

PARISH SYNOD ON SYNODALITY REPORT

GUARDIAN ANGEL CATHOLIC CHURCH, ORAN

ST. AMBROSE CATHOLIC CHURCH, CHAFFEE

FR. JOSEPH KELLY, PASTOR

On Tuesday, May 3rd, 2022 we held our Parish Synod on Synodality gathering at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Oran, MO at the conclusion of our RCIA class. Invitations were issued via the RCIA classes due to the number of people we reach through our email list. Attendees included members from both parishes, as well as a few attendees from Cape Girardeau, **approximately 50 total**. Each small group consisted of approximately 6-10 people. The age for the group ranged from college-aged students to the elderly, the majority of the attendees being 50-60 years of age. The following are the various answers given in the small group discussions. I have simply written down the answers of the groups in bullet-points, some of which are repeated, in order to show the frequency of some answers to the questions.

GROWING IN HOLINESS

1) How does the parish community help you to encounter Christ and journey with you on the path to holiness and a deepening relationship with Christ?

- RCIA classes every Tuesday
- Men's Bible Study every Saturday morning
- Looking to other people [parishioners] as examples
- Involvement in choir, RCIA, organizations like the Knights of Columbus, Ladies' Sodality, Men's Bible Study on Saturday morning
- Our priest
- Special devotions like the 40 Hours Eucharistic Devotion
- Divine Mercy devotions
- Fr. Kelly's bulletin articles are great!
- RCIA
- Fr. Kelly's leadership and his homilies
- The reverence and beauty at Mass
- The 2 parishes [Guardian Angel and St. Ambrose] working together
- Having RCIA open to the parish/public
- More opportunities Father has provided for confession
- 40 Hours Devotion
- Divine Mercy devotions
- St. Ann's Ladies Sodality [Oran]
- St. Joseph's Men's Group [Oran]
- Catholic parish dinners and social events
- Daughters of St. Ambrose PCCW [Chaffee]
- Men's Bible Study on Saturday mornings
- Increased opportunities [like RCIA] to study the faith
- People want to hear the Truth from the pulpit—Fr. Kelly does this

- Current RCIA classes are very helpful to bring us into our religious life
- Fr. Kelly is ‘honest’ with us
- Fr. Kelly’s Podcasts
- RCIA classes
- More opportunities for the Sacraments
- Various retreats offered through the parishes
- Men’s Bible Study
- *Formed.org*

2) What could the parish community do better to foster and encourage your growth in holiness?

- More bible studies/groups
- Children’s church
- Youth Group improvements
- More adoration hours
- More youth-geared involvement for post-8th grade graduation (in Oran)
- More everyday Catholic ‘routines’ explained (more bulletin-type articles to help explain); even a Mass ‘run-through’ to explain
- Q&A open forum-type events
- Form a greeting committee—we need to do more asking and encouraging people to get involved
- Youth ministries
- Sporting events and CYC
- Youth sports/church league
- Teaching for youth
- More opportunities w/ adults to continue education
- Bible studies
- Small group study classes
- Encourage programs for youth
- Possible monthly Q&A studies
- Find ways to make religion more important than athletics, especially high school to college kids
- “Keep doing what you’re doing, Fr. Kelly.”

FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES

- 1) In what ways does the Church journey with individuals on the path of intentional discipleship? How does the parish community help one another to grow in fuller knowledge of, understanding of, and daily practice of, life in Christ?
 - The Sacraments
 - Parish school, PSR, and daily Mass
 - Parish groups: RCIA, Knights of Columbus, Ladies' Sodality, Men's Bible Study, our priest, devotions
 - Men's Bible Study
 - Adoration opportunities
 - First Friday devotions
 - Forming men and fathers
 - PCCW fundraisers and stewardship
 - RCIA program
 - Cursillo movement—getting Catholics to think about being a disciple
 - Catholic Man Night and Men's Bible Study
 - Social times related to religious activities
 - *Formed.org*
 - Bulletin articles from Fr. Kelly
 - Prayer books and prayer cards
 - Extra prayers after the end of Mass on weekends
 - Various retreat opportunities (White House in STL, Cursillo)
 - Men's Prayer Breakfast on Saturday

- 2) How does the parish form a welcoming community where ALL are invited to participate and given opportunities to discover and use their gifts? Who, in your experience, does not feel welcome or is not part of the active parish community and why (if the reason is known)?
 - We need to increase community involvement in: dinners, bake sales, sports breakfasts.
 - 18-25 year olds are not a part of the active parish community
 - We lack this here—we could have a family responsible for greeting at Masses
 - We should form a greeting committee to welcome new attendees, encouraging returns to Mass and developing relationships
 - Busy young adults likely feel the least welcomed (30-40 year olds) and likely the same group for least active likely because of busy schedules, etc.
 - Choir, readers, liturgical roles, sacristan opportunities for girls and altar serving for boys are all ways for parishioners to feel welcome and use their gifts, especially children and young families.
 - We do not feel parish community help.
 - We need improvement on being a welcoming community

- The youth feel unwelcome/not a part of active parish community because there are no youth group activities.
- We feel that establishing Pre-K in the schools brought more families to church.

3) What positive suggestions would you make for how the Church could more effectively form intentional disciples?

- More community involvement
- More early morning adoration hours
- More youth involvement/more youth programs
- More every day Catholic routines and the Mass explained
- Q&A events
- Form a greeting/welcoming committee
- Asking and encouraging people to get involved
- Going door-to-door
- Reaching out to less-regular attendees with charity
- Hospitality and welcoming efforts
- More opportunities for adults to continue their education in the Faith
- Bible studies
- Small group classes
- We need to be more accessible and accepting to new members and give them a reason for feeling welcome.
- We should have more events that are open to the entire parish
- We should be more inviting to the non-Catholic community through dinners, bowling events, etc.
- Have more priests like Fr. Kelly! We need more explanations of the 'why' when it comes to our Catholic practices!

BEING SENT TO WITNESS

- 1) How does the parish community foster healthy relationships within the larger surrounding community and with other Christian churches within that community?
 - Ministerial Alliance
 - Knights of Columbus
 - Meals on Wheels [Chaffee]
 - We used to participate with community services for Thanksgiving services, but this hasn't been done since Covid.
 - The choir used to sing at other Christian church events
 - We participate in the food bank, i.e., Thanksgiving food drive/clothing drives
 - Thanksgiving services within the community and local churches
 - Bringing the faithful back following Covid
 - Mission talks (Advent/Lent)
 - Ministerial Alliance
 - Food bank
 - Clothing Closet (clothing drive)
 - Thanksgiving prayer services w/ other churches
 - We were involved in the community celebration of the 150 year anniversary of Oran
 - Ministerial Alliance
 - Birthright
 - Food pantry
 - Extra collection for weather-related disasters (several parishioners helped facilitate food/clothing/necessity drives for the community in Mayfield, KY after the tornado in December 2021)
 - Food pantry for the community
 - Working together for a common cause to serve common needs in various ways

- 2) How does the parish community specifically serve as the hands, feet, eyes, ears, and heart of Jesus: How do we reach out to help those most in need (physically and spiritually)? How do we intentionally welcome and minister to those considered marginalized and left out?
 - Angel food boxes (Christmas)
 - We don't know what kind of a community we actually have to reach out to—if they come to Mass we welcome them, but not sure we actively seek out 'outsiders', but again, we do assist in community funding when needed/requested.
 - Baskets for the needy
 - Adopt-a-family/child at Christmas (PCCW sponsors 'Boxes of Joy' through Cross Catholic Outreach)
 - Clothing and baby item donations to Birthright
 - Prayer-line
 - Hospice care from parishioners
 - Birthright donations

- Helping/visiting the elderly
 - Extra church collections
 - The Boxes of Joy program at Christmastime
 - Giving to Birthright
 - Fr. Kelly playing/singing at community events
- 3) What more can we, as the parish community, do to reach out and bring Christ to those who do not enter the doors of the Church?
- We can have nursing home Masses
 - Encourage participation in Night Prayer videos (like what Fr. Kelly did during the pandemic)
 - Make Christmas cards and go caroling in the community.
 - Being encouraging of the Catholic Faith and what it truly means to be Catholic (we need more Fr. Kellys'!)
 - We need to advertise ourselves—live a life that makes others curious and interested.
 - We need to actively invite people to come to church.
 - Talk about our faith more with others
 - Invite people to church
 - Invite people to RCIA classes
 - Witness to the Faith with our lives in an integral way
 - Reaching out through phone calls and home visits
 - Church greeters
 - As a parish community we need to be living our Catholic faith, not just mouthing words. We need to stand up for what is right—BE A WITNESS!
 - Encourage large gatherings in the community—singing, prayer, food events
 - Cross educational meetings with other faith groups willing to discuss the Catholic faith.
 - Keeping opening up RCIA classes to everyone in the parishes
 - Encourage listening to Fr. Kelly's podcasts
 - Share Fr. Kelly's posts on social media.

SUMMARY

As can be seen by the various answers given in the questions, the majority of people feel that they do not know their faith and have a desire to learn more about Catholicism. In doing so, they feel this will make them more active in the Church and have a greater ability to reach out to others who have fallen away from the faith or are unchurched or are not Catholic. Greater exposure to the Sacraments (Mass, Adoration, confession, etc.) as well as the various devotions of the Church has helped people grow in their relationship with Christ. The encouragement of community gatherings was another theme that continued to appear in the answers to the questions. The process, overall, was pleasant and the people participated peacefully and cheerfully.