



# **SYNOD ON SYNODALITY 2021 – 2023**

## **Submissions from Saint Michael Church, Cranford N.J.**

### **Submission Summary**

**Parish Reports submitted on or before  
APRIL 15, 2022**

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**Saint Michael Church Synod Report Team**

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May 17, 2022

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## INTRODUCTION

In May 2021, Pope Francis invited the global Catholic Church to gather and reflect on communion, participation, and mission within the Church. The two-year process of listening and dialogue is themed, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, & Mission,” being referred to as the “Synod on Synodality,” which the Holy Father officially opened with Mass at Saint Peter’s Basilica on Oct. 10, 2021.

Pope Francis convoked the Synod on Synodality, calling for the people of God and clergy to convene and work together to listen and discern a vision for the future of the Church. The Pope wants the whole Church to explore: What does the Holy Spirit expect of the Church in the 21st Century?

Through listening and discernment rooted in the Holy Spirit, the entire people of God will be called to contribute to a process by which the Church deepens in understanding of Her mission and looks to the future.

The Synod on Synodality is intended to inspire people to dream about the church we are called to be,

to make people's hopes flourish,

to stimulate trust,

to bind up wounds,

to weave new and deeper relationships,

to learn from one another,

to build bridges,

to enlighten minds,

warm hearts,

and restore strength to our hands for our common mission. *Synod Handbook*

By means of Listening Sessions, each of the parishes around the world is asked to listen and respond as a synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel and in “journeying together”:

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

We, at Saint Michael Church, convened twenty-six small group sessions attended by over 160 persons. Half of these attendees were adults, most of whom attended the fourteen Parish-led small group sessions. A few adults took part in the four Religious-Education-led small group sessions. High School and Junior High youth took part in the eight Youth-Ministry-led small group sessions.

# SAINT MICHAEL CHURCH SUBMISSION REPORT SUMMARY

## SYNOD ON SYNODALITY SAINT MICHAEL CHURCH REPORT TO ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK 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:**

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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.

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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.

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Theme #3

**Events / 150 Anniversary.** There is significant, positive feedback on the success of strengthening the SMC community through planned events, and the 150<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

May 17, 2022

## APPENDIX A: PARISH SUBMISSION

### Saint Michael Church SYNOD PARISH SYNTHESIS REPORT

#### GENERAL PARISH SESSION(S) INFORMATION

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**Parish:** St. Michael, Cranford

Sessions hosted: 26

Date(s) of Session Jan 16 - Feb 27

Were the sessions held in person or online?

We had 10 sessions in person and two sessions online

Total number of people who participated:

57 (plus 62 youth & parents reported separately by Youth Ministry and Religious Education)

#### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**Estimate the percentage of how many women attended.** 57%

**Estimate the percentage of how many men attended.** 43%

**Tell us about the connection to the parish community of those who participated.**

Parishioners

Religious Education

Catholic school

Youth group

Faith sharing group

Charismatic community

Prayer group

Liturgical minister

Other: Other parish groups, including Rosary Society and Knights of Columbus

**Did the participants in the session(s) represent a cross-section of the racial,**

**ethnic and cultural diversity in your local community?**

Yes

**Did you reach out to people with disabilities or families who have members who are disabled?**

Yes

**Did you reach out to people who are marginalized?**

Yes

**Which group(s) did you reach out to?**

Homebound. Those who could not attend, Non parishioner Noon Mass attendees

#### LISTENING SESSION(S) OVERVIEW

Provide a brief overview of session(s) - (Limit to 2 paragraphs or about 500 words.) If you hosted more than one session, you may wish to highlight how these sessions were similar or different.

When asked at the end of the session "how was this?", the response was that the attendees enjoyed the session, especially the chance to hear what other people said on the topics.

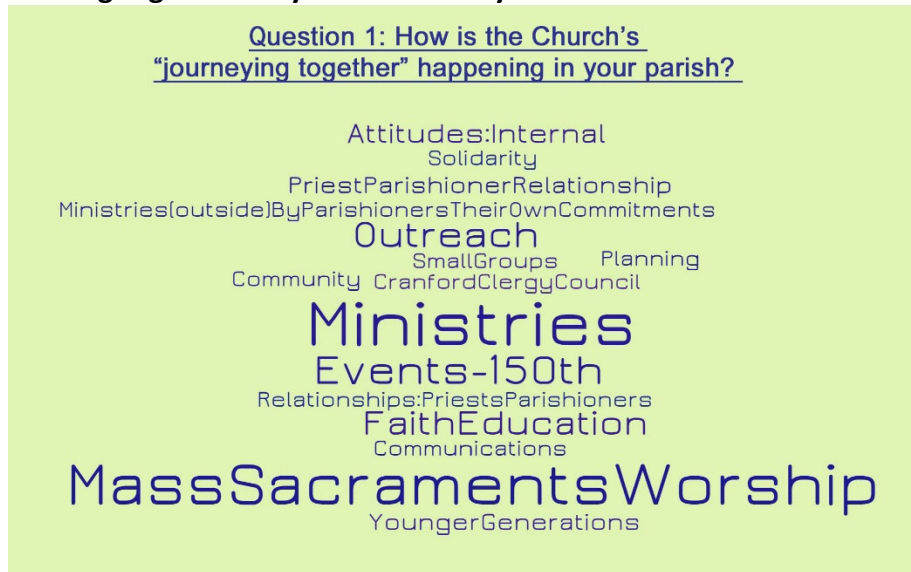
**In addition to the listening session(s), did you use an online survey to collect feedback?** If yes, please provide

information about what you learned from the survey in a separate report.

No

CORE QUESTION ONE: PARISH

**HOW IS THIS "JOURNEYING TOGETHER" HAPPENING TODAY IN YOUR COMMUNITY? Share 3 examples of "walking together" in your community.**



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Theme #1

**Ministries.** If there is one clear cut strength in the SMC community it is the abundance and success of the ministries. There are social welfare, spiritual and communal ministries for all ages and interests.

Description

Opportunities to participate in responding to needs; being able to serve the parish, parishioners, persons in need in and outside of the parish; giving of time, talent or treasure; also, good people ministering as "living saints"; ministering in many ways in one's daily life.

How often was theme #1 discussed? (i.e., 80% of the tables discussed this theme) **64%**

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Theme #2

**Mass/Sacraments/Worship.** The SMC community feels that there is ample opportunity to nourish their spiritual growth at SMC.

Description

Brings us together; enables us to show concern for others.

How often was theme #2 discussed? (i.e., 80% of the tables discussed this theme) **57%**

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Theme #3



**Events / 150 Anniversary.** There is a lot of positive feedback on the success of strengthening the SMC community through the planned events and the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary planned events in particular.

Description

Gives us opportunities to be together, to share interests, show openness to each other.

How often was theme #3 discussed? (i.e., 80% of the tables discussed this theme) 43%

**What prevents us from “walking together?” What hinders people from being a part of the parish and/or speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly?**

**WHAT PREVENTS US FROM “WALKING TOGETHER”?**



**Attitudes** that people have towards the church, specifically the prioritization of living a faith-based life were the most prevalent themes. Most of these responses were not necessarily reflective of dogma or specific church teaching.

- Society: “me” society; a cancel culture; fast-paced society; secular society; relativism; too busy.
- Personal: casual society; different life stages; don't know each other; stressed; time pressures; personal obligations; too many owned ministries; turned off by parishioners; unfocused on Bible.
- Intra-Church: an "I am spiritual, no need for church" attitude; attitude toward God; criticism of church; fake news on the church; no awareness of a need for church; no thought of life-after-death.

The second most common theme was related to **Communications** and how and what the church messaging is. Some felt the messaging from church officials was often negative or unfavorable or lacking inclusiveness.

Not listening; not welcoming; lack of a “Catholic, come home” approach; advertise; communication; not reaching those without computers; some do not read the bulletin or our weekly email blast.

The third most prevalent theme however was more **Faith-Education** centric and perhaps reflective of the conflicts of traditional church teaching and an increasingly “secular” society. The church’s stance on divorced Catholics and LGBTQ featured prominently.

Catechism taught too early; children stop coming to learn; faith teaching isn't challenging; weak homeschooling; lack of qualified teachers; lack of parental interest in faith; not enough building of relationships with Jesus; [concern about] God is missing; Issues: LGBTQ, divorced, politicians/Communion.

**What are three steps we can take in our parishes to grow in “walking together”? (This question was asked and answered at the Listening Sessions, but was not included in the online survey.)**



The most often mentioned was related to **Prayer and Spiritual Growth**.

Cornerstone; spiritual growth; charismatic preachers; faith sharing; individual responsibility; moms YouTube group and chat group; people's stories; Prayer; prayer groups; small groups; relevant to life: what should I do?; sync home and church; the chosen; ward off evil.

Next is **Communication**.

Internal communication; communicate with people; see what works outside; advertise; communicate; advertise our presence; no interest in the bulletin or blast.

Followed by **Parish**.

Invite; invitations; image; be welcoming; show respect; get over pre scandal effects; staff should be seriously committed to the faith; size; participation.

## CORE QUESTION TWO: UNIVERSAL CHURCH (ARCHDIOCESE AND GLOBAL)

### HOW ARE WE "WALKING TOGETHER" AS A CHURCH, AND WHAT STEPS DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT INVITE US TO TAKE IN ORDER TO GROW IN OUR JOURNEYING TOGETHER?

By our deep listening, what actions do you hear the Holy Spirit asking the **universal Church** to take?

- **Church's Teachings:** Show relevance and reasonableness of Church's teachings. Find a way to get more of us to see that what the Church teaches and what we profess to believe do 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."

What practical steps are needed to include people in the areas of leadership, governance, and inclusion in the **universal Church**?

Leadership:

**Administration/Leadership:** Separate and assign non-worship functions to laity without negatively affecting the Church's mission.

**Doctrine, Spirituality and Issues:** Add interesting content to USCCB website that can be used by diocesan and parishes website to educate and inform the faithful – written specifically for the faithful of various ages.

Governance:

**Leadership/Administration:** Separate and assign non-worship functions to laity.

**Accountability:** More checks and balances.

Inclusion:

**Women in the Church:** Promote women into church roles.

**More Key Positions for Laity:** Train lay people to assume key positions that do not need to be filled by priests.

## LOCAL QUESTIONS

How can the **Archdiocese of Newark** support you in your local 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.

Parish Communications: On a regular basis provide parishes with publication-ready material about the Vatican, USCCB and Archdiocese for Social Media, website and bulletin for communication to the parishioners. (Now each parish has to search for this in order to keep the parishioners informed.)

What are 3 steps we can take in our **Archdiocese** to grow more collaboratively for the future?

1. Collaboration between the parishes – providing parishioner education and socializing. Sharing ministries to increase collaboration and maximize strengths.

Catholic School Incentives – providing incentives for parents to send children to our Catholic schools.

2. More Bishops visiting parishes.
3. Allowing Catholic weddings at non-church venues - with a priest.

#### CORE QUESTION ONE THEMES FOR SMC PARISH PLANNING

[The Listening Session Directions and Notes requested that we develop Themes for Parish Planning based upon Core Question Two (CQ2). The SMC Synod Listening Session Report Team is, in addition to the CQ2 Themes submitted via the Archdiocesan Survey, submitting to the parish Revitalization Team, these themes reflecting the content given by the Listening Session participants in their responses to Core Question One.]

The quotations below are from the Listening Session Scribe Notes.

#### **Core Question One Themes for SMC Parish Planning**

##### **Theme 1: Mass, Sacraments, Worship**

“Brings us together; enables us to show concern for others.”

Focus on increasing our gratitude for the Eucharist and on living Eucharistic lives in the “circle of love” of the Trinity (which is in our DNA – since we are made in the image of a God who is Love)

##### **Theme 2: Ministries**

“Opportunities to participate in responding to needs; being able to serve the parish, parishioners, persons in need in and outside of the parish; giving of time, talent or treasure; also, good people ministering as ‘living saints’; ministering in many ways in one’s daily life.”

Focus on evaluating and re-founding our ministries and developing new ones, including one(s) that encourage everyone to see each other as potential “living saints,” ministering in many ways in one’s daily life.

**Theme 3: Events, 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events**

“Gives us opportunities to be together, to share interests, show openness to each other.”

**Theme 4: Attitudes**

Initiatives to lessen the impact of “Societal, Personal and Intra-Church attitudes” that keep us and others from a fuller experience of the joy of the Gospel message (God is For Us and God is With Us).

**Theme 5: Faith Education and Prayer**, including an understanding of “Issues thought to be controversial (LGBTQ, divorce, politicians/Communion)”  
Prayer, Spiritual Growth, Prayer/Faith Formation Groups

**Theme 6: Parish Staff, Volunteers, anyone interested**

Programs and initiative that encourage growth in being “seriously committed to the faith” - for the sake of the Church’s mission. [an action statement of “staff should be seriously committed to the faith; more parishioner participation”]

**Theme 7: Communications**

Update so that the message is appropriate and most likely to be seen and viewed.

CORE QUESTION TWO THEMES FOR SMC PARISH PLANNING

Refer back to Core Question 2. In your discussion of this question, participants were asked to offer specific actions for the local parish.

List 3 to 5 themes which you heard in the table discussions which will assist with your future parish with pastoral planning.

Theme 1

We are asking the Church to (1) show us the “relevance and reasonableness of Church’s teachings”, and (2) help us to see that the “teachings do speak to us and our lives in today’s world.” We, then, have to be willing to try to listen to it with an open mind and an openness to the Spirit helping us to understand and accept it. How do we do this and do likewise with what the Universal Church presents to address the sex abuse scandal.

Theme 2

If the Universal Church responds to the requests for administrative/leadership change and the inclusion of the laity, especially, women in church positions, the parishioners must welcome them and allow them to serve in this capacity.

Theme 3

Parish priests, staff, volunteers and other parishioners must see oversight of the parish be the Archdiocese as well as inter-parish collaboration as being performed for the good of the whole Church and fully support this.

#### Theme 4

Create education opportunities for parishioners to learn about doctrine and history – lecture series or speaker series?

#### Theme 5

Revitalize the CLOW (Children's' Liturgy of the Word), youth and young adult and adult efforts; continue with more social events similar to the ones organized for the 150 Anniversary.

## APPENDIX B: YOUTH GROUP SUBMISSION

### Let's Journey Together! Sharing Our Voice Youth Ministry (Middle and High School Aged)

The scribe or person who is taking notes records key points of the conversation. You are trying to capture the essence of the conversation, not all the details. You may want to jot notes down on a blank sheet of paper as the conversation unfolds and then fill in the form after. Please write as neatly as possible and organize the thoughts presented. Work with the group participants to discern what are the key themes.

Location: St. Michael, Cranford

Date of Session: Sunday February 27, 2022

Thursday February 24, 2022

Approximately how long 1 hour & 30 minutes

1 hour

How many: 38 **HIGH SCH. (9TH-12TH GRADE)** teens

22 **JUNIOR HIGH (7TH, 8TH GRADE)** teens

What is the age range: high school

middle school

Male (#)\_15\_ Female (#) \_23

Male 10 Female 12

#### Race and/or ethnicity

Caucasian

Caucasian

African-American or Black

Asian

Asian

Hispanic or Latino

Hispanic or Latino

#### Involved in:

*(Check all that apply)*

Religious education

Religious education

Catholic school

Catholic school

Youth group

Youth group

**1. In our parish, do we have effective means of reaching our young people and including them?**

- *We use our Social Media well. Adaptive views on identity & events - effective but can be changed and improved.*

**2. Are there some additional ways we might need to adopt to communicate with more people and invite their active participation?**

- *We have good youth participation.*
- *We need more interaction with other youth groups, more youth only events, more representation of youth in the church.*
- *More choices and fun events for young children.*
- *Advertising more and mailing us stuff.*
  
- *Other than youth group, CCD and catholic school there isn't much to include younger kids.*
- *The Youth Group is a good way to get kids to connect and go to Mass.*
- *We should have more discussions like this synod more often so younger people can speak.*

**3. Pope Francis encourages us to reach out beyond our active parish community and observe who is in our local area. It is essential to look at who "used to be at our parish," and now who is not here, and those who might feel left out or on the margins. These might include members of minority groups, young adults, widowed or divorced, singles, elderly, persons with physical or learning disabilities, members of religious communities or various devotional groups, native speakers of a language other than English, those who might be considering becoming Catholic, civic officials, or those of other faiths.**

**What are the ways we reach out collectively or individually to those who are no longer participating in church? How do we reach out to youth, cultural or ethnic groups, women, disabled, those living in poverty or social exclusion, or others?**

- *Being more accepting, offering therapy and having Mass in different languages.*
- *By Social Media and our church's website.*
- *The church needs to go out and see and talk to people not just wait for people to come and see them. Maybe consider hosting charity events to get people involved.*
- *We can send them mail, post things on social media, and invite anyone and everyone to come to youth group.*
- *We could do a better job at communicating.*
- *Don't force it, be accepting and open, let them choose their faith path.*
  
- *Money collections every Sunday, food banks, fundraisers, being inclusive, "buddy benches" and mutli-religion activities.*
- *Do more activities like the Feast.*
- *Invite them to church events or talk to them about the church.*

**4. What do you think are the biggest challenges facing young people today?**

- *Mental Health Issues, FOMO, social media pressures, peer pressure, identity issues, Covid, Social media expectations, school, stress, conflicting views from the church, future plans, fitting in with society, not*



*talking about our faith, phones*

- *Covid, dealing with the pandemic, how the internet negatively affects us, stress, school, bullying, anxiety, prejudice, family issues, relationship with God, inclusivity*

**5. Liturgical ministries, outreach to the homebound, religious education, youth ministry and services to the poor always seem to need additional volunteers. Are we challenging people to take on some vital parish ministries and training them for these? Are we asking you to get involved?**

- *You can always do more*
- *There are opportunities, but nothing to convince people*
- *We are encouraged, but not challenged, we have to do better as a community*
- *We ask parishioners to volunteer and make sandwiches each week*
- *No, only in pamphlets/ bulletin that we don't read*
- *They can definitely be more motivating, some have negative views of religion*
  
- *We are encouraged, but not challenged to join. For example, we are encouraged to join the High School Youth Group – but not pressured into doing it.*
- *Yes we are getting asked to be involved*
- *Other than CCD and Catholic School there aren't enough service opportunities for us*

**6. What is one positive thing that people your age can offer to the Church or Society to impact both of them for the better?**

- *Service, charitable donations, changing social norms, inclusive society, lending a helping hand*
- *Better input from young people and more dedication*
- *We keep the church going and spread it to the next generation*
- *Volunteering, donating, creating a positive community, being accepting*
- *Altar servers, youth group, service projects*
- *Go to Mass, volunteer, themselves*
  
- *Donate, Volunteer, Community Service, Altar Server, being a role model*

**7. Are we an evangelizing parish? Do we reach out to one another and to people who are not members of our Church in ways that makes Jesus real for them and personalizes faith? Are we seeing the fruits of our efforts?**

- *Programs like this, youth group*
- *We are not evangelizing. We reach out to people to help them, not convert them*
- *No, we can do better. People think we are judgmental and are afraid of being criticized.*
- *We think we are, and that we are seeing the bountiful fruits of our efforts*
- *Yes, we have people from all different towns*
- *The face of religion is old people, young people don't feel accepted by their age, old can't connect with the young and have different views*
  
- *Yes*
- *We don't really talk to others about our faith, so we don't evangelize*
- *We have events like the Feast that involve many people in a positive way. Our community is very inclusive to those not a part of it.*

**8. What is the best thing you have participated in that helped deepen your faith or helped engage you in your faith?**

- *Youth Group, personal experiences, family participation*
- *Youth Group, Catholic School, Religious Ed/ CCD*
- *Youth group is the best thing we have participated in that has deepened our faith*
- *Helping with service organizations, visiting sick kids, going on youth group retreat*
- *Youth Group*
- *Confirmation, community work, youth group*
- *Volunteering with the Church, helping out at CCD*
- *Retreats, Receiving the Eucharist, Donut Events, Church*
- *Youth Group and CCD*

**9. What is one thing you wish the local church offered to help you grow in faith that it doesn't currently offer?**

- *More programs for teens*
- *Cater things more to teens, kids and adults*
- *Bible study for younger kids, youth only events, youth only Mass*
- *We wish the church would offer more times for confessions that teens could go to*
- *Volunteer opportunity and teen bible study*
- *Bible study for teens*
- *Food*
- *More activities for kids to participate in*
- *More activities for younger kids, more youth group*
- *Youth only Mass once in a while, Food with Bible Quotes, Easier donations like digitally*

**10. If you could sit down with Pope Francis, what is one thing you would tell him about young people?**

- *Social Media is King, we have this kind of negative stereotype of religion*
- *We need to break the reputation of the Catholic church to get more young people*
- *That we are grateful for the youth group because it has improved our faith*
- *It's different today, the church needs to change with the time. Be more accepting, learn from us, don't dismiss us and don't be scared of us!*
- *We are strong!*
- *If we work out some problems, we have a lot to offer*
- *We need support when we struggle with our faith, in our "world" being a catholic isn't always "cool". You could encourage kids in the church by changing the way we are taught.*
- *We have a voice too, we're smart, talk about personal life. All the Churches should have their own Holy Cow.*
- *Make a TikTok. A lot of young people aren't involved in their faith and the church should have more things for them to get involved in.*

## APPENDIX C: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUBMISSION

### SAINT MICHAEL, CRANFORD - RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RESPONSES

**1. If your family could sit down with Pope Francis what things would you tell him about yourself?**

*Our child's faith formation begins with us, the parents; we want their religious education to extend into the community and get them involved in the community. Faith, sacramental training are important to us; faith is a big part of our life. We like to give back. The Church is not moving fast enough to keep up with the changing world; our fidelity and trust in the Church is compromised by perceived flaws and the world's lack of faith.*

**2. What are some challenges families are facing today?**

*Challenges: busy schedules; outside influences; Mass boring, (Make it relevant to our outside lives); balancing work, life, faith; perceptions of Church policies (gender issues); Covid-initiated absence not restored; the Church's virtual world is not attracting the kids to use it to help with mental health, anxiety, isolation.*

**3. What does your family, or families in general, need from the Catholic Church? Could include your local parish, the archdiocese, and or the global Catholic Church.**

*Update the Catechism to modern day life; retain young adults in church communities; be more welcoming to everyone; create community; God: help with building a connection to God; more openness and flexibility; help with connecting to the global Church; better understanding of the Bible; more authentic interaction with our priests.*

**4. What is something your family can contribute to your parish? To the larger church?**

*Outreach is contributing to parish and Church;" practice patience"; "want to grow the Church"; sharing treasure; "stay strong in faith"; "attend Mass regularly", "active in Church."*

**5. Do you feel as though your family matters to both your parish community and the global Catholic Church? What are some reasons why or why not?**

*Yes, if we do something to make that happen; so-so to Church helps & knows us; Church needs new leaders; post Covid: we don't matter.*

**6. If your family were put in charge of keeping other families active in their faith, how would you go about it?**

*"Fun" Bible study; relevant-to-life, more inclusive Church teachings; use social media to "push" Gospel messages. Service, coffee, donuts, Bible and prayer groups. Better technology & education; let all (men, women, married, single) be priests. Family gatherings and service opportunities.*

**7. What are some of the joys of sharing faith as a family? Some of the struggles?**

*Joys: Sharing small joys; being together, guiding principles, moral compass; celebrating and mourning together; sharing tradition, celebrating the sacraments and holidays deepened by faith.*

*Struggles: hard to find time. Different members have different opinions/views on church policies and teachings. Struggle getting to Mass.*

**8. At baptism, each of us is called to follow Christ and be his disciple. In what ways can your parish, archdiocese, the global Catholic community better engage families to live out this calling?**

*Social media presence; N/A; gatherings; emphasize Church's social mission; better understanding of the Bible, a more inclusive and welcoming Church.*