

Synodal Church Sharing 2022-03-20. RESPONSE SUMMARY

PARTICIPANTS: Nine persons, all part of an Intentional Community, who meet virtually on Sunday mornings for shared liturgies. See separate DESCRIPTION of INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY.

Our Synodal Questions: In reflecting with the pillars of a Synodal Church: Communion; Participation; and Mission:

- 1) Where and how do you experience life, joy, and the Spirit in the Church?
- 2) Where and how do you experience difficulties and wounds?
- 3) Given these reflections and that “Our mission is to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family.”, where do you hear the voice of the Spirit? How is it calling us?



We opened our session with “Prayer for Romero: Prophets of a Future Not Our Own” by Bishop Ken Untener.

- 1) Where and how do you experience life, joy, and the Spirit in the Church?**
- 2) Where and how do you experience difficulties and wounds?**

- The sharing was rich, free-flowing, heartfelt and passionate, expressing deep love for the Church along with deep frustration and dismay with its institutional stagnation, often extreme clericalism, exclusion of the perspectives and voices of faithful laity, too often caught up in rules and regulations while missing Jesus’ message.
- Key life-giving experiences, in parishes and elsewhere, have been in small faith-sharing communities and through varied forms of social action. Examples are legion, including Cursillo, Charismatic, Marriage Encounter, Renew groups, Just Faith programs, Call To Action, and this Intentional Community...

- Recurrent experience of a change in the parish pastor leading to abolishing and silencing participation of parishioners (e.g. removal of lay leaders & lay leadership in the parish)
- Searching widely for a parish that feels life-giving, and when a Catholic one cannot be found, searching among Protestant churches in the area.
- Finding rich faith life and church life among poor persons in South America and Haiti.
- Sometimes unable to believe what is said by clergy and hierarchy, e.g. a priest claiming to be “Jesus Christ”
- Covid provided the opportunity to leave the institutional structures, the regular liturgies, and join [more life-giving] virtual gatherings. Many who left during covid are not returning. Those who return are those who accept things as they are.
- The Spirit is working through the priest shortage!
- Remembering a 6-year-old niece saying “I don’t think that Jesus is such a great guy. In the reading today he fed all the men but did nothing for the women and children!”
- What about the place of youth in the church today? They are often not invited to be engaged in parish life.

3) Given these reflections and that “Our mission is to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family.”, where do you hear the voice of the Spirit? How is it calling us?

- The institutional Church as now structured needs to die. The Church needs to cast out fear and let change come from the margins.
- Care for Mother Earth needs to be more of a priority
- We need to pay attention to our inner longings! Know the Spirit within ourselves and let it flower.
- We are not looking to the institutional hierarchy to be the light on the mountain, but look to find the Spirit “outside the box.”
- We will continue to find other ways for local commitment and engagement.