

SUMMARY SYNOD REPORT

ST. ANDREW CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Method: We invited all 400+ members of our community who are on our e-mail list to participate in the synodal process by responding to a survey containing several questions about the Church, and where they feel the Holy Spirit is leading us. We also requested some demographic information from the respondents, such as age, ethnicity, and frequency of Mass attendance.

Twenty-seven (27) individuals responded. Most marked “almost every week” for Mass attendance (4 marked Sometimes, and 2 Rarely); all were at least 46 years old, with the vast majority over 60; most were White/Caucasian, 5 identified as Hispanic/Latino, and 1 African-American. Seventeen were female and 9 male.

The following is a summary and synthesis of the responses to each question:

What do you value most about the Catholic Church? What fills you with joy?

Most respondents cited Mass, the Sacraments, the Word of God, and worshipping together as a community, as what they value most and what fills them with joy. Other responses included the love, acceptance, and support of their parish community, and the church’s outreach to others. Several expressed their gratitude for their upbringing in the Catholic faith, and how it has sustained them throughout their life.

In what ways do you see the Holy Spirit working in our parish?

Nearly all responses referred to the way people care for one other in the community – both within the parish, and the wider community. This includes ministry to homebound and charitable works in the Boulder City community. Others see the Spirit working through the liturgy, including the music, the ministers, and the homilies. And still others see the Spirit at work through the joy they find in simply sharing coffee and donuts after Mass, and through other social activities.

How well do we listen to the voices of the laity, women, young people, the marginalized, and other groups in our parish community? What can we do to include those who feel excluded?

There was a wide range of opinions on this question. Some feel we are doing all we can to reach out and listen; others feel we can do much better. There was concern that much more can be done to welcome individuals and groups that may feel alienated like divorced Catholics, young people, and those who are not long-time parishioners. Some suggestions on how to better include people were: reaching out to those who have stopped attending Mass, more evangelization, creating more opportunities to be involved in parish life, and more personal contact with parishioners on the part of the pastor and deacon.

What one thing breaks your heart about our Church? What do you need the church to be for you?

A very common response was the lower attendance at Mass from people who used to be regulars, and the drop in numbers of young people and children, including those in Religious Education. But other responses to this question varied widely. Some are concerned the Church is not following its teachings carefully enough, and standing up and speaking out about those who oppose them. Others feel the teachings should change, such as those surrounding divorce and remarriage, and the role of women in leadership, etc. And still others are saddened that people feel excluded; that people leave the Church over seemingly trivial things; and when they see leaders in the Church abuse their power.

In light of all these things, what is the Holy Spirit saying to our Church today? What is God asking of us today?

Many responses to this question were spiritual-related: e.g. praying more, being repentant, standing against injustices within and outside the Church, and better loving one another. Others echoed previous responses including being more welcoming, encouraging more parish involvement from more people, learning from past mistakes and moving forward boldly and confidently.