



**COMPREHENSIVE REPORT FROM THE SYNOD LISTENING SESSIONS
INCLUDING COMMENTS FROM SCRIBE REPORTS FOR EACH THEME
WINDSOR HERITAGE CATHOLIC FAMILY OF PARISHES
JUNE 2022**

INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, Pope Francis announced that the theme for the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023 would be **"For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission."** He invited the whole world to participate in the synod preparation by sharing their experiences of the church and listening to the experiences of others. This theme and experience of journeying together in synodality will be decisive for the life of the church today and tomorrow. As noted in the Synod preparatory document: "It is impossible to think of a conversion of our activity as a Church that does not include the active participation of all the members of God's people". Pope Francis has also said, "Synodality is more than just a word or a slogan. Synodality is an expression of the very nature of the Church - the process of discerning how the Spirit is moving us, so that we may continue to fulfill our mission to evangelize the world." Ultimately, this path of walking together is the most effective way of manifesting and putting into practice the nature of the Church as the pilgrim and missionary People of God

The purpose of our synod process was to consider what the Holy Spirit was saying to us in this time and in this place as we shared our stories, insights, hopes and dreams for the church. It was our opportunity to dream about the church we are called to be and to give prayerful input on the needs of the church today. By the end of our time together, we began to respond to the basic question: "What is the Holy Spirit asking of the Church in the 21st century, especially the church in our family of parishes?"

The synod is not to be a one-time event. It will be an ongoing process that changes how the Church engages with the faithful, and others, forever. One part of the synod was to gather people's thoughts, hopes, dreams and struggles to be synthesized and submitted to our local family of parishes, the diocese and Rome, but the other, bigger, part of the synod was the start of a new way of 'being Church', of walking and journeying together.

THE PROCESS

The coordinating committee

In January, Jean Beneteau, on behalf of the pastoral team, invited parishioners and members of our communities to consider sharing their gifts as part of the family of parishes' synod committee. Eight people responded: Gabe D'Amore of Assumption Parish; Ed Czilli, Jennifer St. Pierre, Mary Claire St. Pierre and Filomena Yamashita of St. Alphonsus Parish; Marisa Nabbout of St. Angela Parish; Matthew Charbonneau of St. Benedict community, and Anne Shore of Assumption Parish, who became the synod coordinator. Jean Beneteau, of the Windsor Heritage Catholic Family of Parishes' pastoral team, was on the committee as well. Our synod committee began meeting on Zoom at the end of January and met every Thursday until May 5. The diocese provided training and resources for the coordinating committee.

Ways to participate

The diocese provided the framework for the synod process in our family of parishes. There were two ways for people to participate: the first and preferred means was through engaging in a gathering of members of our family of parishes. This in - person or zoom format allowed participants to pray together, as well as to listen to one another. A second means of participation was through an online individual reflection form which was available on the diocesan web site.

To be as inclusive and welcoming as possible, all information and materials related to the synod were translated into Italian for the parishioners of St. Angela Parish.

The synod listening sessions

The two - hour synod listening sessions were the heart of our synod process. They were rooted in meditation, prayer, Sacred Scripture (The Emmaus Story) and small group sharing and listening. Comprehensive notes and training videos and resources for session facilitators, table leaders and scribes were provided by the diocese. The session facilitators guided the whole process. The table leaders asked the key discussion questions and guided the conversations so that all had an opportunity to speak. The scribes took notes on the main ideas and insights presented and worked with the small group to develop the two key points which were shared with the other small groups. Scribe reports were shared with the synod coordinator and the diocesan synod committee. The two questions for sharing were:

1. What have been your experiences of journeying together with the Catholic Church?
 - What joys did these experiences bring?
 - What difficulties and obstacles have you encountered?
2. As we journey forward together, what are your hopes and dreams for the Church?

Table leaders and scribes

A list of people from the three parishes and two communities was generated and members of the committee personally invited them to consider sharing their gifts as a table leader or scribe for the synod listening sessions. Many said that they were pleased and surprised to be invited to have the opportunity to help us gather as church and share our stories. The response was immediate, and, in all, 59 people responded yes to the invitation. Training and resources were provided for them from both the diocese and our synod coordinator.

Registration

Registration was mostly online and easily accessed. Those without internet access could register by phone. To those who registered through the website, a participant's guide was emailed to them. To the phone registrants, a copy of the guide was left for them at the back of their parish church.

COMMUNICATIONS

There was an attempt to use as many means as possible to reach out to people and invite them to participate. Even before our Launch Weekend, resources about the synod were on our website and information was in the bulletin.

The following are the ways we communicated about the synod to our parishes and communities:

- **Launch Weekend March 5 - 6** A poster was developed and available at every access door at each parish and community. A handout, listing the listening sessions and a little information about the synod, was included in the bulletin and handed out at all Masses.
- **Launch weekend March 5 - 6** At every Mass in every parish and community, the presider preached on the synod and someone from our committee (except at St. Angela's Italian Masses where we needed someone who spoke Italian) presented information on the synod listening sessions and invited everyone to participate. We began the process we would follow until May 15 when the synod process ended.
 - A prayer card with the synod prayer was printed and available in all the pews. The cards at St. Angela Parish were in Italian and in English. The synod prayer was said after the announcements at every Sunday Mass throughout
 - The commentator reminded everyone that we were in the synod process at the beginning of Mass each week
 - The weekly bulletin had information on the synod, the listening sessions and the questions that were to be answered
 - There was a weekly prayer of the faithful connected to the synod
 - There was a weekly announcement connected to the synod.
- **Website and social media:** An introductory video on the synod and some resources from both the diocese and the Vatican were available. After the March 19th session, several personal testimony videos from people who had attended the listening session were available.
- **Emails were sent to leaders of parish groups** asking them to invite their members to participate in one of the sessions
- **Personal emails were sent to everyone in the three parish listings** with an email address inviting them to attend a session.
- **Easter Vigil / Easter Sunday** A second handout was given out at all Masses at all parishes and communities at both the Vigil and Easter Sunday morning masses. At the announcement time, the presider spoke about the synod and invited everyone to consider participating.

LISTENING SESSIONS

Facilitators for the listening sessions were either Jean Beneteau or Anne Shore. The exception was the March 26th meeting at St. Angela Parish where a parishioner facilitated, as Italian was a requirement. Each small group had a table leader and a scribe. Normally the table leader and scribe did not participate outside their role. Unless noted as zoom, all were in - person sessions.

DATE	WHO	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS	SMALL GROUPS
March 11	Pastoral team & Pastoral council	Assumption Parish	12	2
March 19	Table leaders & scribes listening training session	Holy Name of Mary site Assumption Parish	33	5
March 26	Italian speaking parishioners St. Angela Parish	St. Angela Parish	6	1
March 28	General session open to all	St. Angela Parish	15	2
April 2	Zoom session Open to all	Zoom	13 A number who registered did not attend	3
April 3	General session Open to all	Holy Name of Mary site Assumption Parish	38	7
April 9	General session Open to all	St. Alphonsus	26 A number who registered did not attend	5
April 27	Zoom session Open to all	Zoom	Cancelled Not enough registered	0
April 28	Assumption Cares	Holy Name of Mary site Assumption Parish	42 Met one on one with people there for food, clothes, income tax help	5 people asked the 4 questions one on one
May 2	General session Open to all	Holy Name of Mary site	9	2

		Assumption Parish		
May 5	Synod coordinating committee	St. Alphonsus Parish	8 all were participants including table leader and scribe	1
10 meetings		Each parish hosted one of the sessions & then where best for session	202	28

LIMITATIONS

The information found in this report does not reflect the broadness and richness of our family of parishes and local community. There was minimal participation from some groups or communities in our family of parishes. Most who responded to listening session invitations were parishioners, many of these active and involved already in our communities. There was little young adult engagement, no youth, no First Nations, and little contact with the poor outside of Assumption Cares. Many were older adults and there were a few non - Catholics.

There were some limitations that made it more difficult to get a large turnout for the listening sessions. Covid - 19 kept some people home and zoom fatigue kept others away. The relatively short time available, from the end of January until May 15, provided limited opportunity for publicity and reaching out. Even in all our communication about the synod, many parishioners had no idea what a synod was or that there were listening sessions available to them. Those who attended the listening sessions had high praise and gratitude for having the synod and providing opportunities for them to share their stories. Some who did not attend expressed a cynicism and doubt that anything would change.

THANK YOU

There are many people who contributed to our synod process. Without them, the listening sessions would never have happened. Thanks to the coordinating committee who made this process a priority for four months and generously gave of their time and talent. For incredible dedication, time, energy and expertise, we thank Anne Shore for coordinating our Synod Committee efforts and drafting the report. Thank you to the pastoral team and the pastoral council who supported the synod and took every opportunity to invite people to participate. A special thanks to Jean Beneteau for everything.

Social media, registration, handouts, bulletin announcements and much more would not have been possible without Kevin McQuaid Jr, who tirelessly did the many things that

needed doing. Owen Wolter helped with the poster and initial handout format. There would have been no Italian translations without Rosanna Moceri who never flinched when new pages appeared needing translation. Marisa Nabbout assisted in this as well. Thanks to Sally McQuaid for the parish lists.

Laura Soulliere and Tim McKinley helped with location setup and enabled our Assumption Cares April 29th morning conversations. Laura was instrumental in getting our prayer cards printed and even created a second larger font card for St. Angela. A special thanks to Leon Janisse, Erin Turner and Zoey Soulliere of Windsor Chapel who designed and printed our prayer cards. When we ran out of the first printing, they generously did a second one for us.

Our table leaders and scribes were the backbone of the listening sessions. They attended a training session, prepared to help us gather and share and were welcoming, inclusive, respectful and attentive to each one. They were willing to attend and be on call, not knowing if they would be needed or not.

The Basilian Lay Associates provided hospitality and refreshments for the April 3 meeting at Holy Name of Mary. They helped set up, welcomed people and kept us watered. Two, at the last minute when non - registered people arrived, became a scribe and table leader. Thank you to Frank Gualtieri for all his help with generating lists and hospitality for our meetings at St. Angela Parish. Thanks to Filomena Yamashita for paying for parking for the St. Alphonsus gathering and to Gerard Charette and Ed Czilli who helped with parking.

We give thanks to Pope Francis who invited us into this grace-filled experience and to the Diocesan leadership for the many resources and personal support provided. Finally, we are grateful to the Holy Spirit who guided our whole process and helped us to truly share our experiences of the church and to dream about the church we want to become.

SYNOD LISTENING SESSION THEMES

We, as a family of parishes, responded to a call to reflect together on our experience of communion, participation, and mission in and with the church. The outcome of this process is a picture of a beloved church in need of some reforms to enable the communion, participation and mission to go on into the future.

The following are the themes which emerged from the small group scribe reports from the various listening sessions. Comments from the scribe reports, which are related to the theme and theme elements, have been included in this version of the report. The presence of a star "*" indicates more than one person presented that idea.

THEME ONE

PROFOUND LOVE FOR AND APPRECIATION OF THE CHURCH

One of the powerful messages sent by the participants from our family of parishes was their deep commitment to, and concern and love for the faith and the church. The synodal process made it clear that there is an appreciation for much that is good and hopeful in the church today. A depth of faith was shown in their responses and in the value that participants placed in their ongoing faith journeys. Responses were heartfelt and moving as people described their faith as "the centre of my life". For many, faith provides a foundation of guidance, of steadfastness, a moral compass. There is joy discovered in times of sharing faith and building relationships with others. People expressed joy in diversity across the family of parishes. Many communicated a feeling of oneness, of unity and community and belonging. Others do not see themselves valued or represented in the church.

(This theme was present or implied in every small group scribe report.)

- **Great love for the church and being rooted in the Catholic faith**
 - Church is the centre of life *
 - We are passionate about our faith
 - There is a great common love for the church
 - Joy in the church
 - Deep love for the church and sensitivity shown toward those who are "missing", who felt left out or distanced from the church
 - Love of and hope for the church
 - Appreciation for being a member of the Catholic Church
 - Sense of belonging in the church
 - Church is home and comfortable
 - Church is home away from home - never thought of leaving
 - Church like our home and must be cared for and nurtured
 - Connection between experience of church and the experience of family that brings comfort and joy
 - Faith has brought us far and grounded us
 - Faith roots run deep
 - Faith is calming influence you need
 - Faith and church always a part of life
 - Find stability and normalcy in the church
 - Church brought structures to life
 - Church is the duct tape of the world
 - Constant presence of church a blessing
 - Small group moved by each other's service and commitment to God's church
 - Universal church - same teachings everywhere across the globe

- Good of the church always outweighs the bad. Good to move past any negative experiences we can encounter and instead embrace any love that comes our way
- **Importance of faith filled families and the presence of church in childhood and teen years for strong adult faith**
 - Growing up in the church gave a sense of belonging
 - Growing up in church fostered comfortable connectedness and closeness with God and with the family
 - Born Catholic, great experiences in church in childhood and teens
 - Grew up in the Catholic Church and had no experience of the wider world until university
 - As a child most problems with church as institution as opposed to faith
 - From childhood fond memories of First Communion and statues of Mary
 - Grew up with church teachings
 - Wonderful experience growing up in the church and enjoyed participating
 - Joyous experience of journey with Jesus and the church in childhood and youth leading to deepening faith and desire to be involved in the church
 - Joy in togetherness in church as a child
 - Have a secure path with God since childhood
 - Family, especially elders, had big faith influence
 - Parents had a big impact on Catholic upbringing
 - Involvement in church provides roots in community for children
 - Support of faith filled family helped in difficult times
 - Family taught and instilled basis of church and creating a trust in God and in prayer
 - Learned faith in family
 - Relationship with church through grandparents who influenced faith life
 - Faith filled childhood with faith filled parents
 - Traditional Catholic family, prayed together, went to church together
 - Joy of growing up Catholic with faith filled parents
 - Gift of faith formation in the family
 - Young adult age when one chooses one's faith and so is an important age
- **Some reflections on Catholic Schools**
 - Involved in church as young child through the Catholic school which created a sense of community, fostered friendships and brought joy
 - Growing up non-Christian, went to Catholic school and people living faith there inspired, supported and called forth vocation
 - Happy going to Catholic school
 - Joy in presence of Basilian priests and nuns in the schools

- Appreciation for the work of Catholic teachers
- Joy of becoming a Catholic teacher
- Teachers who live faith important to help children develop faith
- Daughter in Catholic school led him to want to learn more about the Catholic faith and become Catholic
- Bring religion back to Catholic schools taught by teachers who are active in church
- Emphasis on education in faith for students and teachers
- There is a disconnect between church and elementary schools
- Hope for future of the church in student population and need freedom to speak faith in Catholic schools
- Disappointment in Catholic Schools and yet better than nothing
- **Church as source of strength, stability and support**
 - Church provided strength, stability and support in relationships with Jesus Christ / gospel
 - Joy of being in church - shown compassion especially with funerals, confession, illness and in sacraments: priests took time to speak, to listen, to understand and to instruct
 - Belonging to church helped person through the death of a spouse - stronger faith because of journey in church
 - Church is comfort and support in tough times
 - Attending church traditions provides comfort, stability and a sense of belonging. Provides continuity.
 - Parishioners seek / need to find strength to journey in faith in the church
 - Journey in the church helps us deal with the challenges we face
 - Source of strength in times of trouble
 - Faith brings joy every day and helps us cope with the loss of loved ones
 - In suffering of war and immigration, faith can keep you up and keep you going
 - Role of Providence in blows life deals leading one to a stronger faith life
 - Throughout all troubles / struggles we have stayed in church because of the support, love of the people there
 - Church helps you through life's challenges
 - Gives strength in times of difficulty
 - Through struggles church was a safe place
 - Strength found in Jesus and the church in times of personal difficulty
 - Church helps us live through life's challenges, but rigid laws can be an obstacle to others seeing church as important
 - Participation in groups helped one learn faith and build relationships

- Rituals create sharing and belonging so not isolated
- Positive growth from affiliation with the church
- Experience we are not alone
- Encouraging that others feel as we do and so feel we are not alone
- Though we all are unique and have different opinions and beliefs we can all get together to celebrate our faith
- Developed friendships and support in the church.
- As person aged, they realized most people not this way and feel like an outcast.
- Grew up in small French community and experienced religious diversity there
- In listening session hopeful to hear of the strengths of the church; in spite of our different experiences, there was a lot of sameness.
- Loves being part of the church, especially teachings and doctrines - these are the foundation.
- Deep appreciation for the beauty of the truths of the faith and doctrines
- Loves Catholic Tradition and orthodoxy. Believes what makes Catholicism so beautiful are its traditions, teachings and sacraments
- **Joy found in church prayer, devotions and faith experiences**
 - Joy in Jesus
 - Joy in prayer
 - Joy in Word of the Lord, scripture, teachings and history, RCIA
 - Joy in learning and proclaiming traditional devotions
 - Joy in daily Mass
 - Joy in rosary, prayer group, Rosary chapel, adoration
 - Joy in Eucharist and communal prayer
 - Joy in healing process of annulment
 - Joy in scripture, bible study, Divine Mercy, retreats, missions, shrines
 - Joy in Mass online
 - Joy in the commitment to prayer and participation in the sacraments
 - Importance of prayer and tradition, living faith and journeying together to become better people
- **The gift of active involvement in the church**
 - Many resources provided by an active participation in the faith life of the church
 - Being active in the church helps you to grow your faith; church supportive of our serving and involvement
 - Feeling of being called to serve, a purpose to fulfill, a mission
 - Appreciate opportunity to give back and to become involved
 - Joy in leading First Communion groups

- Joy in being involved and volunteering
- Worked in the church and enjoyed the journey

THEME TWO

COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY: AN INCLUSIVE, WELCOMING CHURCH COMMUNITY

This theme reflected the desire to be an outward looking, inclusive community, welcoming others in and helping those in need. Participants called for our family of parishes to be a vibrant community, beyond those gathered at Mass; being more connected to each other and offering social events to build relationships. While parishes are generally experienced as welcoming communities, participants felt that they can become much more so and are not always perceived as such by those outside or on the edges of them.

Various aspects of the church as a community were highlighted: the desire to be welcomed in the church; the importance of hospitality, belonging and participation; the need to accompany each person wherever they might be in their life journey; the call to be compassionate and understanding towards the marginalized. One reported comment seemed to sum it up - "I hope the church becomes a vibrant, welcoming, inclusive, faith sharing community that is accepting of all people."

- **An inclusive church community**

- Church should be for all people, and all should be included
- Deeper acceptance and inclusion of others
- Need grassroots movement of inclusivity and an opening of doors
- Have more respect for diversity
- Remove biases / prejudices to become more diverse and inclusive
- Engage people from various cultural backgrounds to become more actively involved
- Need more inclusion of different types of people'
- Need to remove barriers to a church that welcomes diversity and implements inclusiveness
- Provide opportunities for more people to express themselves and to be heard so they can contribute to the church
- Create a safe place for all those who are involved to reflect on problems and concerns that affect us in our own unique way
- Model dialogue of inclusion with respect, honesty and love and listen to one another so that we can chart a path forward together
- Need to create a community where we walk in other people's shoes
- Church to be more open, humble, receptive and less authoritarian
- Bring communion to homebound, nursing homes and retirement homes

- Work more closely together as a family of parishes so we can serve a greater number of people
- **A welcoming church community**
 - Everyone to feel accepted, that they belong
 - People presenting differently need to be welcomed so they can find peace, and comfort in the church
 - Where everyone is welcome and worthy
 - Church not welcoming enough
 - Important to feel welcome
 - Church is home away from home and so welcome is essential
 - Everyone needs support from other parishioners
 - Need to make everyone feel welcome, especially new people coming to the parish and people from other countries
 - Culture shock for immigrants coming to Canada and the Canadian church where faith is lived so differently - this is especially difficult when see church as home away from home and can be a source of suffering
 - Foster understanding and trust within and across cultural families toward a more welcome and just community of faith
- **The church community**
 - There is a good sense of community while attending Mass - lacks community involvement other than Mass. We do not know each other
 - People who go to different masses and parish communities do not know each other. Need opportunities to come together and grow in faith outside of Mass
 - We must become a home as we speak of church as home away from home
 - Sense of belonging important - family, community, fellowship
 - We are interconnected
 - Community is more than four walls and Sunday Mass
 - Need to reinvigorate church communities post COVID
 - Community is a way of helping people have a positive experience of church
 - Must become a healing community modeled on Jesus - all connected in the Spirit - care for each other - we are reliant on each other and need each other to foster and nourish growth in the church
 - Community important - happy not to feel alone, nice to see the same people at church, need to have others to share faith with
 - Importance of belonging in Catholic Community
 - Need for community and belonging - people connecting and reaching out to each other
 - Community is God being central in our lives

- Joy of close community
- Donuts symbol of community
- Need community to mediate presence of Christ
- Need stronger community so we can go out
- Place where people want to be part of with everyone looking out for everyone else: sharing a level of concern makes people want to be a part of it, a place to come, to spend quality time in a caring community.
- We are searching for a place to be community
- Though we are different we are all the same and need a place where we can need others, a place to share our stories and to grow in the faith and church - community is the foundation of growing the church.
- Sharing gospel with others of similar values helps connect us together
- We are each on a unique journey of faith but travel together on the road with others. Sharing with others allows our light to shine and to remove the bushel basket. It confirms a depth in each of us
- We strengthen one another by sharing and listening to one another - this draws us into community
- Parish life not as vibrant and varied as in years past. Spiritual, catechetical and social activities in the parish often limited in range offered and people who support them
- Looking for more opportunities for fellowship and getting to know more people in church:
 - Offer programs like Alpha, Wild Goose
 - Community meals and events to bring people together
 - Social events
 - Family movie nights
 - Monday night dinners
 - Celebrate with whole family of parishes
 - Build up hospitality and greeting ministry
 - Coffee Sunday
- **Closure of churches and change of church sites - seen as an obstacle**
 - The closure of churches and the moves from Assumption to Holy Name and back again was a large obstacle in their faith and relationship with the church *
 - Church is more than a building - it is building that holds memories of funerals, baptisms and weddings
 - When church closed there was a loss of home
 - When church moved there was a loss of identity
 - Challenged and disappointed when community broken up and churches closed

- **Outreach to the greater community**
 - Need to become a more missionary church
 - Importance of parish and personal outreach to the neighbourhood and involvement in the community
 - All need to be outward looking and reach out to others
 - Can outreach with the strength of community relationships
 - Our mission is to love and help others in need with concrete acts of charity
 - More outreach especially with food, help, assistance
 - Need to think beyond food into employment opportunities and helping people access social and community services

THEME THREE

REACH OUT TO PEOPLE ON THE MARGINS AND AN AWARENESS OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HURT BY THE CHURCH

The need for everyone in the church, lay and ordained, to reach out to those who feel themselves at the margins of the church's life was frequently mentioned in the small group scribe reports. Parishes are not always perceived as welcoming by those outside or on the edges of them. Responses reflected that many have experience of family members and friends who have left the church or find themselves on the margins. It was noted that it is important for those who practice their faith to know how to "meet people where they are" without judgment or condemnation. The language of "inclusivity" can mask the underlying pain, sadness and deep feelings caused by restrictions.

There is an awareness that people have been wounded by the church and that there is a lot of personal hurt among our parishioners.

- **Need to reach out to the suffering and marginalized in parish and community with an awareness of those who feel excluded**
 - We need to be welcoming, inclusive and accepting of various people with the varied gifts they bring with continued adherence to the rich tradition of the church.
 - Outreach to those who are estranged from the church, seek them out, invite them to tell their stories and understand why they left the church
 - Welcome the outcast
 - The marginalized feel excluded, rejected and are hurt and frustrated
 - Assumption Cares offers welcome and hospitality in respectful ways
 - Need to include LGBTQ+ people in all things
 - Gay people feel outside of the inside of the church
 - Particular concern that some groups as divorced and remarried Catholics and people from the LGBTQ+ community may not feel as a part of the church as they should

- Eucharist is so important that acceptance is an essential
- The exclusion of some people from the sacraments is an obstacle
- We should not condemn but invite people to growth and healing
- Need to have understanding of the people who have been hurt by the church
- Need to open our hearts and ears to all various types of suffering in others
- Concern that the church seems not to hear the voices of those crying out for pastoral care
- Leaders need to reach out to estranged and alienated and repair what wrongs have been done to them
- **Personal hurt mentioned in small group scribe reports**
 - Left church for a time due to divorce and being hurt. Was brought back by the warmth of invitation
 - Shame of divorce - the church needs to be more merciful and less judgmental from hierarchy to people in the pews
 - Much pain experienced by those excluded or hurt by the church - great difficulty with political correctness instead of radical acceptance of radical Jesus message
 - Need to address confusion and misunderstanding about some teachings in the church
 - Some terrible experiences in church and yet don't want to leave Sin should not be held against people - church needs to not be judgmental
 - Some pastors and priests cause hurt by being stern and judgmental
 - Some feel entitled and behave in rude ways
 - Not accepting people based on so called sins - lack of inclusion based on sinful behaviours
 - Disparity in how priests handle different situation
 - Refusal of communion to common law couples
 - Bad confessions, lots of fears, condemnation for doing wrong
 - Church leadership betrayed me, looking for priest who speaks as Jesus spoke
 - Annulment process - long, painful, exhausting, confusing process; many church rules and processes are lengthy
 - Once annulment process completed, healing is possible
 - Birth control
 - When family denied baptism for child because they did not go to Mass at the parish
 - How person was not treated with compassion or understanding when preparing to be married and son is bitter
 - Sadness that no one seems to want to talk about faith

THEME FOUR

GROW THE CHURCH WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON YOUTH

Many participants asked the question "Why are people no longer attending Mass?" and expressed concern and sadness at decreasing numbers of people involved in parish life. There was a consistent concern about the lack of youth attendance and involvement in church activities and calls for more targeted youth programming. Support for young people was seen as crucial to the growth of the church and that investment in youth work and peer evangelization would be important to this growth. Senior members often felt connected but felt youth see the parish as irrelevant and that church is unappealing to young people,

It was indicated that young people need to be involved in liturgical experiences and must be given adequate catechesis in schools and in parish community, if their faith is to be an encounter with Jesus.

Many participants are asking for advice on outreach and engagement with young people as a solution for diminishing Mass attendance, as they do not know how to attract them. They are also asking for advice on how to reach out to fallen away friends and family who are distanced from the church. Mention was made that we also need to understand why people are leaving the church in such large numbers.

- **Desire for the church to grow and sadness at diminishing numbers**
 - Hope that church grows - better attendance evolves and becomes more accommodating with the 21st century
 - I pray that the church flourishes and grows, that the number of priests increases, young people come back and that there are more people in church
 - Passionate about the church and want to see it grow.
 - Hope church flourishes and becomes more relevant to the world
 - Church needs to become more welcoming so that members will want to keep coming and potential members will want to join
 - We need to grow our church
 - We need to have more families in church
 - Good things are happening in the church and more people need to be part of it.
 - Make church someplace where people want to be
 - We need to make church more attractive
 - We need to create interest in the church
 - Need to advertise who we are; maybe electronic bulletin boards with upcoming activities and opportunities to serve
 - Need to bring church back to an earlier time when it was more vibrant, and attendance was better
 - Need to look at why we are not growing

- The Pope must give strong leadership on ways of addressing decreasing Mass attendance
- Would like to see a full church that isn't a sea of grey hair. Strong desire for people to come to a place where they know and admit that they need God
- We need to make church a priority again
- Look for ways to draw people back to church and keep them
- We need to focus on what we are rather than what we are against
- Relationships are key - with Jesus and with others in community guided by charity
- Zoom Mass never replaces in person Mass
- Too many have fallen away from the church and we need growth
- Struggling with adult peers rejecting their faith now
- Sadness so many have separated themselves from the church, especially family and friends
- People gave personal stories of their sorrow and frustration when family members, especially children and grandchildren left the faith
- **Realization of need for evangelization but do not know how to hand on faith**
 - People feel they do not know how to hand on the faith *
 - Need help on how to evangelize in daily lives
 - Need to know how to help adult children feel like coming back to the church
 - Need to find ways to bring people of all ages back via various God-centered groups and activities
 - Real concern for how to pass on the faith to my children and grandchildren
 - Need to learn how to bring faith to others
 - How do I help people return to church?
 - A few people mentioned that they are aware of their personal responsibility to hand on the faith - struggle with how
 - We need to journey with people like the Indigenous people; church is not just Jesus and me
 - We need to do the work even if we don't see end results
 - Evangelization is more witness than words
 - Words are useless unless followed by intention and action
 - Peers evangelizing peers
 - Need to show people the invisible Jesus by our own love and acceptance
 - People give testimony - we have to show how God is working in our lives
 - Need to bring our faith experience to others
 - Compassionately invite others to faith
 - Home is the touchstone where learning in faith begins
 - Show others the love of Jesus - need to present Jesus to others

- Offer perspectives and insight to those who have turned backs on the church
- **Great concern about absence of youth in mass and parish life and desire to bring them back**
 - Sadness in seeing youth distance themselves from all participation in church life and sacraments
 - Need more involvement of our youth
 - Need to encourage younger generation to attend
 - Need to bring back our youth and find new ways to interest them
 - Bring the children back
 - Youth are treated as an after-thought; need to involve youth
 - Inviting and encouraging young people back to church essential
 - Bring youth back as active participants with huge leadership potential
 - Hope youth become active and take on leadership roles
 - Encourage youth to come back; initially through personal contact - best done by peers
 - Become more inviting and encouraging families with children to attend
 - Help families with children to increase involvement
 - Need community programs where youth can be involved
 - Challenge of helping youth have some experience of community
 - Instill in youth a love of God
 - How can we attract the younger generation and bring them home
 - Church needs to be more appealing to youth
 - How can we foster faith in youth
- **Some suggestions to help bring youth back to church and parish life**
 - Need to provide a home for young people in church through participation, getting support and ritual - all leading to outreach
 - There is a spark of faith there and we need to look for ways to ignite
 - Need to inspire our youth
 - Call them to work together to do God's work
 - Bring the church into the 21st century
 - Hope for directory/library of resources for teens
 - Look to see how other countries keep their youth involved and interested in faith - why do youth from other countries have faith and Canadian youth do not?
 - Have Sunday School for children but do not remove them from the Mass
 - On Sunday, attending for children should include a time apart to participate in Sunday School
 - Have after school programs

- Have more programs for youth
- Need to catechize parents
- Fundamentals important so is fun

THEME FIVE

IMPORTANCE OF THE SACRAMENTS ESPECIALLY THE EUCHARIST

A great love of the sacraments as well as the joy of celebrating the sacraments with children and grandchildren alongside a community of like - minded believers was mentioned. Access to sacraments was a concern, particularly in relation to the loss of sacramental opportunities during COVID and the looming shortage of priests. COVID - 19 and the Church's response to it have left wounds from which individuals and the greater Catholic community are still trying to recover.

Eucharist is clearly central to the lives of many participants. The liturgical life of the parish is a place of encounter with the person of Christ. There is a need for good liturgy, music that invites participation, good proclamation of the Word and well prepared, well - delivered, effective and relevant homilies.

There was acknowledgement that different people appreciate the liturgy differently and that there is room for different ways of worshipping. For some, a significant minority of participants, it is the liturgy that was used prior to Vatican II. For others, the vast majority, it is the liturgy in the vernacular that was promulgated after Vatican II. Sadness and concern were expressed, by a number of participants, that the provision of Mass according to the 1962 Missal would be lost.

- **Love for the sacraments**

- Great comfort to be able to receive the sacraments
- Deep appreciation for the sacraments
- Joy in the sacraments
- Happy receiving sacraments
- Sacraments are source of growth in community
- Celebrate milestones with the sacraments - give meaning and form to life
- Childhood experiences of sacraments having lasting effect on personal closeness to God
- The power of the RCIA
- There is redemption in confession
- Joy in receiving the sacrament of the sick and the sacrament of reconciliation

- **Importance of the Eucharist**

- Sunday Eucharist is the centre of life *
- Eucharist life giving and source of grace
- Profound sense of joy with the Mass

- Eucharist brings joy especially when one is serving in a liturgical ministry
- Eucharist experienced as so rich and yet many find boring
- Need more exposure to the Mass
- Love universality of church - can feel at home in church anywhere and the Eucharist is celebrated in the same way wherever you go
- **Hope that the Latin Mass continues**
 - Hope there will be room for all to continue to worship in way that is meaningful to them without judgment
 - I have a reverence for the Latin Mass
 - Sadness at possible suppression of the Latin Mass *
 - Hope that the Latin Mass continues *
 - Keep the Tridentine Mass
 - Should go back to celebrating Mass in Latin
 - The Latin Mass offers a clearer understanding of Mass as sacrifice
- **Impact of COVID - 19**
 - The closing of the church deprived me of access to the sacraments and a community of faith
 - Isolation of closed churches - sense of community disrupted, sense of loss and disconnect with the church
 - Sadness at not being able to receive communion during lockdown
 - Love for and desire to receive Eucharist increased during COVID
- **Liturgy**
 - Need good liturgy and being able to participate in it
 - Lack of joy in Mass - should be celebration
 - Need homilies that are effective and relevant to today's life and issues
 - Homilies need to be intentional and relevant, especially to reach youth
 - Need more uplifting homilies
 - Learning how to live faith through the homilies
 - Joy found in liturgy that is alive with song and responsive energy
 - Need more of old traditional hymns, Gregorian Chant while continuing with new contemporary music
 - Need to help people to sing
 - Bad music - not for younger generation
 - Liturgical language needs to be updated to reflect modern language
 - Need inclusive language

THEME SIX

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION

There is a need for everyone, the whole Body of Christ, to be responsible for the mission of the church. We need to examine the exercise of leadership to enable all to respond to their baptismal vocation and discern, form and use their gifts and talents to the service of the Gospel. The church needs to draw on the talents and gifts of all in the community, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, or ethnicity. People are seeking a greater understanding of the role of the laity in church leadership and parish life, particularly for women and young people and seek greater collaboration between lay and ordained. Discernment in the life of the church requires the exercise of gifts we have received from God. While many feel that they are free to exercise these gifts, the synod listening sessions indicate a great number felt themselves with limited ability to use their gifts.

Numerous participants expressed appreciation for priests and their ministry, while others shared stories of pastoral disasters and poor pastoral practices.

A concern about the decreasing number of priests and the low number entering seminary led some to call for a re-imagining of priesthood by the inclusion of married men and the ordination of women. There was some concern about priests being disconnected from their parishioners.

- **We are all church**

- Looking for a co-responsible church that provides opportunities for encounter with Jesus
- Look for true co - responsibility
- We are all the body of Christ
- We are all the face of the church and must be aware of this
- Need to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying no matter whether messages given to lay, priest, nun - everyone having a chance to speak and share in change and movement of the church
- Need to recognize and appreciate the wealth and variety of gifts and charisms of others; acknowledge gifts and talents each brings to the table; need to use them to help others
- Everyone's contribution matters and all contribute in their own way to the whole
- Important that our priests shepherd us and the laity step up
- Need more cooperation between clergy and laity to build up the church
- Need dialogue and understanding between clergy and laity
- Need to see everyone - priests, laity, nuns - living faith filled lives
- Church should not be top down - listen to what is said
- Church leaders need to display more openness and to listen authentically

- Hierarchical structures are too rigid
- Impact of clericalism
- **Empowerment of laity**
 - Need for greater empowerment of the laity *
 - That laity recognize their office in the church, identify their gifts and use them in harmony with each other to build the Kingdom
 - All are to use gifts and strengths to help others - need to celebrate our own gifts and those of others, minimalizing none
 - Invite laity to volunteer so that we can develop more parish programs and reach out to the community beyond the parish
 - Create opportunities for people to be actively engaged
 - Need more participation of the laity
 - Create opportunities for people to express themselves and to be heard so they can contribute to the church
 - Help laity recognize gifts, and how to share them
 - People want to help with parish activities
 - Church is asking laity to become more involved
 - Parishes do not make use of all the gifts and talents parishioners have
 - Laity not encouraged to use gifts
 - Need to develop people's gift
 - Laity don't know their gifts and how to share them
 - Seen as shortsighted the untapped potential of laity
 - Lack of transparency - need greater consultation with the laity
 - Need more laity, including youth, in leadership roles
 - Laity need to be involved in decision making in the church
 - Want more lay participation in ministry
 - Called and Gifted needs to be rebranded to understand the programme
- **Ministry of priests**
 - Priests are important to faith life of parishioners: good priests help in upbringing in faith and are part of the great experiences of church people expressed in memories of childhood and teen years
 - Important role priests have in helping youth and adults grow in faith
 - Positive influence of religious order during youth and adolescence - surrounded by supportive people to help them know and share gifts
 - Amazing example of faithful priests and deacons
 - Joy in getting to know wonderful priests
 - Person was filled with anxiety and stress until met a priest who invited them to participate
 - Comfort in priests

- Need to be compassionate towards our priests
- Priests need to get to know parishioners so they can help them live faith lives
- Want visit of priest to homes especially in times of struggle
- Lifetime consequences of painful experiences - bring to mind complicated issues of clericalism, power and worldly values affecting church
- Want priests to become humble and be divested of their arrogance and judgment of others
- Need positive priests
- That priests and deacons continue to reach out to all members of church
- Concern in decline in number of priests and what this means for future access to sacraments
- Lack of priests has impact on faith life of parishioners and affects opportunities to participate in sacraments
- There are not enough priests for our family of parishes
- Need more vocations to priesthood and religious life
- Invite former priests back
- Open to priests from other lands and gay priests
- Married men and optional celibacy for priests would enable priesthood to be secured in many ways more relevant
- Married clergy would address shortage of priests
- Married clergy necessary - how can they advise on marriage and children when they haven't experienced it
- Hard to relate to priests because they are not married
- Experiences of marriage, raising children are areas in which celibate clergy are frequently ineffective in preaching and pastoral care
- Need relevant priests with more experience with life
- **Involvement of women**
 - Need the involvement of more women in the church
 - Concerned about women's roles in church; also concern for the roles of girls
 - Should have better placement of women
 - Important that we have feminine images of God and human inclusive language
 - Like to see more women actively involved in church as deacons and in positions of authority
 - The ordination of women would help address the shortage of priests
 - An obstacle to my faith is the reality that half of our church members excluded from priesthood because of gender
 - Obstacle in faith is the church preventing women from full participation and sharing their gifts

THEME SEVEN CALLS FOR NECESSARY CHANGE IN CHURCH

Our family of parishes is quite diverse. There are those who seek reform, co-responsible leadership, and adaptation to contemporary society. They asked for a more pastoral perspective, an openness to the Spirit and the inclusion of groups typically on the margins. They spoke of the struggles Catholic families have in living within complex and imperfect relationships and realities. There are others who would like to see the church return to a pre-conciliar time in matters of doctrine, culture and morality and asked for more tradition, orthodoxy and similar ways of adhering to the faith. There is some tension between, on the one hand, a longing for the church to not dilute its teachings, and, on the other hand, a sadness that the church appears not to move with the times and is not relevant for many today. And then there are those who like things the way they are and have little or no desire to increase their participation or to see great changes.

Many agree that these are challenging times for the church and that the church needs to change and mentioned they are staying in the church while this change happens. Our challenge is recognizing that these need not be opposing values but can be creatively expressed within the Catholic imagination.

People expect and want clear teaching from the church. However, there was not one clear answer as to what this teaching should be, and a notable difference is present. Some reflect that it is difficult for the average Catholic to understand and stay true to the teachings of the church when members of the clergy seem to be proclaiming different messages regarding theological and moral issues. At the same time, this desire of some Catholics presents concerns for others who believe a stance in upholding the teachings of the Church, without sufficient catechesis or pastoral care, can alienate members who are struggling with issues of sexuality and gender, abortion, birth control, and divorce and remarriage, among others.

- **Need for change in the church**

- Departure from current path of the church is paramount if there is to be a future - necessary change must be embraced
- Rebuild, renew and restore a good theme for the church now
- Need to be open to change
- Changes in church and adapting to changes can be an obstacle
- Despite confusion, anger, exclusion, misunderstandings, differing opinions, somehow our faith brings us back and we are "sincere seekers".
- Need to revive church with a new spirit of joy
- Become a ministering church, comfortable sharing faith in small groups
- Hope for rejuvenation of the church, not give up our home and come alive again

- There is a thirst for renewal in the church as there is a hunger and thirst for God
- Hope to listen to the Holy Spirit in all of this
- Church must light a spark and live the Word more
- Trust in the Word of God
- That people be the light by focusing on the Word
- That all the baptized develop personal relationships with Jesus Christ and share that relationship with others by learning to share faith and minister together
- Need strong leadership in this time in the church
- Church needs to become more tech savvy to give a more positive image of the church
- Hope church will continue in traditions while also embracing Vatican II and being relevant today
- Learning truth of Gospel liberating and shedding things of world freeing - meet great people in this process
- **Need consistency of message preached about church teachings**
 - Need consistency in message
 - Lack of consistency with church rules - for example being told in marriage preparation it was OK to take part in intimacy with soon to be spouse
 - Need transparency about church teaching
 - Teach actual teaching and not open - ended teaching
 - Call for clear teaching on subjects like abortion, same sex marriage, divorce and remarriage and birth control.
 - Need better explanation of church teaching so faithful can understand and present that teaching themselves to others
 - Need to know why we are here and what is expected of us
 - There is not enough in - depth teaching about what our faith is and why we believe what we believe
 - Faith must be based on scripture and Christ's teachings - need to return to radical teaching of Christ
- **Call for change and modernization in the church**
 - Church has failed to read the signs of the times and lost credibility
 - Church must respond to real needs of the people and be relevant to people's lives
 - Need to embrace Vatican II and be relevant for today's society
 - Concern for church to be more forward, provide what interests people, make all avenues available

- Need to understand and get to know the vision of Vatican II and what came down from it
- We need a more Christian view of the modern world
- The church is too restrictive for today's world
- Church needs to change her moral teaching
- With LGBTQ+ community need to express teaching with more kindness and love
- Have experienced marital breakdown and no longer feel welcome
- The teaching on birth control - no compassion for couples
- Obstacle - the refusal of the sacrament of marriage to same sex couples or at least a blessing
- Conflicts with church beliefs and doctrines (living together, birth control, gender identity, divorce and remarriage, LGBTQ+)
- Obstacle the refusal of communion to couples living common law
- Need to become more modern, go with the times, draw people in and back, especially LGBTQ+ by modernizing
- **Call to embrace church traditions and orthodoxy**
 - Hopes for change that embraces the church's traditions and heritage - bring back traditions that seem to be lost
 - Looking forward may mean missing wisdom of the past. Church needs to be more fervent and has gone away from fundamental truths.
 - Don't water down church teachings
 - Not water down the teachings of the church / Jesus as we welcome everyone. Respect the way Jesus established the church. It should not be too modern; bring back Tradition
 - Hope Tradition to be brought back
 - Fundamental truths of church need to be spoken about, brought back and taught
 - Church needs strong courageous conviction to stand up to controversial issues today
 - Keep to traditional teaching - less politics in church
 - Deep Catholic roots - Traditions need to remain
 - Help people accept church teachings
 - There is a redemption in confession - society is too wishy - washy
 - That the church honours the natural world
 - We must continue to pray the rosary
 - Confession too modernized - told by priest there was no need to go to confession so often
 - Satan is alive and well in the church but Christ always prevails

- There is supposed to be true obedience to the church but people are not obedient
- **Focus on God's truth**
 - The Church is the Truth and needs to stay strong and courageous in its values
 - We have to really know truth and pray for God's truth
 - Need to reach people with the truth of the Gospel
 - Churches need to be active in promoting biblical truth. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. If Jesus had conformed to the world in the Garden of Gethsemane, we would never have been saved
 - Role of church is to change world not to be changed by the world
 - That priests will not shy away from speaking God's truth according to the bible. The truth does not change no matter what we are discussing. Church needs to reflect and make improvements according to God's Word and not world - doing the right thing is not often the easiest but that is where the blessing is
 - Church not standing up for God's truth - needs to start from pope down to begin to spread God's love / truth. Church leaving out or not focusing on many truths: the rosary, the importance of Mother Mary, detriment of abortion, euthanasia, need to fight for our faith

THEME EIGHT FORMATION IN ADULT FAITH

As participants spoke about their faith, there was an underlying request for it to be built up through appropriate learning, training and catechesis. Those who responded were aware of the need to continue their own spiritual and faith journey, nurtured by the sacraments and guided by the Holy Spirit. Many expressed a deep longing for on - going faith formation and spiritual guidance. Many asked for programs, resources and learning opportunities to be provided. They suggested a variety of adult faith formation possibilities: catechetical programs, scripture study, theological education, spiritual guidance, and sacramental preparation programmes.

- **Need for catechesis and adult faith formation**
 - Want to get a better understanding of the faith
 - Learning about our faith as adults - why we do what we do
 - Need for education about church teachings as many are misinformed
 - Need to make catechesis relevant
 - Need to teach the faith
 - Help those without a strong sense of faith to grow faith
 - Need refresher courses in Roman Catholicism for adults *

- Great need for on-going adult catechesis. formation and education *
- Need to help people develop a strong Catholic identity
- Adults not catechized enough - better catechesis needed
- Limits participation in faith life when Mass is only way in the parish to do so
- Give parishioners resources to help with transition from cradle Catholic to living, dynamic, adult faith
- Resources, especially in person, for parishioners to grow in faith
- Need to acknowledge catechesis is different without people in pews - can we use internet
- Catechesis as witness rather than words
- Importance of catechesis in all its forms: active prayer, community building, outreach programmes, celebrations that are truly celebratory - all to draw people in without judgment *
- Learn how to interpret the bible in an adult way
- Desire to understand the scriptures and to make the Gospel alive and present
- **Spiritual guidance and formation**
 - Need to be taught ways to fall in love with God and with the church and work on it together
 - Allow God's Word and the Holy Spirit to guide us - how to do this
 - Having difficulty living faith because of life issues - need to know God more
 - Learn how to see everything with eyes of Jesus / faith
 - We can all profess faith but living faith is real challenge
 - Need support / guidance to help us see Christ in each other, being Eucharist to others by living like Jesus, in terms of thankfulness for all people, showing love, forgiveness and healing, and teaching about the freedom of love God brings
 - Need to learn how to listen to Jesus / his teachings and the Holy Spirit
 - What does living the Gospel mean?
 - Help people develop a deeper relationship with Jesus
 - Need to learn how to grow in God together
 - Spiritual formation
- **Suggestions**
 - Need more faith sharing; small groups important and one step in process of living faith

- Deeper knowledge of and understanding of Jesus so we can have a deeper faith
- Educational opportunities: basis of doctrines, getting to know Jesus, the shift to the Holy Spirit
- Help understanding doctrine
- Feeling we have lost a sense of sacrificing for God and reality of sin in our lives - let's talk about what sin is today and the mercy of God
- Need more teaching on scripture
- Need to learn more about church
- Need to learn more about the Mass
- Bible study - more in depth study *
- Need to learn about critical events in church and early church history
- Cursillo, Marriage Encounter, RCIA, prayer group, adoration
- Charismatic Movement: "Let's Live Word"; "Action"; "Living the Gospel - as Jesus Said Follow Me"
- Alpha, Wild Goose

THEME NINE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Numerous participants want more transparency in all areas of the church: financial matters, residential schools, handling of the clergy sexual abuse, changes in liturgical practice, parish configuration and any other areas where the laity can contribute before any decisions are made. The experiences of lack of accountability and transparency in the life of the church can be stumbling blocks in people's involvement and commitment. There is a pain, shame, sadness and anger due to the clerical abuse and residential school scandals. The church must listen to the survivors of abuse. Ongoing reconciliation and reparation were seen as necessary now and into the future. Pope Francis' apology is a promising first step but more needs to be done. Many participants touched on the wounds of the people, often so publicly displayed, as well as the diminishment of power and prestige of both priests and the church and the pastoral care affected by this.

- **Need for accountability and transparency in the church**
 - Church does not always act according to its own teachings
 - Need to talk about things that are uncomfortable
 - Need to talk about our darkness - not all sugar and spice
 - Hierarchy needs to be more transparent and do things that would restore people's trust and confidence
 - Hope for new level of transparency - an acceptance of responsibility for misdeeds necessary for reconciliation between church hierarchy and the people - need to overcome mistrust

- Church must correct mistakes, not hide from them, acknowledge wrongdoing
 - church for the people - an openness to our mistakes
- Acknowledge ways church has gone wrong and then move forward
- Feel youth are angry about the deception in the church
- Fear the church is taking direction from a hierarchy that is not being transparent
- Obstacle - arrogance and superiority of church leadership
- The pope needs to address social issues with transparency
- The Vatican needs to be more transparent about where the money is and should donate more to help people. There is no reason the Vatican needs to be richest establishment in the world
- No transparency in financial matters
- **Clergy sexual abuse and residential schools**
 - People have left the church because of the mishandling of the clergy abuse and residential schools and deceptive way church handled these issues for many years
 - The sexual abuse scandal led people away from the church and made it difficult for Catholics to share their faith with confidence
 - Great anger and difficulty with the revelation of abuse by priests and with Indigenous people
 - Clergy abuse and residential school problems with institutional church and not Catholicism as faith
 - Obstacle: Lack of transparency regarding sexual abuse and offenders, extreme abuse inflicted on First Nations people attending residential schools and the bad image of the church this has created
 - Difficult to understand what happened years ago and is happening still and how church allowed things to happen and chose not to acknowledge wrongdoing
 - Sexual abuse cases are a tragedy for the victims and their families, and these crimes diminish the credibility of all the clergy and the church as an institution
 - Sexual abuse issue and residential schools' reality very stressful
 - Bad behaviour on the part of the hierarchy of the church and mistreatment of Indigenous people obstacle
 - Need for reconciliation with Indigenous re residential schools
 - Importance of pope's apology to Indigenous people and commitment to ongoing reconciliation
 - Land acknowledgments before meetings

- Need transparency, accountability and action: open files, disclose what we know about crimes of members, take responsibility for wrongdoing of the past and make amends for offences - reparation for sins. Allow justice system to work
- Reparations for past hurts and wrongs cannot atone for past wrongdoings

THEME TEN

FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

The synodal journey was seen as a valued experience of listening to others and being heard and highlighted a desirability for better means for listening in our family of parishes in the future. The participants indicated, not only satisfaction at the opportunity to come together for the synod listening sessions, but also a desire to make them a recurring event. Many felt encouraged by the opportunity to speak, although some lacked the confidence in the hierarchy to follow through.

- **This is a new way of communicating with one another and needs to continue**
 - The church faces challenges in the future and this new way of working together will help us
 - This experience has potential to be a very powerful tool in growing the church. The meetings should continue
 - Liked being able to speak about / share about experiences of church and feeling voice was being heard
 - Valued opportunity to share and participate in collective discernment
 - Value to share faith and want to have more opportunities to do so
 - Like sharing faith - hope for the future
 - Synod was a Spirit led process for moving forward as a church *
 - This is an opportunity to change, to grow and thrive as we continue to follow the synodal pathway
 - There are ideas that have come out of this synod that we do not need to wait for the actual synod for them to be enacted.
 - Desire to understand next steps and for this not to be the end of the process
- **Experience of unity and oneness in shared stories**
 - Synod experience showed harmony in the group - we are a people of faith and sincerity
 - Touches on common struggles, love for Jesus and the church
 - Experience we are not alone, that many feel the same way we do. We are blessed to hear others' stories
 - Empathetic listening to pain of others - experience of healing and faith around this table

- Sharing inspired a desire for growth in one's personal faith life and importance of being freed from dependency on the hierarchy to do this
- We all have stories and church is made up of these stories like a family tree and like a tree there is a need for pruning from time to time and perhaps the synod will do this