

## Synodality Listening Session 2 Comments

February 26, 2022

Carmelite Sisters of Baltimore

### POSITIVE EXPERIENCE OF CHURCH

People had a good experience of church when they received the sacrament of Confirmation. Holy Spirit was present with them, hearts on fire.

Someone had a good experience of church when they proposed a program for disabled children and it was accepted.

Good experience before the pandemic to get together with others in a parish for mass followed by movies and something to eat.

Churches using technology to connect people.

Loyola Pastoral Counseling Program expanded my vision; could discuss anything

Participants experienced Church as it was meant to be at various times, situations, and places including:

- ~a high school senior retreat for students from multiple schools with an adult presence but talks given by peers and students encouraged to openly air questions and doubts...gathering and forming community outdoors rather than in a building.

- ~Guiding an RCIA program

- ~Participating in the early days (1970's) of a Carmelite Contemplative Prayer Group one the West Coast

- ~Attending the ordination of a woman who would preside at liturgies for a House Church

- ~Celebrating Eucharist in accord with the traditional Catholic rubrics but in a small chapel with an intentional community.

- ~Participating in events at a Carmelite H.S. when her sons were students there

- ~Gathering periodically with a small group of like-minded women to pray with, reflect on, and share their thoughts about the Sunday scripture readings

- ~Working in a Campus Ministry setting where all were welcome

- ~Doing Retreat Ministry among a Native American Population and finding God in nature

- ~ Pastoral Parish Work that had no need for presence of ordained clergy

Canonization of John Neuman in Rome. Group went out of the way to make Americans feel welcomed-played Mummer's music – everyone joined in the Mummer's Strut.

Mass in the Motherhouse: Included sisters from Africa who came dancing up the center isle with the Offertory gifts. This is Church!

Inter-novitiate experience: 10 communities represented.

In a senior residential center the group tries to provide spiritual care for each other through contact with each other and faith sharing.

After COVID-19 a small parish group is working together to recover their ministries lost because of pastoral changes and the pandemic.

The Carmelite Monastery practices inclusivity by inviting the Gospel Choir from a city church to cel-

celebrate Sunday liturgy at the Monastery which is always open to all who wish to attend. In the past the students from the school were invited to have a day of retreat at the Monastery – and a chance to enjoy grass and trees and flowers.

A pastor hopes to begin outreach to the Indigenous Peoples living within the church's environs. The approach will be through listening circles to learn about the spirituality of the People. Subsequent steps will evolve from the listening experience.

Local church tries to get people to come out for various offerings with little response.

Gatherings with various Christian churches and inter-faith groups where we get to know one another and learn about one another's tradition.

Experiences in Kenya and Jamaica. All black community went out of their way to welcome the only 2 white people in the church.

Pastoral staff went out of their way to reach out to fallen away adult children in a time of need. It made such a difference and brought them back.

Working with young people it has been important to acknowledge we have not done church well, name our sin and provide opportunities for healing and forgiveness.

Belonging to a small intentional community group and sharing our faith was meaningful.

Being greeted, welcomed, and walked to a discussion table made me feel like I belonged even though I did not look like the African parish I was attending.

Private prayer and community prayer was instrumental in my sense of belonging.

Attending mass in person and/or via zoom at the Carmelite Baltimore Monastery made me feel instantly welcomed and I experienced a desire to live a holy life.

Establishing small Christian communities to discuss the Gospel was meaningful because it invited us to listen to the spirit's voice and the wisdom of others.

Listening, praying, speaking, and sharing with people made me feel connected to others as brothers and sisters.

The intimacy and regularity of attending mass in a small parish church made me feel known and loved.

Moved to new parish right after Vatican II, pastor into VII, encouraging everyone to get involved. All were new, people all worked together. Very inclusive, all were eager to participate.

Lot of time of oneness: Parish in Nicaragua, I wasn't even a Catholic at that point, had nowhere to go, parish open to me, though I was Anglican, I was receiving Communion, priest so open and encouraging. Felt that, as an "outsider" (technically,) I was completely welcomed. Became a Catholic. Experienced oneness in other parishes abroad too. Maybe not possible in a local parish.

Church "as I thought it was meant to be": In U.S.: Went to Catholic college outside NYC, experienced inclusivity, respect for inclusivity and difference there; cities offer divergence /diversity of experience. Closer to home, invited to "Nativity" parish outside of Baltimore, amazing. Vital community.

Experience of extended time in Taize' community: Horizontality, inclusion of different voices, collaboration, welcome, simplicity, dialogue, energy, deep spiritual searching in common, constructive action.

Interfaith Centers in Columbia: Different congregations housed in one building. Welcomed into Catholic community. One example of outreach of tapping into people's gifts. Mothers with young children

group. Spirit of outreach, wonderful

And outstanding choir and director, outreach. It enlivened liturgies, and community was built around it.

50 years ago, most significant experience, so meaningful, I was a religious sister in Philippines, I was involved in many activities in the Church, for the poor (those poor in everything), the marginalized. Collaboration with priests, religious... Where there was collaboration among members of the community of the Church; where I can see hands of God working in everyone of us... Grace putting us all together.

Everyone had some good experience of “church” but not necessarily in church.

One mentioned having with a charismatic group, another with a group praying the rosary in all different languages. One experienced it in teaching lots of different immigrants English (welcome, respect, help among the group). Another mentioned a woman presiding at a communion service.

General feeling of welcome steams from involvement-- examples: pizza parties with parish kids, volunteer opportunities at Catholic Worker house

Working together in groups-- we must come together as community of faith-- there is no other way to achieve what we want from our Church

Laudato Si action platform: meaningful way of coming together; connection with nature/ecology; reflecting on our lack of relationship with nature as sign of our inability to connect with one other.

Relationship with faith community at daily mass in local parish; presider asks congregation to share their “own piece of the truth” as part of homily. Can we bring to our Church a greater understanding and sharing of others’ truths?

Appreciative of community at Baltimore Carmel, both on Sundays and during the week. Openness of the community to all who come, frequent singing of “All Are Welcome” (sincerely meant and lived, not just sung).

One couple shared that their greatest experience of welcoming in Church was at their wedding (1969); they welcomed their guests as they arrived, walked in with their parents, and the priest invited everyone to communion.

Two members of group had attended liturgies or ordination of RC Womenpriests and described great inclusiveness, openness, and welcome there.

Someone who had volunteered at southern US border spoke of sense of welcome among religious and lay volunteers-- felt that moving outside of one’s comfort zone gives new energy.

One of our group spoke about difficulties in parish life when the Church first began speaking about exclusionary relationships-- as an LGBTQ+ person, she felt that any hope she had once had for the church rolled back for her. The Church has gone backwards; she finds women’s religious communities to be much more open to this demographic than parishes and hierarchy. Others agreed re treatment of LGBTQ+ population; expressed desire for some liberation theology-type thinking on topic. Much concern re conservative thinking on this topic.

Baltimore Carmelites modeling Church that is from “the grass roots up . . . Life-giving and supportive.”

Image of ticky-tacky houses where everything is identical. We need to sit with scripture. We need a liberation theology-- an aggiornamento-- open windows to the Spirit. Female priests. Inclusion of LGBTQ+, all races, all ages, all cultures.

Political divisions impede some theological discussions and movement toward change. Conservative bent among many young people, young seminarians, foreign seminarians who will be ordained for US dioceses. Concern that participants in our synodal conversations are self-selected and, as a rule, thinking alike on these topics. We're not hearing other perspectives (more conservative, more traditional).

Remember that the most important thing is love-- invitation to love and friendship can be easily forgotten amid differences.

One of our group recalled an employee orientation at Mercy Medical Center. It started with prayer: "God wants you to be here."

Strong feeling that like-minded Catholics need to creatively and courageously speak our truths. Must do so authentically, honestly, and corporately.

Mass in my Religious community or other communities welcoming everyone.

Church of my childhood, just after Vatican II - vibrant and alive, welcoming, eye toward social justice

Monday meditation group at Carmel - intimacy and closeness has developed, also connectedness and vulnerability.

Church experience where priest walked around before mass to meet people and remembered names. All were invited to stand around the altar at consecration. I felt a part of this.

What was meaningful was the kind of open, welcoming community, the dedication, the prominent role of women (at Carmel), and the place of music.

Bishop Frank Murphy's funeral Mass when all the people rose up in common acclamation and appreciation of an exemplary, prophetic leader who stood up women's full equality in the Church

Liturgy/Church in Africa with African priest where a "community of communities" was the profound experience.

One woman "ran away" from unpleasant Church experiences and after not going to Church for many years has found and has worshipped in a Catholic parish with ordained women priests for 15 years. "It is so meaningful to experience a woman saying, 'This is my body; this is my blood.'"

During the pandemic women, nuns, have found liturgies presided over by women/nuns /sisters extremely meaningful and transformative of consciousness regarding priesthood and patriarchy.

Women not being ordained is the great sorrow. The call for equality of men and women in all roles in the Church is prominent.

One priest has been influenced and inspired by close association with an Anglican priest, Anglican community of men, and "General Seminary," association with Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches, and work in all denominations. What would be meaningful would be bringing all the Churches together.

A protestant clergy person experiences every other Church as brothers and sisters, the community of the baptized. In her world there are "lots of windows".

Many people shared the Carmel Zoom created small group where they felt connected , cared for , listened to and continually learned ...

In the virtual small zoom group, created in her parish in Rochester NY.

In a Protestant church participated in their home group in Baltimore

In a book group in her parish

In a New Jersey parish where the pastor for over twenty years listens , is welcoming to all and invites and all enable lay people to participate and run all aspects of the church ...church has grown from 300 to over a thousand

In a prayer group where she learned how to pray , listen and shares experiences

Zoom lectio divina

Benedictine prayer group

A bible Study

Being welcomed into church by church members

Most members stated the experience was /is meaningful ...enjoyed participating in small groups where they gather , share, pray and learn from one another and feel the presence of love and spirit .

### **ACTIONS A CHURCH CAN TAKE**

An example that could support a divide is the behaviors of some congregations that persons sit in the same place in church or go to specific people to hold a conversation. A suggestion to resolve some of this challenge to unity in a community is to openly welcome a new comer , to look for common grounds in community work or gatherings, to work through some needed changes in Church .

There is a need to communicate, communicate , communicate and listen deeply.

Inclusion must be intentional

General acknowledgment of the need to reach out and expand our Church community to include reaching out to more members especially the poor, and racially different group

Reaching out to current members of our existing Church community by introducing ourselves and creating a closer community.

Seeking new ways of reaching out to immigrant communities, recognizing that these may increase due to current war in Ukraine.

Offer young people different ways of worshiping.

Decrease the focus on “shoulds and should nots” and instead welcome and explore the questions openly...something isn't working and it needs to be uncovered and addressed

Participate in local, diocesan, national invitations to dialogue through Synodal Listening Sessions

Be willing to speak up and speak out about the lack of and need for inclusivity based on the life and attitude of Jesus

At the very least we as church have to recognize how very parochial we are if there is ever to be any hope of becoming a more inclusive, welcoming church.

Find ways to foster the idea that God, spirituality, etc. is so much bigger, more expansive than we acknowledge it to be

Listening to the issues that young people/students bring up; witnessing how they come out of old structures and bloom into something new.

My archdiocesan pastoral council practices 'serene listening'

Covid brought an opportunity to see via ZOOM the diversity of how other parishes worship

My hand bell choir requires me to lean into and be attuned to other members to be in unison with them

What the parish/church could do differently:

Is not happy with our church at the institutional level; the parish needs to incorporate social justice into its preaching and practice.

It is not enough for the parish to give money to ‘the poor’; the parish needs to make time for them as well.

Some parishes need to change their judgments about those to whom we give.

Stop denying eucharist [to divorced, non-catholics, etc]

Follow the Lakota tribal tradition for big decisions. This tradition asks what will this decision mean for seven generations from now? It is not just about us.

It would be helpful if the churches would help to create spaces where those who often feel excluded can encounter one another; e.g., LGBT, ethnic groups, migrants.

During the height of the pandemic, one pastor sent postcards to his parishioners to stay in touch; another parish established a phone tree so that parishioners would stay connected. 95% of the parishioners in this second parish returned to church once it opened for services.

Liturgy:

Homilies that are better prepared and that relate to what is going on in the world, with better theology, and that come from the heart. This takes work!

Music that the congregation can sing; music is the congregations’ gift to the liturgy

An open-table liturgy—all are welcome!

Encourage the use of every member’s gift; all need to take responsibility

An interesting insight: Conservative liturgies attract because of their sensory appeal; progressives are not putting energy into their liturgies; perhaps they are discouraged from doing that or they are just complacent.

Find creative ways to reach out to the marginalized, young people, LGTBQ+, etc and make them feel welcome.

In Peru, we learned people don’t often come out for Mass but funerals draw everybody. Need to take advantage of these opportunities.

Meet people where they are.

Be aware of and capitalize on teachable moments.

Take advantage of the Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Easter large gatherings and use them to welcome and engage people.

Welcome people to Eucharist instead of using it to keep people away.

As a group, all have “shopped” for meaningful parish experiences of church. Almost universally the groups named:

- o Feeling recognized, welcome, valued
- o Diversity in all ways (ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, other persons seeking a community of faith and belonging)
- o Good homilies (representing the larger hope for ongoing education and formation in faith)
- o Good music – also a variety – e.g., Gospel liturgy, multicultural liturgy, etc.
- o A social justice dimension to a parish – opportunities to live out faith in ways that impact larger society for the common good (environment, peace, racial justice, outreach, etc.)

Good music and good homilies.

Open the church to the gifts of women on all levels

So much can change with a change in pastor who can come and “undo” all that has been developed in a parish

The parish has little or no voice in the choice of the next pastor. Some will vote with their feet and shop for what they need and hope for.

The Church has largely become identified with dogma and rules about who is “in” and who is “out” – often focused on things sexual (orientation, divorced, birth control, abortion) and many people are not attracted by dogmatic groups.

Formation in seminaries seems to be on legalism, clericalism, dogmatism and not on relational leadership – listening, learning, developing understanding. Current seminary training does not seem integrated or wholistic but very narrow.

As Tere mentioned, look at the Latin X experience of Encuentro – developing communities of encounter, small base communities of welcome and belonging

Seriously looking at current seminary training and preparing persons for being shepherds who “smell like the sheep.”

The question about women’s equal place in the church including (but not limited to ordination) cannot be off the table, blocked or repressed. Just look at who comes to Lectio and who are those still sticking with parishes – it is largely women.

People feel welcome when you notice and affirm their gifts

It’s helpful when priests give homilies that fit the listener’s specific situation- and try to encourage them

Parishes can take advantage of zoom to connect people and create small faith community groups

Creating and establishing these small faith groups is key to ensure that every person is known by name.

Creating listening ministries to support people who are seeking spiritual direction and connection

Large parishes may want to create small and intimate interfaith communities

Use technology to interconnect people from different countries such as Ukraine and the USA via prayer.

One mentioned about lack of wheel-chair access at churches.

Mention was made about inclusions of LGBTQ community.

Share in circles rather than from pulpit. Hear less from hierarchy and more from people. Leadership

by the people of God.

Ask “What do you need?” “What is/isn’t working for you?” Important for us to meet and be with other people-- church/parish/community provides setting for that.

Make good use of technology-- lessons learned during covid.

Need for self-reflection (and truthfulness) as we dream of new vision of Church: Do I really want a Church that pulls me out of my comfort zone or my isolation? What if I don’t really want to interact with the person next to me in the pew? Or to reach out to people I don’t know and maybe don’t really want to know? Ideal aspirations, but do I want the personal cost?

People not returning to parishes or to church post-covid; finding meaning elsewhere. Does this signal growing significance of the domestic church? Is this an opportunity? Parishes must be aware that things are different and many things are messy. Are we looking toward a period of growth or continued diminishment?

The church and local parish need to recognize all people , it’s purpose and function is to serve. Church needs to posture the church different at every level. Goal is to follow Jesus primary life to teach, bring people together and heal people. It needs to: be more human, inclusive , decrease the hierarchal focus, include lay and religious people at every level of the institution, allow women and male priest and to allow them to marry. to hire pastoral counselors and spiritual directors, offer more educational programs, small groups and more social time for people can get to know one another., empower the members to take on leadership positions and actively participate in the liturgy on the altar , giving homily ...so many gifted , wise people in local churches new programs that speak to the importance of having a spiritual life and have training sessions how to pray , sharing different techniques, and group discussions. Parishes, clergy need to address: each person is called to feed the hungry, create shelter , welcome immigrants, not to judge, be welcoming

Give women a voice.

### **SPECIFIC ACTIONS ONE CAN TAKE**

Suggestion to ask people what are they looking for when they register in a new parish. Give them a list of ministries available but be open to what they are saying.

Meet people outside of the chapel doors; personal welcome; being known by name.

My pastor told me that I could either leave and find a church that works for me or stay and change this one

Encourage young people to come to church; guide them

Bring one person back at a time, save them from feeling excluded

Encourage your pastor to watch a livestreamed mass that you think represents a best practice. St. Patrick’s in Chicago was given as an example.

Frustration with the institution requires me to have patience.

Regarding question 1, many shared positive experiences of both being welcomed to a parish as a newcomer, being encouraged to join a youth group and participating in extending the same kind of welcome to others. Being seen and feeling welcome seem to be very important determiners of whether to join a parish.

I need to be more free and open to go with the flow and growth of the church.

I need to be patient with the transitions and changes that are happening within the church.

I need to save to dream

The church is on the move and we need to get moving with the church

I need to go with the flow of the spirit

I need to be an agitator to the church so that I can participate in the changes of the church

We need to stay connected

Invitation: we need to continually invite others into the circle, into our communities; invitation needs to be open-ended, maybe people can't come first time, need to extend invitation over and over.

Hospitality: show it, welcome, make first move... at structural level, we can still be the people we are called to be.

Invitations of the heart to be open to different points of view; breadth of heart. Jesus was inclusive to plenty of people who didn't see as he did.

My parish hasn't even mentioned "Synod"—I will speak to pastor, ask his plans to respond to Pope Francis' plea. 30 years in this conservative parish. Active in a community that goes to Haiti—but does nothing to change the parish.

I can encourage dialogue when can speak the truth, should start from the priest, down to servant leaders, to people. If priest will not cooperate with the process, I'll open conversation with the bishop....

A few people who think very differently from me [in retirement community]. I raised "Synodality," and they said they'd like Church to go back as it was before... I could have simple 1-to-1 conversations with a person who has a different concept and really listen....

Become more involved, bring resources I could offer, for listening, for fostering opportunities for inviting in different voices and perspectives.

Stand at the door of mass and welcome everybody

Introduce myself to people I don't know

Sit with people I don't know

Participate in various groups/events/listening sessions as a way of getting to know more people and making them feel welcome

Give voice to a yearning to think bigger, wider, and more systemic to intentionally welcome and include all.

What we can do is to be the change we want to see-make sure I am open and inclusive to all, and celebrate everyone because of who they are, since we are all God's beloved children.

Invite someone to church - someone I know, someone I don't know well

The desire to move beyond self-referential, self-concerned life and notice unconscious biases, recognizing beam in one's own eye. Admit blindness, look within myself.

All I yearn for has to begin with me.

Don't think when belonging to dominant culture.

Read "Caste"- awareness of white supremacy

Synodality logo: all the people

Be a greeter at church.

Create a ministry in her church to visit the homebound or connect with them by phone or online. Privacy policies is stopping this to happen as people desperately need connection

Help create opportunity to help roaming catholic .

Be part of as phone network for people, she is homebound .

Help create a system in the parish to have different people deliver homilies, many felt priest were poor in this are.

Help support the creation of small groups.

Help facilitate small groups.

Participate in planning groups.

To be a better church, we all need to reach out compassionately to others.

It's up to every person to be the welcoming church. We may not see the fruits immediately but seeds are sown.

### **TODAY'S EXPERIENCE / SYNODALITY IN GENERAL**

Liked Teresa Maya's suggestion that Synodality is "a way of life, not an event; an ongoing process that leads to a life-style."

The group intimately and collaboratively connected with the sharing and insights of Sr. Teresa.

Our group was a mix of lay women and women in Religious Life . There was no divide in thinking or experience. This brief summary is in unity of woman Christian church, however not all participants were in union with the Roman Catholic Church .

General sincere appreciation to the Baltimore Carmelite Sisters for doing these weekly Lectio sessions which involve not only substantive content, but also technology expertise.

General appreciation for Teresa's comments especially trusting this process and having patience, and an attitude of trust and care.

Overall this group's jury is still out regarding whether these synodal listening sessions will make a difference. Though all thought that these sessions are a good idea and helpful, some wondered whether the voice of the people would be really heard by the bishops.

One person wondered whether the present Church structure is capable of opening itself up to a more expansive understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

I personally believe that the Holy Spirit will not be confined by a structure .

Teresa Maya's description of the Synod Image as the Holy Spirit nudging, pushing, prodding us all to move forward makes me smile with approval.

Many comments about how wonderful Teresa Maya was. Several referred back to her talk and our own blindness.

Generally, the group went well. There was a nice mixture of people from all over (Peru, USA, Ireland). All participated and no one dominated. Someone entered the group about halfway through and it was a little distracting. We did acknowledge her and let her know what question we were discussing but it did affect the flow of the group. Perhaps we should not allow latecomers to join a small group but let them wait for the large group to regather.

Regarding the introduction, in spite of the facilitator modeling being brief, participants introduced themselves but didn't seem to understand the invitation to "say a word or two about what you are bringing here today (emotions, thoughts, etc)". Instead then tended to talk about their experience of church.

Concluding comments – great gratitude for Pope Francis who continues to challenge the church despite negativity towards him, hostility in the hierarchy. As was mentioned at the beginning of our session – this effort at a synod on synodality is the most ambitious renewal process in the Catholic Church in 60 years.

Concerned about degree of exclusivity in our suburban parishes... 3-year Synodal process might not get us far, unless an action plan results. I'm here because I hope...

Excited: I'm 88, and when I first learned about the Synodal process I thought "Oh, finally! Someone is going to listen to me in my Church." Being part of the Synodal process with each of you has deepened my faith, hope. Realizing, at this stage of my life, that I can be part of my Church.

Mixed feelings. Concerned that so many dioceses have chosen not to participate in Synodal process. Exclusion of people who don't even know this is going on. . Opportunity to participate in conversation with others who want to [be part of this].

Synod process is what we really need at this time. Many practices that need to be transformed along path of synod. Many laity and clergy are still living in pre-Vatican II [way]...

Happy for what Synod will bring to me and my parish.

### **OTHER**

How can one be part of a church that treats women so badly.

Need to stretch our focus on a global church rather than only the "American Church."

Those married "outside the church" should not be denied Eucharist.

Miss the Church of the '70's with "home Masses" and more openness and inclusivity. We seems to be going backwards.

"I am the church . . . not the hierarchy."

Need to keep hammering away at the power structure in the Church to reflect a 50/50 composition in the hierarchy.

Global oneness of us all in relation to Ukraine

Felt left out when it seemed all the jobs were filled and there was no room for her or something new to take place.

There is a common need for a sense of community within spiritual communities. At the same time there is an experience of loneliness and of not belonging ....especially if there is a strong inner circle of decision making processes leading a community.

When persons experience a personal hurt from the community the outcome is to react defensively which often expands the divide in community.

The hard work will be to have ALL in the community feel un-threatened and worthy of fully participating in the work of change.

A sister mentioned that they offer space that they had used before when they had bigger numbers to anyone who would need it (she didn't specify). Obviously outreach beyond religious community, parish.

All participants considered themselves to be Catholic though some consistently or at least occasionally worshiped (in person or via live-streaming) among congregations of a different Christian denomination. All felt varying degrees of discomfort at the distinct absence of the feminine as presider at Catholic liturgy. At least two (and others piped in agreement) specifically noted how difficult it is to find and experience the Wisdom of the Divine Feminine within the confines of the Roman Catholic Church

Two (at least) have consistently streamed worship services and have not returned to in person liturgy since the onset of the COVID lockdown and at this point feel very disconnected from parish life.

One young person who worked in faith formation in the parish was concerned about how to break the barrier that existed between the English speaker and Spanish speakers. She pushed for a bilingual mass to no avail. Instead, when it was time for the social, she devised a way to form two groups that were racially mixed so that folks could have a chance to talk with one another.

On the other hand, the use of language that is not inclusive can erect a barrier that is hard to break down.

One young woman said that the millennials have left the parishes not the church.

3 out of 8 of us here are residents in a retirement community... on the margins. Church can tap into this... Synod on young people a few years ago; need Synod on old people, and on everybody in between. We have a lot of wisdom/experiences, questions, a lot to offer. Don't feel it's being acknowledged, used, tapped into by our Church.

I noticed that our dissatisfaction appears on several levels: some things such as non-inclusive language in the missal is at the diocesan or higher level and hard to change; some things such as poor homilies and a less than welcome atmosphere usually depend on the education, interests, enthusiasm of the pastor; some things could change if the people of the parish were encouraged to work at it.

Treasure of Carmel activities, experience of community through Zoom; feel the depth of presentations [we hear through Carmel] is not reflective of the total Church. It's very different locally... I see possibility—something deeper going on in many of us. Hopeful for future of Church.

Sadness: situation in parish, see particularity and indifference of some people in Church [in another country]. And Hope, looking for trusting, more inclusive community.

If people do not feel welcome in their Church because they “do not meet the criteria”, then invite them to worship at the Carmelites, where all are welcome.

Desire for church to be more horizontal; more connection, communion, welcoming. Move away from American-exceptionalism, self-referential.

Concern for young people: have homilies on climate change, immigration, things they care about.

The overall response in our breakout was that each person presently experiences an absence of pastoral care by the church (as in hierarchy).

The experience of inclusivity within their worship communities was minimal. Where it was experienced was in churches whose congregants were from various geographical areas, not the local population. These people were probably attracted to the churches because they are inclusive. The experience in these churches was likened to being part of the community where Jesus chose to be.

We have a long way to go, but the efforts of individuals in leavening groups is a hopeful sign as the community of the faithful takes responsibility for the pastoral care of the community.