



Report to the Community

Synod 2021-2023



March 1, 2022

Introduction

In early October, 2021, the Pastor recruited four Parishioners to respond to Pope Francis' call for a world-wide Synod on Synodality. The Synod was to include "Listening Sessions" to hear from the parishioners in all local communities.

The Diocese provided 42 questions, organized around 11 themes, to assist in the listening process, and conducted a Coordination/Training Session on October 17th in Blackwood.

The team quickly developed a publicity plan, a schedule of in-person and video conferencing meetings and an on-line questionnaire to support the listening effort.

Four sessions were scheduled. The first was for Leadership (Pastoral Council, Finance Council and Ministries Leaders) after which the Listening instrument and session methodology was finalized.

General sessions were scheduled for one and one half hours in a mid-week evening in the Parish Center and for a Saturday morning after Mass sessions.

A parish-wide session was also conducted via Zoom on a mid-week evening.

An in-person Youth session was also scheduled for a mid-week evening.

It is our hope that we listened well, discerned the most important themes and issues, and are herein reporting the results for the Communities' benefit and review.

On the following pages are found;

	Pages
1. Synthesized Feedback for the COL Community from the Team	2-4
2. Ranking accordance to Importance of the Themes/Questions at Listening Sessions	5
3. Listening Session Sample Program with Questions	6-9
4. COL Response sent to the Diocesan Deanery 2	10-30
5. Responses from the on-line Survey	31-64

Not included at this time is the draft Response from the Diocese that will be forwarded on to the US Bishops. That document will be available on-line in the near future.

Yours In Christ,

Michael Eltham
Luisa Foster
Barbara Long
George Sundell



ALL ARE WELCOME: COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

Notes for the COL Community from the Synod Team

The following thoughts were uppermost on the minds of COL Parishioners as discerned by the team

EUCCHARIST

Most people who participated in the synod believed that the Eucharist is the true body and blood of Christ. Transubstantiation is a very important part of the catholic faith and the Eucharist is part of the true Catholic identity. This topic was always ranked number "One" and discussed at every Parish Synod meeting.

However, there were a few who believed the Eucharist is "symbolic" or "a representation" and not Jesus' actual body and blood. Also, many were concerned about the popular statistic that only 1/3rd of "Catholics" believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

There was a great emphasis on providing more education on understanding the Eucharist. We should use all avenues like seminars, Mass Homilies, Book groups, parish ministries, multimedia and social media to extend opportunities for education on the Eucharist.

Some feel that there needs to be more reverence for the Eucharist, such as the use of bells during the consecration, use of incense, and not chatting in church before Mass.

There should be more opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration. This will encourage the faithful to spend time adoring the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

YOUTH

We see that many youth/young adults become inactive after they receive the sacraments of confirmation. We need to reach out to the so-called "graduated" youth and their families. Getting the youth, young adults and young families back and active is very important for the future of the Church.

We need to also understand and empower the youth to face common issues like social injustice, bullying, peer pressure, substance abuse, addictions etc. We need to provide opportunities for the youth to learn the Church teaching on topics like same-sex attraction, co-habitation, pro-life, stem cell research, and protection against child abuse and divorce.

The Community of Christ Our Light is very fortunate to have a wonderful Youth Minister. However, as hard as she tries to incorporate the importance of attending Mass, the problem is often with the teens' parents. Since the Parents do not attend Mass, it's not important that the teens do so. Their list of priorities says that sports or whatever is more important.

We need to organize more youth retreats, rallies, concerts and take our youth on pilgrimages and conferences.

We need to increase our contact with parishioners who become 18 years old, moving them from a general household email to their personal email.

CELEBRATION: Music & Liturgy

Active participation in the celebration of Mass by all the faithful is important to most parishioners, and both music and liturgy are very critical to the celebration of Mass and to other services.

Most parishioners appreciated active greeters who actually greet, that are warm and welcoming to known members as well as new and visiting members. We need greeters that are not just present and standing around, but useful and engaging.

A Spirit of Reverence was mentioned several times, particularly in regard to a lack thereof prior to Mass. A quiet preparation time as we gather should be encouraged and supported by the clergy. Conversation before Mass should be limited to the lobby space.

Homilies are very important. It is generally thought that we have good homilies but there were members who think otherwise. More could be done (possibly a survey) on this subject. It is not clear what is appreciated and what is not, though "lack of relevance" to the readings was mentioned. Homilies were also thought to be a place for teaching on important church teachings like the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist".

Personal Witness and Reflections by lay persons, particularly to raise the visibility of women on the Altar, was mentioned when discussing homilies. Can this be implemented within a Mass?

Music is very important to the parishioners and generally given good grades. However, some noted a recent slippage in music but that was thought to be primarily about the Pandemic and not changes in leadership. The Music ministry should listen to requests, comments, and feedback from parishioners. For example, there were many requests for a better mix of traditional and modern music choices.

Many thought there were too many new hymns each week and would limit that to one new song. The congregation wants to join in the singing. Perhaps new songs should be rehearsed before Mass.

Most mentioned signage for the hymn numbers in the hymnal, citing the Cantor announcement as too late and/or inaudible. Many lamented still searching for the correct page while the hymn has started. Many mentioned that it was terrific to have the hymnals back after a long hiatus.

A few members mentioned their appreciation for diversity in music groups at different Masses, particularly the former "Praise & Worship" group on Sunday evenings and the Contemporary group at 9 AM. There was also an appreciation for a more formal Choir as was historically at the 11 AM Mass. Many thought that the changes were due to the Pandemic and look forward to the old choir groups.

The use of big screen TV/projectors can be beneficial for multimedia displays, as a supportive aide to homilies, for hymn lyrics/numbers, Bishops Appeal video, retreats, PowerPoint. It was mentioned that savings from not buying missalettes/hymnals would offset the cost of the TV/projection system.

Many hoped for the inclusion of youth and challenged parishioners in liturgies and in liturgical ministries (Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Musician, Singer).

We need to bring back children's Masses, explained Masses and more such special masses like Healing Mass, Mass for the dead, Charismatic Mass and Mass for people with Special needs.

ALL ARE WELCOME

“ALL ARE WELCOME” are three words that parishioners at Christ Our Light have used to describe the way of life at our church. It has been a safe sacred space for many, where friendships have been formed, where Christian values and morals have been taught and have shaped people, where the Sacraments are celebrated with excellence and joy, where social justice has been pursued and personified, where diverse peoples have found inclusion and unity, all *companions on the journey*. And yet, Christ Our Light still needs to do better!

WHY? Have you noticed who are missing from our parish community?

Many young families, the youth and the young adults have been absent. The Church and the Mass are no longer considered a priority, more important are sports and other activities. Church is seen as irrelevant and offers no value to the family. The Church community is disconnected with the youth and young adults.

LGBTQ+ and divorced (and remarried), separated Catholics feel that they are not welcome due to Church teachings and primarily, the perception of their exclusion from the Holy Eucharist. Lack of compassion and judgment make it difficult to stay in the Church.

The physically and/or mentally challenged, the poor, certain ethnic minorities are not often seen within the church community.

Non-practicing Catholics also cite the following issues as reasons to stay away:

- The Church's unfair treatment of women – viewed as less than men, in spite of women's many contributions in time, talent and treasures. Also, in light of the lack of clergy, women can be called to priesthood and the diaconate.
- Pedophilia and the Church's participation in the cover ups are a major cause of resentment towards the clergy and the institution.

How can we do better?

Communal and personal invitations to come to church for Mass, events, ministries, prayer, etc. by parishioners, ministry leaders, staff and most importantly by the Pastor, who remains the most influential and respected person in the parish.

Establish new ministries to address those who are missing. LGBTQ+ ministry is now in formation. We need to look at ministries for the divorced (and remarried) and the disabled.

Understanding of the Laity that they have a co-responsibility to help the church by their example of personal holiness and works; thus they also need to personally and actively invite people to church.

Better communications of activities within the parish. Ministries should take turns giving updates to the parishioners. Better use of social media. COL needs to develop a richer website content such as personal testimonies and witnesses. We should encourage use of available online catholic resources.

As Vision 2024 becomes widely disseminated in the parish the hope and expectation is that many of the suggestions will come to life.

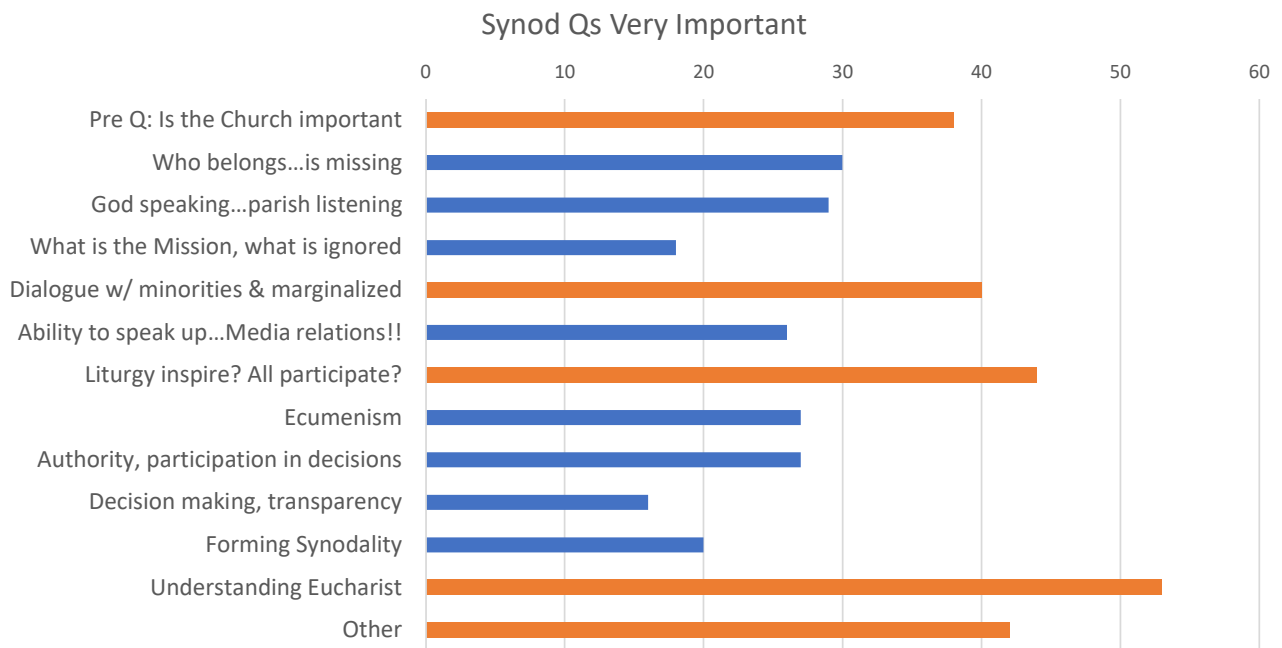
ANALYSIS: Ranking of "Very Important" Response to 13 Topics from In-Person Meetings

Synod 2021-23

Christ Our Light

	Meeting 1	2	3	4	5		
	27-Oct	3-Nov	7-Nov	10-Nov	17-Nov		
Diocesan organization of Qs	Leadership	Youth	P-Church	P- PC	Zoom	TOTAL	Rank
1 Pre Q: Is the Church important	14	12	4	4	4	38	5
2 Who belongs...is missing	10	12	4	2	2	30	6
3 God speaking...parish listening	15	5	4	2	3	29	7
4 What is the Mission, what is ignored	3	7	2	1	5	18	12
5 Dialogue w/ minorities & marginalized	17	13	3	3	4	40	4
6 Ability to speak up...Media relations!!	9	14	2	0	1	26	10
7 Liturgy inspire? All participate?	22	2	9	6	5	44	3
8 Ecumenism	10	5	6	1	5	27	8
9 Authority, participation in decisions	13	6	2	2	4	27	9
10 Decision making, transparency	5	7	4	0	0	16	13
11 Forming Synodality	10	3	4	1	2	20	11
12 Understanding Eucharist	18	13	9	6	7	53	1
13 Other	11	21	3	1	6	42	2

- Top 5 are highlighted





SYNOD 2021-23 Listening Sessions



Agenda

- 7:00 PM WELCOME, PRAYER and GROUND RULES: 10 min
 7:10 PM YOUR JOURNEY: Witness 5 min, write your story 5 min, 20 minutes share
 7:40 PM SYNOD QUESTIONS INTRO: Source & Purpose read & prioritize, Pick 2-3 Qs + 12, 13, 15 min
 7:55 PM BREAK 10 min
 8:05 PM SYNOD QUESTIONS DISCUSSIONS con't, 40 min
 8:45 PM WHAT WE HAVE HEARD 10-12 min
 8:58 PM CLOSING PRAYER

Synod Prayer

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.
 With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;
 Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
 We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
 Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.
 Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life
 and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
 All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,
 in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen

My Journey within the Church -Encounters with Christ, Clergy, Other Christians

Origins _____

Formative Years _____

Teens _____

Young Adult _____

Adult _____

Senior _____

1. Pre-Questions

How has the Church (either universal, diocesan or parish) been important in your life?
Or why is the Church important to you?
How has the Church community accompanied you on your journey of faith?
How or why has the Church been an obstacle to the growth of your faith?
Has the Church hurt in you in any way? How?
What do you believe the Holy Spirit is asking us, the Church, to do today?
How does belonging to the Catholic Church help you?
How should the Catholic Church relate to the world around her?

2. Companions on the Journey

Who belongs to our parish community? Does it reflect the diversity of our local civil community?
Who is missing from our parish community? Why?
Who does our parish community ignore? Why?

3. Called to Listen

How does God speak to us through the voices of those we sometimes ignore?
Does our parish listen to the voice of laity? To women? To young people? How?
How well does our parish listen to those on the peripheries? To those who feel that they do not belong or cannot belong?

4. Sharing Responsibility for Our Common Mission

What is the mission of baptized Catholics? Personally? Communally?
Are there areas of mission that our parish ignores? What are they? Why are those areas ignored?
How does your parish help members to live out their service to society? To be missionaries?

5. Dialogue in Church and Society

How does your parish provide opportunities for diverse peoples to come together for dialogue about the Church and the Church's relationship to society?
How does your parish listen to the voices of minorities, the poor, the sick, and those generally excluded from Society?
How does your parish serve the needs of minorities, the poor, the sick, and those generally excluded from Society?

6. Speaking Out

Do you feel you are able to speak up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in your parish community? Why or why not?
Does your parish have a relationship with local media? How?
Who speaks on behalf of your parish community? How are the chosen?

7. Celebration

How do prayer and liturgical celebrations actually inspire and guide the common life and the mission of your parish community?
How can we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?
What keeps most people, the majority of Catholics, from participating at Mass on a weekly basis?
What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to?

8. Ecumenism (The Church's relationship with Other Christian Communities)

How does your parish relate to the other Christian churches or communities? Should more be done?
What are the fruits of these relationships?
What are the difficulties?

9. Authority and Participation

How is authority or governance exercised within your parish community?
Does your parish have a pastoral plan with set goals and strategies to reach those goals?
How were you been made aware of it?
Do the lay faithful in your parish understand that they are co-responsible for the well-being of the parish?
How are the lay faithful invited to share their talents with the parish and surrounding community?
How is synodality (consultation of the community) practiced in your parish? At parish pastoral council?
Other bodies?
What suggestions do you have for fostering a more synodal approach in your parish?

10. Discerning and Deciding

How are decisions made in your parish community? How could this process be improved?
What tools or processes does your parish employ to promote transparency and accountability?

11. Forming Ourselves in Synodality

How does your parish form people to "walk together," to listen to one another, to participate in the mission of the Church, and to engage in ongoing dialogue?

12. Understanding the Eucharist

Do you believe that the Eucharist is the true body and blood of Christ? Why or why not?
Why do you come or not come to Mass?
What three things would you like to change in the celebration of the Mass?
What does the reception of Holy Communion mean to you?
How, when and why do you invite others to join you for the celebration of Mass?

13. Other Input

What is the best part of belonging to your parish community?
What would you most like to see change in your parish community?
If you could offer the Holy Father, Pope Francis, one bit of advice, what would it be?
Would you like your parish to conduct this type of consultative meeting once or twice each year?
Is there anything else you would like to offer?

Summary Observations

Closing Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the hearts of your faithful.

In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Submission Contact information

1. Contact information:

Submitter's Name	Michael Eltham
Parish	The Catholic Community of Christ Our Light
City/Town	Cherry Hill
Submitter's Email Address	Mickey.mys@gmail.com
Submitter's Phone Number	2155144659

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Pre Questions

2. How has the Church (either universal, diocesan or parish) been important in your life? Or why is the Church important to you? How has the Church community accompanied you on your journey of faith?

*The church and the parish are important because they have taught me to live a good life in the Christian Faith. They have helped me develop morals and values that have shaped who I am today.

*COL has been a source of lasting friendships with people whose wisdom have guided me and provided support in pursuing a better world.

*COL has helped me to stay grounded in my faith by introducing me to people with similar beliefs. These people have become friends, we've helped one another during times of crisis and also shared joyful experiences.

*COL has shown me that social justice is the way of doing God's work.

3. How or why has the Church been an obstacle to the growth of your faith?

The obstacles to the growth of my faith center on what I consider narrowness on the part of US Bishops. Christ would not turn away a person for any reason. He welcomed sinners. To not support the undocumented, the divorced, the LGBTQ in the church seems so anti-Christ when priests who harmed our most vulnerable youth were quietly moved around parishes.

4. Has the Church hurt you in any way? How?

I cannot justify sharing my time, talent and treasure with a church that does not reflect my values. Pedophilia and cover-ups dealt the death blow. Lack of women priests and deacons in the church, refusal of communion to anyone, lack of understanding and compassion towards LGBTQ community has already soured me. I will practice my faith electronically on YOU TUBE for now where I can find a Mass without lectures from the pulpit about topics I cannot agree with, and a spiritual daily rosary. I miss the Holy Eucharist dearly.

5. What do you believe the Holy Spirit is asking us, the Church, to do today?

*The church needs to put as much effort into climate change, prison reform, stopping executions, help for refugees, supporting single parent families through a period when children are born until kids are 18 yrs old as they do for Pro-Life. To save an unborn child but not support that child until adulthood is unbelievable.

*The Spirit is asking us all to save the planet and everything in it. It does not help to save an unborn child, if that child will be facing life with threatening issues such as fires, floods, hurricanes, droughts, mass migrations due to impossible conditions at home.

*The Holy Spirit wants us to witness to others the good news of Christ. The church needs to inspire and motivate the youth.

*The Holy Spirit is asking us to live our lives in a positive, God-centered, and peaceful way so as to counteract all the negativity, hatred and violence in our world today.

*The church should be reaching out with love to ALL people.

6. How does belonging to the Catholic Church help you?

*Belonging to the church helps me to focus on my faith and weed through some of the bad things we see happening in our communities and pray for those who have turned away from God.

*I go to Mass to recharge my soul from the weekly stresses of work and life. In the darkest moments Jesus is there for me.

7. How should the Catholic Church relate to the world around her?

*The church needs to embrace the world with care and move away from our oil dependent lifestyle to make the world safer for future generations and to help people who will be most adversely affected by climate change. This is more important than not allowing politicians who support a person's right to make her own decision, to go to communion.

*The church needs to have more women on the altar, ie, preaching as Deacons and Priests.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Companions on the Journey

8. Who belongs to our parish community? Does it reflect the diversity of our local civil community?

Our parish is located in a diverse civil community & it does announce that "All are welcome," it could try harder to get the word out that we really mean it. Even though we have a large Filipino community, we don't seem to attract the Korean & Vietnamese communities. We need to do a better job at letting these communities know that they are welcome.

9. Who is missing from our parish community? Why?

The divorced/remarried may be missing because of the Church's teaching and Bishop's direction which do not allow to them to receive the Eucharist.
Handicapped people may be missing because of the lack of encouragement to be part of the parish, parish ministries like lectors, EMs Etc. The parish needs to do a better job at "how to be more welcoming".

Who does our parish community ignore? Why?

The Parish doesn't ignore or turn anyone away. In fact, the staff tries hard to meet the needs of anyone who knocks at the door for help. However, it's not just the job of the staff to be welcoming. As parishioners it's our job too. Having the welcome committee expanded to people being at all doors to welcome everyone.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Called to Listen

10. How does God speak to us through the voices of those we sometimes ignore?

* God sends messengers through the poor, needy, and through children's needs. The church offers many volunteer opportunities to serve God and our community through multiple ministries. Our church provides ministries to feed the hungry, and help those on the peripheries.

*Listening to others helps give us a different perspective.

11. Does our parish listen to the voice of laity? To women? To young people? How?

* More emphasis should be given to women/female voices.

* Our parish listens well to those who speak up. We have a wonderful faith-filled staff who, I believe, they try very hard to "hear" everyone.

* I don't feel there are good outlets for parishioners to speak up. The only way is to make my opinion to staff in the church foyer, but it's not easy to do and there is usually no progress.

*COL appears to be doing a great deal to reach and help all groups of people.

* The voices of those on the margins seems to have been the voices Jesus responded to and where commended for their faith. It seems as if this parish attempts to do the same.

*The church should be more welcoming to the LGBTQ community

*The church has a very good youth ministry, but we need to be more listening to the youth.

* We need to have more representation from the poor

* Some topics seems to be silenced in the church – we should discuss all topics with openness.

* We do a good job listening but can do better.

The below statement is verbatim and statement by one of the parishioners.

One reports this - * Laity should claim the role to listen

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Sharing Responsibility for Our Common Mission

12. What is the mission of baptized Catholics? Personally? Communally?

Baptized Catholics are called to SERVE not just sit in the pews. The Parish is very Social Justice oriented but it takes EVERYONE to serve. Serving is being aware of the needs of others e.g. food, clothing, shelter, listening & accommodating, This is the personal mission, Communally we need to be a symbol of Justice.

13. Are there areas of mission that our parish ignores? What are they? Why are those areas ignored?

The parish attempts to mission to all areas. If there are areas not being missioned, I'm sure it's not done intentionally. Therefore, this is something that needs to be looked into.

14. How does your parish help members to live out their service to society? To be missionaries?

. The Parish not only missions to the civil community, but in other countries & states where we can help the poor. Also we have over 70 ministries which give parishioners opportunities to SERVE.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Dialogue in Church and Society

15. How does your parish provide opportunities for diverse peoples to come together for dialogue about the Church and the Church's relationship to society?

The Parish offers outreach ministries serving the elderly, economically disadvantaged, racial minorities, immigrants, LGBTQ communities, divorced, care givers etc. ALL are invited to every meeting and activity. There is often dialogue as part of the outreach, but these groups are mostly into action.

16. How does your parish listen to the voices of minorities, the poor, the sick, and those generally excluded from society?

The Parish does not have a formal way to listen to the voices of or dialogue with minorities, nor does it think we need to. We do listen to them as individuals when they come to us for help.

17. How does your parish serve the needs of minorities, the poor, the sick, and those generally excluded from society?

The Parish assists the homeless with a motel room & gift card for food and resources, and collect food for a parish-based food bank. The parish has Homebound Eucharistic Ministers that visit parishioners for prayer and serving the Eucharist. The parish has a food pantry for parishioners. The Parish has outreach ministries to immigrants, LGBTQ individuals, widowed and divorced, youth, young adults, and we have masses for people with disabilities, to name just a few,...and there are many We could do a better job at serving the needs of the elderly and those with mental health concerns. Some parishioners think we do not do enough in regard to abortion, particularly when there is a clinic just one block from the church. Yet there is a Pro-Life Group who are active in this area.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Speaking Out

18. Do you feel you are able to speak up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in your parish community? Why or why not?

*Some say they can and some say they are uncomfortable. Some don't know who to talk to. It's been suggested that the parish establish a process which is monitored by a cross-section of parish leadership.

*one reports this – "I am a Republican and do not feel free to speak candidly about certain things"

19. Does your parish have a relationship with local media? How?

Our parish does not have a relationship with local media. We should have more!

20. Who speaks on behalf of your parish community? How are they chosen?

COL has a pastoral council; members are chosen by the Pastor. There has been no need for a spokesperson, but if there were the Pastor would speak on behalf of the parish.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Celebration

21. How do prayer and liturgical celebrations actually inspire and guide our common life and the mission of your parish community?

Liturgical celebrations when done with excellence are not only beautiful, but most of all also transformational. COL has been credited for excellent homilies (when readings from scriptures are tied to our everyday lives), inspirational music and an atmosphere where “ALL ARE WELCOME.” Many parishioners give special mention to the Easter Triduum, November 2 Mass for deceased members of the community who passed that year, Misa de Gallo to be truly inspirational and moving.

22. How can we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?

*We, the laity, must first of all lead lives in the imitation of Christ, then continuously invite others (lapsed Catholics, non-Catholics etc.) to liturgical and sacramental services. Once there the services must be excellent, inspirational and transformational as demonstrated in homilies, witnessing and songs.

*We must invite different segments of our community, such as the disabled, LGBTQ, various cultures to take active roles at Mass, to be lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Singers, etc.

*Have different Masses focusing on various segments of the community, ie. young families, various age groups, music preferences.

*Greeters should be at all doors in the church to greet and welcome.

*Invite parishioners to personal witness at Mass.

*Find a way to give mini adult education at Mass.

*May be make the homilies interactive with a big screen tv.

*Greater flexibility on requests for music, like singing “The Our Father” at weddings, funerals and the like.

*More upbeat music.

*Please post the numbers for the music choices for the liturgy.

23. What keeps most people the majority of Catholics from participating at Mass on a weekly basis?

- *Too busy with other activities, sports, family events. Priorities not in the right order.
- *"I don't get anything out of the Mass." Too boring.
- *The general consensus is that we have good homilist, a few parishioners say that some priest do not connect the gospel message and readings to what is happening in everyday life.
- *Music is too conservative and not uplifting enough.
- *Not understanding the real meaning of the Holy Eucharist.
- *Disagreement with the Bishop on how the pandemic was handled, particularly when it came to the schools, and the Bishop's reluctance to meet with the parents for a discussion.
- *We need the church to reach out to people where they are in the stage of life they are in the moment. Some people try to attend seminars or meetings in hopes of getting to know new people only to find the attendees already have their own friends and people they know and they don't really care for you to "invade" their group.
- *On a questionable assertion one parishioners states. "We should not be chatting aloud before Mass, making jokes during Mass, applauding for the musicians at the end of Mass. We completely lack reverence in our parish and are never taught otherwise."

24. What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to?

- *Due to the pandemic, use of technology had been a life saver for Catholics who learned that on-line Masses, Prayer Services, Catholic education can be easily accessed. Some Catholics feel that they can be good Catholics without the institution of the Catholic Church. So if the church doesn't listen and not make significant changes, who knows that the future of the church could look like?
- *Pedophilia and the cover up, the church's treatment of divorced Catholics, lack of compassion for LGBTQ, intransigence on women preaching, teaching and in the future becoming deacon and priests, each of these sours people from going to church.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Ecumenism (The Church's relationship with Other Christian Communities)

25. How does your parish relate to the other Christian churches or communities? Should more be done?

We have collaborated with the Unitarian parish across the street on matters of race relations. We have hosted Rabbis and Muslim Imams in joint presentations at our parish on themes of social justice. COL works with Cherry Hill Food Pantry, IHOC, Faith in New Jersey, however more inter-faith activities especially with Jewish communities are in order.

26. What are the fruits of these relationships?

*These encounters help us to see how much we are on the same page which promote respect. The more we learn about each other, the less divisive and less hatred toward each other. We can all be stronger when we expand our reach beyond the Catholic church to make our local communities stronger and better able to serve the needs of the less fortunate.

*Fruit is peaceful interaction with other faiths, better understanding of how and when and why they worship as they do, so we can see the similarities we have with them.

*Studying other beliefs can help us strengthen our own beliefs.

27. What are the difficulties?

Pandemic, choosing projects where we can collaborate. We have to be careful of not thinking all faiths have same teachings and beliefs.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Authority and Participation

28. How is authority or governance exercised within your parish community?

The Pastor is the leader of the parish and sets the frame-work of what needs to be done. However, there are Pastoral Council and Finance Council that advise the Pastor and provide vision and implementation though this is not well known to the parishioners. Moreover, there is an able and enthusiastic staff for music & worship, outreach, life-long learning, and sacramental preparation. Both staff and parishioners are self-actualized and initiate programs and make small decisions as needed.

29. Does your parish have a pastoral plan with set goals and strategies to reach those goals? How have you been made aware of it?

Christ Our Light has a parish mission statement and a pastoral plan called Vision 2024. Vision 2024 was an important and strategic effort by our former pastor to clearly line up all our initiatives and our ministries and our leadership. It called forth not only the staff, but the ministry leaders to a position of leadership. It empowered the laity to act and speak up, to plan and to be heard. It was emphasized and presented at several Masses, discussed and elaborated on in the bulletin and promulgated thru a very colorful poster. We need to find ways to keep it in the front of the parish's mind, so they see it not as a one-and-done process, but something that we live by. As usual, all parishioners do not report that they know that we have these Councils or a Vision Plan. Recent decisions include a "Vision 2024 Corner" in the weekly bulletin with the 4 subcommittees that are implementing and guiding the vision each taking turns in reporting on programs and progress.

30. Do the lay faithful in your parish understand that they are co-responsible for the well-being of the parish?

The lay faithful are invited to share their talents and co-responsibility through a multitude of parish ministries. This parish is blessed with many knowledgeable, dedicated and willing volunteers. Periodically, the parishioners have been asked to participate in annual events such as Mitzah Day, Fair Trade, etc., and there frequently are recruitment invitations to join ministries in the weekly bulletin. All do not understand there "co-responsibility" as there still are the same 15-20% of the parishioners who are very active in most outreach.

31. How are the lay faithful invited to share their talents with the parish and surrounding community?

The lay faithful are invited to participate in sharing talents through pulpit announcements, the weekly bulletin, weekly emails, personal invites/recruitment. Only some outreach goes out to our wider surrounding community.

32. How is synodality (consultation of the community) practiced in your parish? At parish pastoral council? Other bodies?

Synodality is not formally practiced in our parish.

33. What suggestions do you have for fostering a more synodal approach in your parish?

A more synodal approach would be to have active Parish Council whose members are diverse and whose terms are limited so as to encourage a rotation of leadership from among the congregation. Even though participation in Pope Francis' Synod 2024 process has not been great, I think we should have listening sessions at least once a year. Encourage everyone to speak up, to speak out and a call to action.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Discerning and Deciding

34. How are decisions made in your parish community? How could this process be improved?

In general, the Pastor makes all the important decisions. He will consult with Finance Council & Pastoral Council that approve, plan and develop certain projects. But some parishioners say that don't know about these Councils.

Our many Ministries are self-actuated and generally make their own decisions.

35. What tools or processes does your parish employ to promote transparency and accountability?

We get a summary of the finances once a year but the expenses are listed in such broad categories that it is hard to distinguish what the expenses are really associated with.

When Parish Council planned Vision 2024, that is the future direction of the Parish, there were many parish community initiatives to communicate the plan

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Forming Ourselves in Synodality

36. How does your parish form people to “walk together,” to listen to one another, to participate in the mission of the Church, and to engage in ongoing dialogue?

The Parish provides many opportunities to “walk together” through its various ministries, retreats and community service projects. They offer many opportunities in-person and online to participate in the church. There are no specific “listening sessions”, but there are intentions to do so at least annually.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Understanding the Eucharist

37. Do you believe that the Eucharist is the true body and blood of Christ? Why or why not?

Yes! Almost all who participated in the synod believed that the Eucharist is the true body and blood of Christ. Transubstantiation is very Important part of our Faith. This topic was always ranked number "One" and discussed at every meeting.

There were a few who believed it was "symbolic" or "a representation" and not Jesus's actual body and blood. Many are concerned about the popular statistic that only 1/3rd of "Catholics" believes in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Solution: More education and awareness need to be made available in the form of Homilies, seminars, articles, & different forms of media. We need to re-affirm the teaching at different stages/ages of the person. The last education that faithful formally receive is usually at confirmation. We need to make use of the RCIA and CCD programs or stand-up new programs to cater to adults and families.

38. Why do you come or not come to Mass?

*I come to Mass to experience and celebrate the Word, the Eucharist and the Community.

*Physically coming to mass reminds me of God's love and support, allowing me to take time from our busy world to speak to God, pray and commune with friends/parishioners

*I come to mass to refresh my soul every week and gain inspiration from the readings and homily to get me through the week.

39. What three things would you like to change in the celebration of the Mass?

It's impossible to limit to three things that need to be changed. The facilitators recognize that the following is verbatim and these are sometimes from misinformed parishioners

Reverence:

*I would like to hear the bells ring at the Consecration. It enhances reverence for Jesus our King.

*After mass people make the church a social club start chatting and ignore Jesus, there should be reverence as people leave the church building

*I would like to see the tabernacle moved to the center of the altar and not to the side.

*I believe the pastor and priests in general should encourage the congregation to have a more reverent behavior in church towards God and the altar.

Communion:

*There should be a provision to receive holy communion during pandemic, like the times in the Pandemic when the masses were suspended.

*ALL should be given the opportunity to receive Eucharist whether they are catholic, non catholic, divorced, remarried, or whatever. Clergy has NO right to choose or judge who does or doesn't receive. Their ordination didn't give them that right.

*I hear the priest say "Only Catholics in the state of grace can receive," I am saddened because so many in the church who need God's help are left out.

Sermons:

* The sermons should be better.

*The Homilies are very good most of the time but sometimes some priests just tell stories and they may not even be relevant to the readings.

*Shorter more relevant sermons.

*Appropriate sermons should be preached, appropriate for Sunday audience. A deacon once preached on the Body and Blood of Christ and it was too deep, caused us to believe that we are indeed eating flesh and blood

Education:

*Adult Catechism should be introduced which will help everyone grow in their knowledge of the real presence of Jesus in Communion.

*We need to encourage everyone to participate in the Mass responses and prayers.

*There needs to be a platform where people can discuss their doubts about the true presence

Special Masses:

*Special mass for the kids

*We should have special mass for the youth with upbeat music and lively sermons.

* Explained Masses – where the priest explains each part of the Mass

* Charismatic Masses

* Mass for the mentally and physically challenged

Inclusion:

*Alter boys should be brought back, involving them will keep them close to the church and her sacraments.

* Women should be given an opportunity to preach at Mass.

* Handicapped folks should be encouraged to be lectors, EMs & part of the music.

* Women speakers deacons and priests

*Inclusion masses for those who do not feel welcomed

Music:

* I would like the music to be a bit more up-lifting sometimes such as a praise & worship format or a mix of the traditional hymns with praise & worship style also.

* The music has recently slipped a bit we need to get back to previous standards.

40. What does the reception of Holy Communion mean to you?

Most Parishioners expressed their spiritual connection to the Eucharist as follows

*“I become what I receive” and is hence very important for me to grow in my spirituality and to do God's will.

* “Receiving the Eucharist means everything to me, without which I feel spiritually withdrawn”

* When I receive communion, I feel God’s presence with me and helps me with the week ahead.

* Makes me feel as though I can face any situation.

However, one is focused on the mechanics as follows.

* I would like to receive communion on the tongue like before.

41. How, when and why do you invite others to join you for the celebration of Mass?

*I talk about my church frequently to friends and family

* I try to encourage others to go to church and explain the reasoning that Jesus also came to earth to establish the church.

* I drive my neighbor to Mass and encourage my friend to attend as well

* We need to get the word out on the miracles of the Eucharist, this will motivate people to frequent the sacrament.

* I constantly invite my non-church going children to come back.

*I try to encourage others to go to church and explain the reasoning that Jesus also came to earth to establish the church.

Diocese of Camden Synod Listening Session Results

Other Input

42. What is the best part of belonging to your parish community?

We're able to work to make Jesus alive. Come as you are. We're encouraged to serve society & in doing so, think out of the box.

Pastors come and pastors go. But what makes COL stand out is the incredibly faith-filled people of God who truly live the Gospel message. I am blessed and proud to be a part of this wonderful Catholic community.

The priests, parishioners and staff are the best part. The parish is open during the day for those who want private prayer.

The best part of belonging to COL is the social justice focus we have that enables us to live a Christian life.

It is an extended family. I would like to thank the church for being there for me in times of emotional need.

I enjoy being a member of my parish because everyone is so welcoming. I think this parish does a lot of things to ensure our Church community is following the teachings of Jesus.

I have met so many wonderful genuine people throughout my 40 years at this parish.

COL is very welcoming with a strong sense of community and activities of interest to all.

43. What would you most like to see change in your parish community?

I'd like to see more of a variety of cultures in the parish. It would be lovely for COL to become a melting pot of cultures. Also, we don't have enough female representation on the altar.

Women should be preaching.

When the diocese decides to bring priests from other countries, the Diocese needs to provide training on neutralization of accent.

Many more parishes need to develop an "All are welcome" theme like ours.

44. If you could offer the Holy Father, Pope Francis, one bit of advice, what would it be?

I would strongly advise the Pope to include women in the ordained priesthood.

If we had women priests 10 years ago, we wouldn't have had the scandal because women are nurturers.

The church should continue to advocate more to protect our planet against environmental degradation and destruction.

Pope Francis should make the annulment process less painful

My advice to the Pope would be to stop trying to change the church. Get back to the way the church was meant to be and not appeasing all the people of today to change it

Pope Francis is such a blessing, I hope he can overcome some of the negative voices in the church and promote the wonderful teachings of Jesus.

There are a lot of fake news about the Pope, he should have a task force that deals with fake news.

45. Would you like your parish to conduct this type of consultative meeting once or twice each year?

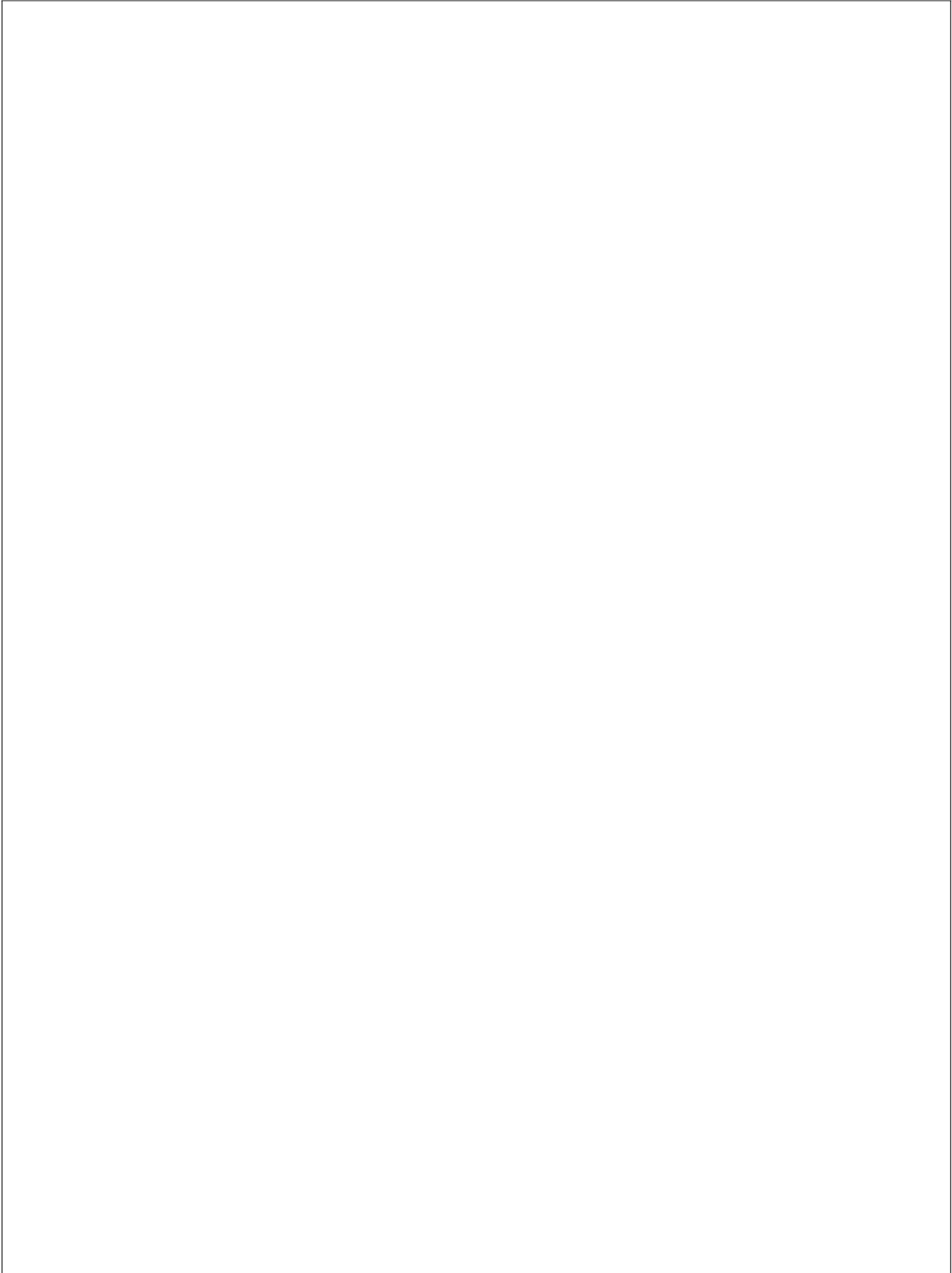
It would be very beneficial for parishioners & clergy to hold this type of meeting once/twice a yr. It would give everyone an opportunity to express the pluses & minuses of the parish.

46. If you have anything to add, not covered but any of the previous Synod questions, please let us know here:

Parishes and parishioners should have opportunities to speak openly to the Bishop. It would help him to hear how parishioners feel about him as the Shepherd of the diocese. As an example in the recent past, parishioners were not able to reach the Bishop on topics like 'vaccination' and "Pandemic related graduations".

We need to reach the youth who have finished their confirmation by increasing our presence on the university campus and schools.

Different parishes offer different experiences and seem to deal with the LGBTQ community differently, the catholic church should be universal across parishes. The catholic teaching is universal however the implementation varies across parishes.



1 Pre-Questions

- 1 All members of the Church need to be more socially active, specifically related to environmental degradation and climate change. God gave us a garden and we will be leaving a desert to our children.
- 2 Thirteen years of Catholic School imprinted the faith in my mind, heart and soul. Even when I left the Church for 15 years I was still a Catholic. Being reunited by a deep community experience over 25 years with the RCIA transformed me. The journey continues with involvement in service and spiritual connection to God supported by my parish.
- 3 The church at Christ our Light has hurt me by making me angry. When I go into Mass I want to have quiet time and pray to the Lord before Mass starts. The people all talk and don't care about others around them. They talk about vacations and gossip. This is a time to prepare for Jesus. Father John is also talking which totally blows my mind how a priest can't respect the quiet time before a mass is about to start.
- 4 The Catholic Church is where I can worship God and receive Jesus Christ and become one with him, that can't be done in any other Christian faith. The community is important because when when we become one with God, we take that out to everyone else. when we meet outside of the mass it is good to have support with one another in our spiritual walk with the Lord.
- 5 My faith, the church has given me hope when I needed it most that all will be ok. Sometimes ritual and prayer helps remind and focus on Gods plan for his people
- 6 We have been parishioners at Christ Our Light for over 22 years and our daughter attended St Peter Celestine Catholic School in her elementary years. The church has always been welcoming to all and a sense of family is felt with fellow parishioners. Since I have been working in the parish office, my spiritual life has bloomed tremendously. Between co-workers, priests, deacons and parishioners, it has been such a positive and uplifting environment. The ministries that I am participating in and the Christ Our Light Charismatic Prayer Group have been a blessing and spiritually fulfilling. I feel the Holy Spirit wants the church to stand firm on pro-life in all stages and oppose the use of aborted fetus cells in the development of vaccines and in vaccines.
- 7 I am cradle Catholic, attended Catholic university and graduate education. Married in Church and annulled in Church. Children raised Catholic. Attended Mass pre COVID. The Church had been a mainstay in my life. That being said, I cannot justify sharing my time, talent and treasure with a Church that does not reflect my values. Pedophilia and coverups dealt the death blow. Lack of women priests and deacons in the Church, refusal of communion to anyone, and lack of understanding and compassion towards the LGBTQ community had already soured me. I will practice my faith electronically on YouTube for now where I can find a Mass without lectures from the pulpit in topics I can't agree with, and a spiritual daily rosary. I miss the Holy Eucharist dearly.
- 8 The Holy Spirit is asking the church to allow in the fresh air first started with Vatican II. The church should be reaching out with love to ALL people.
- 9 I have been to churches in which all they preach about is money, how we are sinners, and what we do wrong. I searched around at different churches, different religions to find what I was looking for. I found Christ Out Light and it felt like home. Being raised as a Catholic, I find comfort in the routine of the mass. This church is very welcoming of anyone who wants to come in. I also love the opportunities they provide to serve the communities.

1 Pre-Questions

- 10 The parish church has been very important in my life because it has shown me that social Justice is the way to go in a parish. Parishes that do not practice social Justice are not doing God's work. The Church, in relating to the world around her, needs to have more women on the altar e.g. preaching, Diaconate, Priest. The Church has hurt me by excluding women, expecting them to bake cakes &/or clean the altar.
- 11 I, don't know why the Church is not more vocal in the political question of abortion? The Democrats throw this in our faces and more unborn children die everyday.
- 12 the church and parish is inspirational to me as I go to mass to recharge my soul from the weekly stress of work and life. in the darkest moment jesus is there for me.

2 Diversity

- 1 We need to be accepting of all including people who deviate from a conservative mindset and those who are different than more rigid church-goers envision.
- 2 All are welcome at Christ Our Light. Many parents of public school students who attend EFF catechetical classes do not attend Mass with their kids. After Confirmation a lot of students are not seen anymore in a parish setting.
- 3 Who is missing are more young families. The church will not survive without the younger families. They are needed to grow our church. Something needs to be done to bring them back in a much larger scale than we have today.
- 4 All are welcome but that means that everyone is willing to change for God and become the person that he created them to be. The young people are missing from our community(20 and 30 years old). Over the past 50 years for some reason the church tried to be more Protestant but it didn't work. But we keep pushing that agenda. Community is important but if the young truly understood that they are receiving the Body of Jesus that it's really Jesus and that God wants to be one with us (physically not just spiritually like the Protestants). If everyone truly understood when you walk into the church, you are walking on Holy Ground and everyone would show respect to Our Lord. Your whole being is focus on him.
- 5 We have quite a diverse parish community and activities for all ages
- 6 Christ Our Light is a welcoming parish to all. The youth attendance at mass is low, but the pandemic is probably a factor.
- 7 Everyone should be welcome in our parish community. It does not currently reflect the diversity of the local community. Black and brown persons are missing, as are young persons ages 18-35. No LGBTQ community either.
- 8 We welcome everyone, locally. Maybe the larger church, other Parishes, are not so welcoming. The extent of welcomness is too dependent on Pastor and parishioners.
- 9 This parish is all welcoming, we take in people that other churches turn away.
- 10 We have a diverse parish w/different cultures, LGBTQ folks being involved in various ministries. We're missing disabled folks not being lectors, EMs etc. We don't ignore anyone. We live "All are welcome."
- 11 Too much emphasis is placed on illegals.
- 12 Everyone belongs in the church, yes our parish reflects our society. Perhaps more young people and families are needed. The church is inclusive in my opinion only those angry with God choose to stay away.

3 Listening

- 1 Our parish generally professes to be open to all but this needs to be emphasized to more conservative church-goers who seem to relish a judgmental role against others. That being said, I think this is the minority at Christ our Light and most people are welcoming.
- 2 It takes miracles to embrace the people who have fallen away because of being hurt by uncompassionate treatment. Also people look at church corruption and duplicity. They look for truth in new communities that provide greater fellowship and service opportunities without having to believe in doctrines that are not proven but are mandatory.
- 3
- 4 Women in society are becoming second class citizens. We are just incubator for babies, men are taking over women sports and we told to just take the birth control pill (poison) so that your man can have you any time and if you get pregnant just go and kill your child so it makes it easier on men not to be responsible and just use women. When is the church going to start creating holy men who will protect and respect women and not use them? Men who will get down on their knees before the Lord and know who their true strength comes from Our Lord, Jesus. They are taught to wait until marriage to be with their wife the way God create it to be. The secular world is wins on destroying women and children, why is the church silent. When are going to teach the truth about the evil that is going on in society?
- 5
- 6 The Pastoral Associate for Justice & Community Outreach at Christ Our Light does an excellent job listening to those in need, assists and directs those in need of assistance whether it is during or after office hours including the weekends. It is comforting to know how well our parish helps the needy in many ministries. I never knew the extent of our compassion and assistance until I worked in the parish office.
- 7 Those we ignore remain longest in our conscience upon reflection of our shortcomings. I am not sure the institutional Church listens at all to diverse points of view from the laity in the US. The act of listening pre-supposes that your heart is open to change. The parish and the Church generally needs to take active role in making safe spaces for those ignored to be listened to.
- 8 Our parish listens well to all
- 9 The number of ministries this church offers speaks to the way they welcome all people. We have been told to let them know if we think of any other ministry we can offer.
- 10 I think our parish does listen to the voice of the laity since we have over 70 ministries that are totally run by laity whether it be women, men, young, seniors. It's not only the parish that's not listening, but the Church who says that divorced & remarried people CANNOT receive Eucharist. The Bishops, w/their nonsense about this issue, are the cause of people leaving the Church. We need more younger Bishops who are in tune w/the world.
- 11 More emphasis should be placed on females.

3 Listening

- 12 God sends messengers through the poor, needy, and through children's needs. The church offers many volunteer opportunities to server God and our community through multiple ministries. Our church provides ministries to feed the hungry, and help those on the peripheries,

4 Mission

- 1 Helping the poor, marginalized, animals, the weak (politically, socially, financially, emotionally)
- 2 Christ Our Light is top notch in mission outreach which springs from paid church leaders and a laity that eagerly responds.
- 3
- 4 Our mission as baptized Catholics is to make disciples, to bring love and mercy to everyone. Example, if a girl had an abortion as a church we show her God's love and mercy we can show how she can be healed through confession and hopefully the community will come together and be their for her whether it's physically and/or spiritually.
- 5 Our Church has many ministries to help others and provide service to society
- 6 Christ Our Light has a scripture reading group, charismatic prayer group, many ministries for parishioners to be missionaries and enrich their spiritual lives. This parish is blessed with many dedicated parishioners that volunteer their time.
- 7 The mission of baptized Catholics is to teach Christ's message by leading by example. The parish is involved in a number of community service efforts but these are led by the same few. An expansion of these activities and an open house Sunday where the number of service and ministry opportunities could be set up on tables in common area along with coffee and donut service to encourage people to come out
- 8 Many Catholics have only an inward, personal and devotional approach to Christianity, rather than an all encompassing love of God and outreaching love for all
- 9 Our church offers several opportunities to serve the community with donations to the food pantry, giving trees at Christmas, casseroles and sandwich making every month and more
- 10 The mission of Baptized Catholics is to serve & be active participants of the parish community. If there are areas of mission that are ignored, it's usually the fault of the pastor who doesn't want to work outside the box. Our parish has numerous opportunities to live out service & be missionaries. We plan mission trips to other places in the world & the US yearly.
- 11 our parish is very active in this area.
- 12 All of us who are baptized are called to bring the message of Christ to everyone through our actions, sacrifice, and giving of time and resources. I don't think our parish ignores a particular sector or group. Everyone is welcome.

5 Dialogue

- 1 Yes
- 2 Many people in our parish are dedicated to service. We are led by Pat Slater, our Pastoral Associate for Justice and Outreach. She oversees a dedicated committee of women and men who organize more committees with specific missions.
- 3 Our parish is blind to the people that need help. With the abortion clinic just 1000 feet away there are very few people that are there to pray for the innocent babies that are getting killed everyday. There are over 300 babies killed within 1000 feet of our church and nothing is being done except for the small amount of people that are dedicated to this cause. With this evil building so close to our church, the front of this abortion clinic should be packed with our parishioners. Why do we not see more information or groups to notice this evil.
- 4 There is a lot of community service that goes on which is great but true worship is lacking, To service others we need the love of Jesus and have him within us. We need the Mass and true devotion to pray(the rosary) before we serve the people. It's only through Jesus that love can be given and that we can see Jesus in every person that we meet. The ones that are excluded are pregnant women, that why so many end up at the abortion clinic two blocks from us. Why are we not reaching them before they kill their baby. Why don't they know the church two blocks down will help them and be a family to them when their family don't want to support them. Why are the people of this church ignoring what is happening in that evil building? Evil thrives we good people ignore what is happening.
- 5 We could do a better job at serving the needs of the elderly, less mentally stable. All the programs that were available have been discontinued
- 6 To name a few, the Pastoral Associate assists the homeless with a motel room & gift card for food and resources. The parish has Homebound Eucharistic Ministers that visit parishioners and non-parishioners for prayer and serving the Eucharist. The parish has a food pantry for parishioners and non-parishioners.
- 7 This is the first time parish had made parish wide attempt to listen to its congregation, much less diverse people. I am not aware of any parish ministry serving minorities (other than Filipino congregants) or the sick. The days if sick visits by the parish priests are long gone.
- 8 Not much dialogue, but enough. Our parish is more into action.
- 9 We have relationships with churches and schools in Camden to help minorities and poor individuals.
- 10 Our parish can do better in providing for diverse peoples to dialogue about the Church's relationship to society. However, there are peoples in the parish who don't want to change the Church or think outside the box. Our main focus is Social Justice where we serve the needs of minorities, poor, sick & those excluded.
- 11 This is another area our parish is very active in.
- 12 God/Jesus loved everyone not a particular group or race or gender, so likewise I feel that COL does the same. We have a large minority group in our parish. and we offer opportunities for all groups that want to participate.

6 Speaking Out

2 We are vocal within our parish. In fact, some may be considered annoying. Thank God for them.

3 No clue

4 As of now, I don't feel I can speak up and don't feel comfortable.

6 Communication to the parish community is not a problem. The priests and staff are all approachable.

7 I do not feel I am able to speak up in our parish community. The parish does not have , to my knowledge, a relationship with local media except the stray story on parishioners picketing the abortion clinic in Kings Highway. The parish priest generally speaks for the parish.

8 Not an important question.

9 I have spoken up and have offered talks on grief to the parish and the moms meeting

10 I do feel that I can speak up candidly in the parish because I'm not afraid of what the clergy is going to think about what I have to say. Fortunately there are many parishioners who feel the way I do about speaking out & using their voice.

11 I am a Republican and do not feel free to speak candidly about certain things.

12 This section I am not too sure of. As I serve in mass and attend mass but the church serves people of different points of view and we all coexist the best we can. I do not see the media involved in our church. except in the news when the catholic church is seen in a negative light due to church scandals. Our Bishop does the best he can do keep the church in a positive light.

7 Celebration

1

2

1. We have to compete with addictions to the worldly culture, like digital distractions, consumerism, etc. 2. The Liturgy helps me to transform my own personal self to make Christ present everywhere I go. 3. Humble homilies help me relate Jesus to my real life. Homilies that translate the Gospel in the culture of Jesus's day and relate it to the present day help me understand. Prayer establishes a close relationship with God.

3

4

I am a Catholic because it the true church of Jesus Christ and I can physically receive Our Lord in the Eucharist, no other Christian church can give Jesus. The truth has not been taught in the church and I am not sure why it was being hidden from us. If people believe that the bread and wine is just bread and wine after it's been consecrated then why go to church or why not just which to any Christian church that's more fun. (Mass is about worship not about having fun)It's the church job to get the people to heaven. The secular society has convinced people that all you need to do is be good and you will get to heaven, this is what my daughter told me. So my grandchildren aren't baptized even though she belongs to Christ Our Light and they don't go to church.

5

If Mass is a celebration, more people would participate if the music was more upbeat and happy!

6

Part of the reason some Catholics are not attending mass regularly is the pandemic. Other than that, it seems work schedules and family upbringing in the faith may be factors. The liturgical celebrations at Christ Our Light are beautiful and well done. The pianists/organists, cantors, lectors & Eucharistic Ministers are wonderful.

7

Different forms of prayer and liturgical celebrations allow people to connect to the Church in the way that works for their faith. Being open to these different forms of prayer can promote the participation of the laity in liturgy. Many people are still cautious about attending Mass due to COVID. Most people learned during COVID that their faith could continue without supporting the institutional church which had failed them miserably due to pedophilia and intransigence on women clergy, communion for all, and recognition and compassion towards the LGBTQ community.

8

We do great at liturgies. I wish more families cared as much about their faith community as they do about their kid's sports teams and Sunday games and practices.

9

I feel that all Catholic Churches need to be more open and accepting of anyone who wants to participate. Less judgement. The church has made terrible decisions in the past covering up for the sins of many priests over many years. They should have been held accountable for the terrible things they did. Many feel like priests have no right to judge what the people do or not do.

10

We do a nice job w/Liturgy but that's not to say we shouldn't improve. Priests need to be given better education by well known speakers on how to write a sermon & how to give it. Priests shouldn't be showing seminarians how to do a sermon. Also the diocese brings priests from other countries who can't speak English well. The diocese should give them help w/this so that parishioners don't have to suffer through it. People who don't go to Mass regularly are usually those whose priorities are not in the right order. Usually sports & other things come before the family goes to Mass. I'm not sure what we do about that. Issues needing more attention usually involve women & lack thereof.

7 Celebration

11 Our parish has great participation in our liturgies.

12 Our mass is the highlight of my week, and I am personally inspired by it. We need to tell our church going members to invite new members to church (lapsed catholics and non-catholics) weekly. The scripture and the music are the best part of mass.

8 Ecumenism

- 1 ☐ I believe so but I am not sure.
- 2 ☐ We have collaborated with the Unitarian parish across the street on matters of race relations. We have hosted Rabbis and Muslim Imams in joint presentations at our parish on themes of social justice. These encounters help us to see how much we are on the same page which promotes respect.
- 3 ☐ Who knows. It is never communicated.
- 4 ☐ Don't know
- 5 ☐
- 6 ☐ Do not know the extent of the relationships.
- 7 ☐ To my knowledge, our parish does very little in terms of ecumenical services or projects with other faith communities. Much more could be done
- 8 ☐ The Diocese provides enough Ecumenical opportunities.
- 9 ☐ There used to be an Ecumenical council between several churches in the area. I haven't heard about it in a while, not sure if Covid has anything to do with that or not? I personally think the more we can learn about other faiths, the more tolerance we learn
- 10 ☐ Our parish does relate to other churches & synagogues. However we can always do more of that. Difficulties are in the choosing what to do & the work involved in the planning & executing.
- 11 ☐ I think more should be done in this area.
- 12 ☐ We need more interfaith opportunities as a society and a Catholic church. The more we learn about each other the less divisive and the less hatred we live hold toward each other. Our society is very divided now whether it is politically or faith, or where we stand on science.

9 Authority-Participation

- 1 This is advertised.
- 2 We have a parish mission statement. The parish supports small faith communities, some of which have existed for many years. We welcome new ventures where we share ideas and support each other.
- 3
- 4 I don't know the answers to these questions. I don't see a lot of this happening.
- 5
- 6 Christ Our Light has a parish mission and vision plan called Vision 2024. It was discussed with parishioners at mass. The lay faithful are invited to share their talents through the parish ministries. This parish is blessed with many knowledgeable, dedicated and willing volunteers.
- 7 Parish is governed top down from parish pastor. Nothing happens without his permission. I have no knowledge if any parish plan having been adopted. A more synodial approach would be to have active Parish Council whose members are diverse and whose terms are limited so as to encourage a rotation of leadership from among the congregation.
- 8
- 9
- 10 We do not put clergy on a pedestal . They are not better than we are...just a different title. if the pastor makes a decree that parishioners don't agree with, he will hear about it. We do have a pastoral plan that goes to 2024 which contains goals & strategies. Our former pastor put it in the works because it was necessary. The parish has been made aware of it.
- 11 Our parish does a good job here.
- 12 This area is managed well in the parish, we made goals and vision statements throughout the years and with various priests/pastors.

10 Deciding

- 1 There could be efforts to gain more input from the general congregation before decisions are made.
- 2 Parish Council. Open Pastor who will listen and engage.
- 3 Who knows. It is never communicated
- 4 I don't know how decisions or if they even promote transparency and accountability, it seems to be a special group (the same people all the time) who have a lot of say in what goes on the parish, mainly older people that have been in the parish for a every long time.
- 5 I have no idea
- 6 Pastoral Council and Finance Council provides consultation for decision making.
- 7 Decisions are top down from pastor. Regular open sessions for congregants with pastor to talk about decisions could result in more transparency.
- 8
- 9
- 10 Decisions are made by a Pastoral Council. The transparency & accountability need work.
- 11 I think more active participation would be helpful.
- 12 Decisions are made by the parish council, diocese, and sent down to the laity. Some decisions are driven by local scandals, financial issues, and lack of priests, trends in church going.

11 Synodality

1

2

3

4

When I first started coming to this church, I was surprised by some of the greeters didn't smile or greet you, they seem to pick and chose who they want to smile at. We did get a call on your voice mail welcoming us which I think was very nice and the man was very nice.

5

6

The prayer group, scripture reading meetings and retreats form close relationships with its members.

7

Through its various ministries and community service projects

8

9

10

11

No answer.

12

They offer many opportunities via in person, online, zoom to participate in the church.

12 Eucharist

1

2

The Eucharist is the true body and blood of Jesus under the appearances of bread and wine. I come to Mass to experience and celebrate the Word, the Eucharist and the Community. I would like to hear the bells ring at the Consecration. It enhances reverence for Jesus. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is always the same.. I have to concentrate on the words and imagine the Last Supper to make it more meaningful. It's easy to drift off .. When I hang onto the words the mystical transformation becomes more real in my heart and mind. So when the priest sounds like he believes it's wonderful. The Prayers are truly beautiful. I think- become what you receive. The gift of grace and nourishment will help me do God's will.

3

Holy Communion is the most important part of a mass. I think it is disgusting the way the priest and deacons react when someone wants to receive our Lord on the tongue. I understand there is a pandemic but we are way past the worst part and trending up hill to the end of the pandemic. They react like they are serving to someone with leprosy. They make faces of disgust and they wash their hands like a disease is eating their skin.

4

Yes the Eucharist is Jesus. How blest we are to receive our Lord and become one with him. The three things I would like to see changed is when everyone comes into the church and every knee shall bend before the Lord and people praying before Mass starts and that it's not a social club when everyone talks about there week together and they ignore Jesus. Second, I would like to see alter boys, the young should be apart of Mass. How are young men going experience the scarceness of what is going on and to make holy men for the future whether in marriage, priesthood etc. Third, I would like to hear the bells ring when the priest lift Jesus up for all to see, he is Our King. Why is there silence? Bonus, why are priest and deacons afraid to let us receive Jesus on the tongue. It is awful how they bathe their hands in hand sanitizer after and humiliate the person receiving Jesus. Why would I want to put Jesus into the dirty palm of my hand. I want to give Jesus the best and not second best. He deserves the best I can give.

5

Physically coming to mass reminds me of Gods love and support, allowing me to take time from our busy world to speak to God, pray and commune with friends/parishioners

6

The Eucharist is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ. During the consecration, Jesus Christ is truly present. "Whoever eats my flesh & drinks my blood remains in me and I in him". Jn 6:56I attend daily and weekend masses. Hearing the gospel, homily and receiving the Eucharist frequently has changed my spiritual life, developed a closer relationship with Jesus and I feel joy. My faith and trust have grown stronger. Receiving the Eucharist means everything to me. When the church was closed during the pandemic, I felt spiritual withdraw. It was very difficult.

7

I do not deny transubstantiation but believe in it as a mystery , a possibility. I miss receiving the Eucharist. I do not attend Mass now due to COVID. I have been enjoying YouTube masses by the Franciscans which do not preach exclusion of any one from communion. I now understand why many young people do not get married in the Church any more. It saddens me.

8

Yes, Eucharist is the Body & Blood of Christ

9

I come to mass to refresh my soul every week and gain inspiration from the readings and homily to get me through the week. I talk about my church frequently to friends and family I was glad we could still watch mass during the pandemic, but missed holy communion.

12 Eucharist

- 10 I believe that the host/wine are the representation of Jesus's body/blood. I do not believe that I'm eating Jesus's flesh & blood. I go to Mass because I want to be w/the community. Three things I'd like to change are that women should be preaching, sermons could be better & there should be handicapped folks being lectors, EMs & part of the music. Reception of Eucharist helps me to be what I've received. It nurtures me to leave church & serve. I do invite my non-church going children to come to Mass. Something that really needs to be changed is that ALL are given the opportunity to receive Eucharist whether they are catholic, non catholic, divorced, remarried, or whatever. Clergy has NO right to choose or judge who does or doesn't receive. Their ordination didn't give them that right.
- 11 I love the Mass and come often to be refreshed in my spirit.
- 12 yes, bc it is a beautiful sacrament we can receive week to week, I come to mass every week, no change in the mass should be made. I invite my family to come to mass and promote my church every chance I get.

13 Other

- 1 The church should advocate more forcefully to protect our planet against environmental degradation and destruction. These are largely based on our complacency, greed of corporations, and inertia at enacting change.
- 2 I would like to see women deacons. Pope Francis should make the annulment process less painful. It could bring people back to their faith. I love my parish.
- 3 My advice to the Pope would be to stop trying to change the church. Get back to the way the church was meant to be and not appeasing all the people of today to change it. If you are going to change it then change it back to the way it was meant to be. I feel we are in this cancel culture and people want everything to change to fit their way and not the way the church. People today want to change it so that it is more convenient for them. I also would like our parish change our priest. We brought in a new priest and he is no better than the past one. We need someone who has reverence and understands the teaching of the church. Someone who will guide and respect his parishioners and not look past you when you are speaking to him.
- 4 Pope Francis wants to change the church to modern times but God has been the same from the very beginning. People have been trying to change the church for over 50 years when Vatican II happen and it has destroyed the church. People took Vatican II and made it the way they wanted and not the way it was meant to be. If we understood what it was meant to be the churches would be packed today and it would have been beautiful church for Our Lord. I would like to see deep loving worship for Our Lord in Mass and for people stop standing around and talking to each other. I would like to see the priest to reach out to everyone and not the same people all the time and really get to know everyone on a more personal level. After all of the Mass (even week days) stay around for 10 to 15 minutes so you can have items blessed or get advice instead of going to the back room and disappearing. You always need to make an appointment to see a priest which most people won't do. Priest need to be more available. I heard we have Saint Joseph nuns but I have never seen them. They are probably at Mass but I wouldn't know it. They seem to stay hidden.
- 5
- 6 The priests, parishioners and staff are the best part. The parish is open during the day for those who want private prayer. Some of the churches are not open during the day.
- 7 The best part of our parish community is the diverse prayer and liturgical celebrations. I would tell the Pope, as God told St. Francis, save my Church, and that many are praying for a long life and courage for him to stand up for moving the Church forward against a barrage by naysayer bishops and priests, like the Pharisees, who want to preserve their own power at the expense of doing the compassionate thing.
- 8 COL is very welcoming with a strong sense of community and activities of interest to all
- 9 I love the feeling of community in our church. I would love to see priests allowed to marry, and/or women ordained into the priesthood. With the declining number of men called to the priesthood, changes need to be made.
- 10 The best part of belonging to COL is the social justice focus we have that enables us to live a Christian life. In quest. 12 I've answered part 2 of this quest. My advice to the Pope is to do what is right & not listen to the voices of doom in not making women priests. If we had had women priests 10 yrs ago, we wouldn't have had the scandal because women are nurturers.

13 Other

11 I would ask the Holy Father to not be so liberal especially when it comes to illegals.

12 It is like an extended family. I would like more youth involvement to grow the church. I would pray for the holy father and tell him he is doing a good job. Yes this type of reaching out is good . I would like to thank the church for being there for me in times of emotional need.

Question 1 Answer

the church and parish is inspirational to me as I go to mass to recharge my soul from the weekly stress of work and life. in the darkest moment Jesus is there for me.

Community and friendship.

It has helped me stay grounded in my faith by introducing me to people with similar beliefs. We have remained friends, helped each other through life crises and shared joyful experiences.

The church has been important to my life in receiving the sacraments. Sometimes I feel the church can be more motivating and welcoming to single people even when these people are in their 50's and older. I believe the Holy Spirit wants us to witness to others about Jesus. The church helps me by reminding me that God is first in our lives. The church needs to inspire and motivate the youth to be a part of the church so as to build the faith around the world.

The Holy Spirit is asking us to live our lives in a positive, God-centered and peaceful way so as to counteract all the negativity, hatred and violence in our world today.

The SPC/COL Community has been the source of lasting friendships with people whose wisdom has guided me and provided support in pursuing a better world. The Church has been an obstacle in denying an expansion to the priesthood by refusing to accept calls to religious life from ALL children of God.

The Catholic Church has been a part of my personal and family life since birth. I have always loved Mass (never miss unless sick, ever since childhood) and now I find as many opportunities as possible to attend Mass during the week as well. I love Jesus fully present in the Holy Eucharist! I love the sacraments, I love celebrating the sacraments with the parish community, and I pray for the Church on Earth daily. The Catholic Church has to be very careful in these current days to stand by her teachings...we are the only church founded by God. The Church's teachings don't bend and change with the times. We have to embrace that and not be afraid.

The Church is important because it teaches me to live a good life in Christian faith. It has helped me develop morals and values and shaped who I am today. The Holy Spirit is asking us to look to our faith to overcome the many obstacles that face our Church community today. Belonging to the Church helps me to focus my faith and weed through some of the bad things we see happening in our communities and pray for those who have turned away from God. The Catholic Church is doing the best they can in the world we live in. Praying together and providing guidance at Mass.

Since a child I have been a Catholic. In the past 20 years, a lot of my faith growth came from being part of the RCIA team at St. Mary's Church, small community faith groups, working with parishioners at the Cherry Hill Food Pantry, and IHOC, and SJ Faith in NJ Immigration initiatives. Our Life and Justice members had a goal for Care for Creation to make sure that the earth is protected to prevent hardship for the poor and new generations.

The obstacles to faith growth center on what I consider narrowness on the part of many bishops in US. Christ would not turn away a person for any reason. He welcomed the sinners. To not support the undocumented, the divorced, the LBQB in the church seems so anti-Christ when priests who harmed our most vulnerable youth were quietly moved around parishes. I also feel that the church needs to put as much force into climate change, prison

reform, stopping executions, refugee help, supporting single parent families through the time period when children in the family are born till they are 18 as they do for Pro-life efforts.

To save an unborn child but not support that child to adulthood is unbelievable.

I think the spirit must be asking us all to save the planet and everything in it. It does not help to save an unborn child, if that child will be facing life threatening issues such as fires, floods, hurricanes, draughts - mass migration to leave the impossible home conditions.

The church needs to embrace the world with care and sacrifice of our normal oil dependent lifestyle to obviously learn to pay more for things to make the world safer for the future generations and people who will be most affected by climate change. The church can be a force if everyone gets on the same page to act as a unit. This is so more important than not allowing politicians who support a person's right to make her own decision to go to communion.

I am so happy to see in COL bulletin a page devoted to helping the Afghans who are settling in Camden Diocese via selecting items the families need now, the formation of a support group for LGBTQ.+

Christ Our Light community has been a 'lifeline' keeping me Roman Catholic for over 30 years. It has helped me 'keep the faith' in spite of the hurt I carry from the horrendous crimes by the clergy against the young and vulnerable which their ordained peers and superiors allowed to go unpunished.

This is unnecessary. Go back to the Latin Mass and just follow the Catechism. All you need to do. The church is important as a community of believers. I receive much nourishment from attending Christ Our Light and being involved in their many ministries.

Question 2 Answer

Everyone belongs in the church, yes our parish reflects our society. Perhaps more young people and families are needed. The church is inclusive in my opinion only those angry with God choose to stay away.

50 to 60 year olds, gave up on the church.

Looking around in church, I see a wonderful cultural diverse parish. As the sign on the front says "All are Welcome ". I would like to believe that. I also believe we are more likely to open our doors to anyone who wants to be there.

Is seems like there are not many black people in the Catholic church.

ALL ARE WELCOME! If anyone feels excluded or ignored, they need to speak up. It may be that we don't realize or recognize the deficits.

Our parish community is largely reflective of the local community, as is true for most parishes. I don't think our parish ignores any particular group as there are activities and groups for most parishoners (youth, young adult, moms, seniors, etc.). I think due to our lack of social media presence -- in a world where evrything is on social media -- we are missing opportunities to reach more people.

All members of the Church and those who are not members of our Church. Our parish community is very inclusive. We have multiple opportunities to volunteer, give to those in need, and pray together. Through faith formation we include the youth, RCIA we include our adult population, there are outreach programs for the elderly, and ministries for outreach other than those mentioned. I think our Church does a great job with inclusion.

I can see by reading the COL bulletin that the COL community is working towards including the large community in the Cherry Hill area. There are programs that support and help the poor and needy in the area, the immigration issues in NJ, help for the Afghans in Camden, the youth, the seniors, . . . The only vacuum that I see is the "We are all part of God's Planet or Care for Creation. There is so much that the parish can do to change behavior and advocate for change in the area of climate change.

Once it is safe, I hope the Mass for people with special needs will be back.

Question 3 Answer

God sends messengers through the poor, needy, and through children's needs. The church offers many volunteer opportunities to serve God and our community through multiple ministries. Our church provides ministries to feed the hungry, and help those on the peripheries,

My Parish has a wonderful staff to help listen to the parish voices.

Listening to others helps give us a different perspective.

Our parish listens well to those who speak up. We have a wonderful faith-filled staff who, I believe, try very hard to "hear" everyone. They are very responsive to the needs of the parish and the community, at least the needs they see and the needs that are brought to their attention.

I don't really know how our parish listens to anyone...I don't feel there are good outlets for parishoners to speak up. If I didn't know some of the people listed on the front of the bulletin, I would have no idea whom to "voice" my thoughts and ideas. I've had people stop me in the foyer if church to voice their opinion to me, but its not easy for it to go any further. This could definitely be improved.

Our parish is helps young people through faith formation, sacrament formation, youth groups, retreats, and encouraging volunteering for the Church community. Even once faith formation is over, the Church community continues to reach out to the high school student to keep them involved.

COL appears to be doing a great deal to reach and help all groups of people.

Question 4 Answer

All of us who are baptized are called to bring the message of Christ to everyone through our actions, sacrifice, and giving of time and resources. I don't think our parish ignores a particular sector or group. Everyone is welcome.

Again a wonderful staff always ready to help.

Mission is to witness Jesus to others in words and actions

Our parish has wonderful outreach ministries for the parish and our community. We encourage everyone (the youth, young adults, Adults and seniors, families) to participate in these ministries to be of service to each other and to the world.

We need to deemphasize personal sanctification and embrace the Common Good.

When we are baptized, we are called to share in the three-fold mission of Christ — to sanctify, proclaim, and give Christian leadership and example to the world. We are all God's hands and feet on earth and should conduct ourselves that way. Therefore, wherever we go, personally or communally, we should be introducing God to others through our actions. I don't think we ignore any particular mission, we are all on a mission every day (in our families, at our jobs or schools, etc.). The mission of baptized Catholics is to follow the teachings of the Church and live good Christian lives. Our parish helps parish members to live out their service to society by continually offering opportunities for retreats, volunteering, community service. We have opportunities such as sandwich making, collections of items/food.

Care for Creation is an area that needs to be added. This will benefit everyone.

Our common mission is to be 'companions on the journey'. The journey has both corporal and spiritual aspects. I feel the parish's sacrament prep programs' family focus is a great way to help both parents and children deepen their spirituality. I would like to see more parish sponsored programs to support caregivers; help families deal with various dynamics and challenges (young children, teens, adult children and aging parents); educate us on racism as well as the privilege of the dominant race and gender.

Question 5 Answer

God/Jesus loved everyone not a particular group or race or gender, so likewise I feel that COL does the same. We have a large minority group in our parish. and we offer opportunities for all groups that want to participate.

Making programs available to help.

I believe our parish does a good job reaching out to the poor, especially. The food donations in the hall represent how charitable our parish members are without needing reminders.

To have open meetings for dialogue. When people donate their time or talent or contributions to various causes to help the poor/sick/injured this is all part of doing God's work.

There is poor preaching on divorce and remarriage. The Annulment process is a burden and not possible to complete if both spouses can't or won't participate. Our parish has always embraced diversity and recognized the talents of all.

I have no idea.

One thing we did this year for cultural diversity was the parish One Book, which looked at the life of Thea Bowman. This was helpful and brought the community together to address the issues that minorities face in today's world and how Thea Bowman broke down some barriers.

I cannot answer this but your parish is demonstration by the active work of the parish that it is caring the the needy on a weekly basis.

See number 4's answer

Question 6 Answer

This section I am not too sure of. As I serve in mass and attend mass but the church serves people of different points of view and we all coexist the best we can. I do not see the media involved in our church. except in the news when the catholic church is seen in a negative light due to church scandals. Our Bishop does the best he can do keep the church in a positive light.

I would think the Pastor or his designer would be the representative for the Parish. I do not know how that person is chosen.

Not always- sometimes the ultra conservative do not want to hear other's ideas or perspectives. Yes, I feel I can speak up and that I will be heard. And often, I see actions taken by the staff and the parish that addresses my concerns or comments.

I do feel able to speak out, especially in areas where people are being denied Divine rights. I've had a good response when contacting the media but I feel media relations are a weak spot at COL. People volunteer for leadership roles, not appointed. Our parish staff is outstanding. I would speak up candidly and respectfully but to be honest I don't know who we are supposed to do that. I've emailed the pastor to set up meeting to discuss an issue and we were never able to make it happen. And so it never was addressed. Our parish has virtually no relationship with social media (with the exception of Sherine Green who runs the youth Instagram page). Our parish Facebook page is usually just a re-post of the diocese content. We are missing the boat in this department! I follow so many different Catholic accounts on Instagram and Facebook, and have learned so much about the saints and holy days and the catechism of the Church...it's a shame our parish is nowhere in that mix. I feel very welcomed and feel to speak my mind when I am in Faith formation classes. I feel that I am encouraged to speak and reflect on the Gospel. As youth, we are guided to reflect on a question of the week, which relates to the Gospel and helps to focus on what each Gospel means and what Jesus was trying to teach.

My current parish is not allowing diverse ideas to be considered. It is that reason that I plan to change to COL

I have no problem speaking up personally, but would prefer the parish had an established process that is embraced by all. And monitored by a cross-section of parish leadership.

Question 7 Answer

Our mass is the highlight of my week, and I am personally inspired by it. We need to tell our church going members to invite new members to church (lapsed catholics and non-catholics) weekly. The scripture and the music are the best part of mass.

The liturgical celebration in our parish is enhanced by our music. It adds to my prayerful experience and I know it does for others. I believe laziness keeps people from coming to church. They get stuck in a pattern that is hard to break. The excuse of "I don't get anything out of it " becomes their mantra. Prayer and mass help you to focus on God and reminds you to be thankful and to ask for forgiveness for sins. I believe some Catholics do not attend mass because they do not feel that the priest does not connect the gospel message and readings to what is happening in everyday life right now or that the music is too conservative and not up-lifting and lively enough. We need to have the church reach out to people where they are in the stage of life they are in at the moment. Some people (even myself) try to attend a seminar or meeting and hope to maybe get to know some new people only to find the attendees already have their own friends & people they know and they do not really care for you to "invade" their group.

Liturgy is the Source and Summit of our faith life and in our parish community. Liturgy done well (engaging presiders, good and familiar music choices, excellent homilies, prayerful pauses and times for reflection) will call out to many people who are drawn to COL for our excellent Liturgies. Whoever is preaching the homily needs to make sure that the gospel message is directly tied to everyone's life. The music needs to be diverse and spirit-filled, not performance driven so that everyone feels called to participate, not just sit and listen. We need to have more people at all the doors of the church, not just in the gathering space, to welcome and greet everyone as they gather. It may help if different masses are targeted for different age groups or musical diversity. Not everyone finds a full choir led by an organ to be what leads them to prayerful active participation.

Music and homilies, based on the Scripture of the day, and directed to life events happening around us is key. Our Musicians and Liturgical Minister do an excellent job but, of late, homilies have not led us to see how they apply to our life decisions.

I assume most parishoners would say they love our liturgical celebrations because the music is good and the priests are nice. People have told me they come to our parish because of the musicians or because of certain priests. However, I don't think those are the areas that need attention. We need to pay more attention to the importance of the sacredness and gift of the Mass...of the presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist...of the traditions and beauty of our Church. Most Catholics are poorly catechized, unfortunately, and we are missing the boat with the areas on which we place importance. We should not be chatting aloud before Mass, making jokes during mass, and applauding for the musicians at the end of Mass. We completely lack reverence in our parish and are never taught otherwise.

When I go to Mass, I always feel so good about myself. It really starts my day off right. Sometimes life gets busy and this can lead to Catholics missing Church. It has been great to be able to virtually attend Masses each week. I feel like I have participated this way better than actually going to Church.

Although the pandemic has a lot to do with that.

My husband and I have been inspired by 2 homilies at COL in the past month. This is the opposite of our present parish homilies. This is another reason for our plan to change parishes.

#2- The church can be more open and non-judgmental, especially concerning people who are divorced and remarry without an annulment.

There was incredible push back when singing the Our Father was requested for weddings and funerals. Why is that? Isn't it kinder to just say yes, especially for these occasions?

Question 8 Answer

We need more interfaith opportunities as a society and a Catholic church. The more we learn about each other the less divisive and the less hatred we live hold toward each other. Our society is very divided now whether it is politically or faith, or where we stand on science.

There is an ongoing relationship, but honestly, I am not part of the meetings, so I don't know what is the fruits. Maybe that could be shared in the bulletin.

Good to have relationship with other faith communities but have to be careful of not thinking all faiths have the same teachings & beliefs.

The fruits of ecumenism is peaceful interaction with other faiths, a better understanding of how and when and why they worship as they do and so that we see the similarities we might have with them.

This is an area where we've retreated of late. Covid can be blamed, but we need to concentrate on reconnecting with our Jewish and Muslim neighbors. Our clergy need to take leadership roles in reestablishing multi faith activities and prayer services. None attended the recent Immigration prayer vigil.

I really don't know; I don't think we do much with other Christian churches. If we do, I don't know about it. (And I am at Mass every Sunday.)

I know as a person, I have been taught to respect other religions. The Catholic Church, along with my parents, have helped to guide me in this. I am not sure what our Church does to relate to other faith communities.

I know the COL works with the Cherry Hill Food Pantry, IHOC, Faith in New Jersey to name a few. I truly believe that we are all stronger when we expand our perimeter of friends beyond just the Catholic Church as we work to make our local community stronger and better able to serve the needs of our neighbors less fortunate.

Question 9 Answer

This area is managed well in the parish, we made goals and vision statements throughout the years and with various priests/pastors.

The parish does have a parish council.

Periodically, the parishioners have been asked to participate in Mitzah Day, Fair Trade, Etc .

Also, Parishioners can volunteer to be part of parish council.

Pastor is the leader of the parish and sets the frame-work of what needs to be done.

Vision 2024 was an important attempt by our former pastor to clearly line up all our initiatives and our ministries and our leadership. It called forth not only the staff, but the ministry leaders to a position of leadership. It empowered the laity to act and speak up, to plan and to be heard. We need to re-roll out Vision 2024 and find ways to keep it in the front of the parish's mind, so they see it not as a one-and-done process, but something that we live by. Even though participation in the Synodnal process has not been great, I think we should have listening sessions at least once a year. Encourage everyone to speak up, to speak out and a call to action. Our current pastor needs to help promote and provide updates to the parish community on how we are progressing with implementing Vision 2024.

I only became aware six months ago that we had a Pastoral Council and a website distinct from the COL App I had been depending on for information. I only found out when I questioned Kathy Zippilli about who was on Council because I couldn't find any info in the Bulletin or on the App. Since I led a major parish group at that time, I was stunned to be so out of the loop.

I assume all this is done by Pastoral Council. I have no idea who is on that council, nor do I have any idea what they discuss. This is an issue. It would be nice if there was a link at the parish website or some other access to the parish council member names and meeting agendas with an opportunity for parishoner input. Again, this would be a great way to use social media -- introduce council members, post upcoming meetings topics/agendas, etc.

not sure

I'm aware of our mission and plan. I am glad to hear that initiatives from them are forthcoming.

Question 10 Answer

Decisions are made by the parish council, diocese, and sent down to the laity. Some decisions are driven by local scandals, financial issues, and lack of priests, trends in church going.

Pastor makes decisions. There are finance committee & pastor that approve certain projects. I do notice we get some summary of the finances once a year but some of the expenses are listed in such broad categories that it is hard to distinguish what the donated contributions are actually going towards.

See above.

I have no idea how decisions are made. I just assume they are all made at parish staff meetings. I don't know how they are shared, either, except by observing what happens after the fact. Again, I don't feel the parishioners are ever directly asked or have any say. (Many just shop around until they find a parish that fits their styles/needs.)

not sure

I saw that the prayer service for DACA and undocumented was held at COL after a Faith in SJ meeting. The prayer service had to be put together in record time. COL parish, pastor and parishioners who were involved in the Faith in SJ meeting did an amazing job.

Don't know. Feel it needs to be explained.

Question 11 Answer

They offer many opportunities via in person, online, zoom to participate in the church.

Quite a few clubs that encourage sharing faith including Book Club, Mens Group, Women Retreat
BY announcing meetings where you can have some input.

Our parish offers many opportunities for discussion but the clergy seldom attend.

I don't really know.

The youth in our Church have plenty of opportunities to "walk together". Through classes such as faith formation and sacrament formation, we come together to learn about our faith and receive God's Grace. Through youth groups, we are encouraged to come together to have discussions and free time together as youth community. In all of the opportunities, we are encouraged to reflect and discuss our Catholic faith.

N?A not parishioner yet

Many ways.

Question 12 Answer

yes, bc it is a beautiful sacrament we can receive week to week, I come to mass every week, no change in the mass should be made. I invite my family to come to mass and promote my church every chance I get.

Coming to Mass provides me with an opportunity to contemplate quietly for a little while before joining in with my fellow parishioners and friends, celebrating a common faith experience. Receiving Holy Communion reminds me that Jesus is with me and will continue to be with me no matter what is thrown towards me.

Yes, I do believe the Eucharist is the true presence of Christ since Jesus stated it as so during the Last Supper. I come to mass to praise God; to thank Him and to ask for forgiveness of sins and to ask for mercy and to pray for others.

Pastor & Associate Pastor are very good at tying in a good message of the Bible readings to every-day life; however, sometimes some priests just tell stories and they may not even be relevant to the readings. I would like the music to be a bit more up-lifting sometimes such as a praise & worship format or a mix of the traditional hymns with praise & worship style also. I miss hearing choirs singing but they still have not come back to our parish since the covid crisis. Homilies that help motivate people and interesting seminars or Bible studies help people grow in the faith. Reception of Holy Communion is the union of God with us. I believe the communion bells should be used during the consecration of the Eucharist.

I would like to see the tabernacle moved to the center of the altar and not to the side. Also, I believe the pastor and priests in general should encourage the congregation to have a more reverent behavior in church towards God and the altar.

I try to encourage others to go to church and explain the reasoning that Jesus also came to earth to establish the church.

I DO believe the Eucharist is truly the body and blood of Christ. It is my faith, and I think Christ taught us this at the Last Supper.

I do not come to Mass that often anymore. The last few times I went I came away with a hollow feeling instead of being Spirit-filled. I know that COVID has played havoc on our Liturgies because of trying to keep everyone worshipping in a safe environment. But I also think that we need to get back to full active participation and not just going through the motions. However, I have stayed very active in my ministries and with my financial contributions.

I absolutely believe in Transubstantiation. Adult education needs to include exposure to Catholic post Vatican 2 media. We need to be reading Commonweal, America, National Catholic Reporter, US Catholic and participating in online seminars from Notre Dame, Georgetown, the USCCB etc. and not fundamentalist doctrinally weak media.

During Covid I've benefitted enormously from online Masses around the USA and from the Georgetown seminars which you can watch at your leisure.

What strikes me as sad is that this question is #12 on the list. Amen, I believe, YES the Eucharist IS the body and blood of Christ! Our faith is based upon this gift and we need to receive Him to be nourished with grace to keep on going in our mission. I come to Mass to receive Jesus, to be close to Him, to be nourished by his Body and Blood, to follow His command, to be strengthened in the Spirit's gifts, to be in communion with all the saints and angels who celebrate every Mass with us, and to hopefully secure a place in Heaven. We sing with all the choirs of angels and heavenly hosts at every Mass! (The priests says these words before we sing Holy! Holy!) They are present adoring the Holy Eucharist at every Mass! The reception of Holy Communion means everything to me...and it became ever so clear in the past year when COVID restrictions limited in-person Mass. I said an act of spiritual communion, but I literally cried the first time I was able to receive the Eucharist in person again (I think it surprised Fr. Tom!). My heart raced and I was truly overcome with emotion from the depths of my soul. My heart races every time I receive the Eucharist, and even when I am at adoration. If I could

change anything about the Mass in my parish, I would (1) make an effort to increase the reverence in our parish (e.g., no talking full voice conversations before or during Mass, no clapping, bow/genuflect in front of the tabernacle not just the altar, etc.), I would (2) allow reception of Communion on the tongue and offer the Blood again, and I would (3) offer petitions during Mass that are in line with ALL of our faith, not just justice. For example, we need to pray for our Holy Father and for all priests; we need to pray for the conversion of souls, for the dignity of life from conception to natural death, for the souls in purgatory, for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for God's merciful love and forgiveness. (This is another area that using social media could be helpful with.)

yes, I believe that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. I believe it because this is my faith. I come to Mass to celebrate the Eucharist and continue to learn Jesus' teachings and guidance. I think it would be helpful if Mass was more upbeat to capture the youth in our community. Maybe not every Mass, but one service that focuses on the younger population. I think it is great that they do have someone to bring the smaller children together during the mass to help them learn, but I think something should be geared toward the older youth as well.

1. Yes; 2. To share my love of God and gather with my friends; 3. Nothing; 4. Sharing of God with my fellow Catholics & friends. It's sharing my love God with others.; 5. We share our faith and our participation in Mass with all we know and love.

1. I believe it is His essence; therefore I do partake of His body and blood.

5. I've invited others who express frustration with their current church.

I believe that the Eucharist is the true body and blood of Christ. So much strength and grace is obtained by receiving Holy Communion, so when I am at a wedding or funeral, and I hear the priest say "Only Catholics in the state of grace can receive," I am saddened because so many in the church who need God's help are left out.

Question 13 Answer

It is like an extended family. I would like more youth involvement to grow the church. I would pray for the holy father and tell him he is doing a good job. Yes this type of reaching out is good. I would like to thank the church for being there for me in times of emotional need.

I have met so many wonderful genuine people throughout my 40 years at this parish. I hope Pope Francis continues to keep the church in the present day, addressing present day issues. He has done a great job.

I like to see that there are other believers out there when I am in the church. I would like long term parishioners be a little more open in trying to get to know newer people or people they do not know (even if they are not new to the church) and actually have conversations instead of them just sticking to the group of people they have known for long periods of time.

May Pope Francis continue to welcome all people into the church and help them learn the true teachings of Jesus. I like that he encourages his bishops and priests to be with and serve the people of God & to listen to their concerns and advise them not to act like they are privileged princes of the church.

Yes, overall surveys and meetings once or twice a year can be helpful to give input. Pope Francis...please stay well and keep doing what you are doing for us, the Church. Keep calling us to outreach, to ministry, to Communion and Liturgy and to live our faith in every aspect of our lives.

Pastors come and pastors go. But what make COL stand out is the incredibly faith-filled people of God who truly live the Gospel message. I am very blessed and proud to be a part of this wonderful Catholic community.

I look forward to a new Just Faith module in the Spring. Small group programs from "The Jesus Myth" and "Growth in Faith" in the 70s to RENEW, Just Faith, Good News People hundreds were drawn to small group encounters which enriched our parish life.

I would really like to see an increase in reverence during Mass and in Church in general. I would love to see the effective use of social media to reach all parishioners who use it in addition to sharing the same information in church (announcements, in the bulletin, etc.). I would love to see organized devotions set up (e.g., novenas, rosary, First Fridays, First Saturday) and if they exist then share when they meet (e.g., I think there is a group that says the rosary after daily mass on certain days of the week...but I don't know what day and might want to go if I knew). I'd like to see us offer regularly scheduled day or evening of adoration (not all mucked up with music and talking once a month...just quiet adoration). I would love to hear the vocation stories of our priests...this may help our younger people immensely. I truly wish we had the sacrament of Reconciliation offered more often than just Saturday for half an hour. The truth is, I am currently going to other neighboring parishes for all of the things I listed. If I could offer Pope Francis one bit of advice I would encourage him to be brave and to stand firm in the teachings of the Church, not to be vague to allow various interpretation. We need him to be a strong, fearless leader. I would also assure him of my daily prayers.

I really enjoy being a member of my parish because everyone is so welcoming. I think our parish does a lot of things to ensure our Church community is following the teachings of Jesus.

Not applicable. In process of changing parishes. Our advice to the Holy Father is continue what you are doing. Make sure our Pastors, Deacons and Religious be shepherds, not political individuals.

I would strongly advise the Pope to include women in the ordained priesthood.

Pope Francis is such a blessing, I hope he can overcome some of the negative voices in the church and promote the wonderful teachings of Jesus.

The Bishop was insensitive and uncaring towards parents of kids in the class of 2020. Never responded directly to anyone, never addressed parents broadly, couldn't have cared less that people who supported the church for a lifetime were very unhappy about the lack of graduations. Meanwhile

Burlington county and other local schools had real graduations. I have not gone to church since then bc I think he is an awful, self centered man and I cannot support something with such terrible leadership. The Bishop shouldn't have anything to say about vaccinations either.