



Diocese of
Green Bay

Synod on Synodality

The Catholic Diocese of Green Bay Interim Synthesis

Guiding Question One

Where have I seen successes and distresses within the Church's structures, organization, leadership, and life that encourage or hinder the mission?

Guiding Question Two

How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and to live as a community of love and mercy of Christ?



1. The Synod Listening Session for Human Dignity and Life

Successes:

Community and Common Purpose: There is a recurring emphasis on the importance of fostering a sense of community and shared goals within the Church. This includes coming together to create common goals, emphasizing family and communal bonds, and engaging in collaborative efforts both within the parish and with other organizations.

Spiritual Growth and Renewal: There is a commitment to spiritual nourishment, renewal, and growth within the Church. This involves missionary discipleship, discernment practices guided by the Holy Spirit, engagement in orthodox liturgies, and participation in retreats and healing ministries.

Social Justice and Care for Others: Catholic Social Teaching and the call to care for the marginalized and vulnerable are prominent themes. Areas include engagement in justice meetings, support for mental health programs, outreach efforts during the pandemic, and a focus on welcoming and serving all members of the community, including immigrants and same sex attraction.

Leadership and Collaboration: There is recognition of the importance of effective leadership, both within the Church hierarchy and among lay members. This includes the visibility and engagement of bishops, the emergence of women in leadership roles, and collaboration between parish members and organizations to meet the needs of the community.

Service and Compassion: Service to others and compassionate care are central themes. This includes engagement in various service organizations, volunteering efforts, and a commitment to listening to and responding to the real needs of individuals within the community.

Faith and Tradition: There is an appreciation for faith traditions and orthodox liturgical practices, which are seen as drawing people into deeper engagement with their faith and community.

Summary: *These areas collectively reflect an approach to living out the principles of Catholicism, encompassing spiritual, social, and communal dimensions.*

Distresses:

Mission and Engagement: There is a recurring theme of the Church's mission and its engagement with various groups, including marginalized individuals, outside communities, and different cultural groups.

Leadership and Structure: Concerns about leadership, bureaucratic structures, and the hierarchical nature of decision-making within the Church are prevalent.

Inclusivity and Diversity: The need for inclusivity, diversity, and acceptance of different identities, including same sex attraction, Native Americans, and non-traditional families.

Social Justice and Advocacy: There is an emphasis on the Church's role in advocating for social justice issues such as racism, immigration, environmental justice, and affordable housing.

Youth and Education: The importance of engaging youth, providing relevant education, and addressing their questions about Church teachings is a recurring theme.



Gender Equality and Women's Leadership:

Concerns about gender equality, the role of women in leadership positions, and the need for support for women, including paid maternity leave.

Clericalism and Power Dynamics: Criticisms of clericalism and power dynamics within the Church, including a perceived focus on ritual over social justice and the exclusion of women from certain roles.

Relevance and Credibility: Questions about the Church's relevance and credibility, particularly among young people, and its ability to connect teachings with real-life experiences are prevalent.

Communication and Collaboration: The importance of effective communication and collaboration across different levels of the Church, as well as with external organizations and communities.

Spirituality and Practice: There is a call for a deeper focus on spirituality, lived faith, and the practical application of Church teachings, such as the Beatitudes and the Works of Mercy.

Summary: *These areas underscore the complex and multifaceted challenges facing the Church, reflecting a desire for greater inclusivity, social justice and advocacy, and relevance in contemporary society.*

11. The Synod Listening Session for Schools

Successes:

Pastoral Leadership: The importance of priests and leaders within the Catholic Church who are compassionate, welcoming, and actively engaged in the community.

Catholic Identity and Education: The significance of Catholic schools, hospitals, charities, and education programs in nurturing faith and serving the community.

Youth Engagement: Strategies for connecting with young people and fostering their involvement in the Church through homiletics, youth groups, and education initiatives.



Community Building: Efforts to strengthen the sense of belonging and fellowship within parish communities, including through family events, focus groups, and small group activities.

Stewardship and Evangelization: Emphasizing the importance of stewardship, outreach, and evangelization in fulfilling the Church's mission and spreading the faith.

Tradition and Innovation: Balancing traditional practices with innovative approaches to meet the evolving needs of the faithful, particularly in areas such as liturgy, music, and technology.

Sacramental Life: Highlighting the centrality of sacraments, particularly the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in the spiritual life of Catholics and the role of priests in facilitating these sacramental experiences.

Leadership Development: Investing in leadership development programs, such as chaplaincy initiatives and retreats, to equip clergy and lay leaders for effective ministry and service.

Summary: *These areas capture the various aspects of the experiences, challenges, and aspirations within the Catholic Church community.*

Distresses:

Leadership and Training: Concerns regarding the qualifications, training, and effectiveness of leaders within the Church, including priests and other clergy members.

Inclusivity and Compassion: Discussions about the need for the Church to be more inclusive and compassionate, particularly towards marginalized groups such as women, same sex attraction, and those struggling with various issues.

Youth and Family Engagement: Efforts to engage and support youth and families within the Church, including concerns about the relevance of teachings and liturgical rituals to younger generations.

Operational Practices and Financial Stewardship: Discussions around the alignment of organizational practices with Catholic values, including transparency, accountability, and responsible financial management.

Tradition versus Adaptation: Debates about striking a balance between adherence to traditional teachings and practices and the need for adaptation to contemporary societal norms and values.

Communication and Decision-Making: Issues related to communication within the Church community and decision-making processes, including concerns about transparency and inclusivity in decision-making.

Public Perception and Image: Concerns about how the Catholic Church is perceived by society at large, including perceptions of exclusivity, judgmentalism, and disconnect from contemporary issues.

Unity and Collaboration: Discussions about the importance of unity within the Church community, as well as collaboration between different levels of leadership, parishioners, and affiliated organizations.

III. Religious Orders, Prison Ministry, and Resource and Support -Curia Leadership

Successes:

Acceptance and Belonging: The importance of acceptance and feeling a sense of belonging within the Church community, especially for individuals reentering society from incarceration.

Spiritual Support and Guidance: There is a recognition of the role of spiritual support and guidance, including chapel experiences, ministry encounters, and the belief in God's forgiveness and mercy.

Leadership and Advocacy: Pope Francis is recognized for his leadership in promoting mercy, acceptance, care for creation, and addressing divisive elements within the Church. There is also a call for leadership to heed the teachings of Vatican II and adapt to cultural shifts.

Community Engagement and Outreach: Various initiatives and programs are mentioned, such as homeless shelters, parish prayer trees, Catholic Charities, and outreach to marginalized groups. These efforts demonstrate a commitment to serving and support for broader community.





Empowerment and Inclusivity: There is an emphasis on empowering lay members, especially women, and involving them in leadership roles within the Church. Additionally, there is a focus on inclusivity, welcoming individuals from diverse backgrounds, and recognizing the gifts and contributions of all members.

Spiritual Growth and Formation: Initiatives aimed at promoting spiritual growth and formation, including adoration, confession, Theology on Tap, liturgical ministries, and faith formation programs.

Challenges and Reflections: A sense of hope and gratitude for positive developments and progress in the areas of challenge in the Church such as tensions between conservative and liberal perspectives, the need for greater roles for women, and accountability for abuse.

Collaboration and Unity: Efforts towards collaboration and unity between different parishes and Catholic organizations are evident, particularly in community events, joint initiatives, and shared faith formation programs.

Summary: Overall, the feedback highlights a range of positive developments and ongoing efforts within the Church community to foster acceptance, support, and spiritual growth among its members.

Distresses:

Accountability and Support for Individuals in Re-Entry: There is a need for the Church to establish boundaries of accountability while allowing room for growth and support for individuals reintegrating into society after incarceration.

Labeling and Stigmatization: Individuals in re-entry often face stigma and are defined by their past actions, hindering their ability to reintegrate into the Church community.

Communication and Leadership Issues: Concerns about lack of communication, pastoral skills, and declining Church leadership engagement with social issues and Catholic teachings.

Inclusivity and Diversity: Calls for greater inclusion of marginalized groups such as same sex attraction and non-traditional families, as well as a need for gender equality in Church leadership.

Political Engagement and Social Justice: Criticisms of Church leadership's alignment with political parties and the need for a more active role in advocating for social justice issues, including care for the environment and support for migrants and refugees.

Liturgical Concerns: Feedback regarding the cluttering of Mass with devotional prayers and a shift away from focusing on the communal aspect of the Eucharist.

Pastoral Care and Support: Issues related to pastoral care for victims of abuse, the need for meaningful reconciliation services, and greater support for individuals going through annulment processes.

Administrative and Organizational Challenges: Concerns about nepotism in hiring, lack of turnover in ministries, and the need for succession planning within Church organizations.

Summary: Overall, the feedback highlights a desire for a more inclusive, compassionate, and proactive approach from Church leadership in addressing the diverse needs of its members and communities.

Synod Guiding Question Two Feedback

Young Adult, Schools, Religious Order, Human Dignity and Life

- 👉 **Establish Inclusivity Initiatives:** Create specific programs and initiatives aimed at fostering inclusivity within parishes, such as diversity training, multicultural events, and outreach efforts to marginalized groups.
- 👉 **Develop Youth-Focused Programs:** Design and implement relevant programs and activities targeted at engaging young adults and families, including youth groups, family retreats, and interactive catechesis sessions.
- 👉 **Encourage Lay Participation:** Actively involve lay members in decision-making processes, ministry leadership roles, and evangelization efforts, empowering them to take on greater responsibilities within the Church.
- 👉 **Adapt Worship Practices:** Offer a variety of worship styles and times to accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of parishioners, while also exploring innovative approaches to enhance the worship experience.
- 👉 **Facilitate Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between parishes, schools, and community organizations to support common goals, facilitate open dialogues, and implement unified initiatives for the benefit of the wider community.
- 👉 **Prioritize Continuing Education:** Provide ongoing catechesis, spiritual formation, and leadership development opportunities for adults, catechists, and clergy to deepen their faith and effectively serve the community.
- 👉 **Promote authenticity and Compassion:** Encourage personal relationships with God, acceptance of diverse spiritual journeys, and a compassionate approach in all interactions within the faith community.

- 👉 **Implement Accountability Measures:** Establish transparent accountability mechanisms for clergy and leadership, including regular performance evaluations and opportunities for feedback from parishioners.
- 👉 **Revitalize Outreach Efforts:** Renew efforts to reach out to marginalized communities, address social justice issues, and promote environmental stewardship in alignment with Catholic teachings.
- 👉 **Foster Dialogue and Listening:** Create spaces for open dialogue, active listening, and respectful exchange of ideas to better understand the needs and concerns of parishioners and facilitate collective discernment and decision-making.

Summary: *By taking these actionable steps, the Catholic Church can work towards creating a more vibrant, inclusive, and spiritually enriching community that effectively meets the needs of tis members and serves as a beacon of love and compassion in the world.*

