

St. Vincent DePaul, Albany NY

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Synod Listening Session

May 26, 2022

7 – 9 p.m.

Experiences of Church

- a. All church is local: where you are; each parish has its own customs
- b. Converted to Catholicism
 - a. Had many questions and had a good experience here
 - b. As life-long searcher, had looked at lots of churches
 - c. Prayed to St. Jude and prayer was answered but avoided the Catholic church on her mother's advice
 - d. Loved St. Vincent's as soon as she walked in the door; she felt welcome; experienced compassion and acceptance in a time of crisis
 - e. This parish is the way church should be.
- c. Grew up in another parish and went to a private, non-religious school; was scolded by nuns for being late for religious education class – threatened that she would be thrown out the window if she was late again. Mother stood up for her
 - a. Nonetheless, she found her self serving in ministry
 - b. Knew a woman who was divorced because her husband had been an adulterer; she was publicly shamed from the pulpit and was cast out of the church
 - c. Speaker was fired for reporting pedophilic behavior of priest
 - d. These experiences were hard but the good outweighed the bad
 - e. Critical / skeptical of the structure and clerical aspects
 - f. Came to St. Vincent's but it took a while to feel she belonged
 - g. Could not, in conscience participate in the Reigniting Our Faith Capital Campaign, mad a donation to the church building maintenance fund
 - h. Appalled at the pension failure for St. Clare's Hospital employees.
- d. Grew up in Buffalo; attended Catholic schools, taught by Franciscan nuns who were kinder than the lay teachers
 - a. Nuns in high school were liberal and speaker felt comfortable with their positions; introduced social justice teachings which were inspiring
 - b. Taught by Jesuit priests in college; loved their approach to theology; learned about other religions. They were very accepting
 - c. Except: her Mom had returned to college at the same school and one priest told speaker that her mother didn't belong there
 - d. Speaker taught at various Catholic high schools
 - e. Many things she doesn't agree with; sexual abuse by priests is hard to accept
 - f. Bottom line is to follow her conscience
 - g. The authoritarian stories would make it hard for her to stay
- e. Church that is local vs. hierarchy

- a. Went to Catholic high school; inspired by teachers wanted to teach high school; faculty were diocesan priests, therefore became a priest
- b. Went to the seminary in Baltimore, in an all Black neighborhood: culture shock; faculty and students were involved in the neighborhood life
- c. After assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. (1968) the seminarians decided to stay even though there was the possibility of danger; riots broke out
- d. Insight: wanted to work for reconciliation, especially in the inner city rather than teach high school
- e. Working in inner city churches was good; it was alive, very satisfying
- f. Worked in Niskayuna; issues of human suffering were the same but the poor were more honest in revealing their struggles; appreciates parish life where people are honest about their pain
- g. Aware of racism and ignorance of the clergy

Diana's input?

What might the Church learn from your experiences?

- Focus more on Jesus and less on the structure
- Engage more with the Holy Spirit who dwells within – this is who motivates and strengthens us for service
- Rome needs to stop prancing around in “dresses;” avoid petty rule making; be real about life
- Avoid embarrassing the people of God who keep the church alive
- We need simplification, more openness to diverse people especially with regard to gender identification
- Living among diverse people leads one to understand that this is “normal.”
- Let priests get married
- Let women be priests – why can't we discuss this?
- Be honest; don't keep covering up
- Why can't women be deacons?

What actions can individual, parish diocese take?

People feel our parish is on the right track

There are good things about Catholicism: sense of mysticism

Church prepares us for something bigger

Art and music in liturgy remind us of mysticism