

St. Vincent De Paul Albany, NY

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Synod Small Group Discussion Summary May 26th, 2022 at 4:30PM

Jeanne Qualters, Don Smith, Mary Oill, Steve Oill

1.) What have been your experiences of church? What have been your joys, hopes and disappointments? When have you felt connected? When have you felt disconnected?

Experiences of connectedness during mass include: when Sacraments are celebrated during Sunday mass; celebrating "in the round" where everyone can see each other; universality of the mass- even with differing languages that we are doing and saying the same things, the same rituals; community communal support.

Joys: asking new friends from church to pray for us about specific needs, and praying for church friends for their needs; inspirational homilies as opposed to "preaching" homilies;

Disappointments: announcements for people to not receive Eucharist unless they are in a state of (good) grace with the Roman Catholic Church, and if they are not Catholic (NOTE: this has not happened at St. Vincent's, but we still do not like this practice).

2.) What might the church learn from your experiences? What new dreams and surprising visions for the church might the Holy Spirit be inspiring?

We would like to see the Holy Spirit inspire us in the church welcome and allow woman priests, married priests/clergy/lay women (nuns). We want the church to welcome ALL people and openly acknowledge ALL people, such as people in the LGBTQ community, to the point of saying "We welcome you and we love you!" as opposed to adding a caveat such as "We welcome you but we do not agree with your lifestyle (aka "Love the sinner, hate the sin.") We want more priests, and perhaps another response to this would be for lay people to be priests, just as the Bible tells us. We believe the Eucharist is mysterious enough as it is in the Catholic faith. Perhaps we could celebrate the Eucharist together without a Priest being present, and still see this as a valid celebration. For example, isn't it true that when two or more of us are gathered, Jesus is with us? Why can we not then celebrate a valid Eucharist as members of the community? Jeanne brought up and we discussed the beauty of Agape- a post-Vatican II "Prayer for Eucharist" celebration in all its beauty and spirit. Mary said (and we agreed with her): "For new things to begin and grow, old things might have to die."

3.) What actions can you take? What actions should be taken by our parish or diocese?

Let's literally feed people daily. Don witnessed this at a church community in Hawaii. Let's feed people daily. Really listen to the faithful. Really listen to the people. Really listen to each other. Make our church and diocese a place of celebration and action that we truly would want to evangelize. We are the Church- we the people- let's really accept people: each other and those we don't yet know.

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