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Synod Parish Synthesis Report Form

Submit by April 15, 2022

Email *

mmd1150@gmail.com

GENERAL PARISH SESSION(S) INFORMATION

Parish Name *

Our Lady of Grace/St. Joseph's

Parish City *

Hoboken

Parish County *

Hudson

How many sessions did you host? *

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Other: 1—Session for Disconnected/Non practicing Catholics

Date(s) of Session *

12/15/21

Were the sessions held in person or online? *

In-person

Online

We had some sessions in person and some sessions online

Total number of people who participated *

21

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Providing demographic information was voluntary for participants. However, we ask demographic questions because it is important to understand who participated. Whose voice does this represent?

Estimate the percentage of how many women attended. *

70% Women

Estimate the percentage of how many men attended. *

30% Men

Age range for those who attended.

14-17

18-25

26-39

40-55

56-74

75

+

The largest percentage of participants were from what age group?

40-55

What was the race and/or ethnicity of those who participated?

Caucasian

African-American or Black

Asian

Hispanic or Latino

Middle Eastern or North African

Native American or Alaskan Native

Hawaiian or

Pacific

Islander

Other:

What language groups do you have in your community?

English

Spanish

Chinese

Haitian Creole

Korean

Polish

Portugues

e

Other:

Which of these language groups participated in a listening session?

English

Spanis

h

Chinese

Haitian Creole

Korean

Polish

Portugues

e

Other:

Help us understand more about those who participated.

Youth

Young Adult

Single

Married

Separated

Divorced

Remarried

Widowed

Religious (priest, sister, brother, deacon)

Mass attendance of those who participated.

Daily

Weekly

Once a month

Special occasions (holidays, weddings, funerals, etc.)

Rarely

Never

Tell us about the connection to the parish community of those who participated.

Parishioners

Religious Education

Catholic school

Youth group

Campus ministry

Faith sharing group

Charismatic community

Prayer group

Liturgica

I

minister

Other: 7 were OLG parishioners, 14 were "lapsed" Catholics

Did the participants in the session(s) represent a cross-section of the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity in your local community?

Yes

No

Did you reach out to people with disabilities or families who have members who are disabled?

Yes

No

Did you reach out to people who are marginalized?

Yes

No

Which group(s) did you reach out to?

Non practicing/disconnected former Catholics

LISTENING SESSION(S) OVERVIEW

Provide a brief overview of session(s) - (Limit to 2 paragraphs or about 500 words.) If you hosted more than one session, you may wish to highlight how these sessions were similar or different.

Below, please find the sentiments most frequently expressed in this session of self-described "lapsed" and disengaged Catholics: • Participants frequently cited feelings of estrangement from the church, noting that they felt that the church did not practice what it preached regarding inclusion of those who were not considered "traditional" Catholics—i.e., gay, divorced, single parent

households/female headed households, and those with family members with intellectual/physical disabilities • Not truly feeling welcomed at church other than for financial donations and volunteering at events—that there was no warmth or sense of community within the church after the service was over. Many speakers noted that this was also true of the clergy in their parishes. • Too dogmatic—the Catholic church needs a “bigger tent” to welcome all people, needs to update what is considered “normal” and accept gay and divorced people, as well as people who want a church that reflects their beliefs regarding gender equality, freedom of thought and autonomy over their own bodies. • Chauvinistic—the Catholic church is behind the times regarding women and the roles they are allowed to play. The Protestants are more reflective of modern life, allowing women to be priests, etc. • Loss of trust—the Catholic church flagrantly did not practice what it preached—the institution protected pedophiles, knowingly exposed children and parishes to priests that they KNEW had harmed children repeatedly, but did nothing about the situation until people started suing and exposing the moral & ethical corruption that was allowed to thrive for decades. • Lack of meaningful accountability—continuing on the theme of the church’s institutional failure to recognize, acknowledge, and rectify issues regarding sexual abuse, speakers noted that the institution had failed to curtail known abuses of power (from parish-level priests, all the way up to high level clergy within the Vatican) which allowed financial crimes, embezzlement, and unjust enrichment to take place. Speakers felt that the church had failed to meaningfully hold itself to account—noting that these were actual prosecutable crimes, which anyone else would have gone to jail for, not just say a few prayers and forgive themselves for. • Loss of moral authority and credibility—speakers noted that they felt the church had acted so hypocritically, for so long, that they no longer had trust and faith in the institution. A number of speakers noted that they felt that the main interest of the church was financially sustaining itself, maintaining its existence, and keeping the status quo in place. • Feelings of disenfranchisement—one speaker shared that her parish priest said from the pulpit that undocumented “immigrants should be called out”, noting that not only was this wrong to do, but that there were many undocumented immigrants in her largely Hispanic congregation. • Lack of meaningful engagement with marginalized populations, such as the homeless • Catholic church employs “fear-based leadership” rather than positive, uplifting love-based leadership.

In addition to the listening session(s), did you use an online survey to collect feedback? If yes, please provide information about what you learned from the survey in a separate report.

Yes

No

CORE QUESTION ONE

HOW IS THIS "JOURNEYING TOGETHER" HAPPENING TODAY IN YOUR COMMUNITY?
Share 3 examples of “walking together” in your community. (Pull information from the worksheet to complete these sections.)

Theme for Example #1 (i.e. welcome, engaging youth, etc.)

N/A (longer response- read further)AS THIS WAS A SESSION OF INDIVIDUALS WHO DESCRIBED THEMSELVES AS LAPSED, DISENGAGED AND MARGINALIZED CATHOLICS, THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SESSION CENTERED AROUND WHAT WENT WRONG FOR THEM, CAUSING THEM TO LEAVE THE CHURCH, and therefore this discussion did not touch on the Church's areas of "success". In fact, many speakers noted that they felt that Protestant congregations seemed to more successfully incorporate aspects that they felt were important to them: Inclusion, respect & welcoming LGBTQ individuals, allowing female priests & married clergy, sincere focus on community investment and service to the community.

Description of Example #1

NA

How often was theme #1 discussed? (i.e. 80% of the tables discussed this theme)

NA

Theme for Example #2 (i.e. welcome, engaging youth, etc.)

NA

Description of Example #2

NA

How often was theme #2 discussed? (i.e. 80% of the tables discussed this theme)

NA

Theme for Example #3 (i.e. welcome, engaging youth, etc.)

NA

Description of Example #3

NA

How often was theme #3 discussed? (i.e. 80% of the tables discussed this theme)

NA

What prevents us from “walking together?” What hinders people from being a part of the parish and/or speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly?

As mentioned in OLG's General report, attendees felt that the Church prioritized preserving its own financial, administrative, and hierarchical status and wellbeing over what was best for everyday Catholics.

CORE QUESTION TWO

HOW ARE WE "WALKING TOGETHER" AS A CHURCH, AND WHAT STEPS DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT INVITE US TO TAKE IN ORDER TO GROW IN OUR JOURNEYING TOGETHER?

By our deep listening, what actions do you hear the Holy Spirit asking the universal Church to take?

Allow further leadership roles for women. Embrace those who feel left out and judged – particularly LGBTQ, divorced, lapsed Catholics...

What practical steps are needed to include people in the areas of leadership, governance, and inclusion in the universal Church?

Leadership:

Women in leadership roles. Leaders and hierarchy should be servant leaders, not power hungry ladder climbers.

Governance:

Financial Transparency

Inclusion:

Embrace LGBTQ Catholics. Embrace divorced and remarried people. Include those on the margins, especially the poor.

LOCAL QUESTIONS

How can the Archdiocese of Newark support you in your local parish?

Most of the things that hinder people from deep connection to their faith are problems of the global Church that our local church (OLG/St. Joseph) already addresses very well – LGBTQ inclusion,

Women's leadership, relevancy of homilies, connection to church leadership. Archdiocese of Newark can continue to support the LGBTQ outreach efforts of OLG.

What are 3 steps we can take in our Archdiocese to grow more collaboratively for the future?

Step 1

More inclusion of those who feel left out and judged. Female leadership – priests, deacons, lay females in authority.

Step 2

Financial Transparency – no money for sex scandal payments.

Step 3

More focus on ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.

PARISH PLANNING

Refer back to Core Question 2. In your discussion of this question, participants were asked to offer specific actions for the local parish.

List 3 to 5 themes which you heard in the table discussions which will assist with your future parish with pastoral planning.

Theme 1

Continued support for LGBTQ outreach

Theme 2

Catechesis of both youth and adults

Theme 3

Use of technology

Theme 4

*** There is no area on this form for specific feedback--quite powerful feedback-- so it is being included in this space: SUBSTANTIVE QUOTES FROM LAPSED CATHOLIC PARTICIPANTS: "I'm a divorced person, and a single mother—where do I fit in? I'm a lifelong Catholic—my family has been Catholic as far back as we go, from my great grandparents in Guatemala and Puerto Rico, all the way to the present—but even in the parish I was raised in, where my kids were baptized and confirmed—I feel like we're outsiders. The priest doesn't make an effort to involve families like mine—divorced, single mothers raising kids on their own. They want you to send your kids to Catholic school and CCD, but outside of the financial aspect that they receive from us, it feels like they could care less about really welcoming and including parents like me, and families like mine, even in activities outside of church. The messages are always about the traditional families with a dad, mom & kids, not mine." "I have to filter out the messages that I think are unfair and wrong, and try to explain to my kids how God supposedly loves us all, and that we're made in his image, but that "our" church also says gay people are bad, that they won't recognize gay marriages, that women can't be allowed to be priests, and, that if you're divorced (or had/support the right to have an abortion) that you shouldn't be allowed communion. I end up trying to explain to myself how my church in one breath says that Jesus loves me unconditionally, but in the next, if I've done XYZ that I'm a black sheep that they don't want in their flock." "As a single foster mother, raising two teenage boys and helping them become new Catholics, I feel that we are treated differently. My boys had a rough start in life, but I'm trying share my faith with them, and have them feel like they are just as much a part of the church as other kids are. However, when it was time for them to be baptized (at OLG), instead of the same church-wide celebration that families with infants receive, I was told that my boys had to be baptized in private, which they were. It really hurt that they didn't receive the warm welcome and embrace of our church community when they were taking this important step in choosing to be Catholic." Another poignant comment regarded the treatment of a participant's intellectually disabled teenage son by the pastor of their parish. The speaker shared that as part of her son's senior year requirements, he was required to perform a certain number of volunteer hours to graduate. Her son had his heart set on volunteering at their parish, but when he asked their pastor if he could volunteer, the pastor said "We have nothing for you here, sorry." Her son felt rejected that they didn't want his help, but his mother was absolutely crushed—understanding that their own pastor (who had known the family for years) had judged her son to be unworthy of the time and effort it may have taken to find her differently-abled son a task he could assist with. The woman noted that the priest that ultimately did provide her son with a volunteer opportunity was not only from a church they didn't attend, but was a priest from a Protestant congregation.

Theme 5

N/A