



Saint Gregory the Great's Synod Participation: An Overview Summary

The parish of Saint Gregory the Great is participating in the worldwide Catholic Synod, where Pope Francis is calling on all members of the faith to fully participate in the mission and reinvigoration of the Church.

Having discussed and announced the effort and process, which was open and available to the entire parish, a gathering of 112 parishioners took the time to register and meet March 16, 2022. An additional five parishioners also submitted written comments. Following a listening process, everyone shared their experiences of **disappointments** and **joys** with the Church, then shared their **hopes** for the Church.

The sharing took place in 14 circles consisting of eight to nine participants with a facilitator and note-taker in each circle. Afterwards the facilitator and note-taker developed a summary of all the shared thoughts.

All of the comments of the 117 participants along with the summary notes have been sent to the Diocese for review and processing. Ours will be combined with those received from parishes and special outreach groups throughout the Diocese. Summary comments will then be combined with dioceses throughout the United States. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) will create and forward a final document to the Chair of Pope Francis, to be combined with comments from around the world. The Vatican will consolidate all comments into a final document expected to be completed in late 2023.

On the parish level, St. Gregory's has chosen to consolidate all its summary notes into one document, presenting a list of the most frequently expressed comments (in order of frequency). While heard, comments mentioned only once are not included in this Overview Summary. The following comments, compiled by a team of six parishioners selected by Father Nick, will be used by our parish only.

Experiences of Disappointment with the Church



Perceived Lack of Leadership

Perceived lack of leadership, centering on sexual abuse claims, financial improprieties in the universal church, difficulties in making the Church relevant in our modern age and speaking out boldly on protecting the sanctity of life in all forms.

Sexual Abuse

The breadth and extent of the claims as well as homosexuality with some priests. Deeply felt and difficult to acknowledge.

Failure to Attract Young People

The failure to discern how best to bring more young people back to the Church and to determine why these young people's faith was not stronger.

Lack of Inclusiveness

The perceived unwillingness of the Church to accept gay, LGBT and divorced Catholics when one of our core songs is *All Our Welcome*.

Unwillingness to Expand the Priesthood

The great reduction in vocations in our diocese; we cannot "grow" new priests fast enough to replace those who will retire. Consider expanding the clergy to include married men and women to fulfil the mission of the Church.

Perceived Lack of Relevancy

Mass homilies at times are not relevant enough and applicable to our current lives.

Unclear Communication

Decisions and positions from Rome are sometimes not as clear as they need to be – so that it could be easily understood by all Catholics, as well as a lack of focus on social issues and attracting new individuals to become Catholics, as well as retain those who are already in the Church.

Experiences of Joy with the Church



Sense of Community at St. Gregory's

Very welcoming, supportive parish. There's a depth and warmth of community fostered through ministries and liturgy and the sharing of faith.

"Gathering plaza is a beautiful place for people to congregate. People are welcoming and loving."

Opportunities for Sacramental Preparation

Excellent opportunities to receive the sacraments: baptism, confirmation. RCIA and Easter Vigil services particularly noteworthy.

"So impressed with St. Gregory parish spiritual educators, deacons"

"Enjoy seeing RCIA; so many new members coming into the Church"

Abundance of Ministries

There are many **opportunities to participate** (e.g. outreach to the homebound, ministry of moms, bereavement services, marriage prep program, adoration, RCIA)

"There are so many ministries it's easy to find one where one feels at home, like family."

Response to Covid

Using the traditions of the Church to bring light to families during dark times (e.g. drive-thru blessings and streaming Masses.

"Pandemic streaming has brought joy to the handicapped because they can see and hear better than being in person."

"Joy from the intentionality of homilies inviting people back to in-person Mass."

Catholic School Education

Joy of seeing the students at Mass and seeing older kids lead them; well behaved. Formation program and sacramental preparation are plusses.

Ringling of the Bells

Brings back joyful memories. Demonstrates reverence during consecration.

Youth Ministry

Reinvigorating attitude of youth ministry.

"Young adults are kind and welcoming and have a beautiful ministry in our church."

Hopes for the Church



Youth and Young Adults

Meaningfully engage youth and young adults so they grow in their Catholic faith. Attract those who have drifted away from faith.

Inclusivity, Welcoming to All

Be more welcoming and inclusive, reaching out to those on the margins, including gays, divorced and those who have had an abortion.

Increase in Vocations

Inspire culturally diverse young adults to pursue the priesthood and religious life. Allow married priests and women priests.

Traditional Teachings

Reinforce the rich traditional teachings, sacraments (Eucharist true presence) and values of the Church. Expand adult education and apologetics.

Role of Women and Laity

Elevate the position of women in the Church/leadership, including becoming priests and deacons, and expand roles for the laity (e.g. parish administrative duties to lighten the overwhelming load on priests)

Church Leadership

Be open and transparent, even amid scandal or difficult issues.

Homily Enrichment

Help clergy develop and deliver more concise, fruitful, relevant homilies, connecting scripture to our everyday lives.

Increase Outreach / Social Justice

Double down on helping those in need, including the poor, homeless, imprisoned, sex-trafficking victims, crisis pregnancies.

Capitalize on Technology

Strengthen and expand spirit-filled evangelization efforts through technology and other forms of modern communication (e.g. social media), as exemplified by Bishop Robert Barron.

Evangelization

Encourage Catholics to be unabashedly proud of their faith and confident enough to share it with those outside the Church, those who have left the Church and those in the Church.

Overcome Divisions

Overcome divisions within the Church, reconciling between yearnings for more traditional values and calls to adapt to modern times.

Social Events

Provide more social events and activities for families.