

Synod Synthesis

Sacred Heart Parish - Delta

Question 1: What helps or prevents you from being active in the Church's mission?

What helps you become active in the Church's mission?

i. Sense of Belonging & Community

- An encouraging & welcoming Community
 - Bring back Hospitality Ministry
 - Newcomers welcoming social event
 - Greeters @ Masses - laity (young & old) & priests
- personal invitation to join events & ministries
- Being active in the parish makes it easier to be active in the Church's mission
- Family / peer support → affirms faith, frees us to take time away from family
- Being part of our strong SH School community / Working in a Catholic setting
- Serving/connecting with different parish groups
 - many hands make light work
 - feeling valued when serving
 - Cooperation of the clergy & laity to carry out the mission of the Church
- The universality of the Catholic Church
 - ability to participate in the Mass anywhere in the world & feel at home
 - overcoming cultural & language barriers - binds us as 1 family in Christ
- People of God witnessing good actions in the Church

ii. Self-knowledge

- To know & apply our: gifts & abilities, time, good health, our attitudes, our personality [e.g. Shyness]; what gives us connection & joy
- balancing other responsibilities & demands
- Change of mindset - "What can I do for the church vs what the church can do for me?" (similar to JFK speech)
- To know & to act faithfully & honourably in the world

iii. Vitality

- Effective leadership & participation by pastor at parish activities & events
- Sense of energy: joy, positivity, love, enthusiasm in the parish community
- Evangelize within & outside the Church - family, friends, children & youth
- Sense of purpose when involved in a parish activity
- Sense of tradition with a liveliness & excitement for youth & children

iv. Mass / Sacraments / Faith Formation

- To know & experience the beauty, truth & goodness of the Church
- Return to in-person Mass!

- Continued access to the Mass & the Sacraments (even through pandemic)
- Sacraments, rich prayer life, Adoration - these strengthen us for mission
- Lively homilies offering words of inspiration & instruction to break open the meaning of the Word
- Rituals, community prayer, good music & devotions [daily rosary etc.], daily mass, sense of purpose & community
- Deep & strong foundation of Faith; education & knowledge to minister to students, children, family, etc
- Access & awareness of good online/ in-person faith formation & resources - Behold, Proclaim, Alpha, Bible Study, Bishop Barron series, etc...
- Clear communication about faith events, programs, etc.
- Ability to grow in Faith together, regardless of where you're starting from (new or mature in Faith)
- Catholic school education & Catholic upbringing

What prevents or hinders you become active in the Church's mission?

i Lack of Ability & Availability

- Age, mobility, health issues, lack of enthusiasm, interest, laziness, apathy
- Perceived lack of ability
- Lack of confidence
- Aging congregation - youth & young adults not attending mass
- Lack of access for mobility-impaired persons
- Time / Busyness
 - overwhelmed with family & other commitments & responsibilities
 - when parish events don't fit with work/life schedule
 - not the top priority
- Isolation - Pandemic
- Lack of knowledge of the Faith & where to find credible sources for adults & children

ii Disconnection

- Lack of sense of belonging & meaningful connections - dysfunctional parish family
- Sense of negativity, judgment; lack of joy, excitement, vitality or celebration
- Unwelcoming feel in parish/ weak sense of community/lack of pastoral care; feeling ignored or left out by pastor
- Lack of social gatherings, interaction, relationships within the parish (pre-pandemic too)
- Lack of access to the Sacraments (Anointing, Reconciliation, Eucharist for shut-ins) A safe environment is not provided for immunocompromised individuals to receive communion/participate in functions since in-person mass resumed
- Feeling isolated/shut ins (seniors) not having anyone to attend Mass with you - online Mass or faith series due to Covid
 - no one to bring the Eucharist
- No outreach when someone is absent for any length of time from priest or parish ie: during pandemic
- Lack of faith groups/ministries/outreach for (youth, young adults, young families, seniors, etc...) like: Alpha, Bible Study, Catholic Family Groups, Youth Group, Kids Club, etc
- Lack of ministries/outreach for various ages, interests & needs
- Disconnect between the parish & the school: Is the priest making attempts to connect with the congregation; the school staff & students?
- Stagnant liturgies: leadership & music -->unrelatable & lengthy homilies
- Bad experience with anyone in authority in the Church leads to fear & distrust

- Undue protocol & authoritarian attitude (clergy & diocesan directives)
 - Overly bureaucratic
 - Leadership that dominates without being Spirit-led
 - too structured & conservative: pre-Vatican thinking
 - Top down vs lateral (clericalism vs pastoral)
 - Accusations of hypocrisy
- Not open to trying new things
- Values & lifestyle conflicts with Church practices - fear of judgment (Divorce, Remarried, Women's authority in the Church, homophobia, Racism)
- Scandals in the Church - hiding the wrongs to protect image & wealth (need to create transparency to help prevent sexual, financial & moral scandals)

iii Unawareness

- Lack of awareness of RCAF Faith Formation (Behold/Proclaim); lack of access for those without internet
- Lack of clarity of specific mission/role when recruiting people for roles
- Not equipped or afraid to respond to current scandals in the Church/or evangelize due to hot issues [pro-choice, sexual 'freedom', etc. and scandals] giving a negative image of the Church.
- Lack of awareness of charitable works within the parish or how to get involved

Question 2: What areas of the Church's mission are we missing or neglecting?

I. Better Faith Formation & Development For Laity

i Connectivity

- Sense of Community is missing
- Lack of positive relationships with:
 - Church
 - others (longing for genuine, loving community. Feeling unwelcome in the parish community)
 - If you're not part of the school, you don't feel part of the community
- Need Accompaniment groups
 - (buddy system), walk alongside neophytes, newcomers, form small connect groups
- People are leaving the Church due to lack of interest/ engagement/ fellowship
- Mentoring / support system for young families. Foster a keen sense of community at the parish level

ii Formation

- Lack of preparing/equipping people for the times we live in. We need encouragement & knowledge to live in a perpetual state of grace, especially today
- Solid training, formation & continued catechesis for children, teenagers & adults - in easily understood / simple language
- Lacking consistency of programs across parishes. Should be a predictable base of programs ie: Alpha, Youth Group, etc... Then when families or pastors move to a new parish, there is continuity. Introduce a Program Administrator in each parish to oversee & implement this
- Better communication to build awareness of RCAF faith formation programs in parishes so we're not reinventing the

wheel - Behold, Proclaim, etc...

- More sharing of in-person events & good Catholic websites – daily Mass, rosary [with Our Lady of Fatima prayer], other devotions
- Church needs to better communicate doctrine on Pro-Life issues
- Be mindful of non-work hours for Mass & faith events to accommodate people, especially more adult and youth teaching/programs
 - attach events to Masses when people already are coming
- Equip parents to build strong domestic churches
- build faith connections at the school age level – sacramentals & rites that are used in the mass
- Study salvation history [OT & NT] the Sacraments & why the church does what it does [e.g. apparent hurdles to baptism, marriage,] Church history, and dogmas;
- Foster a deeper understanding of the gospel and the Mass to help appreciate the values of the rituals and traditions of our faith;

iii Outreach & Witnessing

- Encourage and help laity to use opportunities in daily life to witness and, if asked, explain why [encourage people to bring family to Mass, saying grace in public, wearing a crucifix, wearing ashes, etc.]
- Evangelization & apologetics training - More preparation for how to lovingly share Church teaching on today's hot issues - racism, bullying, sex [gay issues, porn, fornication,] pro-life [abortion and euthanasia,] etc.
- Lack of parish opportunities for charitable works. This can also build ecumenical connections / partnering with local churches!
- Opportunities to put faith in action - participate “hands on” vs “do as I say”

II. Better Faith Formation & Development For Priests & Parish Leaders

- Homilies - solid training to develop skills to spark and hold interest when preaching
 - more concise, current, relevant, relatable, practical & inspiring homilies based on the readings - not about donations & meetings [pro-life].
 - Greater connection to the Word...”How can we apply what the Gospel teaches practically in our daily lives --
 - Real life 2022 experiences / & relatable experiences to / for our kids, young adults, adults
- Pastoral approach needed - training on effective leadership & relationship building vs. admin/clericalism
 - Pastor needs to be community minded; active in vital ministries like RCIA
 - Stop showing partiality to certain groups, distancing from everyone else
 - listen & accept constructive criticism
 - Build bridges not hurdles when young people want to get married or baptized
 - Need pastoral advocacy & participation in parish events & initiative. Failure to do so undermines the effectiveness & success
 - Greater participation & role of the Deacon in the parish
- Increased presence/visibility of priests in the classrooms
 - connecting with the children / games, sacramentals explained, favourite stories
- Revitalizing our church/Mass: through updated music, ministry & programming that reflects demographics of those who are not attending the church or have left.
- Making the Church relevant to people of today
- Revitalizing what is being communicated at mass - are people leaving mass feeling joy? Do they feel a connection with

the church community? Is the priest making attempts to connect with the congregation and school?

- Masses are long & arduous, often focusing on hot topics, ie: abortion, euthanasia, or reminding us to give \$\$\$. Churches should be welcoming, short & to the point!
- Assess what is working & what is not working
- Building activities to nourish relationships between parishioners & priests
- Reinstate a later Sunday Mass to accommodate more people
- More privacy in confession for kids (face-to-face is the only option @ PREP & SHS)
- Pay more attention to the direction given by the Archdiocese for church run programs (universal) vs. autonomous churches "doing their own thing"
- The formation of people in leadership that hold authority in the structure of the Church to better represent Church doctrine - Eucharistic & lay ministers & teachers
- Leadership & facilitation training for effective meetings & group work
- Treat the church like a business; we have a shortage of good volunteers; some paid expert help is needed to draw people in & keep them. (Youth & family ministries)
- Take note of what's effective in other Christian churches in our community. Adapt. Work together.

III. Effective Outreach

- Inclusion needed - we use tradition & rules to exclude people from the Eucharist.
 - Sacraments are for sinners. Sinners need to be invited into the Church.
 - Children have been denied Baptism because their parents aren't married in the Church.
Godparents, Grandparents can also help support & guide
 - Embrace everyone! Fallen away Catholics, unaffiliated, & atheists.
- Need for outreach/charitable opportunities to live serve the marginalized, broken-hearted, lonely, disabled, those in need of healing & social justice
- Diversity - Go out with love, meet people where they're at without judgment, making others feel loved & welcome - to people of all ages, abilities, needs & interests.
 - Advocate for the marginalized: mental health, physical disabilities, anxiety, drug & alcohol abuse, elderly, isolated, lonely, Gay (welcome & love without judgment)
 - Partisanship vs open mindedness - Synodality → compassion to objectively listen to perspectives of others: mental health, youth, seniors. "We are all broken people & must remain open to everyone's brokenness."
 - More social, community-building & family-building activities – e.g. opportunities to do the charitable works of the church & serve those in need (for example in the Downtown East side)
- 4-walling - Connect groups - smaller, safe warmer groups are needed
- Sex Education - the Church needs to promote sex ed & start programs that help children protect themselves from sexual predators
- Social Media - greater, more effective presence
 - Upgrade a/v equipment, technology in the church to offer contemporary music, not just old hymns from the hymnals to enliven the celebration & draw young people
 - Greater use of technology - online options as well as in-person for faith formation/programs - RCIA, Alpha, Bible Studies, etc.; apps for children to allow better/easier understanding of the readings.
- Indigenous People - focus on financially making reparations as promised
- Seniors

- build ties with Augustine House Sr's home through school & parish groups
- are we including them & interacting with younger members of the church community
- are we using our seniors' experiences & wisdom
- Keep in touch with "super seniors" who can no longer attend mass/church functions - bring them the Eucharist
- Understand the needs of the parish community such as seniors, marginalized & those isolated due to the pandemic; offer support
- Youth & single young adults,
 - Invest funds to build a vibrant youth ministry/programs drawing them in to share their own issues
 - Wide disconnect between clergy & youth
 - Feeling that the church is hyper focused on older audience - younger generation is neglected
 - Lack of education/understanding of the Faith, leads to them falling away
 - Youth Min - balance social & spiritual components: social justice & interests [sports, arts, etc.,].
 - Find ways to draw youth to Mass & to be involved in the Church
 - Go where they are. Meet them where they're at spiritually. Youth are being pulled by a secular world today.
 - Connect young married couples with other couples
- Young Families
 - Evangelize
 - Offer support programs, ie: Moms & Tots
 - Build up & support the domestic church
 - Buddy up - connect & invite families to join @ Mass & parish events
 - LWC - bring it back
 - Kids club
 - Pancake breakfasts, Coffee social after Sunday Mass, etc.
- Women expand their role as Deacons
- Ecumenical connections & integration with inter-faith groups & ethnic outreach to diverse races/cultures [emphasize unity rather than differences]

III. Build Prayer Ministries

- use prayer ministries to pray for the sick (host healing sessions 1-2x a year)
- Form & use prayer teams to allow the gifts of the Spirit to be used broadly with love and humility.

Question 3: What particular issues in the Church do we need to pay more attention to?

I. Holy Orders Formation

- Improve priest & deacon selection, screening, training in leadership & regular evaluations; as well as in Church doctrine & Canon Law,
- More support for priests/deacons: equip for inspiring homilies, time management, prioritize access to Sacraments
- Imbalance of power & authority. The Church needs to prove that it's listening to all voices - Synodality at all levels!
- Help priests to embrace shared authority - new pastors may begin their role by undoing what's working & established in a parish. Relax & be less rigid for the greater good
- Declining Participation - We are losing church members. There is a lack of vocations to serve the church.

- Review & expand the role of women in the church
 - value women's leadership & find ways to enthusiastically include & promote women as deacons & leaders in the Church & in supportive roles in the Vatican / Church
 - Give nuns the leadership of orders, same status & voice as bishops
 - Mother Superiors should be invited to Synod Phase 3 in Rome
- Inclusive language - in homilies, prayers & hymns

II. Lay Leadership, Participation & Formation

- Continued catechesis, Gr 8 & up to awaken what & why we do what we do. Return to basics.
- Recruit & develop - New (younger) blood, new leaders, new energy, new approaches
- Cultivate young people at an early age to continue the mission
- Focus on drawing young families back
 - Special Masses for families - support & build up good values
 - Declining Mass & parish event attendance (particularly families & young adults)
 - Equip the domestic church & all the faithful for the times we live in
 - Peers ministering to peers: Youth, families, seniors
- More paid staff vs relying on volunteers. Treat it like a business: need to spend \$ to make \$
- Need more vitality! - updated music, ministry & programming reflecting demographics of those no longer attending church
- Assess what's working & what's not
- Ensure events/gatherings are designed & led so that people are not intimidated by large or unwelcoming/inaccessible facilities

III. More Guidance to Deal w/ Current Hot Issues In Society

- Make Church more relevant to the people today [e.g. Guidance on how to respond to current world tragedies, scandals in the Church and secular values]
- More education on church's views/issues without being rigid!
- Women's leadership - value, include & promote women leadership in the church
- Special Pro-life masses, masses for other current issues 1x / yr - educate parishioners on the options to save lives & to live in truth & love
- Talks & communication on Church's response to hot issues like the sex abuse, LGBTQ, & Indigenous People. Support for victims
- People feeling marginalized due to:
 - sexual orientation - How can we be more accepting & loving while still following the doctrines of the Church?
 - marital status - e.g. Divorced, mixed marriages, Remarried, Common-law
- Revival of ecumenism

III. More Transparency

- Openness & courage for Church to admit wrong doings. Silence creates confusion & doubt.
- local Cdn Catholic Church's response to Truth & Reconciliation=what is actually being done & who is making sure the Church is accountable? There's a lot of frustration!
- Acknowledge the good & the bad - Full disclosure.

- Consistency in conveying the truth & Church teaching
- Church to be more transparent on Vatican issues and actions .e.g. sexual abuse, residential schools; do not cover up, expose to the light & share how future abuse will be minimized.
- The Church needs to be more proactive in defending its position in media attacks or fake news
- Popes have made peace with the Orthodox churches, but not enough follow up
- The Church should be a source of dialogue to avert crises at the world level

Question 4: What particular issues in society do we need to pay more attention to?

I. Secularism

- Indifference to Christianity / countercultural / no longer living in Christendom
 - Strive to make the Church the hub of the community once more
- Culture now living by relativism [I'm god] & Marxism [you are to blame for my unhappiness] lack of compassion, kindness --> selfishness
- No longer know/trust God or the Church. Weak personal relationship with Jesus & indifference [or anger due to scandals] to the Church
- No longer believe in objective truth [fraud, lying, gossip, slander is now OK]
- We've lost our objective moral center & standard [ignore the 10 commandments] & act without a sense of common good or personal responsibility
- Society is focusing on self reliance & Christians are becoming more isolated
- Need great courage to speak the Truth & to receive the Truth

II. Culture Of Death

- No longer see life as sacred [abortion, assisted suicide & euthanasia, etc.]
 - Need more effective Pro-life guidance & strategies
 - include the Prayer for Reverence for Life at Mass more often
 - Get to the heart of the matter. Counsel & support people in their distress
 - Some practicing Catholics not in line with Church teachings that life begins at conception
- Drug crisis - Opioid epidemic
- Climate change crisis

III. Culture of Unchastity

- Rampant sexual immorality [pornography, fornication, issues]
- Address issues about gender fluidity, sexual orientation, sexual identification & how as Christians are we to accept societal expectations & still uphold the teachings of our Catholic faith
- Actively promote how love, mercy & truth can be prudently lived in current times

IV. Devaluing the Family

- Losing value for families as more see family as an obstacle to one's freedom
- breakdown of our families through illness, addiction, domestic abuse, drug abuse, adultery, divorce.
 - Need to build up families, offer support/ provide help to families who are struggling (breakdown of families leads to breakdown of society)
- Family / laity not living by example or teaching kids the value of faith, respect, Christian love
- Youth & Seniors - we need to listen. Make connections. Value their experience & wisdom

V. Culture Has Lost the Care For True Social Justice

- Human suffering is on our doorsteps:
 - homelessness - with youth & many others
 - lack of affordable homes for all, especially young families and seniors. o Hungry children in our schools.
 - isolation of elders & marginalized → pandemic
- Need better care of the needy [true social justice of love not politics]
- Mental Health & Well-Being
 - build awareness & support for mental health issues/depression/despair among students & families
 - facilitate education
 - support for those affected
 - work to inspire hope based on our Christian beliefs
 - Remove the barriers for migrant workers, immigrants, refugees, new people to our country. Sponsoring & offering opportunities to participate in & be nourished by the Sacraments.
- Refugee Crisis - sponsor families ie: Ukrainians
- Correct unfair distribution of wealth, power & authority
- Address issues about gender fluidity, sexual orientation, sexual identification & how as Christians are we to accept societal expectations & still uphold the teachings of our Catholic faith.
- Indigenous Justice
 - Study & promote calls to Action of Truth & Reconciliation committee
 - Show respect for Indigenous spirituality
 - connection, reparation & communication: build relationships, as they are open to it
 - Acknowledgement & Transparency of Abuse in Residential Schools (it's been swept under the rug)
- People persecute other people who are different or think differently (stigmas) – racism, bullying, disrespect of disabled people, Catholics, other political party members – need compassion to listen to the other person's perspective. LGBTQ. Divorced. Remarried. Disabled. Mental Health. Homophobia! Addicts - Drugs & alcohol. single parents.
- We judge others without mercy & don't forgive – cancel culture.
- Social media platforms - ostracism / isolation / bullying / conspiracy theories
 - conversely, could affect change to connect church members worldwide, including youth to share views & impart change
 - Fake/corrupt news - media
- Partisanship vs Open-Mindedness. Compassion to listen objectively to other's perspectives.
- Church could affect change on these issues through social media: connect Church members worldwide (including youth) and share views and work together to impart change
- strengthening marriage & family → strengthens society
- need for strong leadership in society

Question 5: How can we, the local Church, journey with our Indigenous sisters and brothers in a process of healing and reconciliation?

I. Be Informed on the Truth of Indigenous History in Canada

- Learn, acknowledge & pass on the true, real history of Canada
 - What was/is the lived experience of those who suffer due to colonization?
 - The church must support the uninformed & truthfully answer their questions

- workshops are needed for parishioners & clergy about the past, present & future of residential schools
- make credible resources easily accessible to the laity
- Educate our children - build respect for Indigenous experience & culture
- Make a lived commitment to actively listen to Indigenous voices & the truth from the heart:
 - Invite indigenous people who are willing to come & speak at the parish level; perhaps residential school survivors to the parish [and Church experts] with the intent of actively & respectfully listening & learning
- Pray
 - for clarity & to grow in knowledge & understanding to foster Healing & Reconciliation
 - for the truth to be revealed & for clarity as to how we move forward with our indigenous community in reconciliation
- Following an apology there needs to be a firm resolve that it never happens again
- Need to end guilt dynamic [victim vs oppressor,] focus on provable injustices, a balanced look at history, humility and love, mutual forgiveness & how to move forward from here

II. Solidarity with Indigenous People

- Engage in more dialogue & ask for input from our First Nations in our community! How does our local First Nation feel? What was/is their experience? What do they ask of us now? Follow their lead.
- Reach out, connect & strive to build relationships, rapport & comfort - ask what steps we can take to come together.
- Collaborate with Indigenous people to find ways to foster healing
- Initiate invitations to build relationships with our neighbours. Start small. Extend invitations & welcome 1st Nations people to a BBQ or “Get to know you” activities, Then,
 - host parish / church gatherings, ceremonies, tributes, & activities: youth movie night, retreats, games with children
 - invite local First Nation elders/people to have a voice in church activities: speak to or at church functions &/or “parent” evening @ school
 - Host (monthly/seasonal) Mass / Prayer dedicated to healing & dialogue
 - Be open to, welcome, honour & include Indigenous culture/ traditions/ expressions of spirituality/ ceremony/ language/ land acknowledgement: ie: art, icons, drums, music, smudging, colours, according to their direction & desire
 - Celebrate Feast of St. Kateri Tekakwitha with Mass, Invite Indigenous people as honoured guests, acknowledge & honour them (if they are comfortable)
- Acknowledge the richness of Indigenous language & culture: Include at the beginning of mass a good morning or goodnight in the hul'qumi'num language & land acknowledgement
- be more open, respectful & accepting of the culture & practices of our Indigenous sisters & brothers to promote unity, & connection.
- Follow the steps taken by parishes like: Sacred Heart, Vancouver see: <https://bccatholic.ca/news/canada/church-wants-to-help-indigenous-protect-language-culture>
- More needs to be done to remove age old biases, to become a more welcoming parish towards our Indigenous sisters & brothers
- Follow the lead of Indigenous People on this Journey of Healing. Strive to hear & understand the pain; remove defensiveness
- Personally take initiative to learn about the local Indigenous People's culture, faith & spirituality; concerns, needs, wants

- Participate in local Indigenous events when open to the general public, ie: TFN Memorial march - July 1, 2021
- Consult with First Nations about signs of solidarity, such as: Displaying orange hearts & shirts, or shoes as a memorial, so that they aren't mere tokens, rather than contributing to the healing process
- Reach out to ALL Indigenous people, not just the baptized
- Learn & find common ground in our beliefs, spirituality & show solidarity. Will require paradigm shift in way we view cultures & faith - approach evangelization with love & respect
- Establish new parish Ministry for Truth & Reconciliation
 - to educate Catholics through events & resources of Canadian history & the truth
 - to reach out to elders of the local First Nations (ie: TFN) & make connections
- Cooperate with & support Indigenous People wanting a former parish [or chapel] on their reserve to be revived
- Special mass to be offered for & with Indigenous People for their healing
- Ongoing prayer for the Indigenous community to be said at mass.
- Provide prayer cards of Our Lady of Consolation specifically for generational healing of the Indigenous people- made available in the church.

III. Know & Understand the Principles of Truth & Reconciliation; Implement Calls to Action

- Starts with priests, leaders in Church - integrity of leadership in Church must be maintained - follow example of Pope Francis - humility, compassion, empathy, respect
- Transparency
 - Acknowledge tragedy: this will be on-going, unfolding process
 - Admit the wrong doings of the Church, the Gov't & its representatives - complete & total transparency
 - honesty/accountability
 - Church & Gov't records regarding residential schools & other institutions should be made public
 - Communication is vital at the local level. We need to know what actions have been taken towards the Truth and Reconciliation process so far.
- We need to humbly pursue understanding by studying and promoting the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation committee – e.g. how to improve the standard of living for First Nations monetarily.
- Investigate the 94 Calls to Action in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and examine how they apply to our parish.
- Church may need to offer educational opportunities from outside sources to avoid biases from within
- Independent legal investigations, to alleviate biases - Report all offenders/accused to civil authorities as soon as possible to trial/investigation
- Reparation: second collections masses to go to First Nations reparations
- Support mental health initiatives for our local First Nations communities
- scholarship / bursary opportunities for leadership opportunities and/or furthering educational opportunities

From this time of listening, could you sum up in one or two sentences how the Spirit is calling us to grow in “journeying together”?

I. For Each Of Us As Disciples

- Living in the example of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Church is one body with many parts - commonality is baptism & being grounded in Holy Spirit. We are all God's children & worthy of love, compassion & respect, even when we don't agree on issues

- To know God & to know what we can do to not be separated or distant from God, in order to to build a close personal relationship with Him
- Preparing ourselves for the journey with prayers, sacraments & immersion in the Word - pray for wisdom, patience, understanding & humility
- Through prayer, we can grow together & discern what God wants for us
- As disciples of Christ, let us go out to serve & help those who are truly in need. Moved by love & compassion, guided by wisdom & teachings of our faith, let us use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to bring the reality of Christ's love to the most vulnerable, the sick & the lost.
- Since COVID, for all church members to let the Spirit use our more quiet time & lessened activity to pray, look into our souls, & better prioritize things. To educate priests & d laity on dealing with current issues
- To know our past & learn from it
- To learn what is God's truth & how to better speak it with love
- Moved by love, humility & compassion, guided by wisdom & teachings of the faith, let us use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to bring Christ's love to the vulnerable, the sick & the lost.
- Transparency. Openness. Work together to better our community/school/church.

Synodality!

- Build on this experience of synodality & continue the process where every member of Christ's Body counts
- Be humble, be knowledgeable, live & share the Gospel.
- Gathering physically together allows for us to share our ideas & perspectives about what direction the church needs to take in order for growth to occur.
 - We are able to be more accountable in regards to what we have shared and mentioned
 - We are called to be more interconnected with each other, & with all members of our community:
 - young/old, people of all faith, life & cultural experiences
 - We are being asked to be energy givers in our Church community, so that we can have a more positive, joyful experiences with our fellow parishioners & community members.
- The Spirit is calling us to grow in "journeying together" by speaking to us in the quiet through prayer; by listening to our Spiritual leaders; & through spending time in the Word of God.
- The Holy Spirit is calling us to pray & listen to others without judgment with an open mind & heart to be more interconnected with those around us, not only within the Catholic Church.
 - Stop, listen, understand & respect human dignity, everyone is special & precious because they were made in the image of God. Always put yourself in other people's shoes as in the Gospel "do to others as you want done to you" Matthew 7:12. (Particularly youth & young people)
- Listen to God & let Him lead; be brave & take a leap of faith.
- Be open to different points of view & change
- We, the laity, need to continue to be empowered to speak up & not be afraid to share what we experience and what we know - Holy Spirit calling us to journey together
- To have more compassion & be more loving with everyone
 - We are all God's children & worthy of love, compassion & respect even if don't agree on all issues
 - Focus on welcoming & forgiving the sinner without judgment. We are all sinners
 - Accepting & loving of all people - especially the marginalized & those whose spirituality is different than ours & other Christian churches
 - Deepen relationships
 - Help others in whatever way we can

- Respect human dignity - "Do unto others..."
- Reconstitute Ecumenical encounters: choirs, deanery of pastors & Ministerial gatherings with other churches in our areas

II. As One Body

- To build community through:
 - praying unceasingly together as a church
 - to become a truly loving Catholic inclusive Church where everyone is welcome – young and old, saints and sinners, all races & cultures, the marginalized – to be celebrated as God's one family.
- The true Catholic Church is rich in grace, standing firm through the ages; now by listening & welcoming all, it continues to be a beacon of Hope
- To find & develop more Spirit-filled leaders
- Not changing Church's teachings, but re-teaching as new generations are joining. Like turning the radio dial to eliminate static & fine tune

Describe the groups that met, both as a whole community and in your own particular small groups. Were there people you expected? How did they interact? Is there room for your community to grow, not only in number, but in connection and friendship?

70% of participants in the Synod from Sacred Heart Parish were over 55 years of age & close to 100% of the participants were practicing Catholics. Efforts were made to encourage young families of our school & PREP + youth & young adults to participate in our Synod sessions, but only a handful joined in the conversation. After speaking with several parents of young families & some young adults to ask why there was so much apathy towards joining the Synod conversation, the common response was, "No one will listen, so why bother. It won't make any difference" Their lack of participation is a voice in itself & echoes the longing for a sense of belonging in our faith community. The overarching theme was a hunger for synodality! A great yearning for connectivity with: The Church's teachings, Sacraments, the pastor, parish groups, one another & with the marginalized. There is also a strong desire to live out the Mission of the Church, but a struggle to know how.

These are our Parish groups who hosted sessions and the number of participants.:

- Bible Study group (24)
- Sacred Heart School Staff (26)
- St Monica Guild (12)
- Walking in the Spirit Prayer Group (6)
- In-Person Parish session (21)
- Virtual Parish sessions (25)
- Independent Submissions (10)

Total of 124 adults

Sacred Heart Parish dedicated a day of prayer & Eucharistic Adoration for the Synod on April 1. Students (K-7) of our school took part by praying & reflecting on the Synod questions, or adapted questions for children (Vatican's Synod resource "Goose Game"). Although we did not include their responses in this synthesis, there were some great insights shared, and the children got a taste of this pathway of a synodal Church.