

Discernment Session #1 (St. Anastasia) Compilation:

**Note: x# indicates number of groups with similar comment, not number of total comments in scribe notes**

**LISTENING**

- How is God speaking to us in the voices we sometimes ignore? How are the laity listened to?
  - Parish/Diocesan Realities and Structures
    - Parishes need easier and more ways for parishioners to voice concerns x4
      - People are afraid of parish structures or skeptical of their own qualification
      - Parishioners bring up ideas and nothing is done
      - Task-orientedness can get in the way of listening
      - Can priests have “listening hours”?
      - Access to parish council members?
    - Parishioners don’t interact with each other/lack of connection x5
      - Or people stick to certain groups
      - Parishes can facilitate these interactions
    - Invitation is important to helping people become involved in parish ministries x4
    - Parishes need to offer more opportunities for involvement x2
      - Survey of parish ministries – are they meeting expectations?
      - Parishes need more support/pastoral groups
    - Parishioners ought to volunteer more—ask “How can I help?” x2
    - Acceptance of people varies by parish
      - Different parishes have different “flavors”
      - Small parishes used to knowing everyone, not used to new
      - Cathedral hosts visitors, homeless population
    - Bishop doesn’t respond to letters
  - Practical Theology and Observations
    - We need to be willing to hear different opinions and expose ourselves to other cultures; echo chambers are too easy to fall into x4
    - Listening is key to relationship and begins with the individual x3
      - Through the ears, to the heart
      - Find common ground while appreciating difference
        - Multicultural environments can be enriching
      - Show patience, respect
    - Prayer is important to listening x3
    - The Holy Spirit’s role is important x2
    - Among parishioners, need to listen to people of differing political views x3
    - The way in which we share the Gospel determines whether others will listen
    - Pride gets in the way of listening
    - Don’t make outsiders projects – allow them a voice and contribution
- Who does the Church need to listen to? Who is left out?
  - Minorities/POC x4
    - Parishes and neighborhoods are becoming more diverse, but structures are only just beginning to adapt
    - More attention needs to be given to cultural groups and multicultural events x2
    - Parish communities function separately
  - Young people x3
    - Transition after high school is difficult
    - Resources for young people are lacking, especially in catechesis
    - Youth want/need places of leadership
    - Youth want to see concrete authority and rules, leading to interest in Latin Mass

- Concerned for young people because of lack of “good examples” in parish
    - Groups even at the same parishes don’t even interact
  - Women x3
    - Women run an outsized proportion of parish ministries
  - Elderly x2
  - Families x2
    - Sacraments needs to be affordable; cost of religious ed. can’t be a barrier
  - Homeless x2
  - LGBTQ+ community x2
    - Lack of Church support for parents of LGBTQ children
  - Poor x2
  - Dead – Church needs to spend more time praying for the dead
  - Disaffiliated family members
  - Divorced Catholics
  - Latin Mass community, esp. younger people
  - Pregnant mothers and the unborn
  - Undocumented immigrants
    - Afraid to go to Mass or register children for Catholic schools
- Other Comments
  - People need to show more reverence in churches
  - Why love the Church?
    - Church offers truth
    - Church is like a big family

## SHARING RESPONSIBILITY

- How can the baptized be helped to share in the Church’s mission?
  - Need for more outreach and joyful evangelization – both to members and nonmembers, those in need, those we encounter in our workplaces x8
    - We are called to practice what we preach
    - This runs counter to a culture that says religion is only a private matter x2
    - Common responsibility for faith, common responsibility for those who can’t help themselves x2
    - Need to walk with those on the margins, those who experience doubt
    - Cradle Catholics can learn from converts
    - Parishioners don’t know about the outreach that already exists – Catholic Charities, etc.
  - Education in the faith is important x6
    - Emphasis on Kerygma x2 – back to basics
    - Ecclesiology – what does it mean to be “Church”? x2
    - Need for education in Scripture x2
    - Also practical help with being involved in ministries
    - Better education on human sexuality
  - Help people feel comfortable and capable – stewardship and hospitality x5
    - Again, invitation is key x2
      - Those who are “at large” members can draw in other people
    - Volunteers not given responsibility because they can leave at any time
    - People are afraid of rocking the boat
    - The Body of Christ has different gifts that ought to be put to use
  - Quality priests help the laity participate x4
    - Homilies should move parishioners to action
    - Priests should be willing to let parishioners have authority
  - The Eucharist is important to shared community x4

- Mass should help people feel “supported, encouraged and enlivened.”
- Parishes ought to provide activities in the evening, when people can attend x3
  - Include fellowship and faith-sharing
- Encourage people to make time in their schedules x3
  - Many feel like Sunday obligation is the only obligation
- Mission is first cultivated within the family x3
  - Provide childcare within family events
  - Family give us examples in the faith
- Prayer helps us have a missionary heart and a heart for community x3
  - Retreats important as well
- Priests need to talk about consecrated life more – far greater push in Church for priestly vocations than for religious x3
  - Need for more presence of women religious x2
- Listening helps parishioners feel empowered to share in common mission x2
  - Esp. young people and young adults x3
    - Young people have desire to serve and engage in mission of Church
- Begin with baby steps – smile, say hello, etc. – treat people with kindness x2
- Emphasize the love of God, especially in the Eucharist
- Visit other parishes and diocesan activities to get new ideas for participation
- COVID has made mission difficult – need to renew active participation

## SYNODALITY

- How can the Church form members to be more capable of “walking together?”
  - Ministries form environment where people can share x3
    - Small groups, esp. in large parishes
  - Need more guidance in synodality x3
    - Resistance because lack of understanding
  - Prayer is important to synodality x3
    - Need special attention to the Holy Spirit
  - Universality of the Synod is a hopeful thing x2
  - Different groups of the parish act separately when they should be together
  - Parish renewal programs, e.g. CRHP, Cursilo, Discovering Christ
  - Eucharistic Congress brings people together for communal formation
  - Morality must be rooted in Gospel values
  - Boldness needed in approaching those who have left the Church
  - Discernment evenings like these help people walk together
  - Sharing of personal stories builds connections

## ONE-WORD CONCLUSIONS

- Hopeful/Optimistic x11
- Encouraged x4
- Satisfied/Pleased x3
- Inspired x3
- Love x2
- Community/People x2
- Thoughtful
- “Difficult job”/”work to do” x2
- Joyful
- “What’s next?”
- Peaceful x2
- Happy x2
- Prayerful
- Determined
- Diversity
- Positive x2
- “Hidden Life”
- Perseverance
- Stagnant
- Engaged
- Transition
- Confused
- Shared
- Enriched
- “Happy to listen”
- Depressed
- Enlightened
- Frustrated
- “Want action”
- Obedience
- United
- “Unknotted”
- Thankful
- Emmaus
- Refreshed