SFDS Cincinnati 2025-26 Synod Survey Report

Our Vision for St. Francis DeSales Parish - Called by the Holy Spirit to be:

- **A Community Gathered – at our shared Eucharist**
- **A Community Connected – for support, growth and inspiration**
- **A Community Sent – to meet the needs of others and our world**

BACKGROUND - 175 people completed our parish survey in the fall of 2025. They listed both the strengths of our parish as well as possibilities for future growth and development in areas the Holy Spirit is calling us. A 9-member Synod Task Force has been working since that time to compile the survey results, sift through the data, and develop recommendations based on the survey. The information below recaps the results and suggestions in the context of our above vision and how we might move toward a fuller realization of that vision.

Strengths and Opportunities

A Community Gathered **Our Strengths** Respondents commented on the sense of welcome, warmth, inclusiveness, hospitality, and acceptance they experience when we come together for Mass. "It feels like family." The overall experience of Mass, in a beautiful space, is a highlight for many. Music adds to the richness, as does Fr. Mike's homilies, his servant leadership style & his effort to reach out to everyone before and after Mass.	**Our Shared Eucharist** **Opportunities for Growth** There was strong support for a children's program during Mass and for more opportunities for youth participation during Mass. There was a desire to diversify the music, to include other traditions/ethnicities and musical instruments. Many respondents shared that they have difficulty in hearing Fr. Mike. They also expressed a desire for the homilies to connect more with everyday life and current world realities.
A Community Connected **Our Strengths** Opportunities to gather outside of Mass (spiritual growth programs/retreats, volunteer efforts, faith sharing, educational programs) were valued by the respondents. There is an interest in having more of these gatherings. We have a diverse community that enriches our interactions. The Marianist tradition/charism offers an important framework for the life of the parish.	**Our Shared Experiences** **Opportunities for Growth** About 70 of the respondents listed a talent, skill or interest they are willing to share with the parish. We should create opportunities to use these talents There was strong support for a more robust outreach to young families and young adults. There is interest in developing ways to more fully celebrate and build on the diversity among our members. Expand the learning and application of Marianist Charism.

A Community Sent Our Strengths	Our Shared Mission Opportunities for Growth
The parish's commitment to service, social justice and outreach to the broader community are valued. Our support for local service organizations and schools was noted as a strength.	The parish should expand our commitment to promote awareness of and action for social justice. Develop relationships with additional organizations to offer more options for volunteer efforts and financial support.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to deepen and fully realize our vision for the parish, the Synod Task Force proposes that the Parish develop a 3-year strategic plan based on the survey responses. We also suggest some immediate actions to be taken.

Overall Recommendations

1. Elevate the Marianist charism in all aspects of the parish and make an ongoing commitment to being a synodal parish.
2. Share this report with all parish committees and encourage them to create and lead action steps.
3. Designate a committee – existing or new – to develop and oversee the plan's implementation.

Recommendations for A Community Gathered

- Schedule all-parish Masses and follow up events on a periodic basis.
- Develop a comprehensive children's liturgy plan that broadens to include more times and age groups.

  Immediate Actions
  - Address the audibility issue with Fr. Mike.
  - Try moving donut Sundays to the school cafeteria and adding additional beverages.
  - Create an expanded online parish member and volunteer directory.
  - Add choir members' names to the bulletin so parishioners know who they are..
  - Begin Children's Ministry lessons. Start with 1/mo. and work to expand as needed.

Recommendations for A Community Connected

- Identify opportunities that meet the needs of our youth, young adults and young families,
- Develop plans to leverage parish diversity and talents and include in an updated parish directory.
- Expand opportunities for parish members to meet outside of Sunday Mass.

  Immediate Actions
  - Develop a team of people to follow up with everyone who identified a talent, gift, or skill.
  - Build on the Millennial/GenZ efforts underway to expand and enhance participation.

Recommendations for A Community Sent

- Promote social justice education and volunteer activities offered by others.
- Look for opportunities to engage with the East Walnut Hills community and be a welcoming space for all.

  Immediate Action
  - Develop relationships with additional organizations to expand our social justice efforts.

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