



This first session of “Conversations...” for this semester focused on Pope Francis’ theme for the Synod on Youth, “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment.” The presenters, Dr. Theresa O’Keefe from BC’s School of Theology and Ministry, and Mr. Andrew Mercado, our Coordinator of Vocations, both spoke from their experiences of working with this critical population in the Church and to the importance of the Church in listening to these young Catholics. As a result, this can only help us to understand where they are coming from in today’s worldwide cultures and how to respond to them in ministry.

Dr. O’Keefe first mentioned the challenges of structure, organization and management in the Church that youth encounter. In contrast, she noted Pope Francis’ concern for focusing on the meaning of life, the purpose of life as people of faith and the importance of having a prophetic stance based on the gospel. This is what the world needs today and is the hope for the future.

Mr. Mercado spoke of the Synod as a listening experience for Youth and Bishops as a means of guidance and inspiration during an age of a shifting social landscape and how discernment must play a role. He used Moses and the burning bush as a metaphor of curiosity of what is and not what we want it to be. We must engage our youth in the ‘messiness’ of our life in the Church, recognizing the sufferings of the young, not to let structures get in the way but be hopeful to challenges, broaden our horizons and witness to authenticity.



Following the presentations, there was a lively discussion between the presenters, the residents, community and guests which was enthusiastic, thoughtful and enriching.