



Synodal Summary - St. Patrick Catholic Community

In 2022, we learned that a Synod is a gathering of the faithful in order to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church and asking her to be and to do. Pope Francis calls it “an exercise of mutual listening”. To that end, the St. Patrick Catholic Community held two listening sessions last year: one in the spring and one in the fall.

Taken from the Vatican’s website www.synod.va - *‘We recall that the purpose of the Synod is not to produce documents, but to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.’*

From the same website we learn that the synodal process is not a one-time experience but an opportunity for the People of God to discern together how to be more synodal in the long-term - it is a way of being Church. Our parish is adopting the synodal way of being Church and will hold “Synodal Listening Sessions” twice a year with another round of listening sessions in May. Details on those sessions will be forthcoming. The purpose here is to provide feedback to the parish from the 2022 listening sessions to help fulfill the Synod purpose listed earlier. The process we are following at St. Patrick is the process Pope Francis is suggesting: “See-Judge-Act”.

“SEE”

The “See” portion of the process was implemented through listening sessions. In the spring of 2022, the community was asked “In your lived experience, what have been your joys and sorrows in your journey with the Catholic Church?”. In 55 offered listening sessions there were 244 parishioners that participated. In the fall we were asked “In the area of mental health, how can the Church be more supportive? How has the church been supportive?” There were 6 listening sessions with about 50 participants. These listening sessions were conducted by trained volunteers from the parish and staff acting as facilitators and scribes.

“JUDGE”

Following the spring listening sessions, the facilitators and scribes along with several other interested volunteers, met to analyze the feedback received from those sessions. The input received from the spring sessions was summarized and delivered to Bishop Olmsted and to Pope Francis at the Vatican. The responses were further broken down into five subcategories.

- Partnering With the Diocese

- Women in Leadership
- Connecting with Youth and Young Adults
- Education/Formation
- Building Community / Putting FUN Back in the Church

Many of the earlier synod volunteers came together along with some new additions and formed a formal ministry within the parish: “Synod Listening Sessions and Steering Committee Ministry”. The group divided themselves into five subgroups, each taking on one of the five subcategories above. Following the fall listening sessions, the feedback on the mental health questions was assigned to the “Partnering With the Diocese” subgroup since Bishop Dolan has identified mental health as an important part of the diocese’s emphasis.

“ACT”

The five subgroups have been meeting at least monthly since late fall 2022 to determine actions that can be taken on what was learned from the listening sessions. The main purpose of listening sessions is the act of active listening to the participants. However, there was a lot that was heard in the sessions that offer opportunities to enhance our parish life, provide us with learning experiences and to promote our journey together. Some of these action items are:

- Implementation of the “Christ in Our Neighborhood” program.
- Participation in the diocesan “Mental HealthFirst Aid” program.
- Investigating the “Discerning Deacons” program.
- Planning activities like return of the parish picnic, all-age talent show, online cookbook, St. Patrick Day Dinner and more.
- Leveraging social media toward the youth and young adults.
- Work with the Men’s and new Women’s Clubs on events.
- (not a full list of plans ... edited for space requirements)

If you have any questions or comments, please email them to synod@stpatcc.org.

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