



Overview of the Parish Synodal Listening Session

Pope Francis has called us to become a synodal church: laity, religious and clergy jointly discerning the call of the Holy Spirit. Members of St. Francis DeSales parish gathered on Sept. 25 for a synodal listening session focusing on the Spirit's call for our parish. After reflection, prayer and small group discussion, the 22 participants shared the following insights.

What at St. Francis feeds my soul?

- A genuine sense of community, a feeling of warmth, like a family.
- The Marianist Charism, the presence of the brothers, Fr. Mike's homilies and his love for the parish, "discipleship of equals."
- Many opportunities for involvement: in liturgy, service agencies, parish committees, Fr. Mike's classes.
- The diversity in the parish.
- The equal involvement of men and women, particularly at the Masses.
- Inspiring worship space and music.
- Strong emphasis on social service.

What are areas for improvement and growth?

- Celebrate our diversity: invite everyone to share their talents and participate fully.
- Offer additional social gatherings at times accommodating participants attending either Mass, more liturgies/potluck dinners like we do in Lent, dinners for new parishioners, more frequent Doughnut Sundays in the school cafeteria, "pretzels with parish staff."
- Increase outreach to young adults and young families: social events, follow up with Baptism parents and couples married here, children's liturgies.
- Broaden our song selections at Mass.
- Continue the Worship Committee's collaboration with Fr. Mike on the homilies and share specific suggestions for improvement offered at the synod gathering.
- More adult formation programs and programs aimed at spiritual growth such as retreats, Taize prayer services, small prayer groups.
- More focus on social justice while continuing our tradition of social service.
- Invite parishioners who were formerly at St. Anthony to lead a one-time sharing session on creating a vibrant and diverse community.
- Encourage parishioners to attend the "all school Masses."
- Showcase the parish committees and how others could be involved.
- Make the synodal listening process a regular (annual?) event in the parish.
- Consider a parish survey on these ideas and other hopes for our parish.