

St. Vincent DePaul Albany, NY
www.stvincentalbany.org
Synod Listening Session Small Group
May 26, 2022

1. What have been your experiences of the church?

We experience church as a community, at times an important part of our social circles. Our greatest connection happens around the celebration of the Eucharist – the times before and after Mass, and other sacraments: RCIA. Baptism, First Communion, these are our times of connection.

Our greatest disappointments lie in the priest scandals and the poor way the Church doesn't deal with human sexuality. In addition the language of the Church is non-inclusive. Women are made to feel outside the community called church, especially in the area of ordained ministry.

We are also concerned by a turn toward a “conservative” theological / sacramental expression where the superficial is revered (i.e. cassocks and other externals.)

2. What might the Church learn from your experiences?

The Holy spirit is present in those who leave the Church as well as those who stay. There could be a greater outreach to those who are marginalized. We need to get out of the church and into the neighborhoods.

The hierarchy is detached from the local church. We / it might be better if there was less hierarchical structure and more service.

We are the body of Christ, but we are often seen as “lesser thans.” We are adults and should be treated as equals.

We get little discussion about living a more contemplative life, where our lives of prayer and service rise up from a deeper spiritual life.

3. What actions can you take; should the parish or diocese take?

We extend our hospitality to all, not just on Sundays but in all aspects of our lives. We all could be creative, dynamic welcoming communities.

By telling our stories we witness our faith experiences.

The churches need to create an environment that invites participation. The church has a great deal of healing to facilitate.

Creating listening sessions / liturgies can help us heal and become stronger communities.

The annulment process is too legalized and insensitive to those who are trying to heal. There are times when this process can do more harm than good.

Women make up the majority of this planet and this church but are denied ministerial equity, in serving and ministers and preaching on the Word.

No one should be denied the Eucharist; it is gift of God for the people of God.