

St. Vincent De Paul, Albany  
[www.stvincentalbany.org](http://www.stvincentalbany.org)  
Zoom Synod Listening Session  
June 1, 2022

### Small Group Breakout Session

#### Experiences in the Church

1. Grew up in city parish; everyone the speaker knew was Catholic  
Had a tendency towards scrupulosity; went to Confession every week  
Faith was challenged in college by geology teacher who asked, “You don’t believe in God do you?” Speaker decided they didn’t.  
Married, speaker and spouse were raising children the way they had been raised, doing all the church things  
Through Cursillo and Residents Encounter Christ the speaker had an amazing revelation of God’s love and has been fast in faith ever since.

2. They have had an administrator for the past year but the name of the former pastor, who was removed for sexual abuse of a minor is still on the bulletin; intercessions during Mass include prayers for him but not for the victims  
During this past year, speaker felt that there wasn’t anything they could offer; didn’t think the current administration wanted them to  
Lost pastoral council, committees, idea of basic Christian communities  
Church has to listen more; Bishops don’t seem to listen  
The speaker asked to be anointed because of an upcoming medical procedure; the administrator never called to ask how they were doing  
Doesn’t find community in the church anymore; knew community under different leadership many years before; was involved in liturgical ministry; liturgies were celebrated well; homilies were challenging  
Left to join a neighboring parish but after a recent merger, the other church is hard to get to  
Likes the contemporary choir and the administrator but there are some legal issues with his immigration status  
There are indications that the Holy Spirit is at work; Pope Francis has initiated challenging endeavors, but the speaker knows there is dissent  
The speaker loves the Auriesville Shrine, walks there every day however, the Extraordinary Form Mass is offered every Sunday, tends to be only one model  
Used to have workshops, get together with people in different ministries  
The secretary would respond right away; speaker knew they were “somebody”; felt welcomed  
People in church are quick to name what is wrong; never go to the underlying causes, e. g. Uvalde and Buffalo were not mentioned in the Prayers of the Faithful  
Feelings changed after surgery; realize how disconnected someone can be  
Speaker’s mom would receive visits, calls, was asked to send get well cards  
How do we connect people?

2. Speaker has a diverse experience: baptized and confirmed in the Ukrainian

Catholic Church then confirmed again in the RC Church  
Connected with Thich Nat Hanh  
Ordained  
Handicapped and in a wheelchair due to an injured spine; accepts the pain as part of God's will  
Would like to see more diversity  
Zoom services are helpful

Large Group Report – What were the most significant things heard / felt in your breakout group?

Happy with Vatican II; disappointed with the way it worked out  
Didn't open things up for the laity to get more involved  
Could be more creative in reaching out to the neighborhood  
Rather than stay with ritual, we should throw in a "real" meal or service activity  
Get away from "I believe" to "This is what it means to be a Christian."  
Invite congregants to write ideas down on readings on index cards  
Dialog homilies

Joys –

Energy present in the community at prayer; manifestation of the Spirit  
Don't get to God on one's own

Disappointments –

Treatment of LGBTQ people  
Women restricted from ordination  
Men recently ordained seem to have received no pastoral formation  
Church needs to take a hard look at itself and walk the walk  
Like to see example shown by being more welcoming and inclusive  
Action needed – to institutionalize the synod process, especially regarding the selection of bishops

Concerns –

Been in a lot of churches: quality of homilies is generally poor; do not address the conditions of the world, e.g. the idolatry of guns or consumerism  
Need for a new evangelization; we are living in a pagan culture  
Much of church teaching is based on natural law which doesn't take into consideration modern science  
Church teaching must be based on reality: theology and scriptures; people should learn what to take literally and not; need to think about how and what is taught  
The Church has a lot of substance to offer  
A lot of the references to God are metaphysical: Jesus is neither lamb nor cornerstone.  
The canonical doctrine of reception: if a teaching is not received it is not valid  
Importance of inclusivity and against racism: seamless garment of life

Being at St. Vincent's is very different because of the way it expresses Christian discipleship

American Church is different from European church; the Church in America is very divided

Speaker had little teaching about Vatican II where she grew up; she learned so much as a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph

Was in one group where very young Moms expressed disappointment that people did not adhere to the catechism

Recent billboard – “Are you lost?” targets one group; you've lost the rest of us  
Every group has youth leaving after Confirmation;  
Speaker has known the saving love of God; wants others to know that too

FOCUS churches work together to help the poor; there should be more room for collaboration with other churches in our neighborhood

Post-Vatican II era had impulse of interfaith and ecumenical activity; need to look at what we have in common; be more involved in social justice action, e. g. against war; pull people together; more than a belief system

Speaker is a member of a church formed by Catholics dissenting from RC Church teaching: speaker believes that all the desires articulated in this session wish exist e.g, women priests and deacons in this church

Catechism is a list of propositions to follow as rules; better if it was aimed at a way to live as a Christian. Didn't Jesus say, you've made the law your God?

Pentecost is a celebration of freshness and newness.

Disorder can be a good thing.

Daniel Berrigan – Catholics risking lives for the right reasons.