

STM: Synod Report:
Zoom Call February 9, 2022

Theme 1; Listening:

Parish is lacking transparency - leadership is not listening and providing no feedback -example, pastoral council disbanded, results of surveys are not shared. Lack of appropriate tools in place to be heard, needs to be more opportunity for feedback from parishioners.

School board meetings are closed. Suggested to have 30 minutes open to any parent to attend to voice concerns.

Finance Committee -no one knows who is on committee. A STM staff member didn't even know who was on the committee. This was another example of lack of transparency.

Our parish needs to be more clear on who to reach out and who is on parish committees. STM website is very hard to navigate. This inhibits the parish being able to listen when they are hard to reach.

Several attendees addressed the lack of women being involved and do not feel women are represented. Women should be allowed the same roles and opportunities as men.

During the pandemic a member attended Masses from other churches via zoom. They found inspiring homilies and realized they are disappointed in STM homilies. Young priests too caught up in liturgy.

One attendee was disappointed hearing criticisms of priests. She appreciates the pious nature of priests and feels like we're becoming more divided. We should try not to be angry and listen more to others.

Felt opportunities such as sharing a meal (One City Cafe) with those less fortunate help us to count our blessings; great opportunity to help the marginalized by hearing their stories.

There is a lack of empathy from clergy. At mass it is a struggle to listen because we don't feel engaged. Lay people don't feel listened to. We feel like we have to shout to be heard. We are made to feel that we have a lesser value because we are lay people.

The parish is family focused. Single people are looking for ways to be pulled in and be involved. Singles have to fight to be involved and to pray for one another.

Another member in the group shared that she remembers the Latin mass. She had unpleasant memories of the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church. She felt strongly that the people are the church. She mentioned that some of the current priests at STM preach to the people like children and wear a cassock. She does not appreciate ever being told in a sermon that she is going to hell.

She resents not being heard and doesn't feel that the church does a good job of listening to people. She thinks that priests need to be a part of the healing. (Note- none of this was said in anger, but more in sadness)

Another group member felt that when she spoke out at STM that she was not treated well as a woman by a parish member. She would like to see stronger leadership and transparency from Fr. Justin. She mentioned the recent removal of masks in the school and wished that the situation had been handled with more communication. She wished there was more transparency in the decision making process. She wanted people to feel more listened to during that process.

*Upon reflection of this discussion a theme of inclusion seemed to emerge. All of the group had a deep desire to feel a part of the church and felt hurt by the things that made them feel rejected- words of a sermon, priestly garments or face-to-face conversations. They want to feel connected, inspired, seen, heard, and valued.

At mass I need a message, I feel empty after I leave, I feel lectured by the priests, it isn't uplifting and encouraging

We need support from our priests, Church and school are separated

We need to respect each other, living the message of God

I feel we have a lack of direction as a parish due to our leadership

Theme 2; Discerning and Deciding

Recent survey from the diocese was sent to school families. Several members wished the results of the survey were shared. It would be nice to know the feedback on what is being done to resolve concerns expressed. And what should we do when we receive no feedback? How do we know who to reach out to for follow up?

No action seems to be made to show parishioners or parents in school are heard; follow up is key to being heard. If concern is voiced at parish level and we are not heard, what's next? A member had voiced a concern to dioceses and was just directed back to parish again.

It seems to be a top down system within the levels of clergy including bishops and pastors. We need tools in place to give input or follow up to get answers. Decisions seem to flow top down with lack of voting on different levels; parish/ dioceses/world wide church. The principle at STM can't make a decision without consulting Fr. Justin. This is frustrating. One member said that they felt like they were wasting their breath whenever they voiced concerns. Another group member felt that the hierarchy is an issue. We need to be more open and welcoming instead of being told rules. Some of the structure and rules can shut people out.

Attitude toward gays and transgender needs to change -losing young Catholics to brashness towards others. Need priests, bishops etc in place to keep the future interested and appropriate.

Homilies need to watch harshness and be more aware of young audiences present. Not ideal to discuss transgender or homosexuality as a negative at a Mass the children's choir is singing during. To keep people from falling away from the church we need to be relevant to today's society.

Why do certain rituals (covering of statues during lent) if there seems to be no meaningful reason to do it? Has several times asked to be educated on why we do some things with no answer.

One member appreciated the sanctity of the altar back- this was important to her- rituals equal dignity. Another member politely disagreed and they miss seeing children singing praise and worship from the altar.

One person felt that we need training on how to communicate with one another. They felt that it how we are behaving is causing issues.

People are willing to be involved. We are missing a stewardship element because we aren't allowed to be involved.

Some felt that the conservative rules and regulations from a Vatican II style of thought were brought back by Bishop Finn. Many young priests fell into that and are far too conservative to connect with the people.

People need to be empowered. People need to feel heard.

I want to be listened to and feel heard

We need to celebrate all the positive things in our ministries

We need to tell the story-listen to others stories

I feel that we don't let everyone bring something to the table, we are missing the definition of Stewardship. We are missing the boat on time, talent and treasure. I feel we focus too much on the treasure. I feel that we are missing out on the joy, celebrations and community connections

Theme 3; Sharing Responsibility for our Common Mission

One member cannot discuss the Bible with Protestant friends; does not feel educated enough to have confidence in sharing the word. Several fear knowledge is inadequate. Another attendee shared that it would be difficult for them to start a conversation with a non-believer for the same reasons.

We are called to be in relationships with people. Get out of our comfort zones with our differences. Suggests doing acts of service to help guide others to faith vs. talking about it.

One expressed STM needs to faith in action and relates to people. Another feels sharing a meal with others allows us the chance to faith in action.

Several members expressed that STM does a great job of mission work. Best way to be a disciple is to build relationships with people out of your comfort zone. Lead by example in serving others.

Church of the Resurrection has great community outreach. We need to be like this. Leaders need to be in touch with people. The example of a leader riding in a police car was given. We should be offering ourselves to the community. We need to do more outreach in the community

I would like to see us have a closer relationship with other schools and churches in our POD.