

## Answers for the synod report to the Diocese of Ottawa-Cornwall from Holy Spirit Parish in Stittsville

These texts will be inserted into the on-line report template provided by the Archdiocese, for the deadline of May 6, 2022.

### Data:

Our Parish team invited all parishioners to take part, personally inviting many (schools, non-practicing, youth, older parishioners). A total of 39 were active participants, 26 of these are part of a parish group (CWL or Knights). Most are older. Four Catholic youth, outside of our schools, and 2 non-practicing Catholics, are our periphery respondents (6 of 39). Three times more women chose to take part than men (30:9). Most parish events were by zoom, with one in-person group event. All parish events began with prayer to the Holy Spirit, who helped us discern throughout. The chaplain at Sacred Heart high school (400 students) and the Sacramental coordinator for the parish (38 students) asked students to take part, for a total of 438 students, not all of whom go to Catholic schools or are Catholic. About half are females, half males. Most were in-person group events, with two parish sacramental zoom events. The total of all our respondents is 39 + 438= 477 people.

### Question 1: In your Group's discussion, which points of view seem to be held in common on the experiences of the Church? Include other points of view were mentioned less but are noteworthy?

**1. Joy** in: **real** faith in Jesus and love for the Church he began (Sacraments, mass, Eucharistic presence, beauty, peace, hope, reflection, sacred truth, happy childhood memories); being personally involved in a parish; having an approachable pastor, especially for youth; having a parish well "embedded" in greater community; universal liturgy of our mass; Church's many charitable works worldwide **2. Great pain**, anger, shame based on: current failings of the Church and the need to humbly address these in **relevant** and **responsive** ways; secrecy in the Church; the Church being "on the periphery" of the lives of youth; one woman's story: "The Church stole my childhood" **3. desire** for « **More** » personal spirituality in our Church: focus on growing a **real** relationship with Jesus (mystical experiences of God, deeper communion); more teaching (catechism, theology, Cursillo, mass itself); enriching music ministry; appropriate childhood pedagogy to teach the "religion", then adult pedagogy for believers to keep growing closer to Christ. **4. desire** for a **changed Church** which is: open to all, open-minded, listening, respectful, welcoming (especially to women who are over half the Church yet are absent in liturgy and leadership), less focused on rules, more on being like Jesus, and **re-ignited** in mutual respect between shepherds and flocks. The Church must live the Tradition (based on Jesus) and Scripture, while being **real, relevant, responsive** and **re-ignited** in today's world.

### Question 2: What did the participants have to say about areas where the Church is in need of healing and conversion?

There is sadness, pain from many wounds, "**stumbling blocks**": **1. Sins** of some in the Church in: Failing (sexual abuse, pedophilia, Residential school horrors) to at least protect parishioners rather than the Church itself, to humbly accept and atone. People need to see: sorrow (Are priests sad about the children?), confession (apology), restitution (pay the debt owed to Indigenous people now, with Church's own funds), and determination not to recommit (new actions). **2. Lack** of recognition of gifts and calls of women: near-absence of women in the Church in liturgical and decision-making roles, lack of respect for women in language (for example using "men" where "people" is what is meant, since women are not men), a Church preferentially biased to men, more burdensome on women, referencing women's bodies in negative ways (virginity or prostitution). **3. Is** the "Universal" Church really "universal"? Or is the Church a "monoculture of old, white men?" **4. The** Church is bureaucratic and rule-based, unlike Jesus. **5. Parish** experiences depend a lot on the pastor, from positive to negative, depending on his attitude and openness and willingness to work as a team with lay parishioners and deacons. **6. The** Church should ordain women as deacons, let priests marry if they wish, and ordain women to the priesthood, if so called **7. Church** should kindly and joyfully welcome back the "Prodigal" people who feel estranged from it, especially divorced Catholics.

**Question 3: Through listening to the dreams, desires, and aspirations for the Church expressed by participants and through discernment, in what way is the Holy Spirit guiding the Church to grow in synodality?**

Participants enjoyed the synodal process itself, listening and being heard. Let's continue to create a more synodal Church. Still founded on solid theological teachings, it is called to be: open to all the People of God, especially the divorced, returning, estranged, non-conforming Catholics; officially formed with both men and women, liturgically and in leadership, using inclusive welcoming language; actively engaged with youth who feel needed and respected; less "rules based"; better at communicating moral positions and their reasons compassionately (including in homilies, social media) and clearly, with marketing, messaging and language that is relevant, responsive, timely and tailored for Catholics, similarly for non-Catholics, who often form a negative image of Catholics as judgmental and rules-based; actively helping all, not only Catholics, to experience the Kingdom of God here, with an emphasis on compassion and social justice. Our Catholic Church is called to: listen to each other, be humble, be open-minded, be welcoming, evangelize through words and actions, encourage continual Church renewal based on love and respect for its own humanity and the humanity of others, be a place of joy, with a happy music ministry, be close to its parishioners, their needs and dreams. **Key words: Real** in faith, **Relevant** today, **Responsive** in messaging and helping and **Re-ignited** in relationships of humility, caring and compassion between shepherds and flocks.