



Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough

Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission

Diocesan Synthesis

The Vatican issued the preparatory document and handbook for the synodal process, *Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission*, (“synodal process”) in the Fall of 2021 as part of the global Church’s preparation for the 2023 assembly of the Synod of Bishops. The timing of this announcement coincided locally with the re-energizing of a Diocesan Pastoral Planning Process in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough (“Diocese”) as the pandemic began to subside. This provided an opportunity for the existing Diocesan Pastoral Planning Committee¹ to bring together the two processes and to optimize the feedback from the clergy and the faithful for both purposes – the synodal process and the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Process (“Process”).

Most Reverend Bishop Miehm celebrated the **Mass at the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains**² on October 17, 2021, to launch the synodal process in the Diocese. This celebration rooted the synod in [prayer](#), sacrament, and community. At the same time, Bishop Miehm extended an invitation to the clergy, Religious, and faithful to participate in the conversation through a [video](#).³

The Diocesan Pastoral Planning Committee launched a survey in two online formats posing a set of five questions⁴ through Google Form and providing an interactive exchange of ideas through ThoughtExchange®. The survey was opened from October 17 to November 26, 2021, and it reopened from December 16, 2021, to January 14, 2022. The second open survey link was shared with people attending the Christmas Masses and the First Nations and Métis peoples residing within the territorial boundaries of the Diocese.⁵ A summary of the results from this survey, [What are we hearing?](#),⁶ was compiled and widely distributed both online and in paper format.

The parishes were provided with resources⁷ for the three synodal process sessions. These sessions were held in-person for those who could attend and an online survey format of the parish questions was available for those who were unable to attend in person. A Parish Report from the sessions was prepared and submitted to the Diocese. Fifteen parishes submitted a report.

¹ See committee membership noted in Appendix A.

² Livestream link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEM96UmXqRE>

³ Video link: <https://youtu.be/ZGirNXzJ4bA>

⁴ See Appendix B for the questions.

⁵ See Appendix C for a listing of the Indigenous Peoples referenced herein.

⁶ See Appendix D for this infographic summary.

⁷ See Appendix E for the parish resources.

A ThoughtExchange® survey, promoted by Campus Ministry and parish priests, was opened for university and college students. Synodal conversations were held with lay organizations and Minutes from those sessions were submitted to the Committee. The Faith Animator and Religious Education Consultant along with the student trustee, the Chaplaincy Leader, and various staff members held synodal conversations with students in some of the Catholic high schools located in the Diocese. A report⁸ from this process was presented to the Committee. This process initiated at the high schools a conversation about the Church which continues and the process is being shared with other school boards in Ontario.

The Diocese reached out as widely as possible to ensure that parishioners as well as those distanced from the Church or people from other faiths could participate in the synodal conversation. About 4000+ people participated online or in person. Whether the respondents are currently engaged with the Church or distanced from it, making the effort to respond to the synod questions reflected a deep personally-held connection with the Roman Catholic faith tradition.

The initial reaction to the synodal process included these elements. Some feared that inviting input might lead to the transformation of a Church that they prefer would remain the way it is or the way it was. Others were impressed that the Church was actually asking for their input and often commented that they had never been asked before for their opinion. The online surveys in particular engaged Catholics and former Catholics who may have become distanced from the practice of their faith. They commented most often that no one asked why they left and they appreciated the outreach and care to ask now.

The synodal process itself was met with mixed reactions among some clergy. In hindsight, it might have been more effective if a preparatory process with the clergy alone had preceded the public announcement of the synodal process. That said, many clergy are engaging with the synodal process to the greatest degree possible. One priest wrote, *“I dedicated a series of homilies to explain and encourage the people ... I emphasized that Pope Francis truly wanted to hear from the people what works well in the Church, what does not work well, and what works reasonably well but needs improvement.”*

The Diocesan Pastoral Planning Committee decided to condense the ten proposed Synod questions into three specific questions each focused on a particular theme of Communion, Participation, and Mission.

COMMUNION

“By His gracious will, God gathers us together as diverse peoples of one faith, through the covenant that He offers to His people. The communion we share finds its deepest roots in the love and unity of the Trinity. It is Christ who reconciles us to the Father and unites us with each other in the Holy Spirit. Together, we are inspired by listening to the Word of God, through the living Tradition of the Church, and grounded in the sensus fidei that we share. We all

⁸ See Appendix F for the Report.

have a role to play in discerning and living out God's call for his people." (Official Handbook for Listening and Discernment in Local Churches, Vatican, October, 2021)

PARTICIPATION

"A call for the involvement of all who belong to the People of God – laity, consecrated and ordained – to engage in the exercise of deep and respectful listening to one another. This listening creates space for us to hear the Holy Spirit together, and guides our aspirations for the Church of the Third Millennium. Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are qualified and are called to serve one another through the gifts they have each received from the Holy Spirit. In a synodal Church the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God's will (ICT, Syn., 67-68). Genuine efforts must be made to ensure the inclusion of those at the margins or who feel excluded." (Official Handbook for Listening and Discernment in Local Churches, Vatican, October, 2021)

MISSION

"The Church exists to evangelize. We can never be centred on ourselves. Our mission is to witness the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. This Synodal Process has a deep missionary dimension to it. It is intended to enable the Church to better witness to the Gospel, especially with those who live on the spiritual, social, economic, political, geographical, and existential peripheries of our world. In this way, synodality is a path by which the Church can more fruitfully fulfil her mission of evangelization in the world, as a leaven at the service of the coming of God's kingdom." (Official Handbook for Listening and Discernment in Local Churches, Vatican, October, 2021)

The feedback was inspiring, affirming, questioning, and even condemning. Most responses came from people over 50 years of age, prompting an intentional outreach to those under 50, especially younger adults and youth. Seniors shared their wisdom and youth shared their hopes. Here is a summary of the collective input.

Respondents unanimously felt inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and honoured that He entrusts His mission to us. Many practicing Catholics say their experience of the faith provides them with traditions and a spirituality that supports them. Parents who practice the Faith find a supportive community of others who are like-minded and have similar religious values in which to nurture their children.

The majority of participants in the synodal conversation desire or are searching for their place in the Church. For some, this quest has been satisfied by the spiritual life and fellowship of a Spirit-led vibrant parish community. These are the qualities describing such experiences.

- The Pastor is prayerful, engaged with the realities of life today, and excited about the Parish community.
- The Pastor is respectful of the traditions of the Parish and honours them, introducing new ideas in consultation and collaboration with the parishioners.
- There is an intentional effort to foster unity and reciprocal support.
- The Pastor celebrates the sacraments reverently.
- The Pastor has learned or is open to learning about a priestly ministry that sensitively and wisely balances the proclamation of the Truth with the pastoral care of accompaniment.

- A collaborative, efficient decision-making process and a conflict resolution process are in place.
- The Pastor welcomes parishioners and newcomers, and treats each person with kindness and care.
- The Pastor is present and provides practical and spiritual support for the lay organizations in the parish such as the Catholic Women’s League, the Knights of Columbus, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Development and Peace, the Legion of Mary, etc.
- There are many parishioners involved in various ways such as visiting people who are confined to their homes, bringing holy communion to the sick, studying scripture or topics raised by parishioners, etc.
- The Pastor is open to finding solutions to problems and doesn’t shut the door.
- The Pastor fosters a community that is attentive to good mental health practices recognizing its importance for all parishioners.
- There is a strong ProLife culture in the parish marked by upholding the dignity of the human person from conception to natural death, fostering reciprocal respect among genders and generations, promoting justice and the sharing of resources for all people, and the active stewardship of the environment.
- There are ongoing catechetical and faith formation programs in the parish that provide an authentic understanding of the Faith with attention to the questions being posed by parishioners in the present-day.
- The Catholic Social Teachings are mentioned in homilies and they serve as a springboard to engage the parishioners in the pastoral care of others beyond the parish walls such as people who are homeless, under-employed or addicted.
- Stewardship of the environment and reference to *Laudato Si* is made in homilies and parish programs so that parishioners become engaged with this important and timely issue. One Female Religious highlighted this important issue encouraging, “...a greater emphasis on conversion in the light of the threat to our earth, we have to change...”
- The richness of Catholic spirituality is reflected in the optional programs available to support a parishioner’s prayer life. There is more than one method of prayer offered so that the fullness of the Catholic spiritual tradition can be explored.
- The communication is timely and clear, optimizing the use of technology.
- The liturgy is **good** and this means:
 - The liturgy follows the *General Instructions of the Roman Missal* and avoids additions preferred by either the Pastor or the laity.
 - Hymn selections reflect the Readings, and liturgical music is well-performed and encourages congregational singing. Music was mentioned several times as a very important part of the experience of liturgy.
 - There is a well-balanced sense of appropriate reverence and communal fellowship.
 - The celebration of the Eucharist invites the faithful to receive the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.
 - There is adequate preparation and support for people exercising liturgical ministries so they do it well and continue to do so when changes are implemented.

- Where there is a Permanent Deacon, a good relationship between the Priest and Deacon is evident and their distinct roles at the liturgy are respected.
- The Homily reflects on the Readings of the Mass and invites the congregation to reflect on the Readings and to make them meaningful for themselves.

Some issues that challenge parishioners are as follows:

- Where parishioners have an unresolvable disagreement with the Pastor, they feel there is no forum for recourse. There are very few avenues the laity can use to express concern or have their viewpoint and vision heard. One parish report stated, *“The perception of inflexibility may be discouraging for many people today; a “my way or the highway” environment may not appeal to them.”* As a result, the parishioner either moves to another parish or leaves the Faith.
- In some parishes, it is the same people doing everything and this creates the perception of a clique. Parishioners either continue their practice devoutly or begin to drift. Many mentioned the importance of a personal invitation modelled by the Pastor and then taken on by others to engage more parishioners in various ministries. A female Religious says, *“invite those who have not yet proven their worth instead of the same people all the time.”* Sign-up sessions and personal volunteering options do not always have the same impact as a personal, one-to-one invitation.
- Some Pastors are perceived as treating certain groups better than others such as youth vs. seniors, rich vs. poor, etc. The issue is not recognized by the preferred group, division grows among the parishioners, and eventually, part of the parish becomes disengaged.

There are some challenging matters not necessarily within the control or influence of the parish but they have an impact on parish membership resulting in waning attendance and departures from the parish.

- Abuse by clergy and how it has been handled are a concern for many. There is still a feeling that this issue has been covered up and continues to be hidden by clerical protection. Some did affirm that the current protocols to address abuse by clergy have been updated and are now more transparently communicated.
- The strong feeling that not enough was done to provide restitution and express sorrow for Indian Residential Schools was the top reason for feelings of embarrassment and shame. Some left the Church and some stayed – almost all who commented feel that more should be done. There was much feedback that the Pope should apologize on Canadian soil and fulfil the Call to Action #58.
- Parishioners do not generally understand the pastoral assignment process. They experience it as arbitrary with no opportunity for meaningful input from the laity. This issue is compounded by the fact that quite naturally, some priests find favour more quickly with parishioners than others. And some priests unfortunately are unable to engage in a positive way with their parishioners. Although no names were mentioned in the feedback, this issue was raised many times.

- The Church's Teaching and Tradition about who can exercise certain ministries and who is in a state of grace to receive Holy Communion were called into question. A Parish Report says, *"Revisit liturgical roles for laity (e.g. female acolytes; laypersons preaching). Admit to full communion anyone who wants it, irrespective of faith or behaviour."*
- Many expressed concerns about the Church's struggle with people who identify as LGBTQQIP2SAA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit (2S), androgynous, and asexual) and how it has impacted others negatively with feelings of judgement and condemnation. This concern was particularly heartfelt for parishioners with family members who identify as LGBTQQIP2SAA.
- People who identify as LGBTQQIP2SAA provided critical feedback about the Church and described its pastoral ministry as judgemental and awkward with only a few understanding, sensitive priests.
- The high divorce rate has resulted in a large number of Catholics who remarry without an annulment and their lifestyle is then out of harmony with Church Teaching. Divorced Catholics are seeking to enjoy the full embrace of the Church and in the absence of that, many either abandon the practice of the faith or leave the Church for another religion.
- The annulment process is seldom described as healing even though that is the intent. It was referred to as invasive, forcing people to relive traumas they did not want to revisit and to make statements they know to be false.

One Parish Report said the following which summarizes several of the points listed above, *"The Church must create a place to include the divorced and people living in a common law union to receive Communion, recognize LGBTQ Community, transgender..."*

Other matters listed below are issues where there is a feeling of not being fully understood by the Church.

- Families are described traditionally as the domestic Church which highlights their important place in the life of the Church, and it is within the family, that the seed of a vocation to holy orders or religious life is first sown. Some families live a traditional life with strong male role models, adherence to Church teaching related to contraception, and a rich life of sacramental practice. This is a devout and active minority. For many, however, the feedback reflected a sense that the Church is out of step with its understanding of how the family functions in 2022. Descriptors of a broken or separated family are seen as insulting. Families still engaged with the faith and those distanced from it take issue with the teachings related to artificial contraception, medically enhanced insemination methods, the requirement for an annulment following a divorce should remarriage be anticipated, the objection to a family composed of two same-sex parents, and the perception of a critical stance toward women working outside of the family context. There are a multitude of complexities present in modern-day families. The Church is challenged to meaningfully exercise pastoral ministry to families in this context.

- Youth from birth to the age of young adulthood are important for the Church. They are the **now** and the **future**. There was much feedback about seeking relevant ways to engage the youth in the life of the parish, reaching out to youth where they are gathered in schools and on campuses, and finding a way to meaningfully engage youth in discussions about the Church and their faith. Some youth find solace and a faith experience of God in the traditional expressions of the Church. However, the majority of youth do not, and they expressed the feeling of not being understood and of being measured against a standard that has no meaning for them. Youth expressed interest in social justice projects, Catholic Social Teachings, and the care of the earth – topics they feel are regarded by priests as less important to parish life.
- Some are content with the Church's view on the role of women while many are not. The Diocese reached out to a network of Catholic women in their 30s and 40s who are mothers/wives, entrepreneurs, and professionals. They have a deep respect for the spiritual traditions of the Church but say that some of the teachings related to women, leadership, ordination exclusive to males, and people who identify as LGBTQIP2SAA are out of step with the call of Jesus in the world today. A Parish report says, *“One suggestion of an interim measure for including females as leaders in our Church was allowing women to become deacons. This would be an easy introductory measure to allow more female leadership while the Church transitions to full inclusion of women at all levels within the Church.”*
- Respondents who are from different cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, or who identify themselves as marginalized were critical of the Church's welcome describing it as cold and unaccepting. They say there is little or no effort to learn about them or to grow in mutual understanding.

Most respondents commented on their respect, even love, and support of clergy and religious. The feedback reflects an appreciation of the great sensitivity needed to faithfully proclaim the Gospel and the teachings of the Church in the present-day and to accompany people whose lives are challenged by Church teaching. Two areas garnered comments – clericalism and priestly formation.

- Experiences of clericalism for the laity involve being summarily dismissed by the clergy even if their academic qualifications in a particular area meet or exceed those held by the priest. Most priests say they are unaware of what exactly clericalism means and most affirm the desire to avoid clericalism. The issue of clericalism and experiences of it need some forum for discussion beyond the priest and layperson since these matters are often unresolved. Following an experience of clericalism, if there is a deep hurt, the layperson moves to another parish or leaves the faith.
- Priestly formation is a matter of concern for most of the laity. The concerns are the:
 - relevant preparation to minister in this historic time with the complexity of issues,
 - need to learn a pastoral ministry of accompaniment,
 - requirement to proclaim the Truth in such a way that it is not rejected,

- awareness for young priests that they are often talking to their elders, and
- a thorough study of scripture.

The laity are finding that priests are being instructed in a way they describe as “pre-Vatican II.” Some of the laity prefer this traditional approach to priesthood and are pleased to see the priest wearing his cassock and adopting traditional practices the older laity themselves have left behind after Vatican II.

There is tension or perhaps a growing divide between Catholics over the Mass form itself - the Novus Ordo (Mass in English/Vernacular) and the Traditional Latin Mass. Some Catholics provided feedback about their desire for the Traditional Latin Mass which they find to be more reverent and therefore, preferable. They take exception to the restrictions placed on the Traditional Latin Mass and are pleased that it is celebrated within most regions of the Diocese. They are critical of the Novus Ordo and provided feedback in support of expanding the availability of the Traditional Latin Mass. Some say that the Novus Ordo Mass is removing the opportunity for a reverential experience and for this reason, the attendance at Mass is dwindling.

Many respondents expressed concern about the growing recognition of a deep division in the faith community between those attending the Novus Ordo and those desiring the Traditional Latin Mass. Further to this concern, they identify that there does not appear to be a process to resolve this issue right now. A Parish Report highlighted the suspicion that exists, *“those who are traditionally minded and attend Latin Mass felt marginalized. It should also be noted that a small group of parishioners, traditionally minded, refused to participate in the synod survey because they felt the synod will be “hijacked” by national and Vatican leaders to suit their desire to promote a progressive agenda.”* Another Parish report spoke to the other view on this matter, *“There has been a recognized divide within our parish and the Church as a whole between, a number who felt strongly that we should return to pre-Vatican II and then a majority who would rather a focus on Vatican II, and more progressive views being included within the Church and the parish.”*

FEEDBACK FROM THE SYNODAL PROCESS ABOUT NEXT STEPS

The feedback about next steps falls into two main categories – *keep everything the same or make some changes*, recognizing as a Female Religious pointed out that there have not been many *“Opportunities for people to find guidance for new questions, and not to rely on the same old answers that no longer fit.”* The Faith is clearly laid out in Church documents so this section will only reiterate the areas of change suggested from the feedback

- The Parish Finance Committee is a requirement in the *Code of Canon Law* but the Parish Pastoral Council is not. It was mentioned several times that Parish Pastoral Councils should be a requirement and the reports from the in-person Parish Sessions often emphasized this point.
- Programs such as RCIA, Alpha, and others have provided good faith development in the past but they need to be reimagined and reformatted for a synodal Church. Respondents

asked for more opportunities for engagement beyond “telling and retelling.” Others suggested offering more sessions about the official Church Teaching, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Magisterium.

- It was suggested many times that a shared model of ministry among priests and laity would be more engaging than the heavy-load of ministerial tasks that the priest currently carries on his own. Ideas mentioned in the feedback included a team approach to bringing Holy Communion to people and to visiting people who are ill or confined to home, laypeople with the appropriate backgrounds running prayer programs, catechetical instruction, and bible study, etc. A Parish Report pointing toward greater involvement of the laity says, *“There was an emphasis and reverence towards priests in general, but also a determination that the parish is mainly made up of the parishioners and that their involvement, insight, and collaboration is critical to defining and reaching goals as a parish and a Church. Suggestions of group prayer, parish surveys with professional statistical analysis, and even Church committees to discuss and collaborate on decisions were all suggestions put forth.”*
- Many respondents spoke about the importance to communicate widely the good pastoral works of the Church and to provide two-way communication for the support of an ongoing synodal process. Specifically, the communication needs to provide:
 - Messages of welcome to the faith for all people
 - Encouragement to be involved in Church life and excitement about the Catholic faith
 - Transparency in how the Church manages finances and responds to controversial issues
 - Invitations for feedback from people
 - Assurances that people are genuinely being heard.
- Many participants commented on the absence of a welcome at the parish door. The Ministry of Hospitality has been added to ushers taking up the collection and the training for this critical ministry has not accompanied this added task. While the ushers may feel comfortable greeting the people they know, newcomers feel they are not afforded the same cheery welcome. A Parish Report says, *““Everyone must be welcomed always.” The need for better training of ushers to more warmly welcome people – “to say more” to those arriving at Church.”*
- The Society of St. Vincent de Paul mentioned in their feedback, *“More Church involvement would be beneficial with access or referral information to social workers or specialists for families and individuals dealing with mental health issues.”* This comment points to an inter-connected model of ministry within the broader community which was also

reflected in a Parish Report asking for more, *“dialogue with various groups ... joint involvement in tackling needs of all of God's people.”*

- The importance of prayer and asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to support a change process cannot be emphasized enough. One Parish Report commenting on prayer says, *“not much change or positive action can come about unless each member of the Church is continuously praying and developing a personal faith life.”*

GOING FORWARD

The Synodal process wasn't about telling or being told. It was about listening. Some of the feedback was inspiring and affirming to read - people in their 90s who responded to the online survey and provided their feedback such as *“Preach good sermons about Living in our Now and direct the people to read the part of the bible that strengthens this.”* and *“Explain the Mass and what it means especially for teens and younger children.”* That was awesome and amazing! Other times, reading through the critical and even harsh feedback was humbling. There is the natural inclination to correct some of the input and the understanding of authentic and accurate Church Teaching is critical. However, the synodal process is about listening and accompanying, and less about telling.

The dialogue has begun and a continued cycle of listening, dialogue, and response is anticipated. Many issues that have been dormant within the faithful have been expressed and awakened. The expectations from the synodal process are threefold:

- First, respondents wanted to be heard.
- Second, respondents wanted to hear back that indeed they had been heard.
- Third, most of the respondents wanted some type of change – be it more and deeper of what is already happening or a substantive change.

The synodal process leads into the continuation of the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Process⁹ locally. The intent of the Process now is to continue the consultations and work toward a Diocesan Pastoral Plan in the Easter Season of 2023. The feedback from the synodal process has provided raw data but it is too early in the local Process to jump to strategies or action items.

Most of the controversial issues in the synodal feedback require the involvement of both the universal and the local Church. These issues are left for the prayerful consideration of the Synod in 2023 as it continues to evolve under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Oremus pro invicem!

⁹ See Appendix G for an overview of the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Process from 2021 to 2023.

APPENDIX A

Diocesan Pastoral Planning Committee Members

- Most Reverend Bishop Daniel Miehm, Chair of the Committee
- Msgr. Michael Heffernan, Vicar General, Diocesan Finance Council member
- Deirdre Thomas, Assistant to the Bishop / Communications
- Fr. Joseph Devereaux, Dean of Central Deanery
- Helena Lessard, Diocesan President of the Catholic Women's League / Central Deanery layperson
- Fr. Randy Foster, Dean of the City Deanery
- Jacob Sullivan, City Deanery layperson
- Fr. Tom Lynch, Priest and Principal of Sacred Heart College
- Deacon Sean Gallagher
- Fr. Craig Cruikshank, Dean of the Southern Deanery
- Anne Higgins, Southern Deanery layperson
- Fr. Roy Villas, Dean of the Northern Deanery
- Kathie Hogan, Northern Deanery layperson
- Deb McRae, Director of Finance, Property, and Administration, Diocesan Finance Council member
- Joanne Hough, Catholic Lay Organization Member, Past President CWL
- Sr. Eileen McManus CSJ, Religious
- Fr. Jerry Tavares, Resource for Parishes
- Michael Nasello, Former Director of Education, Collaborative Consultation Resource
- Jeannie Armstrong, Superintendent of Learning-Faith/Equity and Secondary Program, Clarington Family of Schools, Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board

APPENDIX B

Questions – Google Form

What thoughts, ideas, questions or concerns are most important to you as we plan for the future of the Church in the Diocese of Peterborough?

What can the Church do to promote greater unity, understanding, and dialogue?

What efforts can we as the Church make to encourage participation, involvement, and commitment at the parish level and beyond?

What do you see as priorities for the Church's mission today and in the future?

What can be done to strive for those priorities?

Question for Interactive Platform – Thought Exchange®

What thoughts, ideas, questions or concerns are most important to you as we plan for the future of the Church in the Diocese of Peterborough?

APPENDIX C

Indigenous Peoples reside within the territorial boundaries of the Diocese:

- Hiawatha First Nation
- Magnetawan First Nation, Britt
- Alderville First Nation, Roseneath
- Wahta Mohawks First Nation, Bala
- Moose Deer Point First Nation, Mactier
- Henvey Inlet First Nation, Pickerel
- Shawanaga First Nation, Nobel
- Wasauksing First Nation, Parry Sound
- Curve Lake First Nation
- Métis Nation of Ontario - Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council
- Métis Nation of Ontario - Moon River Métis Council

APPENDIX D



Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough

PASTORAL PLANNING SURVEY SUMMARY

What are we hearing?

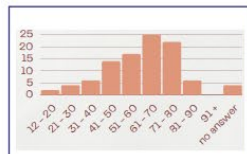
PARTICIPATION

- 1,291 People participated in the survey
- 3,015 Thoughts were shared
- 35,384 Ratings of thoughts were noted
- 66% of participants were female
- 31% of participants were male
- 6% of participants preferred not to answer

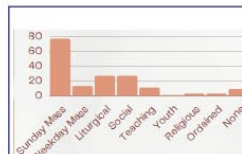


PARISHES

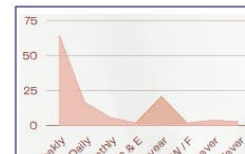
Members from 85% of the parishes and missions participated in the survey.



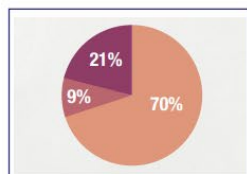
Age
Age range of participants



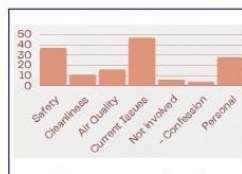
Involvement in Church
How participants are involved in the life of the Church



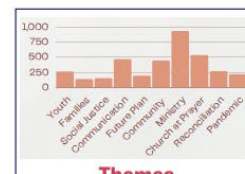
Mass Attendance
C & E = Christmas & Easter
W / F = Wedding / Funerals



Post Pandemic In-Person Worship
Yes 70% No 9%
Unsure 21%



Concerns about Returning to In-Person Worship



Themes
Comments from participants fell into ten categories. The number of mentions is shown on the graph.



What are we hearing?

THEME #1 – Youth

- Deep concern for the future of the Church was expressed with the hope that the younger generations find and embrace their rightful places within the Church community.
- The importance that youth ministry, Catholic schools, and social justice projects play in the faith formation of young people was noted by many.

THEME #2 – Families

- Emphasis was placed on the attendance and involvement of families at Church.
- Pastoral ministry to the family was mentioned many times noting:
 - o Reaching out to and supporting a broad range of families
 - o Appreciating the demands and stresses families face today
 - o Recognizing the family as the seedbed for future vocations to ordained ministry

THEME #3 – Community

- Various aspects of the Church as a community of faith were highlighted:
 - o The desire to be welcomed in the Church
 - o The importance of hospitality, belonging, and participation
 - o The need to accompany each person wherever they might be in their life's journey
 - o The call to be compassionate and understanding towards the marginalized

THEME #4 – Reconciliation

- Anger and disappointment were expressed about:
 - o abuse by clergy and the wounds that remain
 - o the historical and ongoing trauma from the Residential Schools Policy on the Indigenous Peoples of Canada,
 - o the experiences of persons who have felt marginalized or excluded by the Church,
 - o the division in the Church among traditionalists and liberals,
 - o issues related to the roles and contributions of women
 - o the rupture and fragility of trust
- Embarrassment was expressed for the failure to take responsibility and to make amends for serious transgressions.

THEME #5 – Social Justice

- There is a need to take a more active role in ministry to the homeless, the addicted, the poor, the marginalized, and those suffering from mental health issues in our local communities.
- A desire for better communication about what the Church does through St. Vincent de Paul, Development and Peace, and other outreach efforts.
- The Church must continue its strong advocacy on life issues from conception to natural death, stewardship of creation, and quality of life initiatives related to justice.
- Many participants called for more inclusion of the Catholic Social Teachings in Sunday homilies and other parish programs.

THEME #6 - Ministry / Mission

- A desire to see the Church continue to proclaim the truth of the Gospel and the fullness of the Church's teachings.
- A priority to support lived examples of priestly and family life.
- There is respect and concern for priests along with a recognition of the complex role of pastors today.
- Participants had various expectations for their priests including faithfully presenting the Church's Teaching; showing respect and kindness; and extending welcome and outreach to those not connected to the parish.
- A concern that priestly ministry has been hindered by the historical handling of sexual abuse cases by the Church and a culture of clericalism that exists in some places.
- A concern that ecclesial structures don't make sufficient room for laypeople.
- There is concern about a shortage of vocations to the priesthood and its impact on Church life including:
 - o More dependence upon priests from other countries or missionary priests and/or
 - o New ways of exercising ministry.
- Some suggested that the Church retain a traditional model of ministry while others suggested that new models be explored:
 - o More shared ministry opportunities between priests and laypeople
 - o Parish teams to reach out to the sick, to visit the elderly and to bring communion, and to keep them connected to their communities
 - o Strong support for more involvement of women in the life and leadership of the Church

THEME #7 – Well-Being

- Since the survey was completed during the pandemic, many responses dealt with the pandemic health precautions.
- The comments were mostly supportive of the health precautions and procedures put in place.
- Some perceived a government over-reach into areas of church life while others were critical of some disregard for the health precautions which left them feeling unsafe and concerned to attend worship in person.
- Many highlighted the need to reach out to parishioners as the pandemic eases and to welcome them back.
- People are eager for a return to regular liturgical practices, especially the music ministry.

THEME #8 – Communication

- Many noted the importance of good communication within the Church at the diocesan level and at the parish level.
 - People highlighted that communication is a two-way interaction involving both listening and responding.
 - Specifically, the communication needs to provide:
 - o Messages of welcome to the faith for all people
 - o Encouragement to be involved in Church life and excitement about the Catholic faith
 - o Transparency in how the Church manages finances and responds to controversial issues such as clergy abuse, Residential Schools, etc.
 - o Assurances that people are genuinely being heard.
-

THEME #9 – The Church at Prayer

- Many expressed the need for excellent preaching - inspired by the Readings of the Mass, relevant to people's lives, and linked to the experience of shared ministry in the Church and in the broader community.
- Participants commented on the need for in-person worship, the affirmation of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the importance of the regular reception of Holy Communion.
- A desire for opportunities to strengthen and deepen faith was expressed: such as Adoration, Scripture study, Rosary, Spiritual Direction, Stations of the Cross, faith sharing groups, etc.
- Many emphasized the importance of a beautiful celebration of the Eucharist. Some expressed a desire for a more inviting, devout, and faithful celebration of the Mass in English or other modern languages; and others sought to have more access to the Mass in Latin.
- Sacramental preparation of school-aged children/youth was addressed by many. Some saw value in the newer parish-based model; others expressed concern that the current program is not fully reaching parents and children of sacramental age.
- Many participants spoke of the critical importance of prayer to;
 - o help people walk humbly and faithfully;
 - o intentionally turn toward God for wisdom and strength; and
 - o engage in an ongoing dialogue of faith with God.

THEME #10 – Future Planning

- Participants emphasized the importance of rooting future planning in prayer and the Church's mission.
- Some expressed concern that the demographics of parishioners (numbers attending and age) should help determine the Diocesan planning. Maintaining underused buildings might divert resources away from pastoral programs.
- Some observed that various church buildings did not have the flexibility of space to accommodate pastoral programs.
- The following issues were identified as key to pastoral planning: evangelization and mission, the demographic of parishioners, church and facility usage, financial sustainability, accountability and transparency, the place of Parish Councils, and re-structuring.
- Some participants commented that the changes may entail hardship and feelings of loss so it will be important to engage in pastoral planning sensitively, courageously, and prayerfully.

Where do we go from here?

- The Diocese has been receiving input from the ThoughtExchange and Google Form surveys, school board meetings with youth in high schools, campus ministry outreach, parish-based sessions, online surveys for parishioners, lay organization meetings, and letters or emails received at the Pastoral Centre.
- The next step is to collect and collate this input and develop a draft plan of pastoral strategies responding to the feedback.
- The draft plan will benefit from much consultation with the clergy and the faithful before it is finalized with the goal of an Easter Season release in 2023.
- For more information about the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Process, please go to this webpage: <https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/about-us/pastoral-planning.aspx>

APPENDIX E

Three Parish Sessions: Communion, Participation, and Mission

Scripture Focus for the Parish Discussion Process

Acts 10

John 16: 12 – 15

Session 1

Discussion Questions - Communion

- Who is part of the Church?
- Are any persons or groups left on the margins, expressly or in fact?
- How do we listen to the laity, especially to young people and women, to consecrated men and women, to the minorities, or to the excluded?
- Can we speak out freely?
- How are divergences of vision, conflicts, or difficulties addressed?
- What experiences of dialogue and shared commitment do we have with believers of other Christian Denominations, religions and with non-believers?

Session 2

Discussion Questions - Participation

- How does our prayer and worship inspire and guide our common journey?
- How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?
- How do we support our members in reflection and in their growth in faith and formation?

- How do we come together to assume responsibility on the parish level and beyond?
- How do we define the goals to be pursued, the way to achieve them, and the steps to be taken?
- How do we see authority and responsibility within the Church?
- By what procedures and methods do we reflect together and make decisions?
- How and with what tools do we promote transparency and accountability within leadership?

Session 3

Discussion Questions - Mission

- How do we call each person to recognize their share in the Church's mission?
- How do we have dialogue with the various groups in our Church, our Christian communities and our world?
- What are the fruits we have drawn from this common journey?
- What are the difficulties?
- How do we encourage an authentic form of communication within the Church and with others?
- Can we dialogue with secular society?
- How do we reconcile social priorities and goals with the priority of the Church's mission?
- How do we discern our missions and support members engaged in mission?
- How do we form and help those who hold roles of responsibility?

APPENDIX F

PVNC Student Voice through Synodal Discussions – Lent 2022

During March and April of 2022, students gathered in ‘synodal discussions’ in all 6 PVNC secondary school chapels. After a brief introduction explaining the method, classes or student groups were voluntarily separated into circles of 5-10 participants (~100 students per day). Students were initially guarded in expressing their opinions and in general became more engaged as the discussion continued. After about 1 hour, the discussions ended with many students expressing their appreciation and voicing a desire to have their opinions heard more often. The following synthesis outlines some of the emerging contributions from PVNC secondary students in response to the questions below:



Who is on the margins in the Church and in Catholic schools? How?

“There are not a lot of people who look like me.” (Student who identified as black and female)
“I feel not as loved.” (Student who identified as non-binary)

Most consistent mention was made at all schools of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and Indigenous communities being on the margins. On occasion, students also spoke of groups such as non-Catholics, women (in the Church), non-teaching staff, those who are racialized, socio-economically disadvantaged, working through addictions or mental illness, and unmarried parents. Few students commented on ‘how’ these groups are marginalized but those who did spoke of ‘assumptions’ and ‘norms’ as well as the absence of the group’s symbols or representation (ie. Pride Flag).

Can we speak out freely in Catholic schools and in the Church? Why or why not?

“It is less about being able to speak freely and more about having your opinions and thoughts valued.”
“We are taught what to think but not always how to think.”

In general, students found it easier to speak about divergent viewpoints in schools than in the Church. The sentiment of being judged when speaking freely was commonly expressed. Some students spoke of how social media ‘emboldened’ both free speech and judgment.

How does prayer guide our common journey in the Church and Catholic schools?

“[Prayer] creates space to feel deeply.”
“I don’t know, I don’t pray.”

Students consistently referenced communal prayer during opening exercises when speaking about prayer. Some students saw this as ‘calming and creating unity,’ especially when it related directly to their experience (sick staff members, the Ukrainian people, care for the earth) whereas others saw it as “routine and going through the motions.” Many students chose to pass or expressed not having a connection to prayer.

How do we see leadership within our Catholic school and the Church?

“Everyone can be a leader.”
“Some [leaders] demand respect but it should be earned.”

Students typically spoke of the importance and influence of leadership. Two different experiences of leadership emerged in responses to the question: (1) leadership as having a relational focus (in which student talked of values, peer leaders, and “Leadership is kindness”) and (2) leadership as having power (students spoke of ‘hierarchy’, ‘enforcing rules’, or ‘an authoritative stance’).

How do we share in the mission of Catholic schools and the Church?

“The mission of the Church now seems to be ‘less colonial’ and more about improving the world and self.”
“Students have their own mission, to make the world a better place, but sometimes we just don’t know how to do that.”

There was frequently confusion expressed about what mission means and what mission is. Mission was most often connected in the school context through concrete examples (‘outreach’, charity, food drives, cultural exposure trips, or dress down days).

How do the Church and Catholic schools dialogue with society at large?

*“We have to let people know that [residential schools] isn’t what we’re about.
We have to let people know our Churches and schools will always be there for them regardless of their faith.”
“[Listening to each other in a circle] is really great”*

Students frequently spoke about dialogue (‘communication’, ‘connection’) being complicated by stereotypes, history, and societal/technological developments. The Church, and to some extent Catholic schools, were seen as having distinct challenges related to public perception and accountability. There was a desire expressed for more listening.

What challenges do you think the Church and Catholic schools are facing in today’s world?

Students identified many challenges summarized by the following themes:

- **Relevance:** *How can religion be more connected with the lives of young people and more engaging?
How can we engage with those who are feeling apathetic?*
- **Tradition & Change:** *How might we identify what should change and what should stay the same?*
- **Inclusivity:** *How do we create a sense of safety and belonging for those historically marginalized?*
- **History:** *How can we learn about, process and reconcile negative historical Church decisions with faith?*
- **Reputation:** *How do we address stereotypes and misunderstandings of the Church amplified by media?*
- **Polarizing of Opinions:** *How do we refocus on the essential elements of faith to build unity?*
- **Faith/ Science:** *How might faith and science be seen as mutually reinforcing ways of understanding the world?*

What hopes do you have for the future of the Church and Catholic schools?

Students were replete with hopes and expressed the following themes emerged from discussion:

- **Authenticity:** *“Be the best version of yourself for yourself and for others.”*
This was described as accountability, transparency and alignment between tenants of the faith and behaviour of Catholic institutions.
- **Inclusion & Acceptance:** *“[I hope] to walk into a Church one day and feel like I belong there.”*
Students particularly mentioned inclusion for 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous and racialized communities.
- **Engagement:** *“I hope for more discussions like this.”*
Greater connection through in-depth and relevant faith discussions and deep listening.
- **Values & Morals:** *“[I hope we] realize that we are all Children of God.”*
Students saw great promise in further emphasizing core values of the faith.

Vision

Creating a culture of faith, hope and love
to ensure equity and well-being.



being **CREATIVE**



being **WELL**



being **COMMUNITY**

APPENDIX G



PASTORAL PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW SNAPSHOT 2021 - 2023



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PETERBOROUGH

PASTORAL PLANNING PROCESS PRAYER



Heavenly Father,

You have called us to be your people and to journey in faith, hope and love.

May we face all challenges along the way, confident in the light of Your grace.

Christ, Good Shepherd,

Help us listen to your voice and follow you, so that our lives may be transformed. May we in turn reflect your loving care for all the members of your flock.

Holy Spirit, flame of Love,

Empower us with your gifts to build up the Church in the Diocese of Peterborough and beyond. Strengthen us so that we may be faithful to our calling and our mission.

O Blessed Trinity,

Enlighten us so that we may be light for the world. Lead us, so that we may lead others to you. Above all, ignite our hearts with your love so that we may reflect your goodness and mercy before all people.

Amen.



1. Bring together the Synodal Process and the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Process as much as possible while maintaining and respecting the distinct integrity of each process.

2. **General Survey of the Clergy and the Faithful** - What thoughts, ideas, questions or concerns are most important to you as we plan for the future of the church in the Diocese of Peterborough?

Thought Exchange Survey

Google Form Survey

COMMUNION: What can the church do to promote greater unity, understanding, and dialogue?

PARTICIPATION: What efforts can we as the church make to encourage participation, involvement, and commitment at the parish level and beyond?

MISSION: What do you see as priorities for the church's mission today and in the future?

MISSION: What can be done to strive for those priorities?

3. **Finance, Property, and Human Resources Parish Discussions**

Work on the template of information related to finance, property, and human resources.

4. **Parish Discussion Sessions on Communion, Participation, and Mission**

See discussion resources - <https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/about-us/pastoral-planning.aspx>



January

June



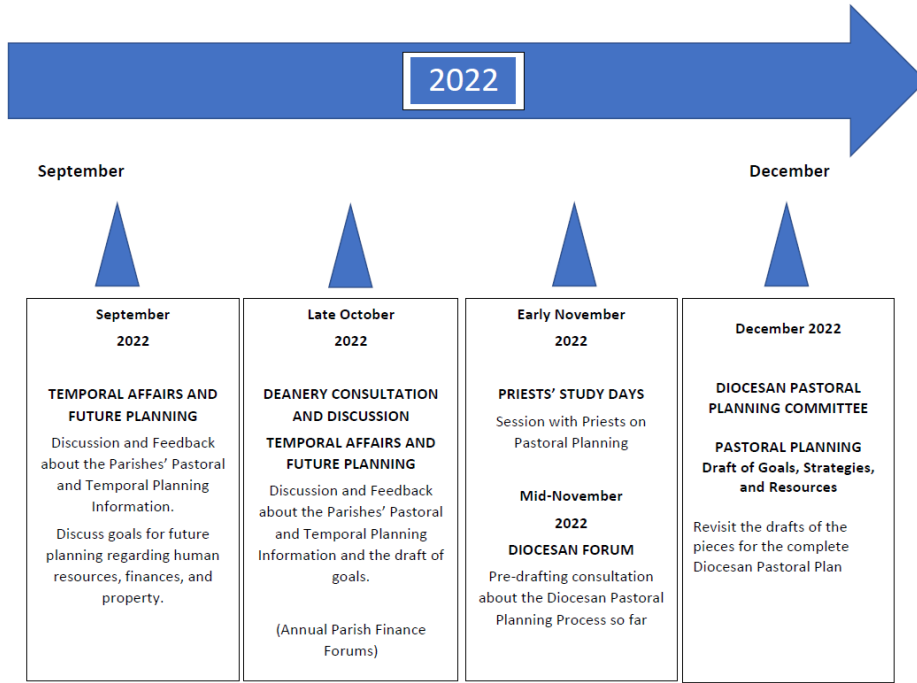
Winter 2022
SUBMISSION OF PARISH REPORTS
(March 1, 2022)
 Report from the parishes of the deanery about their parish committee discussions for communion, participation, and mission.

SURVEY DATA
 Collection of the hopes and concerns from the surveys and discussions into a consolidated report for the synodal process and diocesan pastoral planning.

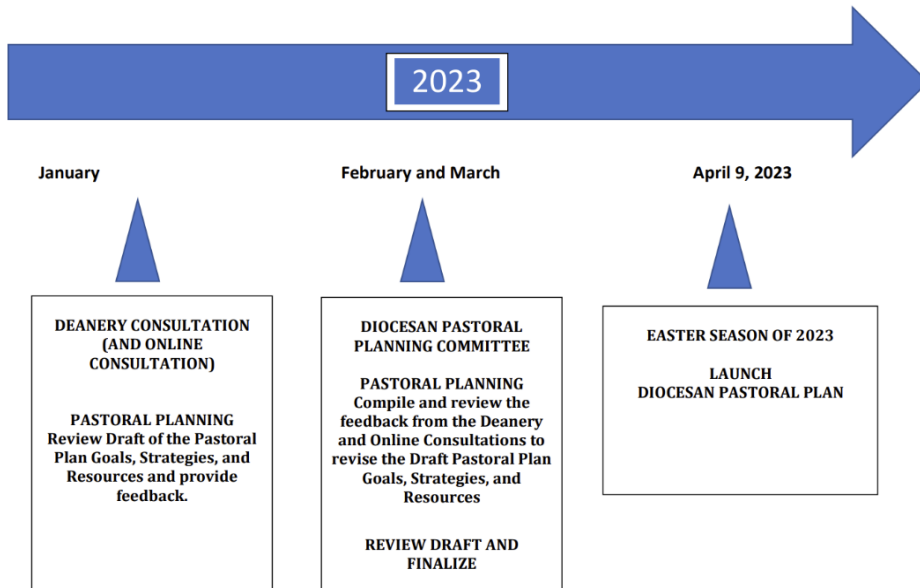
EASTER, 2022
THE CATHOLIC HERALD REPORT
 Develop a report for *The Catholic Herald* as an insert and that can also be a stand-alone about the input received through the surveys.

SPRING, 2022
 Deanery Consultations about the drafts for the Synodal and the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Processes.

JUNE 17, 2022
 Diocesan summary for the synodal process is due to the ACBO.



4



5