



## **Blessed Trinity Parish Synod Report**

Number of Synod sessions: 8

Languages of sessions: English and Spanish

Special sessions (parish groups, parish school, etc.): Ministry leaders, Teens, Catechism Parents, Confirmation Parents, School Parents

Were sessions in person, virtual, or both? In person

## **Synthesis of Parish Consultive Process**

### **Question 1**

What fills you with joy about the Catholic Church?

What causes you concern about the Catholic Church?

In general parishioners are encouraged with the Church in the following ways:

1. God's love, His voice, the Holy Spirit, Jesus, Mary and the Saints, and the Mystical Body of Christ are the Church and strengthen us
2. Finding the Church as a family, it's the same universal Church worldwide – teachings, tradition, history, scripture, liturgy, liturgical year, etc.
3. Participation in the sacraments (especially love for the Eucharist and the real presence)
4. A welcoming and inviting community through Parishes and ministries, living in friendship and fellowship
5. Support the Church provides to help people (grief, divorce, poor, sick, immigrants, etc.)
6. Ability to participate and serve others through the Church

At the same time parishioners are discouraged with the Church in the following ways:

1. Perception of a lack of leadership and clarity, even wrong teaching and direction with certain matters, from the Pope and Bishops, examples include:
  - a. Catholic US politicians that are pro abortion
  - b. Morals of Church fundamentals

- c. Division on all main Church matters
  - d. German Catholic church attempting to change church teachings
  - e. Abuses in the Church
2. Priests and Deacons are leading (but they can't do everything), there is not enough of the qualified laity to help build the Church, one part of the mystical body can't feed the entire body
  3. The Church is too demanding when it overburdens the people serving the Church, pulling them away from family life
  4. A lack of evangelization and formation of the Church, some only have knowledge of the faith from family tradition
  5. People are not committed and believe the Church has to hand them everything versus doing something on their part
  6. The disorder of society is a problem and seems like evil is winning now
  7. Extremely hard to share the faith
  8. The Church does not seem to really know it's fallen away members, such as the elderly and how to regain them
  9. There is not enough focus on reaching and encountering the youth
  10. Fear of being accepted by the Church

### #1 Observations of Particular Significance

There is an urgent need in the Church for evangelization and empowerment of all people, through formation at all levels and stages of life, meeting people where they are at and in the language, style, and manner that appeals to each group throughout their faith journey. Making useful tools and resources readily available and accessible is essential. The Church leadership and laity need to partner together so that the laity can multiply in serving the Church as the Church, including as well formed catechists, to be effective and inspiring teachers, witnesses, and evangelizers of the faith in the world today.

### **Question 2**

Are you encouraged to speak up courageously and responsibly about challenges and concerns?

Do you feel heard? Do you listen to the voices of others?

How can we create greater opportunities for people to be heard in Church and in the public square?

In general, parishioners felt people were not encouraged to speak up and their voices were not heard because of varied reasons including:

1. A lack of a consistent vehicle for input, which is absent at all levels in the Church
2. A lack of communication from the Church creates inner conflict for parishioners when important matters or topics are not shared or clearly communicated
  - a. There is a need for clarity and context in communications from the Church as a whole on matters of faith

- b. Parishioners desire to receive feedback as to why ideas were or were not implemented
- 3. There is no reverse chain of voices, it's all top down, nothing bottom up, so the Church of the people's voice is not shared or heard
- 4. There is a need to create a climate that is more conducive to speaking up and sharing ideas

At the same time parishioners were excited and expressed a message of hope and confidence that there are many opportunities for the Church to not only develop a climate conducive to speaking up and being heard but more importantly growing in fellowship. According to the parishioners the Synod was a good example of how the Church can encourage dialogue and create more interest and communication throughout our parishes. Other opportunities they identified for being heard include the following:

- 1. More public witnesses – gatherings of people to talk about the faith examples of faith lived out
- 2. Connect with fallen away parishioners and invite them back or reconcile with them if something caused them to leave
- 3. Personalize our approach. When people get to know each other, their names, and what they are going through, they will speak up more
- 4. Create forums and events for people to hear and discuss matters that pertain to situations they may be living (various stages of childrearing, entering retirement, etc.)
- 5. Establish a point of communication where anyone can go to (parish, archdiocese, outside archdiocese)
- 6. A personal invitation, smaller groups for formation, bringing content to life (not dry or high-level material), more intimate meetings, involve each person to give more meaning and to engage them, evangelization one to one
- 7. Bi-monthly meet and greet with ministries and parishioners, with feedback as to how they are doing and the value they are providing
- 8. Intimate events and meet & greets with Father (e.g., spaghetti dinner)

## #2 Observations of Particular Significance

The sharing of voices, the ability to be heard, and overall communication in the Church is severely lacking. There is a sense of urgency for this need to be addressed. Parishioners desire clear, consistent, and ongoing communications from the Church and a flow of dialogue up and down the Church. This is critical during a time when the world is loudly and effectively proclaiming and imposing an opposing communication of the truth to the way of life of Christ and His Church.

### **Question 3**

What type of support do you need to grow in your personal relationship with Jesus and His Church? What type of support do you need to help others to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus and His Church? How can the Catholic Church accompany and support you with these?

In general, the support needed to grow the personal relationship with Jesus and the Church is mostly focused on the areas included below which are:

1. Thirsting for education to learn about the teachings of the Church, in order to build up and defend the church (as well as basic learning such as understanding the Mass, learning how to pray, and how to go to confession). The need exists for all ages and for the different stages in life (youth, single young adults, married, families, widowed, divorced, retired, etc.)
2. Creating the opportunities for people to build fellowship through a variety of gatherings to worship, pray and share life experiences
3. Providing more access to resources (self learning, teaching tools, digital, manual, videos, podcasts, music, conferences, retreats, etc.), formation that is attractive, inviting, engaging and less indoctrinating
4. Establishing a mass focused on the youth, and catered to the youth, with their engagement and involvement (e.g., music, skits, witness talks) – consider creative avenues to teach them the Mass, perhaps an evening Mass (would draw and keep more parishioners overall)
5. Provide attractive marketing invitations to the youth for youth groups. Structure youth groups to be engaging, and content rich with subjects that are of need and of interest to them with life application, with witness testimonies of interest, music, food, service events, Steubenville style conferences, and adoration opportunities catered to the youth
6. Making ministries more accessible and inviting to all and adding desired fellowship/worship groups (e.g., charismatic prayer groups)
7. Making available adoration on the premises that significantly increases the access and provides more flexibility for individual prayer/adoration throughout the day and into the evenings (with a longer term goal of dedicating an adoration chapel)
8. Consider leaving the Church open throughout the day for prayer and on certain evenings with workable hours
9. Increasing the presence of the Sisters of the Pierced Hearts. The sisters have been a tremendous source of grace for the parish and there is a desire for more of the sisters (perhaps as catechists, through cenacles, or other events and gatherings)
10. Making confession more accessible more frequently across the Archdiocese, frequent invitation, explanation of the grace received, and simple steps on how to go to confession. Currently there is a limited accessibility to confession in the Archdiocese with most parishes offering confessions only on Saturdays from 4-5

### #3 Observations of Particular Significance

There is a strong desire for parishioners to grow in their relationship with Jesus and the Church, as well as to become better equipped to share their faith with others. Parishioners seem to believe they lack the level of depth, knowledge, education, and resources to effectively evangelize and seek to fill that need.

Evangelizing the youth sticks out as a critical area of need and opportunity. The voice of the youth indicates that some find themselves as the source of faith in their homes and therefore need and seek strong support in community to strengthen and reinforce their faith. In addition, the overall voice of the parishioners indicates that there is a real need among active parishioners to be fortified in their faith with ongoing formation, support, resources, and community to combat the current challenging climate.

It is striking that while there is a clear need for the Church to reach the peripheries, the Church is at risk of losing active members if such members are not fully supported and equipped as indicated in this report given the anti-Christian culture. At the heart of these needs, parishioners are committed, hopeful, love their faith, and are ready to serve, to strengthen the Church and to spread the love of Christ and the Church in the world. The Synod is a great opportunity to build up the Church.