



**SYNOD ON SYNODALITY
SAINT MICHAEL CHURCH SUBMITTED REPORT
SUMMARY**

At Parish listening sessions held in January and February 2022, St. Michael's parishioners responded to questions put to the parishes of the universal Catholic Church about our announcing the Gospel and "journeying together."

- How is this "journeying together" happening today in your local Church?
- What steps does the Spirit invite us to take to grow in our "journeying together"?

The Responders and the Question Format

- Who responded?
 - Approximately sixty adults and sixty youths participated in the twenty-six small group discussion groups. The male/female distribution was approximately 40% male and 60% female. Among the adults, there were more seniors than non-seniors.
- How were the questions asked?
 - Adult sessions
 - The questions were split into two areas:
 - Local Church, and
 - Universal Church (Archdiocese and Global).
 - Religious Education
 - The questions related to faith and family.
 - Youth Group
 - The questions focused on teen faith, needs, and talents and how they serve the Church and how the Church serves them.

Adult Session

Part 1: Local Church

The attendees spent most of the sessions responding to the questions related to St. Michael Parish.

- **Question One: How is this "journeying together" happening today in your local Church?
The three most frequently mentioned themes were:**

Theme #1

Ministries. If there is one clear-cut strength in the SMC community, it is the abundance and success of the ministries. These ministries include social welfare, spiritual and communal ministries for all ages and interests. Theme #1 was discussed by 64% of the tables.

Theme #2

Mass/Sacraments/Worship. The SMC community feels that there is ample opportunity to nourish their spiritual growth at SMC. Theme #2 was discussed by 57% of the tables.

Theme #3

Events / 150 Anniversary. There is significant, positive feedback on the success of strengthening the SMC community through planned events, and the 150th Anniversary planned events in particular. Theme #3 was discussed by 43% of the tables.

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- **Question Two: What prevents us from "journeying together" in your local Church?**
Responses: Societal, personal, and intra-Church Attitudes; Communication and a lack of faith-based education on issues of conflict between traditional church teaching and an increasingly "secular" society.
 - **Possible next steps - Guided by the Holy Spirit**
Prayer and spiritual growth initiatives; improved communications; and better external and internal renewal opportunities

Part 2: Universal Church (Archdiocese and Global)

The attendees' responses to the questions that relate to the **Universal Church (Global)** included:

- Church's Teachings: Show relevance and reasonableness of the Church's teachings. Find a way to get more of us to see that what the Church teaches and what we profess to believe, speak to us and enable us to live our lives in today's world with the joy of the Gospel.
- Controversial Issues: Address Church-related controversial issues such as LGBTQ+, Divorce, and Politicians/Communion.
- Sex abuse scandal: Address sex abuse scandal in a way that "puts it to bed."
- Governance, administration, and leadership: Separate and assign non-worship functions to the laity without negatively impacting the Church's mission.
- Inclusion: Women in the Church: Promote women into more significant leadership roles.
- More key positions for the laity: Train lay people to assume key positions that do not need to be filled by priests.

The attendees' responses to the questions that relate to the **Archdiocese of Newark's** support of our parish:

- Communication: Better communication about what the Archdiocese does for us.
- New Parish-to-Parish Collaboration: Deanery councils of lay people, periodic synods, or assemblies.
- Local Retreats: More local retreat opportunities.
- Inter-parish sharing: Promote inter-parish sharing.

Religious Education and Youth Group Sessions

The Religious Education and Youth Group participants requested more faith and Bible content for their educational programs. The Religious Education sessions identified an appreciation of the materials being provided to bring faith into the family. The Youth Group is appreciative of their youth group program and activities provided for them. They would like to play a more significant part in the parish, perhaps meaning at Mass or more opportunities for integration with the parish adults. Also mentioned: interaction with other parishes' Youth Groups.

Submissions and documentation

The Appendices contain the reports submitted to that Archdiocese prior to April 15, 2022. Copies of this report and all Scribe Notes have been submitted to the Parish Center.

St. Michael Church Synod Report Team – Sister Loretta Fernandez RSM, Richard Gallagher, Gretchen and Thomas Turner, Msgr. Timothy Shugrue

May 17, 2022