an opportunity. A few parishes have joined in this community organization effort with people and resources, but many have not. Communicating the opportunities across parish lines might be a better way of opening communication and participation of people of different ages, races, and religion working on REAL problems closely and steadily. Why not add CONect as an opportunity to your communication efforts to people of all ages in the Diocese?
 - Instead of build and leverage a network, why not work with networks already in place. Perhaps joining them would identify our weakness.
 - This distracts from the greater issue of serving poor, and dilutes energy and focus from need to serve poor. Other faith communities with same good will gravitate together somewhat holistically - this is much lower priority.

 - Surely there are models for this sort of interfaith cooperation? I know New Haven had a long-running group dedicated to promoting and funding affordable housing. This could be a fertile ground for deepening Jewish-Christian understanding, particularly in towns like Greenwich, Stamford, and Westport.
 - We have friends that are ex Catholics and joined another denomination many years ago. They have been happy in that Church for a long time. Recently, the word came down from "on high" that gay marriage will be supported. They tell us that the Church is now in chaos and split nearly 50/50. People storm out of meetings never to return. Do we really have a history of being able to decide, describe and justify our social justice positions? Were we for Obamacare before we were against it? Did we recently cover-up our social injustice with the scandal. Was the recent

family SYNOD an example of how we decide on social justice issues? Who will decide exactly what is considered social justice? Seems like a good way to lose 50% of our members.

- I totally reject the assumptions and bogus supporting info re this challenge. It is not indifferent to those in need to understand that after spending billions of dollars on programs that are abject failures fostering a culture of dependency that another approach is required. The often unlooked aspect of Catholic Social Teaching is subsidiarity. We can be a lot more effective keeping things simple & local. Which border does Pope Francis have in mind? The maritime border between Turkey & Greece where Syrian children drown? Perhaps the borders between Turkey/Syria, Lebanon/Syria, Jordan/Syria, ISIS/Iraq? Those children (I suppose Christians are included) are certainly my brothers. Or perhaps our Holy Father was referring to the borders of El Salvador/Guatemala, Honduras/Guatemala or Guatemala/Mexico? Are the children that have been abused and murdered in a Mexican desert (probably at the hands of people who have been baptized, are devoted Guadalupanas, and celebrate Quincenera parties for their daughters) my brothers? I am certainly in solidarity with them. Now, if he is referring to the Mexico/US border and really has a preferential option for the poor, His Holiness should embrace policies that will lift people out of poverty. This is best accomplished locally in their home countries. It is unfortunate, especially for these brothers and sisters, that Pope Francis has uttered the type of babble I would expect from a Jesuit from Argentina.
- Not necessary to take on too much. Focus on challenges 4 & 5. Mother Teresa said "What can do you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family."
- My only addendum (or added emphasis) here concerns the keyword "Interfaith." In cooperating with our brother and sister Christians, we advance not only the works of charity and justice but also Christ's desire that all may be one. Working side by side involves communication -- talking to each other-- and there is a great need for the scandalously divided Christian community to come together and thereby exert a greater force for good.
- Need to make sure that "Interfaith Communities Working for Social Justice" truly have the same agenda, that our charitable outreach is not compromised by partnership with groups whose goals actually undermine the teachings of the Catholic Church. The Church has been hoodwinked on this issue before, for instance , the Catholic Campaign for Human Development has granted Church funds to community organizations that ultimately ended up supporting the Obama administrations' infringements on religious liberty. If our efforts simply end up aiding the secular agenda then we are helping no one.
- I do not see this as a challenge unless there is a general consensus that Catholics do not play nice in the sandbox. I personally do not see this as a big issue
- Define interfaith beyond Christian denomination.
- This challenge is redundant and overlaps with challenges 3 and 4. If we identify need and set up a volunteer network, we can then expand it to other communities. Let's identify the needs first and set up the volunteer network before we think about expansion. I voted no on this challenge.
- I agree to the challenge to build a network of interfaith communities; however, I have concerns with challenges to our Catholic "brand." I am by no means condoning indifference; I just want

to ensure we are bringing Christ to others and meeting the needs of all our sisters and brothers while at the same time, not becoming influenced by what is contrary to the one Catholic and Apostolic Church.

- My only issue with challenge six is that we definitely should start to build this network within our own diocese first. Once that is firmly established, I think we would have a better ability to create an interfaith community for service. With a solid base of people in our own Church, we can create the foundation to invite others to join our network and work towards more unity amongst those of different faiths.
- I agree with the supporting information but do not feel that we need to build an interfaith network.
- I feel we need to get our diocese in order first before we build a bridge to the interfaith communities
- Of lower priority, only because we may have limited resources, personnel, time, to handle this challenge
- This means getting more involved in politics... that is incredibly dangerous given how divided the church is. Be careful.
- We need to focus on ourselves. And our Faith before working with others
- Why interfaith? Ho can you celebrate Christ with "interfaith" caveats and modifications?
- We must include political issues when discerning this challenge. Without doing so will not accurately present our recommendations. In 2012, Catholics constituted approximately 25 percent of voters in national elections. Faith is not a private matter when it comes to bearing public witness to our faith as we participate in political issues. 1. How to identify with our faith when Assisted Suicide is being excepted as the norm (as recently reported in front-page news) as a preference to completely eliminate pain as opposed to valuing life. 2. How to educate parents that THEY... not the state... have the right to educate their children
- I voted against Challenge 6 because this is beyond the scope of the diocese and may be the work of National Catholic Charities.
- Slightly offensive that we need to open borders to help children and others in need. They are still our brothers and sisters and worthy of our help even if not in the US.
- I have reservations about the ecumenical concept. For example, it is well known and documented that the number one cause of poverty in this country is the breakdown of the family and single parent households. Catholic teaching promotes and supports the family unit, popular culture and other faiths do not necessarily share this and in some cases undermine the family. If we don't combine our Catholic teaching with our works of charity, we are only treating the symptoms and not the cure. In many instances our Catholic mission in works of charity is already undermined by government mandates. I worry that ecuminism will further undermine our teaching. We should be working to strengthen the connection between our doctrines and our works. Teaching what we believe has a better chance of turning around poverty than doing the works themselves.
- I disagree with the stated challenge because we must focus on cooperating with fellow Christians rather than "interfaith" activities. One strength of non-Catholic Christian service

organizations such as Jericho Partnership and Dorothy Day Hospitality House, both in Danbury, and the Christian Counseling Center of Greater Danbury, based in Brookfield is that all of them have Catholics as either paid employees or volunteers. The question should be whether the diocese should financially support non-Catholic Christian agencies rather than duplicating such services via “Catholic” agencies or institutions.

Challenge #7

Is there anything that rises to a major issue in this group?

Yes - Need to Add - 19%;

No - List is fine - 80%

(These are the results of the retaken vote)

- How do you regularly challenge Catholics (from Scripture, reflection and discernment and an understanding of human psychology) of all persuasions to be aware, authentic and active with everyone they meet on their journey.....and if their journey happens to be stuck in a cul de sac perhaps their leader needs to march them elsewhere for a change.....what will be the legacy of their group if they continue to pursue the same activity without relating to accomplishment that can be looked at as legacy? What are the priorities in mercy and justice? How are people voting with their feet, time and treasure?
- this study group has not identified a major challenge: How do we deal with those who do NOT "seem" to be needy - those with great material resources but who are spiritually destitute (Jesus' sermon on the mount, MT 5). And how do we deal with the spiritual destitution of the materially poor we are being called to serve? How do we, in other words, serve those who are starving spiritually? If we feed, clothe, house and employ someone who is needy but do not share with him that Jesus is doing this for him, not us, then we have failed him completely - and failed Jesus, too. How does Catholic Charities meet this need in its social justice work? I DON'T think this can be implied, either in the synod's work or in the work of CC. It must be a STATED objective in our work. The general tenor of discussion at our table is that the mention of Jesus as the motivator of our work - the joyful, surrendered obedience to our fabulously loving God - has been muted in the presentation.
- This group must include a challenge for political issues.
- Should our commitment to the sanctity of human life be specifically addressed by the committee?
- Catholic social teaching implores us to have a preferential option for the poor. Are our programs designed to keep the poor, poor? And the bureaucracies in business. How do we put bureaucracies out of business & truly get the poor, unpoor?
- Our discussion at the table seemed to deteriorate when one was suggesting that "we were getting political" ; i.e. paint me red or blue. Hence it was suggested that "Social Justice" should be defined or at least broadly embellished for a clearer understanding of what was being considered in this section. There is an interplay of words such as Social Justice, Catholic Social Teaching, Charitable Service, Catholic Charity, Unmet needs, and Catholic-Sponsored Services. Needs clarity.

- I believe it is absolutely imperative that we define "Social Justice" because it is used in many of the challenges. Social Justice is a "hot button" word.. and has a very intimidating & political connotation (at least everyone at my table on Saturday agreed that it does). I took a class on "Catholic Social Teaching" at Franciscan University and my professor defined Social Justice based what is written in the encyclical letter "Quadragesimo Anno, on reconstruction of the Social Order" We were taught that: "Social Justice is the virtue in our soul that directs all the other virtues towards accomplishment of the common good." and "Common Good is the condition in which human life flourishes". Could we substitute "Catholic Social Teaching" or even get to the root of the matter and call it "Corporal works of Mercy" to avoid any confusion?
- Are we consistently communicating (at least implicitly) our Faith, our Catholic values, in the Catholic Social Services and Counseling services that Catholic Charities and other Diocesan outreach efforts provide? Specifically, are we supporting the sanctity of Life and sanctity of marriage in the services that we provide?
- Are we, especially Catholic Charities - too dependent on government funding? Is this dependence giving any given administration an undue amount of influence on our work? It is foreseeable that Catholic agencies may soon be ineligible for certain government funding because our teaching on social issues. How do we make sure we can serve the needy with or without this support?
- I think if we look at the example in the Gospel--you see Christ teaching with words and His very life. He, Jesus went to preach the Good News and every need that came His way--He attended to people's needs immediately, even when He had other plans (they lower down the man on the mat) and Jesus interrupts what he is saying to show us what He is saying). What my main point is--don't forget the Gospel--I'm not saying you have--but just make sure that it's place is primary. God's love incarnate in Jesus--in this amazing gift of our faith impells us to loving all who come our way. The riches of our faith are so personally ours that we become like Christ.
- I sent some comments regarding only using certain pieces from the challenges. My goal was great comments that could be combined to make fewer challenges. Wonderful presentation and it was clear that much work was done.
- Build a coalition of Catholics in CT as a voice for social justice (along the lines of the Church Teaching on Social Justice) to impact public policy through Catholic community organizing. If we don't impact the large institutional systems that affect most of the poor and disenfranchised we resort to mostly charity, which is always a necessity, but does not accomplish the changes that need to happen. Establishing a network of Catholic activists we could become a strong voice for public /governmental policy that can really change things. This would also be a way for Catholics across the diocese to meet with others outside their own home parish.
- Use and recognize existing Catholic Organizations
- Social Justice has been a stated goal of Western civilization for at least the past two centuries. Much of the modern welfare state has been designed to address this issuehundreds of thousands of government workers have been hired to carry out this mission, and yet the problem still persists. What can the Church do in concert with, if not assume control over (or reassume) to partner with government to filled in the obvious gaps that still persist. Will the

Church try to gain access to some of the financial resources that are currently being collected by the states and localities to fund government run initiatives? I'm talking about Catholic political initiatives to fight for monies currently being collected by the government (expansion of Tax credits, etc)

- Which brand of "social justice"are we to be espousing? Is it the "Liberation theology" of the Jesuit leftists? Or is it the conservative social justice of the almost Jansenists.
- There is a gigantic need to make sure everyone actually knows what the Church 's social justice teachings actually are rather than let politicians hijack our terminology
- how do we address the disparity between the poor and wealthier areas of our diocese? how do we ensure the resources are dispersed based on need and not on parish wealth? how do we ensure that our inner-city parishes are supported in their unique mission?
- The major issue in this group is a failure to develop and communicate a consensus as to the specific actions we have in mind when we refer to "Social Justice."
- As I said in my one email sent Saturday, the study group has missed the challenge of dealing with those who "seem" not to be needy – those with great material resources who are nevertheless spiritually destitute. Spiritual destitution is the first thing Jesus mentions in the Sermon on the Mount. How do we serve those who are starving spiritually? How does Catholic Charities meet this particular need in its social justice work? And if it doesn't, what changes must occur in order for it to do so? I don't think this objective (meeting spiritual destitution) can be implied; it must be stated as a formal objective or goal. With specific regard to Catholic Charities, there is a crucial need to examine the nature of its counseling services. If its counseling is the same as you find in any secular NGO then it must be changed. Counselors can't ram Jesus down people's throats but the counselors must be prepared to introduce the reality of Jesus at appropriate times in their counseling work. Failing to do this actually works against healing because Jesus is the source of all emotional healing. And on this point I speak from personal experience. If it wasn't for the Christian counseling I have received I'd be spiritually, psychologically and emotionally dead by now.
- I find it difficult to evaluate, accept, or reject "challenges" that are "fuzzily" articulated. In many cases the support points are not clearly connected to the propositions. Furthermore, support points in one challenge sometimes evolve to challenges in their own right. 2. The propositions which I have chosen not to accept are those where I am uncertain as to what, exactly, I am accepting. 3. In the case of propositions, the art of less is more applies but has not been applied here. 4. Where there is more, it does not flow logically from the "challenge". The list does not need to grow. It needs to be more thoughtful, less fuzzy, and more focused.
- I believe after touching base with agencies/churches/communities re: their current programs, it is important to evaluate what is working, and how they may be incorporated into our parishes/communities. Once determined, ask for teams of two willing to visit parishes to educate them. Form a "PR" program using printed materials, visual aids, as well as asking for additional suggestions, that would engage all ages in the parish. There may be something with which even our homebound can help, i.e., making calls, sending cards to those in hospitals, nursing homes or are incarcerated. Once the program is up and running for a period of time,

invite the "teams" to join in a "prayer, share and supper" gathering to compare notes and offer ideas as to how, or if, to proceed.

- I feel that Social Justice is something that a certain generation always promotes. I do not believe this should be a primary focus of the synod. We already do Social Justice. Maybe the steering of this committee should work on the Mercy it becomes Christocentric
- The overarching challenge is to assess the scope of Diocesan charitable initiatives in light of the changing demographics of the Diocese and its evolving needs and identify the ways in which the strategy of our Catholic Charities and social justice activities need to change.