

RECAP of Synod Listening Sessions

This is a recap of the St. Pius X Parish Synod Listening Sessions as submitted to the Archdiocese of Omaha. Thirty parishioners participated in 4 listening sessions, including one for the Pastoral Council.

Each answer had a 1,000-character limit, which explains the strange abbreviations, symbols and sentence fragments. The Archdiocesan office will understand the acronyms used, but this document spells them out in red at least once in each in each answer. Because of the tight limit, there was not space to convey the emotional tenor of the sessions. Use of all caps and bolding may indicate emphasis or emotion but do not fully capture the hope, joy, anger and heartbreak that were expressed.

Many thanks to those who participated, especially to those who facilitated, invited others, and helped to get the word out about the questionnaire and listening sessions.

The Archdiocese will compile all of the results of the questionnaires and listening summary sessions into a 10-page document which will be combined with other dioceses at the regional, then continental level. When the bishops meet in Rome for the 2023 synod, all of the documents from around the world will have been combined into a single working document.

Please continue to pray for the synod participants at every level, including the bishops and the pope. The Catholic Church is a big institution, as flawed as the followers to whom Jesus first entrusted it. Because we trust Jesus who said that the gates of the netherworld will not prevail against his Church, let's continue working within that Church to do what Jesus invites us to do: pick up our cross and follow him.

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Ciciulla
3-16-22

1. As a Catholic, you are automatically a member of the universal Catholic Church (worldwide Catholic Church under the leadership of the Pope). How connected do you feel to the universal Catholic Church?

All answers from devout & engaged Catholics determined to stay & improve Church:

VERY connected: MASS (anywhere in world)!

Catholic = MY IDENTITY!

We stand for human dignity everywhere.

POPE & his vision (pastoral approach, synodality, concern for environment, family issues). Francis gives renewed hope to marginalized Catholics. People of God as parish = GOOD.

Closer to Pope than AB **Archbishop** or universal Church.

NOT connected:

Institutional Church = MESS

Not to institutional Church but to people & parishes

Want Church to get beyond sexual issues & focus on hunger, poverty, climate & homelessness

Sexual crimes & coverups removed moral authority to speak on sex/family issues; eroded trust in Church

Nothing for young adults; they will go elsewhere

Decisions @ higher level often irrelevant

Disagree w/ stances e.g. birth control

Church structure offers no incentive to change

Divisions in politics/culture permeate Church

Only follow foreign Church when scandals happen

2. As a Catholic in northeast Nebraska, you are automatically a member of the Archdiocese of Omaha. How connected do you feel to the Archdiocese of Omaha?

Individuals should seek spiritual AO offerings **Archdiocese of Omaha**

Not to chancery, but other people in diocese

Parish = Catholic Church for me

No need to be connected (X6). More conn'd to Universal Church than AO. AO not relevant to my life.

AB **Archbishop** just shows up for confirmation or to ask for \$

ALIENATED by AO – power issue

Kicked to curb. Devoted entire life to social justice, but unsupported by AO. Dismantling of social ministry commission & AO pastoral council & gutting of social justice programs (e.g., Just Faith)

Hurtful, scandalous that AO asks for \$\$ but won't support OTOC **Omaha Together One Community**

AO s/b going out to parishes to support Cath. Social Teaching as before

Misses AO retreats, pastoral council, social ministry offerings in parishes. Feels not listened to. Concerned re: treatment of LGBTQ **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning**

Unapologetic political bias in TCV **The Catholic Voice**

Thinks bishops s/b **should be** elected by laity

Wants direct apology from AB re sex abuse crimes & coverups, tho anything AO can offer is too little too late.

Still hurt by past crimes swept under rug.

3. Is there something that could be done to help you feel more connected?

Many different ideas:

Feel connected all the time

No reason to be connected

IMPLEMENT & LIVE SYNODALITY

AO **Archdiocese of Omaha** thinks unity = uniformity

Reinstate AO social ministry commission!

Shared governance on AO level –subsidiarity

Change infrastructure – reinstate AO pastoral council; AO assumes knowledge of parish needs, but wrong;

connect AO w/ parish to serve us

More women in leadership roles

Be more pastoral vs. more rules; what will keep future members in the Church

Support community organizing via CCHD **Catholic Campaign for Human Development**

Consistent leadership on common issues (COVID) & formation (sacramental standards)

Failure of leadership during pandemic; bowed to political pressure

Certain parishes' stances on important issues are troubling

Welcome LGBTQ **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning**; every family is touched by this & Church is alienating them; they are us

Pay attn. & be true to CST **Catholic Social Teaching** & justice issues; deemphasize sex/gender issues; restart AO teaching programs that go out to parishes

See AO staff out helping in parishes

Watch parish finances

4. How has your life been blessed within the past three months by participating in the life of the Church (e.g., by attending Mass, praying, participating in a Catholic group, serving the poor, giving to the Church)?

MASS –having a priest, seeing friends, coming to church

Sacraments – Eucharist, baptisms during Mass, RCIA **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** rites, sacramental prep involves parish

Ministries: lector, EMHC **Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion**, lay witness, music, communion to facilities & homebound, pantry

Participation in the life of Church is in my DNA! Blessed every day by church life, sense of belonging and love in parish; **friendships**

Life of this parish IS the life of the Church

Participation in: Bible study, book read, rosary, funeral lunch, dozens of parish committees & social functions

Liturgical seasons

Work with Afghan & Karen refugees

Being part of parish that sponsors refugee families; overwhelmed by generosity

Parish community & justice focus; CST **Catholic Social Teaching** paramount; welcoming

Work w/ Human Needs group: hearing stories, gratitude, making difference

Blessed to be a part of many lives over 30 years in Church work

Church leadership training helped develop gifts, confidence, & English

Welcome statement in our narthex

Working with church extends reach of good

5. How has your life been blessed within the past three months by participating in the evangelizing mission of the Church (e.g., by talking about God, teaching others about the Catholic faith, inviting others to the sacraments or a Christ-centered group)?

Not comfortable inviting non-Catholics to convert (b/c of deep problems w/ institutional Church) **but invite Catholics to come to my parish**

Evangelizing is not organized, scheduled, planned, or programmed – just relationship!

Prefer to evangelize through works and actions

Through everyday conduct: w/ spouse, neighbors, co-workers, addressing struggles

Sharing the joy of the Spirit in our lives

Talk about faith w/ my kids and @ family gatherings, esp. in front of youth/kids for whom faith isn't a normal topic (they ARE paying attention!)

Through ministries: lector, book study, writing daily reflections, faith sharing group

Invite people to parish functions

Serving @ Francis House

Immigrant couple works to help other immigrants keep whatever faith they have (regardless of denomination) as they face challenges in new country

Able to explain Catholicism & why I am one, but accept others' authentic faith

Daily Bible reading discussions with spouse, neighbors

RCIA ministry **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**

6. What makes it hard for you to participate in the life and evangelizing mission of the Church?

Believe evangelizing is NOT bringing people to Cath Church, but into relationship w/ God

Bishops' failure to accept responsibility for clergy sex crimes & coverup; creates distrust

Institutional Church itself: sexism, homophobia, discriminatory practices, clericalism; zealotry; infusion w/ politics; patriarchal model of celibate men as decision-makers

Lack of action on capital punishment (all focus on abortion) & other critical issues: hunger, climate, poverty

Treatment of troubled marriages disrespects adults; review annulment process to support new starts and better marriages; truly support marriage if it is a sacrament

Robust, compassionate spiritual direction for new & pew Catholics alike

Respect inviolability of conscience

Excluding women & LGBTQ **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning** disrespects diversity of God's image in ALL God's children

Being shut down/out

Lack of synodality

Public resistance to Catholic evangelization; hearers ready to expose hypocrisy

Media promotes stories of un-Christ-like Catholics & priests

7. In what ways do you feel called to grow in your participation in the life and evangelizing mission of the Church?

Not participate in more things, but participate MORE FULLY in things

SYNODALITY

Experience w/ Evangelicals helped crystallize faith

Don't compare vs. other churches but STAY ENGAGED; grow differently, not necessarily more

Have given my life to the Church; cannot do more; Already do tons

Keep doing what I'm doing for social justice, human needs outreach, prayer, contributions to adult ed & refugee work

Help at SPX **St. Pius X** when/how I can for as long as I can

Even though frustrated by lack of support, will stay & work to change the Church

Attend to the Domestic Church

Demonstrate the joy of the Gospel; be a beacon of hope

Explore what participation looks like when I retire

Rush out to greet & welcome new, young members

I have great dreams for increasing outreach, but limited by resources & territoriality among parishes (vs. sharing resources); this is a CRISIS in the Church! AO **Archdiocese of Omaha** not acting as Christ & prioritizes spending on itself (JP II **John Paul II** center) vs poor so we have to rely on NGOs **Non-Governmental Organizations** vs Church

8. Pastoral Council Only: What are the strengths and weaknesses of a pastoral/parish council?

SPX council STRENGTHS

Strong council leadership & participation: willing to reach out to and follow up with AO **Archdiocese of Omaha** about concerns when necessary

Regular monthly meetings (including feedback from and to parishioners)

Monthly meet & greet in narthex: available & visible & accountable (take questions to council, then report back personally & in bulletin)

Engaged, good people willing to participate in process

Provide support, advice, feedback

Diversity in age, sex, marital status, life stage, etc. allows us to truly represent parish

Gives people a chance to talk w/ someone other than the pastor

During COVID, it was a struggle just to meet, but better now

Need to figure out what fits w/ THIS parish & pastor – decision-making or consultative?

We have reached out to AO w/ concerns

WEAKNESSES

Council depends on pastor

Tied to how pastor chooses to work with group

Can only effect change with a great pastor

The final question was added after a small group got together at the pastor's request to steer the process through the parish and make sure that as many people as possible participated via the questionnaire and/or the listening session. The intent was to give parishioners an opportunity to directly say what does or would feed their spiritual life in the parish. This answer will be shared with the groups that come out of the Parish Conversations that were held last fall.

9. What would help you flourish spiritually at St. Pius X?

Music

- !!Consistent & uplifting music
- Poor voices hurt my prayer
- Some music has improved
- Can't afford to pay musicians
- Need to be forgiving to those who share their gifts (musicians, lectors, etc.) because we don't know what burdens they carry

Homilies

- !!!Homilies that get stuck on Satan & evil and not on living the gospel in practical ways
- Sometimes verge on heresy of earning heaven with our own good works
- Less history and more scripture reflection
- Build on scripture and include application to life
- Need affirmation vs. condemnation
- Need to be uplifting and spiritual
- !!Appreciates testimony from laity; lay reflections are a good thing
- Sometimes sermons speak directly to me!
- Encourage service, not out of guilt, but as something to make others' lives better.

Communication

- Bulletin – needs neighborhood section
- Build up good news and options for sharing resources
- Put neighborhood (and other news) in enews (e.g. Men's Warehouse accepts used suits and cleans/fixes then gives to men released from prison)
- How do we reach out to margins in this parish?
- Use video or slides before Mass to promote events/community
- Gender inclusive language
- More visible participation @ Mass (EMHCs, processions, etc.)

Faith formation

- 1 hour weekly mass is not sufficient to grow faith; wants formation opportunities at regular intervals;
- Wants 1 hour mini-retreat or time to just SING; doesn't have to be something big and formal, just sing!
- !!Adoration

Service/ministry

- More robust hospital ministry; families who are suffering find comfort in hearing from parish family
 - Reach out to hospitalized/newly homebound by priest
 - Maybe follow up by ministry member