

Synod report for Corpus Christi parish Kelowna BC 2022

The first observation concerns the number of people who chose not to participate in the synod. Two groups met, the Parish Council and our CCO committee that grew out of the Multiply workshops. We also sent out copies of the questions to all parishioners who have an email account, with a preamble explaining just what was being asked of them. Parishioners were also invited to write directly to the Bishop if they so wished.

The response was underwhelming to say the least, and I believe that we were not unique. I think that to proceed without investigating why people chose not to participate would be a mistake. We do think that this Synod was a noble attempt to honour the laity, but perhaps some professional guidance on how to engage people would have helped.

As for the Synod questions; there were far too many questions covering too great a scope of subjects. And too many of the questions required some discussion or clarity before we could proceed. For instance, what is the definition and objectives of Ecumenism? Or what is the mission of the church? It was also felt that not having a single question that asked directly about the Indigenous Peoples of Canada was a glaring mistake.

Having said that, the responders felt the most positive about our outreaches and attempts to journey with those who struggle in life and especially with poverty. They are proud of the work of their Society of St. Vincent de Paul and their support of the local Pregnancy Care Centre and Development and Peace, to mention a few.

There was also a strong concern regarding the voices of Women and Youth in the Church. They worry about the future of the Church

and the lack of young people attending church services. They wonder if enough is being done to support families and especially those that are struggling to stay together. Would hiring a professional family councillor help families in crisis and help them to stay connected to the church even when families do break down?

They also feel that it is time for the Church to make more room for the female voice. And that women should have more say in how they are able to participate in all aspects of Church life.

Women have chosen not to serve the Church as Nuns, but that has not negated their call to serve. And it was noted a few times, that since there were women deacons in scripture, perhaps it is time to honour the wisdom of the early Church and the gifts that women receive from the Holy Spirit in our generation. Women are an obvious gift to the Church, and not enough is being done to make the best of them.

As for the liturgy, people wish that the priests would listen to Pope Frances and preach for only eleven minutes.

One word that kept reappearing was Transparency. Whether it was regarding the abuse cases or Residential Schools, people felt that the Bishops have not been open and clear enough with the people in the pew about decisions that are being made on their behalf.

People want justice and they want to be proud of their church again. And they feel that the lack of information coming from the Bishops only gives the media, and people who do not support the Catholic church, reasons to find fault and criticize us in a way that is hard to take day after day.

They are glad that Pope Francis will be making a pilgrimage to Canada. Although they are concerned about the cost of the trip on top

of the financial promises that have been made to our Indigenous communities. We have all heard from some others that they are hesitant to participate in any collection for Indigenous Peoples. Which tells us that there is work to be done to help the Catholic community to embrace this opportunity to be a source of God's healing grace.

They hear that much is being done behind the scenes with Indigenous groups, but they wish that more details would be provided on a regular basis so that that these efforts are well known in and outside of the Church. It was also felt that if we could all agree on what has been done in and by the Catholic Church to this point, that would really help the process of moving forward.

One person stated that; "Parish and Diocesan Councils need a bigger voice and they should be part of any major decisions. Women and youth are not heard from enough just as male laity do not have much of a voice." Perhaps a Diocesan Pastoral Council would have been a help in the implementation of the Synod and in the other areas of Parish and Diocesan life that is seen as a concern by the faithful.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Corpus Christi Parish

Rev. Pat Monette