

## **St. Andrew Synod Reflection and Sharing Questions**

1. How is God present in your life? How does the Catholic Church support your spiritual journey or fail to support you?
2. How has your attitude towards the Catholic Church been formed by your own experience, positive or negative, with the Catholic Church?
3. What is the single most important step the Catholic Church can take in the next 5 years? Where do you want to see the Catholic Church in 10 years?
- B. What does the Catholic Church need to do to move forward in order to demonstrate the Gospel?
- 1A. How is God present in your life? How does the Catholic Church support your spiritual journey or fail to support you?

### **1. How is God present in your life? How does the Catholic Church support or fail to support your spiritual journey?**

#### **God is in relationships with Christ and the Holy Spirit through prayer, reflection, family and others:**

1. God is present in the Christian story, bringing Jesus to accompany us through the suffering and joys of life; God is present in our community—through active participation in our faith community, and with other faith-filled people and religions. God is present in the lives of others who share kindness and compassion.
2. In relationships with family, spouse, friends, and others, in ups and downs, work and play. God is present in learning, teaching, confessing, and forgiving, in growing and grieving in relationships, and in my heart and through redemption.
3. God is in the natural world, in all creation surrounding us. And He is telling me to open my eyes, ears, voice, and heart in ways that He leads me.
4. God is present in my Church. St. Andrew is a place of calm, positivity, peace, and welcome. The Church has helped my family meet its needs, through experiences with people and through connections with those marginalized by society:
5. God is present in my life each day on the streets of Portland. He is the houseless mom and child outside the grocery, He is the woman seeking food and services at the women's shelter, He is the tent camper along the sidewalk, He is the young and old and every human being.
6. Through the web of life, of love and goodness with me always. I see God in everything. She is like a breath of mist surrounding, penetrating and holding everything together. He is my friend with whom I can talk. St. Andrew parish helps me because it is a living relationship. God is with me, with all people I encounter and with the natural world.
7. Through parish involvement in social justice reflection and action, through small church communities and ministries that serve in education, RCIA, Food Pantry, eco-ministry, youth group, and Sacraments:
8. On Thursdays at the Black Lives Matter demonstrations with Fr. Dave, we are encouraged with honks and waves for standing up for justice.

9. The practice of trying to do His will every day by following the spiritual path of the 12 Steps program gives me the tools and the awareness for doing that.

10. The community, which reflects the community that Jesus created; in living fully as God wants and encourages us to do. I choose to stay in the Catholic Church despite its institutional failings because St. Andrew is welcoming to women, the LGBTQ community, and multicultural identified people.

### **1B. How does the Catholic Church support you or fail to support you?**

#### **Parish life supports my Christian story and my personal and family faith life:**

1. Through our parish, we learn about the Christian story, which brings Jesus to us in our own life sufferings and accompanying life stories. God is present in our differences. We are brought together in our Mass and liturgies as well as our small faith groups, services, and celebrations.

2. The parish supports me in its active engagement in local services at our Food Pantry, Dental Clinic, and other means of direct support to those in need. These activities and the liturgy that celebrates God among us support me/us/family/faith communities.

#### **Sacraments and liturgical and faith education:**

3. The Mass is the strongest support for me spiritually. The Church supports me when it connects me to people that foster life-giving relationships and offers liturgical activities and the Sacraments, social justice and faith education through RCIA and Liturgy of the Word for children.

4. My spiritual journey is supported through liturgy, song, Sacraments; social justice teachings and action; and through my parish community. When the Church can bring together a nurturing community, then it is bringing God to the people.

#### **Liturgy, Social Justice and Community Action are based on Catholic Social Teaching:**

5. St. Andrew supports me with generosity and social justice action that brings me a sense of community for my faith journey and welcoming to all.

6. The Catholic Church supports my spiritual journey when it is 100% committed to Catholic Social teaching, both in words and action. St Andrew provides a commitment to create community and supporting social and eco-justice, rituals to bring my family together over time including Baptism, Confirmation, and liturgical seasons and challenges.

7. My parish supports me with meaningful homilies by pastors and other speakers. The broader Church enables and supports deep spiritual thinkers and a community of seekers that have helped me grow in my consciousness. The Eucharist is one of the main supports in my life.

8. God supports us at St. Andrew; we find healing at St. Andrew and in the Synod process.

#### **Examples of How the Church Fails to Support Our Spiritual Journey:**

9. When the Church or its people do not reflect the life and ministry of Jesus by resorting to the "hierarchical model" of the Church instead of the "People of God" model as a social institution.

10. When it promotes a spiritual vision that is inconsistent with Christ's understanding of creation.

11. When it fails to engage with young adults, young parents, and those excluded from society, broadly including women, LGBTQ individuals and families, and marginalized or poor people.
12. When it focuses on money and the request for donations instead of welcoming and helping all.
13. When it lacks inclusion, diversity of people in ministries, does not support and advocate for human rights and inclusion of other faiths, and politicizes single issues instead of social justice.
14. The Church has abandoned parents of gay children who are excluded and see no acceptance.
15. The Church fails to support us by practicing discrimination of institutional sexism and clericalism that excludes important voices of the Holy Spirit. This discrimination excludes and denies the Sacraments equally and these practices undermine one's journey and those of others.

## **2. How have your attitudes towards the Catholic Church been formed by your own experiences, positive or negative, with the Catholic Church?**

### **Attitudes formed from education and family:**

1. Many people spoke to Catholic education--that it is balanced because it offers the spiritual side of our being and our responsibility to others. Others spoke of the failure to support personal relationships with God, the lack of support for youth, as pastors or bishops are not engaged physically and financially in youth programs.
2. Specific priests such as Fr. Bert Griffin have supported social justice and pastoral ministry and have modeled leadership and led ministry with inclusive practices and homilies. Fr. Dave is an important source of support and voice for the people of St. Andrew in both language communities and in his practices of including all.
4. Several people identified mothers, grandmothers, and family as key to understanding God and faith, including differences from Church, examples of ministry, ethnic identity, and Catholic education from elementary through a college education. These offered positive experiences of community, including Sacraments, sharing Baptism, marriage, and weekly Eucharist with family and extended family.

### **Personal Prayer and Liturgy:**

4. The Mass is especially important to many as key spiritual support. Many people cited the Church as the foundation of their faith and a place to develop a personal relationship with God and deepen spiritual life through prayer groups, liturgy, social justice groups, and action in the community. The Church was credited as a ministry focused on forming communities of care and faith lived out in prayer and service. Some people cited the importance of Vatican II and post-conciliar programs as life-changing and offering a way to renew their spiritual life.

### **Education, Leadership, and Ministry Challenges:**

5. Parents noted that the Liturgy of the Word and faith formation was important to their development. Yet for some, the Church fails to hear and support parents, young people, or women who believe the Church often fails to address their lived experiences. Half the respondents noted actions of exclusion and messages that ignore Black Lives Matter.
6. Adults noted a lack of support in their own understanding of the Catholic faith, and struggle as their teens are questioning Catholic exclusionary attitudes, limited understanding of walking with Jesus and with the people of God. People feel personally harmed by a lack of Sacramental

support of the gay, lesbian and transgender members who are excluded from Sacraments, and feel that the Eucharist needs to include all people as Jesus welcomed all.

7. The majority of respondents describe the harm when the Church dismisses others such as women who are not allowed to be priests and gay people who can't get married in the Church. Some were deeply wounded by the lack of repentance and transparency in the revelation of harm caused by Catholic clergy, which led to a realization that We are the Church. For some, this reinforced that we are welcomed as "priests" by our baptism. This exclusion of women from the ministry is an example of failing to support people's spiritual journey.

#### **Mass, Liturgy, RCIA, and the Sacraments:**

8. Many concreted religious and lay ministers attend St. Andrew and have had both positive and challenging experiences with the ministry, including lay ministers, gays, and women who have been liturgical facilitators. Many also noted harmful treatment and a lack of consistency in social justice issues.

9. People also noted theological diversity and the positive examples of Daniel Berrigan, Dorothy Day, and the Catholic Worker movement as important aspects of their Catholic faith.

10. Many people also value the positive reflection on the complexity of the human experience including positive lay ministers who have brought prayer, dance, art, and culturally specific and multicultural expression to the St. Andrew community. Several people noted that Pope Francis is renewing their hope because he reaches out to the poor.

#### **Attitudes Formed from Negative Experiences or Perceptions of Leadership:**

11. The clericalism that puts priests and bishops above laity sets up abuse of power and grave sin and a lack of accountability in the case of sexual abuse and systemic racism.

12. I am skeptical that there exists understanding and welcome of those from different life and cultural experiences. I do not trust the hierarchy to be transparent, to admit wrongs and to share power and decision-making outside the clergy.

13. I have seen the church become more closed, dogmatic, male, with power more concentrated. The bishops seem out of touch. The larger church does not hear women and the excluded.

15. Ever since I was young the Church has always been a sacred, open space for all, no matter one's gender or race. The only negative experience I have ever had with the Church has been with money. Service was always about the Gospels and the teachings of the Bible but times have changed. More importance has been placed on money and Church donations. I understand it's a need; however, it shouldn't be pushed so heavily with the community.

### **3. A. What is the single most important step the Catholic Church can take in the next 5 years? Where do you want to see the Catholic Church in 10 years?**

1. The Church should reflect the diversity of the global citizenry.

2. The Church should promote inclusive leadership by welcoming, recognizing, and encouraging people of every race and gender, the LGBTQ+ community, divorced Catholics, and married priests into full membership within the Church.

3. Increase the number of African American priests and deacons (male and female) to reflect the Catholic population.

4. The single most important step the Church can take in the next 5 years is to stop the divisive actions, especially in the American Catholic Church: shutting down social justice efforts, advising on voting, and aligning with political figures. Instead, focus on youth, the poor, and the environment.
5. In the next 5 years, the US Catholic bishops need to better support Pope Francis in his efforts to renew institutions.
6. The Catholic Church needs to open itself to all the voices of God's family. This means power-sharing and inclusive leadership at all levels for women and minority groups; more focus on relationality and connectedness with all Creation.
7. In 10 years, let us see the Catholic Church function more as a "people of God" institution where clergy and laity cooperate in developing life-giving relationships and serving the needs of the poor and marginalized. Let the Church start by welcoming the LGBTQ community into our parishes.
8. Face the roots and consequences of the sexual abuse scandal.

**Training, Formation and Inclusive Practices:**

9. The Church should also initiate training for all priests in the multicultural contributions of non-whites in the Church, both past and present. A complete overhaul of the training and selection systems of priests and bishops. These are our spiritual leaders. Also, the laity must find ways to reach out to our priests and bishops and love them more.
10. The most important goal in the next 5 years is to increase lay power within the church. The most important step is to become more just by including full respect for the dignity and equality of women.
11. In ten years women should see greater involvement in parishes through the diaconate and eventual ordination to the priesthood. Among many important steps along this way would be to upend patriarchal power structures and renew all layers from curia to bishoprics.
12. The most important step: Hold another ecumenical council. Call it Vatican III since it should focus on the unfinished work from Vatican II and adopt entirely new models of being a church in this modern age. In the next ten years provide the option of marriage for priests.
13. The single most important step the Church can take is welcoming divorced people and those groups excluded.

**Service, Youth, and Ecumenicism:**

14. The Catholic Church needs to be more welcoming to our Youth and provide more resources to them. They are neglected right now and need to be respected for they will be in charge soon over their elders. Youth have a lot of questions that don't get answered by the Catholic Church.
15. Reach out to young adults where they are, then welcome them into the church. Renew the Church with lots of younger people and their families. Let us see a more inclusive church, reflective of people of all races and walks of life.
16. The Church should focus more on teaching and less on how the building looks. The Church should spend less money on making the Church pleasing and more on the comfort of the community, old people should be able to sit in comfort. The focus should be on building relationships between people to make them closer.

**3. B.) What does the Catholic Church need to do to move forward in order to demonstrate the Gospel?**

## **Authentic Engagement, Service, and Evangelization**

1. I feel the Catholic Church needs to have more actions to demonstrate the gospel in a real way. Being straightforward and being more positive about spreading the Gospel and having more events but be open events to the community
2. More education and Bible study. Keep spreading the word and teaching people how to do the right things. Having more classes in school and preaching to other communities
3. The Church can demonstrate the Gospel by not showing any bias, for example, not comparing people or groups unfavorably. Let women be more active in Catholic Church
4. Including people from other faiths. Sow unity among churches is also part of living the Gospel as the Body of Christ.
5. The Church can talk to marginalized people to see what they need and listen to them. Do not assume that a white male institution knows what we need to truly live the Gospel. Acknowledge the racism in our country and work with groups to make Black persons welcome in our parishes.
6. Consider the Community Health Worker model for the Church where there are people from target are included.
7. The Catholic Church needs to begin long-term listening sessions with all who've been excluded and abused within the church and use that information, while including those voices. Structural change for communities to warmly welcome and elevate those who've been left out.

## **Liturgy to Support New Formation and Listening, Grieving and Forgiveness:**

8. Make Church institutional changes in structure, participation, and operation that reflect an equitable inclusion of all humanity and creation, and support a broad range of practices that nurtures people at all stages and stages of spiritual development.
9. Teach people how to share resources and facilitate opportunities to help those in need in their community as part of Church support in parishes and universities.
10. Continued Eucharistic masses and opportunities for adoration. Expand to include more online tools for mass, sacraments and obligations.
11. Teach everyone and model with everyone the sense of welcoming and love that Jesus would have.
12. Explore new models of being Church. The Catholic Church is an old institution and therefore resists change. We need new things happening in models of leadership and organization.
13. Support the 16 out of 21 small group members: Listen to those whose belief is that the Church is beyond repair. Help people to understand how to translate new theology addressing climate and inequality into political actions and discernment; teach them how they can use leadership and political action in meaningful changes, institutions, laws, and their own business, vocation, or companies.
14. Address systemic racism by reckoning with racism past and present through systemic change.
15. All Church leadership needs to unify and help with the efforts of Pope Francis to transform Church structures & align the Church more closely to the Gospel message of ministering to the poor, disenfranchised & marginalized people. Church leadership needs to become more pastoral in guiding and supporting local churches to more effectively embrace and live this fundamental Gospel message.

16. The Catholic Church needs to begin long-term listening sessions with all who've been excluded and abused within the church and use that information, while including those voices.
17. Structural change for communities to warmly welcome and elevate those who've been left out.
18. Demonstrate the openness of the Holy Spirit in our culture of how we treat each other.
19. The wisdom of women must be brought to the center. Children must have safe spaces to be nurtured. All people must be held with compassion and value.
20. The Church should demonstrate how to live out the Gospel. First, it should be seen to be selling its riches and giving to the poor. Second, embrace women and gays at all levels of the Church.
21. Laudato Si' Action Platform is engaged in by all. i.e. Love of the Earth and Love of the Poor.
22. Using power in a way that supports, not cripples. Honoring all individual gifts of the Spirit in common discernment and inclusive practices responding to the needs of the time, needs of humanity and creation.

**Archdiocese form questions:**

**How many sessions did your parish have?**

We offered two sessions for forming the leadership team and making the decisions on questions.

There were six sessions for specific English-speaking 9:30 AM members that included

1. Two Zoom sessions
2. Two sessions, one for parents and college-age youth and one for Youth Group
3. Confirmation sessions led by Fr. Dave
4. One large group after the mass session that included 48 people in small circle tables
5. We also had at least three small faith groups discern together and include shared feedback form.

**Archdiocese form questions:**

**How many people participated?**

Our parish used shared leadership to develop the questions and make decisions about participation and take shared leadership of inviting and facilitating sessions. Our process began with February 27, when Angela Kremer led the efforts to Convene Synod Planning with 14 parish volunteer leaders and specifically, leaders Mary Nemmers, Jackie Rossini and Valerie Chapman provided additional direction.

The Listening Session involved about 140 people either through small groups, or attending events; over 70 people submitted forms in English, through online forms, or through Confirmation class.

Thank you for the many volunteer leaders who made this process successful and meaningful.

The Listening Session involved table leaders from the Synod Planning group and they gave feedback throughout the process. Additional thanks go out to Zoom tech support of Ken Willett and Lisa Hatten for Communications. The final submission included collaboration with Diana Ruiz and Fr. Dave Zegar.

Listening emerged in many events and through many leaders:

1. 20 people attended Zoom Listening sessions
2. 48 at the after mass in-person session
3. 42 people total in three small faith groups
4. 10 in separate parent/youth sessions

### **Archdiocese form question**

14. On behalf of the parish or this group, is there anything not covered by the survey that you would like to report that can contribute to the Synod Discernment Process?

As a parish, we held two sessions to determine if we needed to develop our own questions and consider what ways we could involve people. Our process led us to offer following recommendations:

1. St. Andrew is a language-diverse community and we would like to partner more with other parishes in the NE Vicariate part of the Synod called for shared discipleship.
2. The timing of the process was rushed. We didn't have enough time to fully involve both language communities in a way to share the results of our listening sessions.
3. We felt the questions provided by the Archdiocese did not leave enough openness for the complexity of people's lives. We appreciate the chance to develop new questions. We then had to have more time to develop connections between faith, support and challenges of being Catholic, and a vision to direct our parish ministry and action of faith in the community and world. The short-time frame resulted in less time for outreach with those questions.
4. We recognize the limitations of the Archdiocese in the large task of involving many parishes and appreciate the interest in feedback.