

St. Matthew's Discernment Session

- Listening
 - General
 - Listening requires not injecting personal thoughts and opinions x6
 - “Must be a sponge and not a hammer.”
 - People hold to preconceptions.
 - We are quick to label people or “put them in a box” based on one point
 - Individualism inhibits listening. X2
 - People aren't open to hearing what the Church has to say.
 - Listening includes looking for truth.
 - Humility is important to listening.
 - Disagreement is inevitable, but humility in disagreement can allow us to listen to the Holy Spirit.
 - We are not willing to take time to listen. Life is busy. X5
 - Do we really mean the question “how are you?”
 - Need for intentional outreach to people outside the Church x5
 - Esp. families
 - Often the loudest voices are the ones that our heard most. X4
 - Listening needs to extend to the peripheries
 - Those who feel unheard are often unwilling to speak.
 - People will hear but not really listen. X3
 - Talking is easier than listening. X2
 - People choose who they want to listen to – most similar or nearest x3
 - Listening begins at home. X3
 - Children are raised through their parents' opinions and beliefs.
 - We need to listen in prayer. God speaks to us in different ways. X3
 - Prayer with Scripture as a group allows people to share indiv. Insight.
 - Must be willing to meet people where they are. X2
 - People have a need to be listened to and deserve respect.
 - People don't recognize Jesus in others.
 - World would be better if we could see people as children of God
 - Communication/media is source of division and conflict. X2
 - Priest can promote listening. X3
 - Priests have information and access that others don't.
 - Fr. Jose and birthdays/wedding anniversaries at the end of Mass.
 - Laity can promote listening.
 - Concern for which voices are heard in the world, particularly on sexuality x2
 - People appreciate the opportunity to speak at the discernment session
 - Poorer parishes' needs aren't met because there aren't the financial resources
 - Racism is a particularly divisive issue.
 - Many people don't trust the Church x2
 - Ask why people don't feel welcome
 - Converts carry a fire for the faith – how can we learn from them?

- Teaching time needs to include answering questions.
 - Balance between conflict and consensus in teaching about hot-button issues.
 - We are quick to blame others.
 - Are we fully present at Mass?
 - Who is not listened to? Who is marginalized?
 - In general, minorities generally are excluded in predominantly Anglo Church
 - Racism is an issue.
 - People want to hear their language spoken.
 - Language can be a barrier for people in need of assistance.
 - When one was a student at BK, felt people of color were unwanted.
 - Black Catholics x2
 - St. Pius community not listened to.
 - African-American vs. from Africa
 - Busy parents who can't commit to parish activities x2
 - LGBTQ people
 - Hispanic communities x3
 - Representation matters. Present/Future of Church
 - Hispanic families prefer to isolate themselves because parents don't speak English.
 - Parents must integrate.
 - All Hispanics tend to be grouped together rather than seen as different groups
 - People outside the Church
 - People with special needs
 - Traditionalists
 - Singles
 - Single parents/unmarried or divorced couples x2
 - Separation from sacraments can be isolating
 - Youth/children x4
 - How can we make church facilities available for use?
 - One young person feels involved as an altar server
 - What is available after first communion/confirmation?
 - Young Adults/College-age x2
 - Lack of opportunities for this age group
 - Millennials
- Responsibility for Common Mission
 - Church should be welcoming. Learn names, greet people, etc. X6
 - All of us become the face of God
 - Non-Catholics can be intimidated
 - Listen to newcomers to the Church who are in need of guidance. X2
 - More food/social events needed x2
 - Parishioners aren't social with each other
 - Personal invitation is necessary for people to engage. X3
 - Laity need to invite others to participate. X2

- One-on-one relationships
- Comments on role of the priest
 - Priests carry a lot of the burden for parish life and can be overstretched. X3
 - Parishes/Priests need to know who their parishioners are
 - Priest is crucial to engagement. X2
 - Priests should be moved every five years.
 - Priests should be left if parish is moving in the right direction. Decision based on needs.
 - Priests aren't chosen by the parish but undoubtedly priests shape the parish.
 - Parish council should work with incoming priests to discuss mission.
 - Priests and parish council aren't responsive to needs
 - Each parish has different needs
 - Some priests harbor prejudice and don't want to serve minority parishes.
 - Could be financial reasons as well – often less money
 - Priest should be more sensitive to all groups and communities, even if language barrier.
 - Priests can feel like serving on the west side of the diocese is a punishment
 - Parish priest should ask for donations to support ministries.
- Liturgy is important x3
 - Sends people forth
 - Eucharist is underappreciated
 - Adoration can be a source of strength.
- Parents need to raise children in the faith. X2
- Service spreads the mission outside the Church x2
- Vatican II calls all of us to evangelize, live mission x2
- Need to step outside of “comfort zone” x2
- Need more programs x2
- Just because programs exist doesn't mean people will go x3
- Parish facilities should be available to all regardless of language.
- Encourage minorities in leadership.
- Look for people who have been hurt by the Church.
- Living a holy life is evangelical by nature.
- Listening is central to mission
- Seminarians can be a good resource for youth and young adults.
- Women religious are appreciated, could have a bigger presence x3
 - Podcasts expose consecrated men and women in a new way
- People generally uninvolved in “parish life”
- Parishes could have a specific focus/charism – marriage, youth, elderly, etc.
- Small ways of contributing to mission go unnoticed – altar society, cleaning, etc.
- Involvement in parish mission doesn't necessarily mean parish-sponsored activities.
- COVID has left people hungry for relationship
- Youth programs don't have support.
 - Diocese should be supporting.
- What hinders the baptized from being active?

- Lack of catechesis x9
 - “Catechesis is taught as a subject, not a way of life”
 - Knowledge of Mary
 - Lack of knowledge of Scripture x2
 - People don’t understand the Mass x4
 - People don’t feel engaged in the liturgy
 - One remarked that young people are interested in Gospel music/vibrant preaching/etc.
 - Two others saw a need for more chant.
 - Time commitment/busyness x4
 - Bad homilies x4
 - People aren’t aware of the work of existing ministries – prison, pro-life, Catholic Charities, etc.
 - Don’t recognize a call to mission x2
 - Limited options of participation as a woman
 - Committees organize everything and others don’t feel like they have to engage x2
 - Fear x2
 - Generally, people feel unequipped
 - Lack of availability of reconciliation – people have to go to other parishes
 - Canonical status – unmarried/divorced, etc. are isolated from sacraments
- Forming ourselves in synodality
 - Could have opportunities to discern/discuss concerns in each group/parish/faith community x3
 - Training needed on how to pray/discern on topics of discussion
 - Need to bring together groups that are usually segregated. X2
 - Priest is important to integrating a fragmented parish and creating conversation.
 - Ministries/age groups help people to learn and pray together as a community
 - Homeschool families build relationships with each other.
 - Need for servant leadership
 - Pilgrimages can spark discernment
 - Right to Life needs to be talked about more
 - People want more political messaging from the hierarchy.
 - People want less political messaging from the hierarchy
 - Need more explanation on current application of Scripture.
 - Priests can speak on synodality.
 - Walking together does not mean compromising the Church’s teaching.
 - Can’t just tell people to go to Church and expect that solves everything.
 - Programs for men and women together
 - Beginning with the tradition of the Church rather than from zero.

- One word

- Enlightened x6
- Hope x5
- Encouraged x4
- Curious x2
- Happy x2
- Heard x2
- Humbled x2
- Intrigued x2
- Insightful
- Responsive
- Positive
- Energized
- Impressed
- Openness
- Aware
- Graced
- Perspective
- Creativity
- Enriching
- Extravagant
- Challenging
- Frustrated
- Gratitude
- Relieved
- Smarter
- Heard
- Stronger

- Inspiring
- Constructive
- Awakening
- Love
- Engaging
- Communion
- Called
- Important
- Ambivalent
- Unsure
- Unity
- Assigned
- Interested
- Overwhelmed
- Opportunity
- Productive
- Excited
- Discernment
- Contemplation
- Silence
- Promising
- Expecting
- Joyful
- Listening
- Beginning
- Open
- Faithful