

**Parish of Christ the King
20 Sumter Avenue
Albany, NY 12203**

Synod on Synodality – Christ the King Parish Report

Report to the Diocese of Albany on Parish Participation – January to June 2022

We are pleased to submit this synthesis of input from all those who participated in the Synod process at Christ the King Parish between January and June 2022. Written and oral comments were received from 260 people. Of these, seventy-three (73) people used questionnaires available since February. Listening Sessions were held with 25 students in Grades 5-11. Three listening sessions were attended by 89 adult participants. Additional input was received from our Parish Visitation Ministry (67 members) and the Day Star Faith Sharing small group (6 members).

Attached are the following:

1. Summary of Synod Activities from February – June 2022.
2. Synthesis and numerical summary of responses to each question and subquestion.
3. Demographic information obtained by direct observation of session participants.
4. Compilation of all responses received.

We can say without hesitation, that above all else, people were full of gratitude to Pope Francis for inviting the entire people of God into dialog about the future of the Church. The words of one person capture this feeling best: “The Church never before asked me what I think.” There was great desire for the Synod to continue and that “synodality” will actually become the way all people participate in the life of the Church. Participants expressed a profound love of God and of the Church. They genuinely appreciate the presence of holy and compassionate priests and religious in their lives. They acknowledged having many priests and religious who sacrificed so much of themselves to be with them and their families in all the good and bad times of life. They expressed regret that the scandal of sexual abuse has hurt those faithful and dedicated servants so much.

While people recognized major problems with the hierarchy and organization on all levels in the Church, they said these things could not take away their faith. They feel responsible to respond to their own prophetic call to challenge practices do not reflect the teachings of Christ. Women especially have served the Church as its front-line ministers—as its deacons—since the time of Christ.

When the Church decided to formally open this ministry to the laity, women were and continue to be deeply hurt that it is only men who are admitted to the diaconate. We are all equal before God and continue to do our best to grow in love and service. Jesus taught that titles, positions, and the power associated with them are not something to grasp at. They certainly should not serve to exclude entire classes of people from ministries to which God has called them. People’s hopes for the future are grounded in the belief that faithful listening by all to where the Holy Spirit is leading us will enable the Church to preserve what is essential and change what needs to be changed to help us carry out the mission of Jesus in our modern world.

Despite their love for the Church and hopes for the future, there was a palpable lack of trust that anything the people say will really make any difference. People noted that the expectations that

were raised with Vatican II so often failed to take effect. They expressed fear that Dioceses will filter out whatever does not fit with the bishops' and clergy's ideas, and that the hierarchy is unwilling to relinquish any power or prestige so that meaningful change can occur. They worry that Pope Francis will never really hear the fruits of our coming together. They were discouraged by the fact that the clergy were not part of their listening sessions and said that mutual listening must involve all of us together if we are to journey together. People also felt it was wrong to have separate listening sessions and dinners for the clergy and parish leaders, that this reinforced an attitude of "specialness" and privileged position.

We are grateful for the opportunity to be involved in the Synod and hope that Bishop Scharffenberger and all Bishops and clergy will fully support Pope Francis in efforts to make synodality the way of the future. We look forward to seeing the Synthesis the Diocese prepares and want to learn more about what other parishes have identified as areas for action. We will be reviewing all of the suggestions for personal and parish growth we have received, and we are committed to responding to the needs expressed to the fullest extent we can do so. In the five months our three-parish Synod committee has been praying together and developing Synod activities for our communities, we have grown personally and collectively in faith and mission. We will continue to gather as a group and have begun to identify ways we can collaborate to make synodality the normal way of life in our parishes.

We have great hope that all can listen with open hearts and minds and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us on our journey to places we have not imagined the Church could go.

With our prayers that we may all journey together
+ all for the honor and glory of God +

Christ the King Church Synod Committee

Pastor: Rev. Richard Lesser; 518-456-1644; rick.lesser@rcda.org

Joanne Curran - Ann Hodgson - Lianne Jensen - Kathy Kavanaugh - Michael Keefrider
Maureen McAuliffe - Fran Schmidt - Nancy Streeter - Marie Woodward - Tim Wiles

With gratitude for all the members of our joint committee and those who assisted them.

St. Matthew's Church Synod Committee

Terry Cunningham - Angela Diamond - Andrea Freeman - JulieAnn Fortran
Jeffrey Lampman - Joellen Lampman - Paula Willsie

St. Thomas Church Synod Committee

Carmel Foltan - Rose Ann Garry - Colleen Harrigan - Patricia Holm
Mary Ann Hospodar - Fr. Dan McHale - Margaret Perazzelli

Christ the King Synod Contact: Ann Hodgson; 518-573-6856; hodgson.annm@gmail.com

SYNTHESIS OF THE SPECIFICS MENTIONED IN RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE PRIMARY QUESTIONS**Question 1: What have been your experiences of Church?****A) What have been your joys? (281 responses)**

Comments fell into the categories of participation, consolation/support; faith formation; Eucharist and other Sacraments; forgiveness and grace; closeness to God; the beauty of liturgies—especially the Triduum; the Church building itself and parish gardens, and gathering spaces; service to the poor, the imprisoned, immigrants, the elderly and the sick; enduring faith despite problems of the Church; and love for the parish of Christ the King. At Christ the King parish and others where our parishioners were raised, pastors have been very kind and caring. People are grateful to those priests who have served and continue to serve humbly, faithfully, selflessly, and generously and who embody the love of God in their care of those they shepherd. Over the years, the community at Christ the King has remained strong even when pastors change. Deacons and their wives and families are appreciated for all they contribute to parish life. People noted that they feel very welcome and want to reach out more deliberately to include everyone as our community is becoming more diverse. Gratitude was expressed for having Masses and Synod listening sessions interpreted for the deaf, for liturgy in the vernacular and the priest facing the people. Participants feel there are many opportunities to be involved in ministries, and that there is a real sense of community when we come together for liturgy, ecumenical services, rosary, retreats and days of recollection, and liturgical prayer. Especially valued are those times when young families are present and youth participate as altar servers, choir members, greeters and in other ministries. There is great joy in watching children grow in faith. Family celebrations of Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, and funerals are special blessings. Liturgical music is joyful, enhances worship and is uplifting.

Children in grades 5-8 expressed joy when going to Communion. They enjoy the beauty of our stained-glass windows, the Baptistry, and gathering spaces. Using Holy Water in the Baptistry to make the sign of the cross was something special they could do. Participants in grades 6-8 also felt the Church is beautiful, priests are kind and welcoming, and that they love the people and how supportive they are. They are especially excited to be focusing on creation during Vacation Bible School this summer as it will help them see God who is everywhere in all creation.

High school students' joys were centered on going to Church, seeing friends and people they love, prayer and self-reflection, gratefulness for parents, family, and people at Church. They very much want to find ways to give back to the community and hope to have more youth-centered activities in the parish.

B) What are your hopes? (112 Responses)

A great desire was expressed for the Church to open the diaconate and priesthood to women, to allow priests to marry, to allow deacons to marry after ordination and to remarry if widowed, and to allow deacons to anoint the sick.

Participants were excited to be invited to participate in the Synod. They believed that the process can strengthen people and parishes and the whole Church. They hope their input will really be heard and heeded, and that this way of being community will continue throughout the whole Church which is in such need of renewal. People hope that the Church will listen to the needs of all as Jesus did. They hope for healing divisions within the Church, openness to change laws and rules that no longer serve the needs of the Church, exclude large groups of people from full participation, and impede us from becoming the living body of Christ carrying out His mission in today's world. We need to use our diverse gifts and focus on what brings us together, rather than what separates us.

Responses to questionnaires and at listening sessions often spoke of the hope that we can find ways to reach out to those who have left the church, have not returned since COVID, those who are indifferent, and especially youth and young families. People were sad that their children and grandchildren have left the Church and pray always for their return. Some expressed gratitude that their family members found strong faith communities at other Christian churches. There is hope that we can find ways to provide opportunities to grow in our relationships to God and as a community. Gathering to talk about issues, town-hall style meetings periodically with the pastor and parish leaders, social activities, faith-sharing groups, days of reflection and retreats, spiritual direction were all mentioned as ways we can make our hopes into reality. We hope that those Confirmed will be invited to enter into some type of service so that they continue to be active in the parish.

People hope that the clergy will be open, encouraging, and respectful to lay leadership and will delegate authority in their parishes and the Church as a whole. As part of this, priests need to encourage parishioners to recognize and respect lay ministers. For example, there are many who feel that only the priest can provide assistance they may need; they will only receive communion from the priest; etc.

For those for whom English is not their first language, there was hope that pastors would have even basic language skills to listen and talk to them. For others, they hoped that homilists and lectors would be understandable, that sound systems be well-functioning, and speakers would be trained to use them.

C) What are your disappointments? (124 Responses)

Responses fell into the following categories: Sexual abuse by members of the clergy; declining participation; shortage of priests; hurtful treatment of those divorced and remarried and toward the LGBTQ+ community; failure to afford women an equal role to that of men in ministry; lack of trust in the Church's organization and hierarchy; lack of input or effective voices on pastoral councils, financial councils, and in the budgeting process; changes in liturgical practices since Vatican II; lack of joy in celebration of Eucharist weekly; inadequate faith education and proliferation of inaccurate information; and overly conservative priestly formation that continues to support clericalism.

The most significant disappointment voiced concerns sexual abuse by members of the clergy and the Church's response to it. One person said: "We can't trust the hierarchy." "Popes, bishops, and priests lie and are hypocritical." "They did everything they could to cover up the situation." "They knowingly continued to put children in jeopardy." Now, "I feel I have to defend the church if I choose to remain Catholic."

Some respondents talked of a lack of reverence in Church. A few felt that Vatican II ruined the Church, that we should return to the Latin Mass, kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion, not praying with hands raised, silence in the sanctuary, and reemphasis on Church rules and laws, and no jokes at the end of Mass. While efforts to reach young adults are admirable, having "Happy Hours" at pubs should not be a Church function.

Conversely, many felt that the Church has failed to implement many of the changes recommended by Vatican II. They feel that the Church seems to be moving backwards nowadays. People are distressed that many bishops seem to be disrespectful of Pope Francis and do not respond, or respond only superficially, when he tries to do anything new. At the listening sessions, people said they felt that the clergy and bishops are unwilling to let go of their positions of authority or prestige, that there is competition for "plum" assignments, and an increasing focus on returning to more elaborate displays of clerical regalia, procedures, and forms of liturgy. Clergy is not "royalty;" the hierarchy are not "princes." Participants who had also been to the vicariate listening sessions were unhappy that clergy were not present. They believe that we need to listen to one another. They mentioned that clergy might consider coming "incognito" so they could speak their minds freely and be able to listen as peers. All too often they seem to be keepers of the status quo and show an absence of commitment to "synodality." To many, it feels like they are being excluded more and more from participation, that God is further removed, and they as laity are the "less worthy" of the unworthy.

All participants were concerned about the lack of priests and unrealistic expectations placed on them and offered similar suggestions. To respond to the lack of priests, the Church needs to allow priests to marry, allow deacons to remarry, allow women to become deacons and priests, and allow deacons to anoint the sick. People agreed that celibacy is a virtue, but not one that is essential to the role of priest. We allow married priests from other Christian denominations to join the Catholic Church and continue in priesthood, and other eastern rite churches in communion with Rome also allow married priests. It is wrong to insist that all priests take on celibacy in order to serve when there is so great a need in the Church. Participants were concerned that faith formation was inadequate, children should be taught prayers, programs should be held at times convenient for adults/retirees who don't drive at night. Although we proclaim to be a church of inclusion, we don't make enough effort to integrate people from other cultures in our parishes and liturgies. Bishops, too, should not get involved in politics, especially barring elected officials from receiving Holy Communion.

As for parishes, people felt strongly that priests should not have to be facility, human resource, and finance managers. These functions can be performed by others. If changes in Canon Law are needed to allow for this, they should be made. People are not happy that they don't know what happens to their donations, they don't want them used to defend predators in court. If we say we are against abortion, we need to put money into supporting mothers, not buying ultrasound machines. We also should not focus so much on aid to foreign countries when people here at home are in dire need. Parishioners need to have input into Pastoral Council and Financial Council

discussions and should be allowed to attend their meetings. Minutes should be available in a timely manner after their meetings. Parishioners should be included in the parish budgeting process and should receive timely financial reports. The sound systems and headsets in churches and meeting spaces don't work properly or are not used properly. As a result, participants often cannot hear the presider or lectors. Parishes do not address environmental concerns in order to be good stewards of resources or the earth as a whole. Some mentioned that we do not reach out to the disabled to see what their needs are, to make them feel welcome and to make their attendance feasible. People often do not get any feedback when suggestions are made or questions raised. Pastors need to be accessible to people as well as have enough time for proper rest and recreation for themselves.

D) When have you felt connected? (29 Responses)

People said they felt most connected during Sacramental celebrations, parish activities, service projects, education programs, and in times of difficulty, self-reflection, and bereavement. Central to feeling connected was the celebration of the Eucharist. People noted that God's presence is felt in the community coming together, being "fed by one another and by God." One person was glad to say that "When I don't feel like coming to church one Sunday, but I get myself there anyway, it always turns out that there was some reason I was needed that I had not imagined." The community makes people realize they are part of the "communion of saints." Liturgies on holidays, funerals, and the Anointing of the Sick services all make people feel like they belong, are cared for, and supported.

At other times, gathering for the rosary, adoration, the Divine Mercy prayer after Mass on weekdays, "Coffee and Conversation" programs about faith-related topics, and days of reflection are popular ways to come together and explore our faith.

Some said that the kindness and welcoming of people drew them into the community. Many reported coming to Christ the King from other parishes where they did not feel connected. People found many opportunities for ministry in the parish and were happy when others helped them find a way they could be involved. They feel their service is appreciated. Special thanks were mentioned for including a sign language interpreted Synod Listening Session, having signing for the deaf at Sunday Mass, and being sure that a blind parishioner received Synod materials in a format that could be used to participate. People said they enjoy gathering for social activities like the parish picnic, enjoy meeting others, and are happy to be missed if they are away for vacation, the winter, etc. There were strong connections to the parish mentioned, but some felt that they were not connected to the Bishops or the Vatican.

E) When have you felt disconnected? (34 Responses)

In response to this question, some people said they or family members feel unwelcome because of things like social status, disability, and divorce and remarriage. Women, people of color, immigrants, children and young people, and LGBTQ+ people are not treated equally. This drives them away from the church. These groups are hurt by the lack of listening on issues that concern them while they are just trying to "live a good life." Others feel disconnected when they don't understand what particular ministries involve and the time or skills needed to participate. People continue to wonder what it is that other churches offer that is drawing people away from the

Catholic Church. What does it mean to be a Catholic Christian today? Why does it matter? Why should I continue to be Catholic?

A small number of participants feel disconnected from Liturgy since Vatican II. However, even updated forms of Liturgy and related ministries, are to many others still too rigid, monotonous, and without joy. They are hesitant to come forward to help, because there is the perception that they won't fit in with those already "running things." When people do come forward and try to do new things, they are often disappointed by the lack of response from those who said they wanted such activities in the parish. There is a lack of information about roles of parish staff and volunteers, who is paid and who is not; e.g., cantors at Sunday liturgies are members of the choir and not paid for their service. The lack of unity among Bishops and lack of fidelity to the Pope causes division in the Church.

Many adults feel disconnected from young people, don't know what would draw them to the church, and see the future of the church as bleak without them. Music, while viewed as excellent by most adults in the parish, may not appeal to youth and other cultural groups. COVID took people from in-person gathering, and those returning to church regret that many feel comfortable with watching Mass on their computers at home. While broadcasting Mass was found to be helpful during COVID shut-downs, people said it is not an adequate replacement for in-person liturgy and "Communion." Continuing to rely on this further disconnects people who could be physically present but don't feel the need to return.

People also expressed concern that the Church is not making an effort to engage in environmental protection and green living initiatives, although they do say everyone else should do their best in their own lives and homes to protect creation. Parishes should get involved in green initiatives when planning facilities and events, so their organizational priorities align with what they preach about the need to care for the environment to their parishioners.

Discrimination is a significant reason people feel disconnected from the Church. People in positions of power often do not listen to or acknowledge how people are hurt by their actions, inaction, biases, and attitudes. The disabled, youth, those without homes, the poor, the divorced, and the LGBTQ+ Catholics often feel unwelcome. Many women feel excluded from full participation in the Church. One said that her first experience of discrimination in her life came from the church when she was 10 years old and was told she could not be an altar server. She has continued to serve the Church throughout her life but continues to be denied full access to its Sacraments. Hope springs eternal since Pope Francis officially opened the ministry of Acolyte—a step on the way to ordination—to all the laity. Perhaps the opening of ordained ministry will follow one day.

Question 2: What might the Church learn from your experiences?

Parishioners have a deep love and profound hope for their Church. They love the Catholic faith and its tradition and rituals and hope for a more inclusive and welcoming Church of the future that will meet their 21st century needs. As one person said, "My biggest hope for the church is that we can grow and bring the goodness of our faith to more people." Another person said, "While God's wisdom is timeless and universal, I don't feel like the Church hierarchy is looking at what today's families need to nourish their relationship with God."

People recognize that the Church is suffering from a lack of ordained priests. Responses to this difficulty were almost unanimous: ordain women as priests and deacons and allow priests to marry. Parishioners want clergy relieved of management responsibilities that lay people can handle such as finance, maintenance, etc. so that pastors can attend to their primary responsibility, that of being a good shepherd. With respect to lay ministry, people felt that the Church should honor and respect lay ministry, that it was a calling in and of itself and should be recognized as such. It was felt that the word “volunteer” demeaned the gifts that lay ministers give the church.

Parishioners want to be welcoming. “God is inspiring more unity, tolerance, unity among Christians, not just Catholics.”

In particular, people mourn the absence of young people and families at mass. They deeply wish to pass on their faith to young people and worry about why young people and families do not attend church. They also wonder what we can do to bring people back and welcome everyone.

People really enjoyed the Synod listening session process and suggest that this model be used in a continuing fashion going forward. The Church needs the voices of all, the “sensus fidae,” to form its future. Practicing synodality allows and encourages people to participate and learn what the needs of the Church and Christ the King and its parishioners are so we can journey together living the mission of Jesus.

Question 3: What actions can be taken?

By You:

The two words used most often when answering this question were “involvement” and “welcome.” Our parishioners have a deep commitment to being involved in their church and welcoming new members and different cultures. They also have a deep yearning that the universal church mirror this welcoming spirit. Individuals said again and again that what they could offer to their parish was prayer, to get involved or volunteer, and to welcome others. These desired actions went the other way too: people hoped that others – including the church – would join them in welcome and action: “The Holy Spirit may be asking me to renew my faith, but I am asking the Church to do better. Do better for women and gay people. Please evolve with us.”

By the Parish:

Parishioners particularly love Christ the King Parish. Similar to ideas presented under “by you,” parishioners want a church that is welcoming and a community that is involved. People want to have regular group meetings with the pastor and continuing synodal listening sessions with clergy and laity together.

Christ the King gives many gifts to its parishioners: a fruitful sacramental life, solace when life is difficult, the beauty of the church building and grounds, a welcoming community, good liturgy and music, and many ministries where they can serve. Particular challenges noted for this local parish are: inadequate/dysfunctional sound system, insufficient faith formation, need for knowledge and assistance with annulment and ministry to divorced Catholics, and the need for a Welcome Ministry that goes beyond just greeting and introductions for new parishioners.

It was repeatedly suggested that the sound system be adjusted or upgraded so that people can hear homilists when they leave the ambo to move about while preaching. It was also repeatedly suggested that lectors receive training in articulation, pacing, and voice projection, and how to use the microphone properly so they can be heard. Having someone who is skilled operating the sound board during Mass would also help a great deal since the musician can't play and attend to the board simultaneously.

Parishioners suggest that faith formation be revamped to be intergenerational. They suggest that youth and children be given responsibilities around the church and in liturgy to get them involved and committed. It was suggested that faith formation include more social time for families. For example, rather than parents dropping their children off for an hour, that parents and families be offered opportunities to socialize with each other during the time their children are in class: simply a few chairs in an empty classroom so people can talk to each other, maybe provide light refreshments, or offer parents the opportunity to create a small faith sharing group or Bible study group.

Adult faith formation was also a hot topic. People said that they would like to know more about why we do what we do. Several people said that, even though they grew up in Catholic schools, that was years ago, and if they had known the answers to some questions of faith then, they didn't remember the answers now and some things have changed, especially since Vatican II and publication of the new Catechism. People deeply mourn cradle Catholics who have left the faith or their children or family members who no longer attend. They would like to have cogent answers when people accost them about why they remain in the church. They would like “to become more

educated in our faith so we can better speak and teach the truth to others.” They believe you can’t love and teach others what you don’t know yourself. Also, there should be more cooperation and planning between parish programs to better address needs and achieve goals.

The process of Annulment, divorce, and remarriage are subjects that cause many Catholics special pain. People are sad and angry that the Church doesn’t recognize the reality of their lives. More and more people have suffered through divorce and should not be turned away from the sacraments because of it. Annulment is perceived as emotionally traumatic with many difficult hoops to jump through and often considered to be too expensive. People are also asking for consistency on these subjects. Everyone has a story of themselves or a loved one who got conflicting information or direction depending which priest they talked to. The whole process is rarely mentioned from the pulpit or discussed openly. It seems to be cloaked not in privacy, but in secrecy.

Again, “welcome” was a major theme in these listening sessions. People do believe that Christ the King is welcoming but would like to go further. Multiple times it was suggested that CTK initiate a Welcome Ministry to welcome new parishioners and reach out to parishioners of different cultures and look for ways to welcome LGBTQ+ people. A specific suggestion was to initiate International Potluck dinners so parishioners of different cultures could meet each other and create community. We could also plan programs about saints from newcomers’ countries so we can learn more of their history and culture.

Other recommendations for what the parish can do include: obtaining the services of a social worker to assist families or youth in crisis, provide social and liturgical opportunities for youth, collaborate with/merge/coordinate ministries with St. Thomas and St. Matthew’s to offer educational, social, and service programs and events to build and broaden our faith and our communities. We should organize more retreats and missions, and reach out to persons with disabilities to ask what they need in order to participate more fully.

People remembered growing up in a time when the church was the center of social life. They wonder if parts of that model could be revived to enliven the church today and, particularly, make church a fun, joyful place for everyone to gather.

“[We] need [to be] so much more educated about our faith. Focusing for so many years on teaching children only about the love of God has left them with no reason to choose the Catholic Church over any other. We desperately need teaching and understanding in ecclesiology, theology, ethics, philosophy, Christology (The whys of what we do.) There has to be a knowledge base that distinguishes the Roman Catholic Church. We have to know what and who we are if we are to invite anyone else to join us.”

By the Diocese:

Parishioners are deeply disappointed in the Diocese and the Church as a whole on at least four topics: the clergy sexual abuse scandal and its cover up, how the St. Clare’s Hospital pension fund was mishandled, how finances are disclosed to the people, and who gets to be ordained.

Regarding clergy sexual abuse, people continue to be enraged and discussion of this topic was clearly something people were compelled to talk about and still have deep feelings about. Repeatedly people said things like: It was bad enough that individual priests behaved in such a reprehensible way, but the Church’s cover up of the sexual abuse and, in particular, the Albany Diocese’s cover up, continues to be deeply disappointing. Repeatedly, people said they did not want

their Diocesan Appeal monies to be spent on lawyers to defend predators and a church whose own behavior is indefensible.

“Transparency” is a word that came up over and over again. People are asking for more specific information and details about how the Diocese spends money, not simply pie charts that show only major categories and percentages. Financial reporting is required by Canon Law and should not be neglected or obfuscated.

People hope that the Diocese will initiate programs and events that will enliven the Church Community. It should be easier to learn about opportunities for retreats, days of reflection and faith formation programs within the diocese. Parish bulletins can't cover all that is available and print materials like the Evangelist don't reach a very wide audience. We need to have section on the diocesan web site, Facebook, and other social media that that publicizes events throughout the Diocese in a timely way, a section specifically dedicated to youth activities, and links to accurate educational and social service resources that people can easily access. People also said to “modernize the Evangelist,” bring back Spring Enrichment, ordain all who are called, including women and married men, expand the ministry of deacons to allow anointing of the sick, make more use/better use of women as Parish Life Directors, establish Best Practices among various parishes and share these practices with all parishes. Ensure that information sent to parishes actually gets to the parishioners/post all of it on the web site. People would like for the Diocese to be more welcoming and to support the work and gifts of lay people. This includes making tangible efforts to encourage pastors to reorganize parish administration to better use the work and gifts of the laity.

Regarding the universal Church, a refrain that came up multiple times was: “We don't really believe that the Church wants to hear what we think or that anything we say will even make it to the Pope.” This was the most frequently cited reason parishioners told organizers they would not participate in the Synod process.

Question 4: What would you like Pope Francis to know?

The most common response to this question was to tell the Pope that we are praying for him, for his health and longevity. The Pope is “a leader full of joy and love” and his “humility has been a welcome change.” It has been a long time since Vatican II, and hope rises again.

People ask that the Pope “Get control of the bishops.” The Pope's leadership should be valued. The ability of the faithful, both clergy and lay, to be a living Church can easily be thwarted by bishops and clergy who want to preserve their own authority, and the traditions and policies with which they are comfortable. The resulting attitudes of clericalism, legalism, privilege, and conservatism that can prevail in dioceses and seminaries under such leaders are divisive and counter to the Jesus' mission.

People repeatedly ask the Pope to “usher in an inclusive church where are all are welcome at Jesus' table.” In particular, people ask that the Pope “open ordination to all who have been called” and to welcome LGBTQ+ people. “People need to feel the LOVE of Jesus, not to be rejected and hurt.” Jesus came to do away with the old law and begin to live God's law of love, to be God's presence in the world, to act as God acts towards us.

We sincerely thank Pope Francis for initiating this new kind of Synod and trusting that the Holy Spirit will work in lay people, too, and that discernment will make a difference for the better in the Church. We thank him for bringing the love and teachings of Jesus to us, thank him for his attempts to stop

corruption in the Church, and thank him for reaching out to other faiths. Please tell the Pope: “Those of us in the pews are listening to him even if the hierarchy is not.”

**Church of Christ the King Synod Listening Sessions
May 22, May 23, and May 26, 2022**

Demographic Information*

Total participants (all modes):	260
Total participants (in-person and zoom sessions):	171
Total participants (in-person):	89

Age range/# of in-person participants:

Age 14 and below:	10
Age 14-17:	15
Age 40-55:	11
Age 56-74:	39
Age 75+:	14

Who attended in-person sessions:

Male: 21 Female: 68

Frequency of Mass Attendance (in-person participants):

Daily: Approximately 15
Weekly: Unknown, but likely most of the group.

Groups represented:

Youth and Young Adult
Single
Married
Remarried
Religious/clergy
Divorced
Widowed
Blind
Hearing Impaired

Race/Ethnicity/Other:

Caucasian
Middle Eastern or North African
Latina

* All demographic data are estimates based on personal observation only. Participants were not asked to self-identify. All participation was anonymous.