

## Philly Phoebe Circle

### Turnout Resources for April 1st Discernment Session

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- [Best practices](#)
- [Goals & Logistics](#)
- [Graphics for social media](#)
- [Sample Email](#) (including para #60-65)
- [Sample announcement from pulpit](#)
- [Sample bulletin announcements](#) (long and short)

*Best practices for building a base/team:*

- 🤝 Personalize your outreach - one to one or phone calls/texts are most effective
- 💪 Remind people of their efficacy - the impact their choice to participate in the synod has made already (all over the globe people have indicated that it's time to "rethink women's participation in the Church - all of us are now invited to weigh in on this in a prayerful way!)
- 🎯 Give them a concrete goal - be one of 5 people from your parish/community to attend
- ✅ Give them steps they can take: sign up by completing the RSVP, invite someone to join them, read the selections from [Enlarge the Space in Your Tent](#) pertaining to women (#60-65)
- 🎁 Tell them what to expect to get out of it - they will have a chance to continue to participate in the synod, discern with others what our priorities should be when it comes to women's participation in the church, build a community of disciples ready to witness to / support women's *full* participation

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#### Goals:

- Build community of disciples across the Archdiocese committed to walking the synodal path together and discerning about women's full participation in the life of the Church
- Learn about how women have impacted the global synod process so far and what the Vatican heard from around the world pertaining to women in the first stage of the synod
- Discern together with portions of the the global synthesis document from the listening stage of the global synod, [Enlarge the Space in Your Tent](#), pertaining to "rethinking women's participation"
- Identify priorities for our respective parishes as well as the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for discerning three areas of global consensus involving women's full participation in the life of the church: 1) women in decision making roles, 2) women preaching, and 3) a female diaconate (para #64)

#### Logistics:

- Saturday, April 1st, 2 to 4 PM
- St. Vincent De Paul Parish - 109 E Price Street, Philadelphia PA
- Refreshments will be provided
- All are welcome to participate in the Palm Sunday Vigil at 4 PM

**RSVP** (one of two ways to capture this):

- [RSVP form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeluLdXwGJuxaBs8nLOdHxGUdcnPyBVQg-VY3ffjU_pZDkrMg/viewform?usp=sf_link) (embed in your email):  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeluLdXwGJuxaBs8nLOdHxGUdcnPyBVQg-VY3ffjU\\_pZDkrMg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeluLdXwGJuxaBs8nLOdHxGUdcnPyBVQg-VY3ffjU_pZDkrMg/viewform?usp=sf_link)
- QR Code (option for the tech savvy among us)



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**Graphics for Social Media** (thank you, Tinamarie!)

- [Instagram Story - Spanish](#)
- [Instagram Story - English](#)
- [Instagram Post - English](#)
- [Instagram Post - Spanish](#)
- [Facebook Banner - English](#)
- [Facebook Banner - Spanish](#)

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### **Sample Email**

Dear -

Our Church finds itself at a critical historical moment of reform and renewal thanks to the global synod process that continues to unfold. Since every corner of the Church registered concerns about women's full participation in the life of the church during the listening phase of the synod, *all of us*, **by virtue of our baptisms**, are invited to discern together what the Holy Spirit is calling us to do in terms of "rethinking women's participation"!

I'm writing to invite you to be part of a PARISH/COMMUNITY's group to attend a discernment session on "rethinking women's participation" in the Church on Saturday, April 1 from 2 to 4 PM at St. Vincent De Paul parish. This is a title of a six-paragraph section of [Enlarge the Space in Your Tent](#), the global synthesis document from the Vatican released in October (see full text below). We'll build the skills of synodality - candid sharing, active listening and communal discernment, in the contexts of relationship building and prayer - while "rethinking women's

participation" in the Church. The synodal session will be bi-lingual (English and Spanish). Refreshments will be served and all will have the option to attend St. Vincent's Palm Sunday vigil Mass at 4 PM.

Please complete [this form](#) if you're able to attend or if you're unable to but would like to be kept in the loop on next steps that will likely emerge from this synodal gathering.

## **Rethinking women's participation**

60. The call for a conversion of the Church's culture, for the salvation of the world, is linked in concrete terms to the possibility of establishing a new culture, with new practices and structures. A critical and urgent area in this regard concerns the role of women and their vocation, rooted in our common baptismal dignity, to participate fully in the life of the Church. A growing awareness and sensitivity towards this issue is registered all over the world.

61. From all continents comes an appeal for Catholic women to be valued first and foremost as baptized and equal members of the People of God. There is almost unanimous affirmation that women love the Church deeply, but many feel sadness because their lives are often not well understood, and their contributions and charisms not always valued. The Holy Land report notes: "Those who were most committed to the synod process were women, who seem to have realized not only that they had more to gain, but also more to offer by being relegated to a prophetic edge, from which they observe what happens in the life of the Church;" and continues: "In a Church where almost all decision-makers are men, there are few spaces where women can make their voices heard. Yet they are the backbone of Church communities, both because they represent the majority of the practicing members and because they are among the most active members of the Church." The Korean report confirms: "Despite the great participation of women in various Church activities, they are often excluded from key decision-making processes. Therefore, the Church needs to improve its awareness and institutional aspects of their activities" (EC Korea). The Church faces two related challenges: women remain the majority of those who attend liturgy and participate in activities, men a minority; yet most decision-making and governance roles are held by men. It is clear that the Church must find ways to attract men to a more active membership in the Church and to enable women to participate more fully at all levels of Church life.

62. In every area of their lives, women ask the Church to be their ally. This includes addressing the social realities of impoverishment, violence and diminishment faced by women across the globe. They call for a Church at their side, and greater understanding and support in combating these forces of destruction and exclusion. Women

participating in the synodal processes desire both Church and society to be a place of flourishing, active participation and healthy belonging. Some reports note that the cultures of their countries have made progress in the inclusion and participation of women, progress that could serve as a model for the Church. “This lack of equality for women within the Church is seen as a stumbling block for the Church in the modern world” (EC New Zealand).

63. In different forms, the problem is present across cultural contexts and concerns the participation and recognition of laywomen as well as women religious. The report from Superiors of Institutes of Consecrated Life notes: “Sexism in decision-making and Church language is prevalent in the Church... As a result, women are excluded from meaningful roles in the life of the Church, discriminated against by not receiving a fair wage for their ministries and services. Women religious are often regarded as cheap labour. There is a tendency – in some Churches – to exclude women and to entrust ecclesial functions to permanent deacons; and even to undervalue religious life without the habit, without regard for the fundamental equality and dignity of all baptized Christian faithful, women and men” (USG/UISG).

64. Almost all reports raise the issue of full and equal participation of women: “The growing recognition of the importance of women in the life of the Church opens up possibilities for greater, albeit limited, participation in Church structures and decision-making spheres” (EC Brazil). However, the reports do not agree on a single or complete response to the question of the vocation, inclusion and flourishing of women in Church and society. After careful listening, many reports ask that the Church continue its discernment in relation to a range of specific questions: the active role of women in the governing structures of Church bodies, the possibility for women with adequate training to preach in parish settings, and a female diaconate. Much greater diversity of opinion was expressed on the subject of priestly ordination for women, which some reports call for, while others consider a closed issue.

65. A key element of this process concerns the recognition of the ways in which women, especially women religious, are already at the forefront of synodal practices in some of the most challenging social situations we face. The contribution submitted by the Union of Superiors General and the International Union of Superiors General notes: “There are seeds of synodality where we break new ground in solidarity: securing a future of racial and ethnic justice and peace for black, brown, Asian and Native American brothers and sisters (United States); connecting in depth with indigenous and native sisters and brothers (Americas); opening new avenues of presence of religious sisters in diverse movements; alliance with like-minded groups to address key social issues (such as climate change, refugees and asylum seekers, homelessness), or issues of specific

nations.” In these contexts, women seek collaborators and can be teachers of synodality within wider Church processes.

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### **Sample Announcement from the Pulpit**

Our Church finds itself at a critical historical moment of reform and renewal thanks to the global synod process that continues to unfold. The Vatican’s synthesis document at the conclusion of the listening phase of the synod, called “Enlarge the Space in your Tent,” reports that every corner of the Church registered concerns about women’s full participation in the life of the church. A six-paragraph section titled “rethinking women’s participation,” begins this way: *“The call for a conversion of the Church’s culture, for the salvation of the world, is linked in concrete terms to the possibility of establishing a new culture, with new practices and structures. A critical and urgent area in this regard concerns the role of women and their vocation, rooted in our common baptismal dignity, to participate fully in the life of the Church. A growing awareness and sensitivity towards this issue is registered all over the world”*

The next phase of the synod is a time for the whole church to discern together with what we’ve heard - to figure out together what it means and what the Holy Spirit may be inviting us to do in response. Join others from PARISH NAME, along with parishioners from other communities, in participating in a bi-lingual (English and Spanish) synodal discernment session to rethink women’s participation in the Church at St. Vincent De Paul parish in Germantown on Saturday April 1st from 2 to 4 PM. There will be community building, prayer, spiritual conversations and collective discernment about how to contribute to this process of conversion of the Church’s culture where women’s participation is concerned. For more information, reach out to PARISH CONTACT PERSON.

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### **Sample Bulletin Announcement - Long**

#### **Rethinking Women’s Participation**

In the beginning of their six-paragraph section of the global synthesis document from the listening stage of the synod titled “rethinking women’s participation,” the Vatican synthesis team states: *“The call for a conversion of the Church’s culture, for the salvation of the world, is linked in concrete terms to the possibility of establishing a new culture, with new practices and structures. A critical and urgent area in this regard concerns the role of women and their vocation, rooted in our common baptismal dignity, to participate fully in the life of the Church. A growing awareness and sensitivity towards this issue is registered all over the world”* (“Enlarge the Space in Your Tent,” para 60). The entire Church is called upon to discern three areas of consensus that have emerged from around the world pertaining to women’s full flourishing in the Church: women in decision making roles, women preaching, and a female diaconate (para #64).

St. Vincent De Paul Parish, in conjunction with members of the growing Philadelphia St. Phoebe Circle, a group of lay and ordained disciples lifting up the witness of St. Phoebe’s leadership in

and service to the early Christian community in Rome (see Romans 16:1-2), will offer a bi-lingual (English and Spanish) synodal discernment session on “rethinking women’s participation” on Saturday, April 1 from 2 to 4 PM. There will be community building, prayer, spiritual conversation and communal discernment. Participants are also welcome to join the Palm Sunday Vigil Mass at 4 PM. Refreshments will be served. For more information, email [maureen@discerningdeacons](mailto:maureen@discerningdeacons).

Embed QR code (above) if able?

### **Sample Bulletin Announcement - Short**

St. Vincent De Paul Parish, in conjunction with members of the growing Philadelphia St. Phoebe Circle, a group of lay and ordained disciples lifting up the witness of St. Phoebe’s leadership in and service to the early Christian community in Rome (see Romans 16:1-2), will offer a bi-lingual (English and Spanish) synodal discernment session on “rethinking women’s participation” on Saturday, April 1 from 2 to 4 PM. This is the title of a 6-paragraph section of the global synthesis document from the first phase of the synod in which the Vatican recognizes that “a growing awareness and sensitivity towards this issue (that of women’s full participation) registered all over the world.” There will be community building, prayer, spiritual conversation and communal discernment. Refreshments Participants are also welcome to join the Palm Sunday Vigil Mass at 4 PM. Refreshments will be served. For more information, email [maureen@discerningdeacons](mailto:maureen@discerningdeacons).

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### **Rethinking Women’s Participation - Excerpts from [“Enlarge the Space in Your Tent”](#)**

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