

**SAINT ANN CHURCH, HAGERSTOWN  
SYNOD ON SYNODALITY  
LISTENING SESSIONS  
SUMMARY REPORT APPENDIX**

**EXPERIENCES**

- ◆ Page 1
- ◆ Catholic hospital in Indiana welcoming to all on Easter Sunday
- ◆ Special Needs nephew received First Holy Communion and was super happy. (He was not allowed until several years later than most)
- ◆ Charismatic Movement
- ◆ Faith Sharing Small Group
- ◆ Attending Retreats
- ◆ Religious Sisters and Priests impactful in our youth
- ◆ Homilies relating to current situations/personal/daily life
- ◆ Welcoming all by parishioners feels like family
- ◆ Joyful celebration of mass (visiting)
  
- ◆ Lack of financial support for Catholic School from pastor
- ◆ Deep meaningful rosary by walking with Christ
- ◆ Retreats
- ◆ Deep prayer – constantly working on it
- ◆ Community that supports: - young adult – Catholic Group
- ◆ Young Adult Retreat very valuable built a strong community
- ◆ Independent scripture reading
- ◆ Serving the Church:
- ◆ Altar Server (4th Grade → young adult)
- ◆ Helping Religious
- ◆ Continuing as an adult
- ◆ Community
  
- ◆ Family expectations to serve Church and Community and to carry on family traditions.
- ◆ Loss of parents as a young teen challenged him
  
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- ◆ Altar Server/Music Ministry
- ◆ Fellowship
- ◆ Catholic Education/Student Ministry
- ◆ Volunteering/Getting involved with the Parish/Sacristan/Music Ministry
- ◆ Attractions to the Sacraments
- ◆ Strong family faith during childhood. Faith matured over time
- ◆ Children help grow parent's faith
- ◆ Retreat experience
  
- ◆ Not all Catholic Churches are the same experience

- ◆ Chose St. Ann for youth programs
- ◆ Not able to receive the Eucharist – for non-Catholic unwelcoming
- ◆ Importance of youth ministry for the whole family
- ◆ Marriage Encounter – people met there/relationships
- ◆ Experiencing Church as a non-Catholic, Fr. Manalis (military chaplain)/join chorus
- ◆ Father and Sister reaching out personally more than one-time, personal invitation to ministry and build up church community
- ◆ Feel left out – caters to Catholics
- ◆ Ministry (call others)
- ◆ Sharing Sacraments and experience with family and others
- ◆ Priest should express gratitude – taught humility, keeps up from expressing the joy
- ◆ Non-Catholic school sometimes left out
- ◆ High Places – Charismatic group (any singing level)
- ◆ Memories from Catholic school – being called on to use your talent – Elem. → college

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- ◆ Given Marriage Encounter as a gift
- ◆ Experiencing other cultures in geographical areas
- ◆ Loss of father (dementia) – she? ed – hard to watch and ‘let go’ of him – the ‘peace’ of talking to him at end when sick/uncomfortable and let him
- ◆ Friends and relative (spec. Aunt) to support in faith journey
- ◆ Had LARGE family! Looks back and wonders “How did I make it?” Had to be the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Personal experiences of communication with God, Virgin Mary, spiritual feelings during readings – ‘words’ speak to you. Stories of others reinforcing that prayer and intercession exists
- ◆ Grandfather biggest spiritual influence. Friday evening discussions. Planted seed for love of Catholic religion
- ◆ Chosen order of Christ Renews its parish
- ◆ Involvement with National Christian Choir
- ◆ Catholic since birth fully educated in Catholic Schools – took religion for granted
- ◆ Later realization that faith is a decision
- ◆ CCD Instructor
- ◆ Prayer group involvement in various locations where lived
- ◆ Impact on faith by prayer with others
- ◆ Carmelite school education

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- ◆ Check-boxes out of obligation
- ◆ Desire to mentor children to love God
- ◆ Faith growth through retreats
- ◆ Cradle Catholic with lots of relocation as child created community
- ◆ Interaction with religious communities
- ◆ Family commitment to faith; prayer example of parents

- ◆ Small group experience
- ◆ Parent! (Their faith) and Religious (Jesuits and Sister of Loretto). Getting to know clergy and religious as real people
- ◆ Living with people that really believe the Gospel and witnessing their example. Understanding the need for prayer
- ◆ The words of a Priest at brother's funeral
- ◆ Advice: OK to be angry with .....
- ◆ Service opportunities
- ◆ Experience at Notre Dame
- ◆ Experiences from Ecumenical Retreats
  
- ◆ Loss of Trust
- ◆ Cover up of sexual abuse
- ◆ No follow up session for previous listening
  
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- ◆ A set dogma exists for Catholic Church – a positive. But also Catholic Church turns people away when divorced otherwise marginalized. Previous years St. Ann welcoming all but now more political
- ◆ Large portion of church going back to pre-Vatican II
- ◆ Catholic Church very important in my life. But now not relevant, lack of trust of hierarchy
- ◆ Scandal has broken church but 'I am still here'
  
- ◆ Senior year retreat – positive
- ◆ Past – comfort of continuity of mass between different churches. Now difference between “conservative” and “liberal” Catholic Churches
- ◆ Message from Catholics to non-Catholics ‘You are going to Hell’; unwelcoming until you are “perfect” to join Catholic Church
  
- ◆ Being part of a community, no matter where you are
- ◆ Retreat – ignited interest in faith, spirituality, scripture ...
- ◆ Became Catholic because raising children as Catholics
- ◆ Being with like-minded people/community
- ◆ Learning theology in depth created strong basis for faith, miss that education today
- ◆ Learning about Catholicism led to conversion (kids enrolled in Catholic School)
- ◆ Catholic Schools, met spouse at Church, teaching Sunday School/RCIA, small groups enriched by community, talking to people
- ◆ Enrich each other
- ◆ Opportunities to learn through Church/Church training
- ◆ Branching out to meet others
  
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- ◆ Proud of Faith

- ◆ “Up with People”; combine Religious with Lay People
- ◆ RCIA/walking with New Catholics
- ◆ Broaden Spiritual horizons in other/self
- ◆ Teaching religious classes/..... through invitation
- ◆ Youth Group = sense of community/meet new people
- ◆ Trust in Church community
- ◆ Catholic Churches not connected within the same community
- ◆ Changes in Catholic environment geographically

- ◆ Attended Catholic School
- ◆ Growing up in divided faith family
- ◆ Moved by sermons
- ◆ Helped mom with Sunday School
- ◆ Receiving blessing – non-Catholic
- ◆ Bringing a non-Catholic to mass
- ◆ Altar server – 15 years
- ◆ Moved by music
- ◆ Attended lots of retreats
- ◆ Feeling like family
- ◆ Small Group Sharing Sessions
- ◆ Receiving Sacraments
- ◆ Celebrating midnight Mass for Christmas @ midnight

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- ◆ Volunteer for FF/everything
- ◆ Married to someone strong in faith

- ◆ Altar Server
- ◆ Choir
- ◆ Teaching Sunday School
- ◆ Rigidity of sacraments (excludes non-Catholics)
- ◆ Lack of inclusion, empathy
- ◆ Small Groups
- ◆ Marriage Encounter
- ◆ Steubenville Retreats
- ◆ Scandal and Response
- ◆ Youth programs, VBS
- ◆ ARISE
- ◆ Visiting Shrines, Cathedrals

- ◆ March 13, 2022

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- ◆ Sacraments (X-mas, Easter, funerals – community to celebrate; through week, not only Sundays)
- ◆ Priest Mass at home, personal
- ◆ Educational experiences (in RCIA, Sunday School, Middle/High School)
- ◆ Going through motions, rote
- ◆ Sign of peace → Parking lot – hostility/rush
- ◆ Multi-generational
- ◆ Restricted roles for women – non-visibility to young Church
- ◆ Adoration Chapel – sit with the Lord
- ◆ Are we allowed to come in? Is Church open during week?
- ◆ Cultural aspects - ..... , sign of Cross - Ambulance, - Pass Church
- ◆ Marginalized groups – justify hate in name of Lord
- ◆ More love/compassion
- ◆ Be Catholic v/s Gay Catholic
- ◆ Hate/racism/marginalized: is a community issue – assimilation
- ◆ Racism/marginalized ignored by Church
  
- ◆ Catholic education K-12 – good foundation for Catholic faith
- ◆ Lack of quality and diversity of RCIA programs
- ◆ ‘CCD’ experience not depth of knowledge
- ◆ RCIA with husband positive experience
- ◆ Responsibility of parents and family and allies to support faith development
- ◆ ‘CCD’ very limited faith formation as a child
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- ◆ When children going through – learned much more
- ◆ Small faith sharing groups – growing faith
- ◆ Openness of Church to people of varying backgrounds/marginalized groups
- ◆ Lack of transparency of Church – Human failings of your Church leadership, open rather than just disappear (depression, mental issues, scandals) Bishops inform us
- ◆ Charismatic movement – a positive experience
  
- ◆ March 24, 2022

## **JOYS, OBSTACLES/CHALLENGES, INSIGHTS**

- ◆ JOYS
  - Friendships
  - Serving weddings
  - Now females can altar-serve
  - Watching children receive for first time
  - When all are included in blessings
  - Being able to sing in Mass
  - Watching Liturgical dancers

- Receiving Blood of Christ
- Connections
- See spiritual growth in other, youth
- Welcoming for families
- Faith community/support
- COVID – Drive through Nativity and Online Masses
- Teaming
- Church has provided divine love
- Church – human errors but “push on” and loose self in good work
- An individual’s relationship with God very important
- Catholic wants to remain Catholic grateful for all St. Ann reaching out to provide solace
- Catholic Church – True presence of Christ nourishes us
- Year of Eucharist misses the point. Eucharist is about all of us being brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ
- Our faith is too important to leave to hierarchy
- Faith works
- Meeting new people : Small Groups and RCIA
- Flexibility to meet personal needs
- Learned more about faith/why Catholics do things
- Relationships
- Learning, love learning; love community of learning
- Small Groups bolster spiritual life
- Teaching religion is an opportunity to deep dive into material
- Seeing God in all through service
- A deeper joy experienced with the Eucharist through Ecumenical Retreat involvement
- Meeting people that shares faith
- Open sharing with similar minded people, elevated by faith f..... people, share burdens and happiness with other
- Adoration, retreats/knowledge
- Women involvement post Vatican II
- Express appreciation for efforts
- Marriage Encounter weekend
- Involvement as a married couple
- Teaching Faith Formation
- EM rewarding experience
- Serving in ministry
- Delivering Communion

- Prayers answered
- Found faith community to 'travel' with
- Universal Church such joy and comfort
- Small faith group
- Finding others to share the journey with
  
- Joy all together for Easter in Catholic Hospital
- Joy at him finally being able to receive – yes, he understood and should have been allowed sooner
- Reawakening of faith
- Deepened spiritual and scripture/share/new friendships
  
- Personal/playful interaction with Religious
- Fulfilling and thought provoking or ... leaving you wanting
- Scary or feel good and happy, warm
  
- Sunday School edge
- Small groups
  
- Vibrancy of multi-cultural Catholics
- Good experiences Catholic faith formation have come from well-educated Catechist – taught and lived it
- Community that we build within small groups is uplifting : faith sharing, LGBTQ ministries
- Confidence in other
- Children grow in their faith
  
- Serving the Church in various ways – As a Result of spiritual experiences
- Spiritual joy and close small groups from Charismatic Movement

#### ◆ OBSTACLES/CHALLENGES

- Priests cannot marry
- Serving funerals
- Females could not altar-serve years ago
- When EM does not know what to do for an adult receiving a blessing
- Uncomfortable feeling when non-Catholic attending Mass with you and not getting direction
- Annulment process
- Fear of judgement
  
- Objections to ARISE not feel welcoming, embarrassment
- STAND training rational/hypocrisy/perception - by non-Catholic parent
- Not all voices heard
- Unclear Church teaching/direction re: ARISE
- COVID – attendance - family participation
  
- Young people see hypocrisy here – not reach out to marginalized
- Church needs to embrace marginalized

- Young 20-40, do not want to talk about Church or listen – ‘a close club’ – should not be immigrant/gay
  - LGBTQT – not preaching from the altar, but have an ARISE group
  - Homilies do not address issues
  - Intercessions – why not pray for end to gun violence
  - Liturgies are anemic – one is uncomfortable
  - Chaos in the Church
  - Obstacle many or all of us have encountered in Church rules
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- Need to dig in scripture more
  - Need more from homily
  - Need more contemporary music
  - Review and/or change Church policy and/or doctrine
  - Modify to all those on the fringe to be accepted
  - Lack of communications on updates/changes
- 
- x 2 nun’s teaching/bad experience at confession; refused help
  - Theology ≠ people in the Church
  - Outsiders see people and their faults; not the Church’s beliefs
  - Not much theology in high school, then intense theology in college
  - How to handle immorality and continue attending Catholic Church
  - Catholic Church takes long time to change compared to other denominations
  - Need more commonality/consistency between priests; congregants feel welcome/unwelcome depending on priest
  - No longer switching Catholic Churches, now leaving Catholic Church completely
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- What does the Church have to offer me?
  - Kids dropped off; parents do not go to Mass
  - Catholic education not given at home
  - Gap in young adult life until have own families
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- Priests unable to marry and be parents
  - Really allowing the spirit to work
  - Need a means of becoming more spiritually mature
  - We cannot crack the nut of ‘differences, prejudices, etc.....’
  - Annulment a very stressful process
  - Rigidity of some things in Church life
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- Girl asked why she cannot become a priest
  - Lack of retreats in Church
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- Difficulty to continue with faith in spite of church abuses
  - ‘I’ v/s ‘WE’ Baptism invalid
  - Norm of young church different than norm of old Church
  - Annulment, same sex marriage, judgement
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- Cost of Catholic School (elite?)



- Love my faith even if I do not love everything about the Institutional Church – Gospel/reaching out/living out
  - The clergy who could lead the ministries/lead by example/be at all experiences
  - Use of terminology – obligation v/s commitment, where is the sense of obligation?
  - The motivation should be joy
  - Are people being “fed” when they come here?
  - Inviting people to come/can come - from Msgr. Or us
  - Using engaging, inclusive music to call people, including all people from community (concerts, children’s choir)
  - Youth ministry can reach to friends of other faiths
  - How is the Parish engaged with SMGHS? And even other Christian youth clubs? (Youth for Christ, Young Life, CYD)
  - Reduction of priests, lay employees (less shepherding) | ..... outreach
  - Support from Baltimore feels lacking
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- Balance family time/work/Parish commitments
  - RCIA converts facing criticism from previous denomination
  - Spousal support can vary based on non-Catholic up bringing
  - Keep the children coming to Mass as adults or after confirmation
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- Praying for a specific item and feeling helpless
  - Annulment - \$ - time – painful
  - Often people leave Church
  - Carrying out the commandments always
  - Forgiveness
  - Low self-concept within Church felt sinful and afraid of life after because of Church “black and White”
  - Woman = Not equal
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- Lack/less (reduction of) Priests and Religious Sisters leaves us diminishing our Church
  - Priests need to shepherd not be administrators
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- Invisible walls
  - Understood norms not to cross
  - Is World Marriage Sunday
  - Mother’s Day Sunday
  - Feel unwelcome
  - Hard to remove invisible barriers
  - If appear accepting will be pushed out also
  - Feel defensive being a Catholic, because of policies – priesthood/same sex marriage
  - Catholic Church viewed as lower than other denominations
  - Treat non-Catholics better than some Catholics
  - History of sexual abuse of children
  - Unwelcoming ... : communion for only certain people
  - Elitist bias/perception
- 
- Church is losing members because not reaching out to all groups

- Change is difficult for Catholic Church – very slow
- Open to changes of time – communication with times
- People of other denominations do not feel welcome at Catholic Mass
- Church to be more open to marginalized groups – LGBTQ+, mental challenges, special needs
- Rigid hierarchy does not discriminate information
- A lot of emotional hurt and distrust of Church due to lack of transparency

#### ◆ INSIGHTS

- Just 1 person not the entire Church
- People left the Church over scandals – insights, just certain people, not the Church
- People do not think to ‘try out’ Catholic Church, but they shop around at other denominations
- Church changes, deal with different issues than in Jesus’s time; Church does not always get it “right” at first, but willing to listen and change
- Church has become more compassionate regarding suicide and homosexuality
- Catholic Church takes long time to change compared to other denominations
- Church shrinking, Sunday school attendance down
- Involvement is investment
- In the midst of change we carry on and keep the faith
- God chooses those we do not expect to lead, and still does, and we survive
- Appreciation and sensitivity to movement of Spirit and being open to this
- Feel comfortable to share faith openly regardless of others’ faith
- Experience creates a light that shines brightly in his soul
- Challenges the meaning of life – why did God make it so hard
- What does human life mean to eternal life/understanding will come in after life
- Belief in Eucharist BEING BODY AND BLOOD OF Christ – what are we missing – why difficulty understanding this – need more education? Need to be aware of what is going on there
- Sometimes we are lax with prep. For Mass and communion strong beautiful prayers/adoration ‘pump’ us back up
- Worthily receive – confession ONCE A MONTH?
- Cannot change the world only a part
- God’s time and actions are not always easy to understand
- Deep desire to stay in church during hard times and joyful times
- Need to better market who we are

#### HOPES

- Elevation of women’s role in Church – and women as Priests
- Priest should be allowed to marry
- Intercessions need to be updated and go along with current/relevant issues/events
- Social Justice

- Reawakening of the Church
- Inclusive of everyone and welcoming elderly, LGBTQ, divorce, other denominations, immigrants
- Welcoming parishioners
- Appreciating laity
- Developing Spiritual Programs
- All love Catholic Church regardless of human faults
- Invite sisters or seminarians to interact with the youth more
  
- More social activities to build community
- We become one as a Catholic Church and beyond
- Young back into Church – welcome 30-40 year olds
- Love of God – deepen personal relationship with God
- Quiet time built within day :
  - Religious education for adults led by ordained
  - Support Groups within Church
  - Emergencies – death, illness
- Fed from the Altar – connecting directly to the readings and our daily lives
- Open about Church failings:
  - Admit not hide
  - Truth will set us free
  - Community actions like feeding hungry
  - More visibility with community

- Full Church
- Build strong foundation for young and adults
- Following Christ not just partially
  
- Expanding evolution of women in ministry/clergy
- To see young people come back to church
- Hope for Priests to marry
- Hope for younger adults to become more involved

- Family participation in Faith Formation
- Hope to attract more into Seminary
- Need more Priests
- Speak to me at Mass during homily; do not read to me at Mass during homily
- Tribunal process more user-friendly
- Constantly asking for money is turning parishioners away
- More social activities together
- See more females as lay people, allow priests to marry
- Can roles be non-Priests? Deacons as youth leaders ..... Pastor as more than administrator?
- Delegate more roles so the clergy can focus on the people
- Find a way to engage volunteers without burning them out
- Bring change faster than next 60 years
- Create 'magnet' in various areas to bring in a variety of people

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- Find a new way to draw volunteers, and follow-up afterwards with success
- VIRTUS – barrier to engagement of volunteers
- Making Church bottom up v/s top down (current situation)
- See our social justice do what it is supposed to do
- We are the Church. Have more say in all facets
- Positive that the Liturgy Committee represents both sexes
- Bring back Greeters in a more organized way
- Welcome back music
- Holy Spirit influences and strengthens us by and through the sacraments – Eucharist, Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage, especially Reconciliation. Need to focus more on importance of all these
- Hope 'THE CHURCH' grows rather than diminish
- Inspire more young people to get involved in serving in ministries at our Church
- "Organized" religion seems to be a hindrance for young people
- Need more conversations within families/religious schools – regarding history/basic of our religion

- Testimonies offered on our website
- Somehow become more inclusive and possibly less formal

- Ways to reach out to younger people anyone < 50
- Domestic Church (family) is important
- More support for families to foster faith

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- Parents have to be role models
- Find a way for instilling faith values which become predominant
- Holy Spirit becomes a guiding light in our lives. Gives us hope for a better future
- We have to be the fertilizer. Church has to become more involved in the trenches. Other Churches are passing us by in the community
- St. Ann should take a more prominent place in the community
- Hope to build a stronger Catholic community that becomes centric in our lives

- Christ in me sees the Christ in all
- Sacrament and Reconciliation : Teaching better in terms of its powers
- Better Sacramental teaching/prep so we better understand (even as adults)
- Open up the Eucharist to more non-Catholics – “Jesus can take care of himself” Nick Bedessem
- The courage to live the Gospels more fully and deeply
- Greater involvement of women in Church leadership (eg: Deacons)
- If we are “Universal”, we need to start embracing this (be more open, less rigid with regard to other Faiths)
- Priests should be able to marry
- Mechanism to encourage youth/young adults to stay

- Church should focus on spirituality
- Provide sense of joy in the Church

- Should feel 'fed' when we leave Mass
- We need music – be able to sing
- Sexual abuse – we feel pain, anger. Need Mia Culpa for abuse scandal. Young 26-30 year old turned off by scandal
- Hope is honesty, transparency ..... – scandal
- Hope – women as deacons/priests/married priest
- Hope – inclusivity in Church – Holy Spirit speaks to Church for us
- Pope Francis – Great for Catholic Church
- Change starts at 'bottom'
- Hope for technology to be integrated in science with hymns, prayers
- Laity is 'Church', start from Bottom, its survival depends on hierarchy making wise decisions, and as a layman how can I help the Church find redemption
- Work on the family:
  - When educating children, have something for parents
    - Give parents reason to stay
    - Create discussion at home after 'class'
- Add coffee and conversation, be social, discuss topic, facilitator
- Need adult education – at least one month have speakers
- Small Groups – connect more deeply with Sunday readings
- Prioritize education specific night
- (Hard to get involvement, many be consistent schedule helps)
- Offer things for young adults so they do not drift away – no longer have evening activities/sports/teams to conflict
- Hard to compete with sports/activities
- Used to get religious education at Catholic School, need to adopt to public school/busy families

- Need build community (used to build community at school)
- Focus on parishes that do not have Catholic Schools too - broaden focus, send out educators etc.
- One month ..... informal education for all kids – half a day or all day

- Catholic education only focused on 'college prep', broaden it to be for every type of student
- Compassion, openness, flexibility – work together – think out of the box
- Open to what people need today
- Priests need to listen to people

- Momentum: Youth Group transforms into the future of the Catholic Church
- Get youth back
- Becomes more inclusive
- Discern carefully yet decisively
- Make Church about the people not the money
- Grow in direct relationship with Jesus
- Rebound successfully from scandals to bring people back to mass
- ↑ activities that include our local community
- Create messaging to teach doctrine

- More welcoming : non-Catholics attending Mass – Annulment Process = LGBTQ+
- Verbal explanation for non-Catholics before communion
- Sermon more applicable to take forward daily
- Priests can marry/clergy can marry

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- Women can be priests
- More inclusive
- More social activities
- Openness to involvement
- Personal contact/invitation
- More youth
- More retreats for adults

- Inclusive of non-Catholics in Communion Sacraments
- Voices will be heard – laity voices

- COVID – agent of change for – thinking outside the box
- Annulment process : 1) less cumbersome 2) more welcoming 3) reform
- Marriage support in Marriage Encounter
- Openness of Church : more women involvement in ministry
- More support/encouragement for men to attend Church
- People will feel like the Church cares for them

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- Learn from other faith/denominations – more engaging faith formation from childhood up
- Anglos learn from multi-cultural Catholics, specifically Spanish Masses and community
- Re-examine RCIA programs to distinguish between those new Christians V/s people new to Catholicism
- More well-rounded training for Catechists
- Catholic education be more affordable
- More vibrant liturgies
- That the Church becomes transparent with scandals, leadership errors, human errors and changes within the Church
- That Priests can marry
- More females in leadership positions – Deacons and Priests
- More non-judgmental love/more welcoming – LGBTQ, poor, divorce, abortion, non-‘tradition’ Catholics
- More dynamic spiritual growth
- More education on power of the Eucharist
- Better communication between all levels of Church – both ways : up and down chain
- Do more for youth to get them to fall in love with the Church and grow with the youth

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- Have women in leadership roles visible to all
- Women have right to be Priests
- More love and compassion, less judgement, ridicule and hypocrisy
- More Jesus
- Church teach what it truly believes
- Same sex marriage performed in Church
- Annulments should be healing/affirming/evangelical/no cost



- Church decision making should be more efficient and less political
- Put efforts into building communities
- Parishioners have more power and input into ideology and operations of church
- Publicly state what church stands for – positive aspects/deeds of Church
- Welcome and support and pray for non-Catholics
- Feel love from Church leaders/hierarchy from Bishops and higher ranking officials

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