

SYNTHESIS OF THE PARISH SYNOD CONSULTATION SESSION

PARISH NAME: St. William PARISH CITY: Buffalo, MO

How many consultation sessions were held at the parish? 2

On what date(s) was the session held? April 26 and April 30, 2022

About how many participants attended? 15

How were invitations issued?

St. William in Buffalo used the bulletin announcements provided to inform parishioners about the synod and the meeting times. Then invitations were mailed to all parishioners and some nonpracticing Catholics in the community. We also had responses from parishioners who were unable to attend the meetings but wanted to give input on the three diocesan priorities. The video from Bishop Rice was shown at the end of mass so people could understand what the synod meetings entailed.

How did you invite and connect with those at risk of being excluded or those on the peripheries? Were there any groups of people whose participation was especially noteworthy and why?

Teresa, our coordinator sent invitations to those at risk and personally called to talk to those at risk of being excluded or on the peripheries. Since most of our parishioners are 50 years or older, an extra effort was made to include the 22 to 50 year old (all 2 of them) parishioners as they are the future of our church. Their input was helpful to let us know we are meeting their expectations of welcoming them. The 70-90 year old group who aren't able to attend church in person due to taking care of loved ones miss the spiritual activities like Bible studies, fellowship and adoration.

Were there specific groups of people who did not participate and why (if known) did they not participate?

We still have some homebound parishioners who are unable to attend. Their priorities are more on receiving communion at home or being able to receive last rites or questions about funerals. They really appreciate getting the bulletin online and having their birthday or anniversaries recognized. They also appreciate the prayers the church is praying for them.

Through the consultation session, what were some of the positive descriptions of how the Church is journeying with people to "grow in holiness"?

Participants described St. William as a significant source of spiritual, personal, and social support which encourages a journey to a path of holiness and Christian life. Parishioners appreciate weekday masses which are held in the morning and afternoon, adoration, reconciliation, rosary before mass, religious education, prayer meetings, and music at Sunday Mass where the Holy Spirit is felt. Many volunteers provide leadership, feed the poor, take communion to the shut-ins, prepare musical prayers during mass and events, make phone calls to the sick and send cards, repair and clean our church, monthly luncheons, hold birthday parties, and monthly luncheons.

What were some of the challenges, disappointments, or frustrations conveyed, in describing how the Church journeys together to "grow in holiness"?

Some participants acknowledged fellowship with other Catholics, particularly since Catholicism is a minority religion in our local community is challenging. They mentioned that if you don't have Facebook or Zoom participating in mass was difficult during COVID. They missed the weekly participation in mass. Spiritual communion was appreciated but they missed receiving the Eucharist.

What were some of the positive descriptions of how the Church is "forming intentional disciples"?

By serving as role models of holiness and Christ's love in our daily lives, others are empowered to join in the many activities to grow in their discipleship and love for one another. St. William is a very welcoming, active, caring and supportive parish that offers a positive environment for growing in life through Christ, both in the parish and community. Keeping the parish informed through text messaging, weekly bulletin announcements, and social media posts has helped us form intentional disciples. The prayer groups, adoration and rosary as well as offering fellowship before and after mass weekly were ways to form intentional disciples.

What were some of the challenges, disappointments, or frustrations conveyed, in describing how the Church journeys together to "form intentional disciples"?

It was suggested that announcement cards be sent when a Mass intention is requested. It will be sent to the person or family who requested the intention to announce the day the person is having the mass said in their honor. Participants also requested additional religious education and resources to explain the Catholic ways of life. We want to encourage growth and understanding on how to foster a closer relationship with GOD. Bible studies, workshops and retreats were mentioned as the Holy Week retreat was well attended. If we are intentional disciples our Catholic way will be evident in the community.

What were some of the positive descriptions of how the Church is responding to the commission of: "being sent forth to witness"?

Many parishioners participate in the community by volunteering at the local food bank food collection and donations, fundraisers for local children in need and many special focused nonprofit organizations dedicated to victims of domestic violence, families in transition, Lifehouse, Mother's House, Catholic Charities, Veteran Project, El Rancho, Haven, etc. Even our youth participates in the Bishop's activities for youth by donating significantly.

What were some of the challenges, disappointments, or frustrations conveyed, in describing how the Church is responding to the commission of: "being sent forth to witness"?

We know there are other organizations that could profit from our assistance. Creating a food bank was mentioned, however there is no way we could provide the manpower it takes to run this government regulated project. We could send volunteers to support another church in the community, as our parishioners benefit from these programs. We use "Why Become Catholic" brochures as outreach in the community and during our events and those within the community.

During the overall consultation process, what dispositions, attitudes, or feelings were notable? What tensions or disagreements emerged from the listening process? What was significant, surprising or unexpected during the consultation session? What new perspectives or horizons opened up? What were the fruits that the Holy Spirit brought about through this experience?

The Holy Spirit was definitely in our midst during these consultations. There was a pretty agreeable feeling with everyone respecting the opinion of others. Each person was allowed to give their input on each question. Some people were disappointed that their loved one masses were not said on the day they wanted them said or the person if they were living didn't get a card letting them know a mass was said for them. Many people mentioned they missed our Bible studies, or the series by Bishop Barren. Those that are homebound with loved ones miss the fellowship and the spiritual activities they used to participate in. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit were present.

What did participants have to say about areas where the Church or your parish is in need of healing and conversion in its spiritual life, culture, attitudes, structures, pastoral practices, relationships, and missionary outreach?

The sexual abuse and annulments of prior marriages are areas people are still needing healing from and a better understanding of the forgiveness as a healing power. People whose children have fallen away from our faith are others that need healing and help in what they can do to bring their children back to the faith. Having a personal relationship with our Lord was a very pertinent opinion.

What dreams, desires, and aspirations for the church were expressed by participants?

Our parish wants to make sure the sick, shut-ins, and their loved ones know that they are loved, prayed for, and still a very vital part of our church family. We want everyone to grow in their personal relationship with Christ. We would like to have a Grotto for the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a sidewalk that goes out to the parking spots at the south end of the hall. We like the songs after communion that invoke the Holy Spirit.