



Faith Leaders Gather for Synodal Discernment

As part of our local synodal process, Bishop Felipe Estévez and Catholic leadership gathered in small discernment groups on April 21 with leaders of other Christian denominations for prayer, fellowship, and dialogue at Marywood Retreat and Conference Center in St. Johns.

The small group conversations were rich and held great promise for the future as we strive to fulfill our mission as a church. The input that surfaced on the questions of listening, shared responsibility, and formation will be added to the 10-page story of our diocese that will be folded into a larger document compiled by the U.S Bishops and sent to Pope Francis.

Some very practical suggestions surfaced, and these will be added to our diocesan action plan. Key among these is the need to learn about each other and from one another. Fear and ignorance were listed as detriments to Communion, Participation, and Mission. These hurdles could be overcome by small group gatherings, similar to our synodal process groups, wherein local Christian churches share prayer, and fellowship, and continue the dialogue. Stay tuned for exciting developments from this gathering, The Holy Spirit is certainly at work in the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Photos, from left, Bishop Felipe Estévez and right, Bishop Samuel Howard of the Episcopal Diocese of Florida. Photos by Fran Ruchalski.