



Synod Discernment Process St. Charles Church, Portland, OR March 2022



Pope Francis has embarked on a worldwide process to consult with all the faithful of the world, to journey with them just as Jesus did with the rich man who asked "what must I do to inherit eternal life? (Mark 10:17). He calls it Synod 2023. He wants to hear from us on the role of the church in our lives today. He invites us to "journey together" in faith. And the way to do that authentically is for the church to genuinely listen to the faithful – *that's us!*

The goal is simple: listen so that we all might discern the best ways of addressing the challenges we face in the world today and walk together toward healing and unity. At the insistence of Pope Francis, the Church is listening! *What would you like to say?*

More than 75 people associated with St. Charles Church reflected on and responded to these three questions:

1. How is God present in your life? In what ways does the church support, or fail to support, that presence? (*responses begin on page 2.*)
2. What experiences of the Catholic Church have brought you joy? What experiences of have wounded you? (*responses begin on page 8.*)
3. What is the single most important step the Church should take in the next five years? (*responses begin on page 17.*)

Some people submitted their responses individually and directly to the parish. Others participated in one of several table conversations that occurred over several weekends in March, 2022. Table conversations were conducted in English, Spanish, and Chuukese.

Below is a compilation of *all responses received* verbatim (as of March 22, 2022). The comments have been organized and grouped according to broad categories to make for easier reading.

We are grateful for the opportunity to be heard by the Church beyond the scope of our little parish.

Questions about this report? Contact Leif Kehrwald, Pastoral Coordinator, lkehrwald@stcharlespdx.org, 503-351-9889.

Question #1
How is God present in your life?
In what ways does the church support,
or fail to support, that presence?

God's Presence

1. God gives me a desire to live out my purpose and find joy and happiness in doing so. God listens to my prayers and gives me wisdom when I most need it. God speaks to me through the scriptures and gives me hope.
2. God is present to me in all my fellow parishioners. They lift me up, support me in bad times and good.
3. I feel God is present in my life. As a gay man, I realized I am what I am because that's how God made me. At St. Charles the people always support me. Affirmation is akin to God in my life.
4. God is present through us, the people of God; the mystical body of Christ (Augustine). For a long time, the people of God, the faithful, was very, very important. In this small group discussion, I feel that very strongly. When I'm in Mass I feel more like a spectator.
5. God is present in my life in a multitude of ways - in people, in nature, in the unseen, in our history. I feel like a leaf on God's vast cosmic tree, connected to the immense family of all God's works. The church supports a vital nurturing connection to God in her members, wisdom, teaching, service, sacraments and example.
6. In everyone, family, nature, everyone children of God. God within me, helps to fulfill helping others. St. Charles is accepting.
7. Present – Family is life
8. When we gather together whether in small group, social, etc
9. Fellow parishioners, love and support from them is God's love to us.
10. He blesses me and my family with many things and helps us in work and school
11. That he blessed me and my family because two years ago we couldn't afford any gifts but then we were blessed with gifts on Christmas Eve. Every time we pray, God gives us a blessing because we always pray, believe and embrace God.
12. In God's words everything already supported and gives what I need.

13. Through prayer and people
14. God has always been a presence in my life to support, teach and guide me
15. Daily present in everything around me, nature, people. Church supports me by providing liturgy, place to worship, sense of community.
16. In the natural world, everyone. Community in this parish. Looking forward to Sunday.
17. He is present in my fellow parishioners who give me love and support all the time and that is love from God
18. It is necessary to give the “sheep” their proper role, which is essential and not secondary. God is present in my life (especially) when I am in the “Mystical Body of Christ”, as Augustine expressed it.
19. In my life, God is represented by my family when we pray together. The church helps support this presence by the reading each Sunday.
20. Through the people in my life, through nature, through community.
21. Nature and through people. When I pray. Sometimes in church. The community of believers surround me.
22. I find God’s presence:
 - In family .
 - Mass revitalizes my faith in humanity.
 - In the support of the parish community, a shared purpose.
 - My waking moments are a reminder to believe in God.
 - The family of St. Charles Parish. In certain people.
 - Reading scripture.
 - Helping others.
23. God is present in my life in every aspect that I can imagine inspiring me to live a healthy life physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. My church is an important institution that allows our community to regularly gather to worship in appreciation of the love bestowed upon us, giving us hope and perspective in order to survive and thrive.
24. I see God’s presence in my family and the people of St. Charles. Sunday Mass revitalizes my faith and my faith in humanity. The church seems to fail for the younger generations and so my children and grandchildren are not benefitting from the church or at least this brand of church.

25. Present in the way I live, how I treat others. The parish of St. Charles shows how I can live out the words of Jesus as it follows Vatican II council directives. Including all people regardless of culture or natural background or language. The feeling of the presence of God. Inclusion of men and women.
26. God is always in every waking moment through the good people of St. Charles, neighbors. Offers many opportunities to learn more & study the Bible.
27. God is everywhere – He guides me and has blessed me in so many ways. He is part of my being. My church makes me a better person. It is good and just. It offers safety, it is my rock. It makes me strong. It allows me to help others. I have opportunities to grow spiritually. The bible is so open to various interpretations. The ten commandments are cast in stone...That's about it in my world.
28. God is present in my prayers, beliefs, and traditions. Also, in my understanding of how to be a good person. I learn through God not just how rituals can be important but basic things of how to love one another, how we can see God in each other, and how to support each other in all of our walks.
29. God is always present in my life. Sometimes I ask him for help when I am faced with a difficult decision to make. Sometimes I ask him for help in understanding life situations or outcomes. Sometimes I ask him to help others who are in need. Sometimes I pray for the souls of any of God's creatures who have died.

Church Support

30. The church offers a prayerful environment to hear the good news, connect with God, and to be supported by a community of believers.
31. The church makes time and space for anyone seeking reconciliation. A priest is available to listen and grant absolution.
32. The church is doing some things right. At my retirement home: rosary, adoration, mass, confession are all available. Counseling is also available. The church is not all that bad. Some of us residents are in charge of these things.
33. God is always present in my life. God is the One who helps me every day. The church supports us with our faith, along with believing in God even more, and getting closer to Him.
34. God is present all the time, because He takes care of, protects and guides us, with every second of our lives. The church is supportive by listening to our needs.
35. So Welcoming

36. Many Ethnicities represented
37. Having had the blessing of several good priests, we continue to need liberal caring leadership.
38. Music = praying twice (said my 4th grade choir teacher)
39. People that mutually care. St Charles liturgy, community, lay involvement
40. Hearing God's word, this meets our needs.
41. My small parish always welcomes me and others, no matter what, just as Jesus did.
42. Support through liturgy and social gatherings
43. Catholic radio 88.3
44. Our parish church has helped me to understand how to listen to Jesus when and how to listen. Pray, prayer and show Jesus' love to those I love and to live – not always easy
45. Having a welcoming community to pray with. Feeling God is surrounding me in church, this particular church. Having multicultural people actively participating. Having multicultural languages. This is the first church in a while I feel I have been heard and the priest is amazing.
46. I feel God's presence in nature and through people. I also feel God when I pray and sometimes while I'm in church. The church supports God's presence by the work it encourages around social justice. Also I feel God's presence in the community of believers that surround me when I'm there.
47. My church (St. Charles) supports me. Surrounded by my faith community. Taken for whom I am. The church is my community.
48. I experienced such welcome at St Charles. It's been that way for me all along. That's why I have been so active.
49. I had never been in a church that did things. This has been wonderful. I love the diversity. St. Charles accepts everybody.
50. I have been blessed to see that our loving God is and always has been present to me through the love, friendship and support of my family, the St. Charles community and the years of deep reflection on the Sunday homilies and the holy men and women who have been brave enough to share their stories of struggle, love and redemption. The Church has failed to

support and maintain quality, meaningful and age appropriate Faith development programs for the children and youth at the parish level. Programs available through the Catholic School system leave out those Catholic kids who are outside the system, but are still part of the Body of Christ.

51. As promise and reminder to believe in goodness and love. Struggle to describe church support/St Charles church as feel out of synch with aspects of universal church and quite in synch with practices of St. Charles.
52. I enjoy attending the Saturday late afternoon Mass at St. Charles because it is intimate and meditative. I like the openness of discussion, challenges to our understanding of spiritual matters, and new ways of thinking about them.

Fail to Support

53. I don't feel supported by the hierarchy of the church. They only say what they feel you need to know. They have no respect for the women of the church. They don't feel that the laity can have insight to the gospel because only the priest is qualified to speak on the gospel, I do not agree with this and I don't think God wants it to be that way!
54. Eucharist and Mass. Priest shortage is a problem. Foreign priests are very difficult to understand.
55. Is the church accepting openly the gay community? It needs to be defined.
56. Full participation in the life of the community. Give more importance to all the faithful.
57. I had to leave the church to find spirituality. The church only offered rules that are outside of someone. There is nothing that teaches you how to be spiritual, how to improve, how to grow, how to love. They just keep saying do it do it do it. And bad bad bad.
58. Restrictions: women, laity
59. Fail – "Sheep" need to be part of decisions and rules of church. Clergy hierarchy because too detached from at the people
60. Stray from Mystic in US church more in head.
61. Lost traditional evolved more toward the more social concerns.
62. Vatican II very necessary but it did not continue...Popes.
63. Need to know how to go to the original church, need the light of the original church.

64. God is present to me in the people and in nature. The church supports people but not nature, and the support of people is limited to the church's traditional membership, to the exclusion of the LGBTQ community. I am also personally challenged to relate to large groups of people, and the church does not provide enough ways for me to relate to a smaller number at a time. Our local church does not have the interest or capacity to support smaller learning or sharing groups.
65. Catholic church should speak with one voice, for example, cardinals, bishops and especially German Hierarchy (very liberal group) differing with each other and Pope from national press and podium.
66. 2-3 together among people we are all the same with God. No separation between church divisions, priests and laity.
67. Failure to support, lacking opportunities in classes for faithful to study and learn.
68. Our connections should be more ecumenical, we need to connect with other non-Catholic religions.
69. The Roman Catholic Church has failed me in not ordaining women as priests.
70. When I was a child, the church was magical for me. I loved the rituals and looked forward to receiving the sacraments. As I got older, I began to question some of the catechism teachings. The church was still teaching the same things, so there began to be a gap between what I believed and what the church taught.

Question #2

What experiences of the Catholic Church have brought you joy? What experiences of have wounded you?

Joy

1. Worshipping each Sunday with a community of believers.
2. Having the opportunity to share my faith and prepare young children for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.
3. Being a witness to a baptism during Mass.
4. Working as a community to help the needy.
5. Having a priest involved in the community and sharing insightful homilies.
6. I am a Catholic convert and I feel like I had found a home. The people I have grown to love and feel supported by are always there. When my husband and then my youngest son passed away the support I had was amazing and made a tough thing bearable.
7. The church isn't just the hierarchy . . . it is the people. I don't have to agree with everything the hierarchy says. I'm in "geezerdome", I'll say what I need to say.
8. Have to go back more to the original idea of the Gospel. Jesus had strong opinions, but he allowed a great deal of exchange.
9. The experiences of community, on a local and universal level bring me joy. The former at a warm personal level, the latter in knowing that anywhere I go, I can worship with my Catholic brothers and sisters. I'm a little thrilled to ponder how the church lives in every corner of the globe. I've also felt joy via the sacraments of Matrimony and in the Baptism of my children. I've not experienced any wounding by the church.
10. I feel joy, because the church has always listened to my needs.
11. I don't feel as though the church has hurt me in any way.
12. Joy – Being asked to be a sponsor
13. Music, being in singing group
14. Having a priest who worked with the community
15. Sense of morality, caring for others

16. Joy – Able to forgive people
17. Helping each other
18. Joy – Coming here to this church brings me great joy. Priest, people, loving melody (sound of God’s words). St Charles is the joy in my life.
19. Being a server has also brought me joy. I enjoyed the old gym parties, my First Communion. My uncle’s funeral in the church has wounded me and my family.
20. The parties we had in the old gym that helped celebrate different cultures holidays/events.
21. Ash Wednesday, because of the story about it.
22. Serving for God, my family helping out the church, and my brother was a youth member.
23. The words of God, the melody of God’s words.
24. Joy – Catechumenate, Proclaiming the Word
25. Joy – Mass and knowing parishioners
26. For me, ritual has been so important. Our parish has kept ritual up front and positive for me. Being Eucharistic Minister, the welcoming feeling in our church, being on the RCIA-RCIC team, love our music.
27. A priest who respected all people, women, especially other cultures, not first white people.
28. Joy in having a priest to work with the parish and community.
29. In previous parish very upbeat, people connected person able to draw in teens and new Catholics. Was able to look at being a Catholic in a totally different way. Bring two friends into church.
30. Joy – Able to forgive
31. Attending Mass and Catholic activities in my original town of San Luis, Pinar del Rio, Cuba. We had a wonderful parish priest.
32. The Catholic Church has supported me with my faith and becoming close with my peers at church.
33. Being part of a community. At mass, I am reminded that for all of my faults, and there are many, God loves me and walks with me.

34. Priest from my childhood was a wonderful man.
35. My Lasallian education was also very formative for me.
36. The 1950s fortress mentality has largely disappeared. We can see a lot common good in other churches.
37. Rituals and traditions = joy.
38. Small group = joy.
39. St. Charles has brought me joy. Raised in a conservative parish living the letter of the law not spirit. Found something different at St. Charles, and felt completely accepted.
40. St. Charles has been a lifesaver and a soul saver for me.
41. The Church brings me joy:
 - When I am asked to be involved.
 - Gives me a way to serve others. When I
 - see acts of love.
 - When I have conversations and opportunities that help me to learn about God, faith.
 - Being part of The St. Charles Community.
42. It's hard to relate to the question of joy. At best the church can make me feel at home (comfort, not joy). Joy might be occasional, such as in a Christmas play or honoring mothers on mother's day. I just don't associate joy with the Catholic church.
43. My participation in the music liturgy group of St Charles Borromeo Catholic Church has brought me much joy as an instrumentalist playing upright bass in addition to using my interest and expertise in electronics to support my fellow musicians.
44. My brief experience in the Pastoral Council was not a good fit, although I do not view this as a wound, since I was graciously allowed to resign.
45. Vocations to priesthood and consecrated life should be real options.
46. In addition to cardinals, bishops, priests, Catholic Schools, all Catholic moms and dads and family members should encourage, guide protect their boys and girls who show signs of a religious vocation today more than ever.
47. Connecting with community, hearing different views, experiences in life that feed us. Opportunities to see things differently. Community members can and do expand our faith.

48. Celebrating the sacraments in the church bring me joy. Seeing the little ones baptized and my own experience like matrimony.
49. My wedding, the baptism of my children, receiving of the sacraments. The more “liberal” view as we follow Vatican II directions. Mass in English, inclusion of women in the Mass and on councils.
50. Supportive community with a shared purpose, quest for growth and previous forums, SVDP, community outreach.
51. Ability to help others.
52. Joy – Watching baptism and being baptized, watching First Communion and receiving Communion. Seeing new Confirmations and remembering my own Confirmation. I feel accepted at St Charles even though my background is so different.
53. Joy includes Christmas, special music, sacraments, community, outreach
54. As a young adult, “the church” was pretty much separate from my notion of “God”. My God was everywhere, in everything. He was all-loving, not punitive. My God still is those qualities. The church, then, was a place where I went once a week to hear a priest say Mass. That was a habit I kept, but it meant little to me, emotionally. I found much love and joy in my everyday life – the people, my home, my job. I was appalled as the sins of “The Church” became public. I felt blessed not to have experienced them.
55. Joy – Finding a Catholic church in Portland where all people are accepted. Participating in Mass, church celebrations and events, and even funerals. People coming together to support one another in good and bad times. Reaching out to the larger community, our neighbors and trying to be one with them.

Wounded

56. The major thing that has wounded me is the sexual abuse that has happened in the Catholic Church and the years of denial and cover up. It was wrong to cover up such crimes. No one who commits such abusive crimes should be held above the law.
57. I am discouraged by the recent changes about the type of music allowed during Mass, the extra kneeling after the Lamb of God, the changes in the wording of the Creed and some prayers, and the restriction of who can give a reflection on the word. The emphasis from the Archbishop seems to be more focus and importance on rules and regulations than on supporting Catholics in building a trusting relationship with God and spreading the Good News. I do not feel welcome and accepted in the Catholic Church. I feel anxious and afraid of doing something wrong and being judged. At one Catholic Church, I had a priest refuse to

give me communion because I did not remove my mask while I was face to face with the priest. I feel more safe removing my mask when I step aside and maintain distance from others.

58. I felt wounded by the sex abuse scandal! I saw the powers to be cover everything up. They knew who these men were and instead of letting them be arrested they moved them to another parish to repeat their crimes on new victims. I think they are still doing this.

59. Greatly wounded over the child abuse issue. We've had to deal with this for 20-25 years. Bishops have failed in their leadership, more interested in protecting themselves. Admire Archbishop Vlazny being one of the first to offer restitution.

60. I cannot say that the church has brought me any joy at all. My brother was molested and raped by two priests and my foster brother was in a catholic orphanage and was badly damaged there. As a child I kept looking for that connection to God, I expected it in first communion, I expected it in Confirmation. Nothing. The only thing I got from the church was to learn how to be angry through the angry catholic people in my family and the guilt for being human. The original meaning of the word sin was mistake. The only reason for making mistakes is to learn how not to make them. You cannot be human and not make mistakes. The cruelty shown and the judgments made around children especially are just unforgivable. I have worked my whole life as an adult to cut loose of the guilt and to work through the anger so that I don't continue to pass it on to my children and my grandchildren. We went to church every day and said the rosary every night as children. I cannot say it brought me closer to God, I would say it took me further away.

61. Mother wounded, (convert, study, priest re: children)

62. Early Catholic Ed – “good Girl” – restrictive

63. Wounded - exclusions of LGBTQ, pro choice peoples

64. Putting forth negative images

65. Exclusions of women in ordained priesthood

66. Judging of others

67. Changes not made when necessary

68. Wounded – Sex abuse scandal, sin and cover up.

69. Parishioners not heard/not included

70. As younger man, felt isolated after divorce/annulment. Too family oriented, felt like an outsider.
71. Where are the people? The middle aged group?
72. Sorrow – Exclusion from Communion for outdated un-Christian reasons.
73. Wounded – As a younger man after annulment of my marriage, I felt alone and no support as a single man. This kept me from being part of a parish
74. Also the sex abuse scandal
75. Wounded – not listening to my needs or parish needs. Priests who are rigid, not wanting to change
76. New priest – didn't respect parishioners, especially women, his way or highway – no sense of community. Also Archbishop not respecting women's role
77. Wounded – Judging, abortion
78. Excludes women's issues
79. The people and some of the priests. The sex abuse scandal wounded all of us. When we heard that these priests who abused children were just moved to another parish to continue their abuse with new victims. I was tempted to leave this church which I love.
80. My De La Salle education/Formation. On the negative side: my mother's inquisitorial approach to Catholicism.
81. Abuse of our children is a wound I don't know will ever heal. Yes, priests are people and imperfect as we all are but the sexual abuse of our children is the most heinous of acts a person can commit. The cover-up and the lying by the church are to me unforgivable. Maybe someday but there is a long way to go.
82. Some of the rituals and traditions that are life giving have brought me joy. My small church community has been a very joyful part of my life. What has wounded me is losing trust in the church by the sex scandal and also realizing that much of what is taught in the church has come from old white men at the top of the hierarchy of the church. Many of the teachings seem contrary to what Jesus's words were and the basic premise "to love one another". Many of the rules and laws of the church seem to only benefit those at the top and keep them in power. The church does do a lot of good in the world but it also fails when it loses site of Jesus's message. Our local Archbishop Sample is a good example of the church failing its people. He often is at odds with Jesus's teachings but he is also at odds with Pope Francis who does a better job of reflecting Jesus in my opinion.

83. Difficulty with sex abuse crisis. Difficulty with old white men calling all the shots.
84. AB Sample seems to follow only what he thinks the church should be, ignoring everyone else.
85. Need to merge old ideas and new ideas for being church.
86. Get agitated when people say the church should be the way we want it.
87. Jesus is not worried about who gives the homily, but rather taking care of the marginalized.
88. Hierarchy must pay attention to what is really important. Why wash the feet of those who only have clean feet?
89. What wounded(disturbed) me.
- The top down approach of Church. Doesn't feel like people are seen as Church.
 - When Bishops wanted to ban Biden from receiving communion.
 - The masculine language used at Mass makes me angry.
 - It feels like the church is not interested in women.
 - Feels like the Church is disconnected from the human race.
 - Ornate chalices, vestments, wealth do not connect me with Jesus who was poor and lived for the poor.
 - The Church has gotten away from Vatican II.
 - The sexual abuse cover up and follow up. When the Archdiocese filed for bankruptcy.
 - I feel the Archbishop would not want to listen to me.
 - The Church is not there for the young people.
 - When rules are more important than people.
 - When Leif & Sr. Phyllis were not allowed to preach at Mass.
 - The Church's stance on Birth Control and making Abortion a single issue.
90. I don't carry wounds from the church in the front of my mind, but when I think about it I have been wounded by the church's judgement of me. As a kid in Catholic school I, like many others, made up sins for our required weekly confession. As a teenager I started to separate from the church because it never changed, and I was changing. I stopped going to confession. There are things I have never shared because of shame and because I don't trust the church. It's been a long time since I have felt at home in the catholic church.
91. I have always stood a little taller when the Pope speaks out on behalf of peace and reconciliation or uses his moral authority to speak out about the issues of the day. However the exposure of the child sex abuse, and the complicity and coverup by prior Popes and clerics is a scandal even to this day. The Clerical class betrayed the people of God and their

accusations against their accusers was despicable. All in an effort to "save/protect the Church". Right.

92. I feel wounded when I've attended Catholic services that have fallen back to pre-Vatican II practices: priest with his back to the congregation during consecration, communion rail, women with heads covered.
93. How the church allowed priests to abuse and continued to abuse by not dealing properly with those who commit and destroy lives. Loss of the younger kids as they become adults, 50 and younger.
94. Wounded – sexual abusers and those who enabled with silence and/or cover up. Discrimination of women, non-inclusion of laity. Hoarding of material objects: power and materialistic focus rather than simple outreach Jesus modeled. All non-Jesus behavior.
95. Wounded – Feeling punished for non-priest people delivering the homily. That hurt my heart and I believe God's heart also.
96. Wounds: the abuse. I am so very upset by the clerical abuse in churches but once again upset even more so by the abuse that occurred in Indian Boarding schools by our church...absolutely horrific! And our church as a whole (pope included) has not even apologized. We owe our Native friends an amazing settlement for their intergenerational trauma. This has pulled me away from the church more than anything else.
97. I like participating in the Mass and supporting the parish in any way that I can. Beyond the parish, I'm not too keen on the hierarchical structure of the church.
 - Archbishop Sample is way too conservative for my taste.
 - The ideas that priests cannot marry; that women cannot become members of the clergy; or that gays, lesbians, and transgender people cannot fully participate in Catholicism are outdated.
98. The Roman Catholic Church has relegating me as a divorced person to the status of a second-class Catholic, denying the sacraments and casting shame on me and all divorced Catholics. The Church has deeply wounded many and has shown very little compassion or love.
99. Wounded – After leaving a very abusive marriage and moving to Portland, I was not really welcome in the parish we first attended. I enrolled my son in sacramental prep and the clergy staff were not welcoming of my family at all. As a child, a very bad confession experience by a pervert priest made me never go to confession again unless it's a group confession. After being allowed to have communion services regularly both by parishioners and the nuns for many years and then having that taken away is a slap in the face. Only receiving communion from a priest is absolutely ridiculous and not even timely since many times a priest isn't even available. We were baptized as disciples of Christ, and he certainly

expected his disciples to break bread with others. Putting in new rules regarding the type of vessel to be used for Communion is also in very bad taste. Jesus certainly didn't ask for only precious metals be used when he shared Communion with others. That our Archbishop does not follow what the Pope says is very shallow, self-righteous, and an insult to us Catholics who are trying to hang on to our church.

Question #3
**What is the single most important step
the Church should take in the next five years?**

Leadership

1. The church needs to recognize that the people sitting in the pews can have thoughts on how things should work in the church. We can speak on the gospel and we should not get in trouble for speaking on the gospel because that is only for an ordained priest. That is wrong on every level! If the church does not stop being powerful and stop the clericalism they will continue to lose people!!
2. We should have more lay administrators.
3. Provide more security for seminaries. Too liberal in some areas. Need to be governed a lot firmer.
4. Allow clergy to marry
5. Need Youth Director
6. Archbishops should be in touch with their communities
7. More inclusive church
8. Listen to the people – really listen
9. Eliminate the laity as a group. Get away from the clericalism. We are all together, not lower than.
10. Ordain women
11. Allow clergy to marry
12. Let priests get married
13. Let each church select our own priests
14. Get rid of archbishops who do not want to change
15. Restructure
16. They need to get away from clericalism. The priests need to recognize that the lay people have as much to say about the gospel as they do.

17. Give the people an executive voice, meaning real power to participate and decide, along with the overseers.
18. Enough with the clericalism! Get out of the fancy robes and high hats and embrace "the smell of the sheep". Allow greater participation by women.
19. Give more attention to vocations to the priesthood and religious life. All parents should encourage this. It's the salvation of the clergy. More important than ever to increase vocations. Moms and dads who petition for support of a child with a vocation should be given highest priority.
20. Give serious thought to letting priests be married. Celibacy could exist in religious orders.
21. My son wanted to serve, but also wants a family. Became a minister in a community church. Need to rethink our church is organized. Eastern rite can marry. Why can't it be done that way.
22. Need a pastor whose values align with our own.
23. Allow married priests.
24. Have parishioners involved in the appointing of parish priests.
25. Moms and dads who urgently petition for special training and/or counseling for working with a prospective religious vocation deserve a highest priority.
26. Shortage of priests around the world.
27. Allow priests to marry and married Catholic men to become priests.

Women

28. I can think of a few important steps, but if I have to limit my response to one it would be this: We should break down the barricades of stultifying tradition and allow women into the priesthood. Not to be insulting, but it seems like a no-brainer, especially in this time of critical priest shortages. The success of our Protestant friends in this area should be an obvious example.
29. How about treating women as if they were of some value and not second class citizens or second class beings. To keep the priests celibate is to invite pedophiles into your church. When you look at the long history of the horrendous things the Catholic Church has done over the centuries, obviously something is terribly terribly wrong. You cannot teach other people how do you the spiritual until you have found it yourselves. Having pedophiles and

self-righteous angry people claiming to know the way to God, it's just not right. Stop claiming the other churches have the same problem in your publications, they do not. No one has the same pedophile problem that you have. I think it is very sad that I have five siblings and they are still all Catholic. I find it very very sad indeed. Clean up your act that's what you can do to make changes. Clean your own garbage out before you start teaching other people how to do it. Clean up your anger, clean up your priests, clean up your hearts, and your souls. Stop pretending that you know the way when you have not found it yourselves.

30. Women – equal treatment, ordination, allow them to follow Vatican II instead of moving away from that.
31. Women be treated as equals in every sphere
32. Women becoming priests & ordained deacons
33. Women's leadership respected
34. Must let women resume the power that they had in the original church prior to Constantine.
35. Include women more in leadership, bring more youth, form youth group, keep our churches open
36. Women be actively involved in all aspects of each church
37. Acknowledging women and what they bring to church. Go Back to Vatican II.
38. Women leadership
39. ERA
40. Let women resume the power that they had in the beginning of the church.
41. We should resume the important roles of women per ancient church teaching.
42. Allow priests to marry. Women to be priests.
43. I think the single most important step the Church needs to address is the ordination of women to the Priesthood and allow priests the option to marry. Where is the scripture passage that forbids this?

44. Women as deacons. Women were sent out to preach in the early church and were ordained priests during WWII. Reigning in the doctoral nature of the cardinals and bishops toward the people. Mass in real language, not of the people. Go back to Vatican II.
45. Elevate women to more leadership positions.
46. Women should be priests too!!
47. Allow Catholic women to become members of the clergy.

Integrity

48. I feel the Church should distribute the wealth to serve the poor and struggling parishes. The Church should practice honesty, justice for all, and acceptance of all God's children. The Church is here to serve and not place judgement on people. We are all sinners and we will all stand before God in our hour of judgement, it is not the place of the Church to judge. It is difficult to support a Church that lies, hides crimes, and ignores injustice.
49. Get rid of nit-picky rules re: Communion, Gays, and Divorce
50. Stand for Democracy
51. Separate church and state. Church needs to expand the good that we do as church.
52. Serve rights for God
53. Everything through God's work is possible
54. I don't know, but everything through God is possible.
55. Get rid of the nit-picky rules that have nothing to do with worshipping God.
56. Stand for Democracy and separation of church and state. Catholics have always stood for separation of church and state. Yet I only see commercials on TV from Ron Reagan Jr claiming only atheist stand for separation of church and state
57. Treat homosexuals, lesbians, divorced people, equal in the church
58. More Gospel teaching
59. I don't think the church should change. It's been going for a long time. I don't think changing it would help a lot, as a teenager I like the way of the church and the teaching of it.

60. There are several steps they must take in order to stay relevant. They need to focus on honesty and healing from the sex scandal and putting in place transparency in all matters concerning priest sex abuse.
61. They also need to focus more on the message of Jesus, to love one another, and ways we can do that in our lives and forget all the man-made rules. Just boil it down to the simple truth of Jesus's message. Also I believe they should allow priests to marry and women to be priests...there is no reason they should not have full equality here.
62. Roman Catholic Church should speak with one voice through the national press and podium. While good comes out of disagreement, when all is finalized behind the scenes, let's hear it.
63. Growing indifference about religion around the world deserves attention.
64. Church needs to be in better contact with medical community with respect to homosexuality. Move away from natural law argument. The whole concept of the family has evolved, and we accept that there are many ways to love. We have to make real the love of God in the manner in which we love one another.
65. Need to reacquaint ourselves with Vatican II and all that was voiced by John XXIII and other theologians.
66. The church does so much more to drive people away than it does to attract them.
67. Concentrate on what's really important: caring for people. What would Jesus do? Let go of the little stuff.
68. Focus on honesty and healing from scandal. Transparency and reconciliation.
69. Forget man made rules.
70. The church needs to be bolder in its effort to save the planet and get engaged in environmental concerns. If we don't get serious about it, our grandchildren won't have a world to live in.
71. We have to stop the war in Ukraine.
72. Have the Mass said in simpler language the people can understand (the language of the people)
73. Desmond Tutu said that communion wasn't offered at the church's table, it was offered at God's table. That gets to the essence of the needed change for me. Get rid of the church's

rules and move instead with God's rules. Stop discriminating against people and accept all people.

74. A growing indifference and hostility toward religion around the world necessitate action based on prayer, grace, sacrifice and missionary energy and spirit.

75. Active love as Jesus practiced. Fully basing on principle: the church is all the people. Abolish power structure with goal of all the people.

76. Back off on judging other rights. Jesus came poor. Cup to chalice. Vatican II

77. Catch up to 2022. Our future is so important and all people should be included in participating in our Mass. Women should be equal. We should grow the church and be an appealing faith choice. Birth control must be re-evaluated. A women's right to choose reconsidered as well as same sex relationships. If we don't change, we will continue to not prosper. God is not rigid. He is loving and compassionate and caring. He loves all!!

78. Make repentance for Indigenous families and communities. I don't know if I can ever trust the church if they don't do this.

79. Reconcile with divorced Catholics by issuing a public apology to them. Also take immediate steps to start the process of ordaining women. Continue to root out priests, bishops, and others in the hierarchy that abuse children. Finally, eliminate celibacy for priests and allow priests to marry.

80. Social Security Net

81. Care of Creation

Parish Life

82. Youth activities need greater emphasis. Protestants are way ahead of us. The future of the church lies here.

83. We lose people to other churches who have youth programs.

84. Where is the compassion for our children and youth? They really need to be taken under our arms. They need our support.

85. Latin Mass – the booklet has a lot for me to learn. The priest says a lot of interesting stuff, providing a rich experience.

86. I would like to see more youth and prayer groups and activities like this.

87. Parish develop relationships with each other
88. Develop small faith sharing groups
89. Advertise – use media to spread good.
90. Make more clubs in different cultures
91. Making more clubs in different cultures
92. Having more reading in different languages
93. Having fun clubs after Mass
94. Making clubs to represent God/Jesus
95. Praying together and making people from different races feel welcomed and that they belong
96. Reading from the Bible
97. Helping to represent God/Jesus (serving)
98. Readings in different languages
99. Social Justice – Peace – Love – Climate – Care for creation –
100. Get youth involved
101. We are so empty due to covid. Do we need to make personal calls, bring people Communion? Churches are empty all over the world. We need to address that.
102. Pay more attention to the youth of the church. Protestants could show us some things. Church needs to invest in youth, e.g. give them opportunities to serve. Try to keep youth in the church. After Confirmation they seem to disappear.
103. We have to make it something real.
104. Need to reach into the Bible. Get more into God's Word. Would like to see our church move in this direction. I joined a Presbyterian Bible Study and it has been wonderful. We should do more Bible Study.

105. Interpreting this question in relation to our specific Parish, St. Charles Borromeo Church, I sometimes, maybe out of pessimism, don't feel confident that our Parish will survive in our present partnership with De La Salle North Catholic High School. My main concern is financial - whether we can reliably maintain a balanced budget. So I believe that the single most important step our Parish should take in the next five years is to stay within our budget.
106. Too much to put down. Engagement example, Leif and Sr. Phyllis could no longer do homilies. Don't think this was God's intent. Clergy were the organizers. Protestants do a better job of explaining and living who God is. Not just tell faithful what to do or how to live.
107. Get back to our native language in the Mass.
108. As an older adult, "The Church" has new meaning. My church is my parish, my friends, my wider, deeper relationships with my fellow parishioners. That is my church. It is the task of The Church to catch up with and learn from its own flock.