

Introduction and Summary

Throughout late Spring, OMC responded to Pope Francis' call for global dialogue by holding over ten "listening sessions" on the Synod for Synodality. Our facilitators attending these sessions gathered the opinions of almost 100 persons, of all backgrounds and ages. While some have feared that similar efforts taken in parishes throughout the world may not lead to change, it is our stated goal here at Our Mother of Consolation to use this report to help us grow as a community of faith, so that *we may be the presence of Christ for the world today.*

All responses in this document were collected during the Synodal "listening sessions" held here in our parish. The preference was to summarize what was heard in these sessions, and not provide direct quotes.

Topic 1: Joys and Concerns about the Church from the people of God

1. *What fills you with joy about the Church?*

- OMC is home; it's a vibrant, welcoming Catholic community, providing solace and comfort.
- Order-bases priests and religious Brothers and Sisters.
- Pope Francis.
- Universality of the church - across countries and languages.
- Consistency and familiarity of mass; rituals are comforting and peaceful.
- Jesus' teachings on treating and helping the poor, sick, and marginalized.
- Catholic education.
- The Eucharist and all sacraments.
- The communion and intercession of saints.
- All of us who are sharing in our faith journey together, just like the disciples, fellowship.
- Diversity of the faithful; perhaps not here locally, but in the Church worldwide.
- Catholic Scripture.
- Ability to attend mass on a daily basis.
- Catholic education.

2. *What concerns do you have about the Church?*

- Is this Synod process even going to make a difference?
- Utter failure in the response to and responsibility for the sexual abuse scandal. Why is it still making news in other dioceses and countries after all these years?
- Accountability to survivors of past instances of abuse.
- Failure to attract and retain young people and younger families.
- Hierarchy of the Church makes change slow and burdensome, if not outright impossible.
- What is the local and global Church going to look like post-pandemic?
- Overall lack of financial transparency.
- Can no longer accept "born Catholic" = always a Catholic.
- Hard to separate the good leaders from tainted leaders in the Church.

- Anti-LGBTQ position.
- Fixating on just one or two social issues - gays and abortion. Is there not more to Jesus' teachings?
- Despicable treatment of religious Sisters.
- Not hearing other voices in leadership besides priests and deacons - no women.
- Need to pay more attention to separated and divorced Catholics.
- Weaponizing the Eucharist because of political views.
- Homogeny of viewpoints and thinking of those in diocesan formation.
- Listening sessions were held after Philly abuse scandal, but what has ever come of it?
- Need to invest more in Catholic education.
- General feeling that the Archdiocese and Rome cannot be trusted.
- Opinions dismissed if do not agree 100% on Church teachings.
- Everything the Church has done for 2,000+ years can't be perfect, why such an unwillingness to change?
- The Church is too big and bureaucratic.
- Self-identifying as 'conservative', 'liberal', or 'orthodox'.
- Lack of religious priests, sisters and brothers.
- Should it be time to allow priests to marry?
- Need more positive marketing!
- Lack of racial and ethnic diversity.

Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church

1. *In what ways or moments has the Church encouraged you to speak up? How does the Church listen to you or hears what you are saying?*

- This is the first time the Church has ever asked for our opinion on anything.
- Leadership of Church has to show a real willingness to listen, then act.
- We are heard at the parish level, but not above.

2. *How can the Church create greater opportunities for people to be heard?*

- Evangelization.
- Show that you act on what you hear from the lay community, and people will be more willing to engage.
- Let women preach and give homilies - diversity of thought should be celebrated.
- The Church needs to live up to the ideals Jesus preached about.
- Less emphasis on rules created after Jesus' death and resurrection, and more about what Jesus taught and preached and lived during his time on earth.
- With results of the Synod, engage the lay community to implement.
- Let priests be priests and rely more on lay parishioners to run the business side of a parish.
- More connection between Bishops and the laity.
- Better utilization of parish council.
- Be more visible within the community in which the parish is located.
- Consistent and credible information/news from the Archdiocese.

- As Pope Francis says, Bishops need to be with the flock.
- Promote racial, sexual, cultural, social, and economic justice in all forms and expressions.

Topic 3: Accompaniment / Journey

1. *How can the Church help you and others to grow in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with the Church?*

- Organizing small groups of faith at the parish-level.
- Keep investing in Catholic education.
- Mini-retreats and conferences.
- Bring together all ages of parishioners over pizza or coffee.
- Listen to what the lay have to say.
- Encourage a more personal relationship with Jesus.
- Strengthening Catholic education; more Catechesis of the Good Shepard.
- Dismantle the hierarchy of the Church. Jesus did not walk among the people dressed in fine robes, rings on his finger, etc.

2. *What can the Church do to support people on their faith journeys?*

- Be ever mindful of the question - "What would Jesus do?" and let that dictate everything.
- Create community.
- Perhaps take some cues from other faiths Christian dialects that are growing through evangelization.
- Need to feed bodies and lives, as well as souls.
- Truly support families, and not just rely on Catholic Charities or Social Services.
- Support involvement of the laity.
- Train priests to be role models for their parishioners.
- Invest more in youth ministry.