

Synod Listening Session Responses - Saint Robert of Newminster, Ada

CORE QUESTION 1: SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION

Themes:

- **NEED FOR COMMUNITY**
- **WELCOMING BACK AND RECONCILING FALLEN AWAY & DISAFFILIATED CATHOLICS**
- **UNDERSTANDING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

Community: We are together on the journey of faith, but not everyone feels included or welcomed. Develop a welcoming and inclusive community, not excluding anyone or turning anyone away. Provide a safe place for people to gather and share their stories. Providing opportunities for welcoming new people and helping them to feel comfortable in our community. Develop community through intentional opportunities to get to know each other.

Welcoming back and reconciling fallen away & disaffiliated Catholics: We need to focus on loving everyone and inviting them back to the Church in a gentle manner. Many people have fallen away from the Church because they've been hurt or feel rejected. A lot of people are just complacent. The polarization of the Church in the U.S. is disconcerting. The "sides" are contradicting each other. Many people see the Catholic Church as focusing on rules rather than spirituality.

Understanding the Mission of the Church: There isn't a general, overall understanding of what the Church's collective mission is. Parishes and dioceses have their own missions, but there seems to be little collective mission work.

We need to be attentive to service and outreach to others. Our parish has a number of outreach ministries, but only a few people know about them. We need to actively invite people to explore and share their gifts.

We need to develop evangelization skills to share Christ's message with others. We need to provide solid catechesis for people to educate them in the faith and help them develop a deeper relationship with Christ. Lead and educate the people and they will gravitate to participate. Bible studies are important for people to learn their faith.

CORE QUESTION 2: CELEBRATION

Themes:

- **DESIRE FOR INSPIRATIONAL LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS**
- **PERSONAL PRAYER**
- **SHARE IN THE EUCHARISTIC MISSION**

Desire for Inspirational Liturgical Celebrations: Connection to Christ in the Eucharist. I appreciate the Word and the Eucharist and the Prayers at Mass. Feeling connected to fellow parishioners at Mass in prayer, even if we do not know their names.

Music is an important part of the Mass. The choir, handbells, cantors add to the celebration of the Mass.

The environment, decorations is important, adds beauty to the celebration.

We need to be more welcoming - greeters, inclusivity. There is some concern with the exclusivity of the Eucharist. Desire for women deacons and priests.

Restoration of communal confession.

We need inspiring homilies that energize us and direct us to actively living our faith. More preaching about God's love and mercy, not just demons.

Blessing of being able to attend Mass anywhere with consistency.

There is a concern that clergy do not listen to feedback of the people and just make decisions without considering the perspective and needs of the people. How are seminarians and the newly ordained being formed? Why do they seem to be regressing into more exclusive behaviors?

Is the Church going to be open to diversity or is it going to be more narrow?

Personal Prayer: Extend the Celebration of the Mass to having reflective time each day, to lose myself in listening to God. Daily prayer time is very important.

The Saint Joseph consecration helped enhance my prayer life.

Surrender to God first thing in the morning.

Sacraments are important. Need more catechesis to help people understand the sacraments better.

Prayer groups help in time of stress and sorrow.

The Bible in a Year with Fr Mike Schmitz is a gem.

Encourage spiritual reading. Bible study nurtures faith, deepens faith. Book studies are great. Giving out books has been good to foster participation. Do a "Book-a-Month."

Adoration, Mass, Sacraments help us to hear the Holy Spirit and listen to the Spirit.

Prayer is nurturing and calming and helps to face the world and daily activities.

Encourage people to develop a habit or routine of prayer.

Share in the Eucharistic Mission: Ecumenical breakfast during Lent. More men's events, such as That Man Is You. Extend the Celebration of the Mass as a Eucharistic Minister at a nursing home. We need more people participating in ministries. We need to actively invite people to participate in liturgical ministries.

Bring faith into the culture through awareness, prayer, involvement.

CORE QUESTION 3: LISTENING AND DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Themes:

- **PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**
- **OUTREACH TO THE MARGINALIZED**
- **AUTHENTICITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE CHURCH**
- **THE CHURCH NEEDS TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL CALLINGS IN MINISTRY**

Provide opportunities for questions & answers: There have not been opportunities for lay people to openly ask questions and dialogue about issues in the Church and the world.

Q&A at the end of Mass. Offer small group opportunities for respectful dialogue. Need to address difficult topics that seem to polarize the community, such as abortion and Right to Life, the environmental crisis, LGBTQ issues, etc. Utilize Civilize It through the USCCB. Listen to all perspectives.

Create opportunities to develop relationships, parish social gatherings, Sunday donuts, pancake breakfasts, etc.

How willing are our priests to TRULY listen? Listening does take time and effort. Offer opportunities for priests to engage in listening and dialogue with people.

Who is on the Pastoral Council? Make members of the Pastoral Council as representatives that parishioners can go to and express concerns.

Outreach to the marginalized: Engage in open dialogue and listening with persons on the fringes, such as the LGBTQ community, the disaffiliated and fallen away Catholics, the physically and mentally disabled, those suffering with mental illnesses, youth and young people.

Do better at promoting opportunities to serve and engage with people on the fringes. Outreach ministries that encourage accompaniment with the poor and marginalized. Get involved in social justice issues.

The Church needs to promote development of and support for ALL callings in ministry: Not just seminarians and clergy, but also lay ministries. There is a concern that as educated and certified lay leaders age out, there will not be lay people stepping up to continue the ministries in catechesis, pastoral care, outreach, etc. Women needed to be recognized as leaders in the Church and actively participating in the mission and ministry of the Church.

Promote authenticity and transparency in the Church: The Church, especially the hierarchy, has not been open and transparent about issues in the past, such as the clergy sex abuse scandal. It feels as if the clergy are disconnected from the laity.

Bishops and priests need to communicate with parishioners more honestly and openly and listen to feedback from the laity.

Communicate changes in the church more openly and clearly.

There is great concern about the disunity among the U.S. bishops on issues.

Ensure we all are open and listening to the Holy Spirit. Are we truly listening to and discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit in our Church?

CORE QUESTION 4: FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION / COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

Themes:

- **INVITE, WELCOME, AND BE NON-JUDGMENTAL**
- **ENGAGE FAMILIES**
- **PRAY FOR AND BE OPEN TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Invite, welcome, and be non-judgmental: Continue this synodal process with future listening sessions and dialogues.

Our parish feels disconnected because it is so large. Develop larger community by creating small faith communities and small groups to pray together, study together, and discuss issues.

Promote opportunities for people to get involved. Openly and actively invite people to get involved in parish and outreach ministries. Get creative about informing, inviting, and welcoming people to get involved, not just bulletin announcements.

Encourage parishioners to reach out and connect with one another, such as conversations after Mass, parish events, etc.

Identify and reach out to the disaffiliated and fallen away Catholics. Personal contacts - phone calls, visits. We need to walk not only with Church members, but also with our brothers and sisters in society.

Engage families: Invite families to gather together for social, service, and prayer. Actively engage parents as the primary formers of their children's faith.

Promote opportunities for adult catechesis and actively encourage adults to participate. Opportunities to explore Scripture and Tradition to grow in knowledge of the faith and relationship with Jesus Christ and one another.

Provide both social and catechetical opportunities for children and youth to connect with one another, grow in their understanding of the Catholic faith, and develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pray for and be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit: Provide opportunities for communal prayer. Promote communal prayer for specific issues, such as praying the Hail Mary for special intentions at the end of Mass, praying a Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet for intentions and issues, Eucharistic Adoration.

Encourage personal prayer for specific issues. Encourage personal prayer to grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pray for specific issues in the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.

We need a synodal Church - a Church that listens and dialogues across boundaries and factions - rather than a museum Church - a Church that follows the rules and habits in order to maintain itself. A synodal Church is open to the movement of the Holy Spirit; a museum Church is closed in on itself.

****NOTE:** A lot of what was shared for the Fundamental Question was also shared in Core Question 3: Listening and Dialogue in Church and Society. Encourage clergy to listen to and dialogue with the laity, reach out to and get to know people on the margins, provide opportunities to discuss difficult issues.