



St Mary's Star of the Sea
Parish Gathering for Synodal Pathway
Wednesday March 30 2022
Sunday April 3 2022

SHARING OUR JOYS

When you think of your experience of Church, What brings you Joy?

Sense of Community & Belonging

1. Mass brings me JOY. I feel a sense of connection to the congregation and the presence of God. This brings me PEACE, which is a form of JOY.
2. Sense of belonging and community.
3. Connection; Community; Praying together.
4. The experience of so many wonderful people I've met through life of the Church, inspirational to me in their capacity for service of others.
5. Sense of FAMILY; sense of Community.
6. EUCHARIST – The Eucharistic Community; Communion in the mystical body of Christ; belonging & Home.
7. Fellowship – Joy in Church.
8. Continuity; people coming together; community.
9. The joy of belonging to a family, giving thanks to God for being part of his Family.
10. Home; Continuity; door always open.
11. Sense of belonging/community.
12. The importance of community of like-minded people, especially as regards the faith, one has to follow "our leader", trusting that its best for us, though we may not be entirely "sold on it" initially.
13. Hope; Community; ability to express my faith.
14. Sense of community prayer at Mass or other services, including centering prayer.
15. Experience of community; growth in faith & new perspectives.

16. Sharing, friendship.
17. I enjoy being a member of a Parish. In difficult times I have felt supported by lay-members of the Parish, and by the Clergy. I enjoy the experience of worshipping together.
18. Being part of the universal catholic Community. Joy in the shared faith in that community.
19. Growing in faith in a community of fellow faithful parishioners
20. Church is not a building(s). It is in me. It is being aware of this. It is also community.
21. Sense of Community
22. Family, memories of the past and visions for the future.
23. Home; family; universality; sense of belonging
24. Community across the world, the catholic universality of the church, allowing us to find recognition and shelter wherever we go.
25. Going to Mass, being part of the Community.
26. 1) A sense of individual faith (peace, calmness); 2) Connection of family with community; 3) A connection with a wider parish community.
27. Sense of community; sense of caring & support in times of trouble & times of joy; sense of belonging to long history of believers & sharing in the magnificent music and art inspired by the Church; sense of giving direction to my life.
28. Certainty/security; traditional community (perhaps more in former times)
29. The universality of the Church where everyone is accepted as they are into the Family of the Church. Great joy in acceptance.
30. The long legacy of the Church, the community the Church gives you with other parishioners.
31. Universality of the Church – that all over the world Catholics/Christians celebrate like we do in Ireland.

32. Meeting and sharing – being a presence to each other in Church; Smile brings joy to a person who may be lonely.

33. Universality of Church – where you can be welcomed throughout the world.

Support & Kindness shown by Church

1. In difficult times I have felt supported by lay-members of the Parish, and by the Clergy.
2. Sense of caring & support in times of trouble & times of joy;
3. By our encounters with certain people that are kind and generous and inspiring. This can lift one's spirits and give us Joy.
4. The experience of so many wonderful people I've met through life of the Church, inspirational to me in their capacity for service of others
5. Social ministry of the Church – support offered to developing countries or marginalised.
6. Spiritual support for the Community.
7. Voice and support to the most marginalised in society.
8. Thinking of the social and spiritual mission of the Church – helping the disadvantaged and the needy.

Music

1. Attending Mass and singing in choir.
2. Choral Singing of Congregation;
3. Sharing in the magnificent music and art inspired by the Church
4. Music
5. Music at the ceremonies.
6. Music

7. Music /tradition.
8. Music
9. The beauty of music during the sacraments and Mass.
10. Music
11. Uplifting music/songs.
12. Good joyful (!) singing.
13. Music, live or recorded;
14. Universality – music – home.
15. Church Music

Expressions of Faith/ Beliefs

1. Pilgrimages – walks like Walking the Seven Churches during the Eucharistic Congress; meeting of families.
2. Reflection; Prayer.
3. Public expressions of faith by laity; laity providing services to Church – Readers etc.; lay retreats.
4. Good teaching.
5. Holy Hour that has the Rosary, music & reflection & prayer
6. Standing up for what is right even when unpopular.
7. The traditions & continuity of services (but less now than 50 years ago) – eg. Benediction. But when there is such a service/celebration, it is a joy
8. Countering the “lay” (*secular?*) view on life.

Listening to Sermons

1. Listening to the Gospels and Sermons.
2. Fr. John's Sermons which are very uplifting & encouraging - & give positivity.
3. Homilies that can be thought provoking and give me a difference in my perspective that results in Joy.
4. Fr. John – never have I experienced such great explanations of the Gospel relating to real life. He is so present ?

Visiting the Church and an opportunity to pray, light candles and spend time with God

1. The building with its candles which just help the world outside to be still.
2. Lighting candles for others.
3. The church building is a lovely place to be.
4. Lighting candles.
5. Lighting candles; sound of church bells; sanctuary & safety; & comfort of being in church.
6. The peace of being still in the presence of God.
7. The comfort of the church.
8. Means feeling at home in the physical church.
9. A place of comfort, refuge, quiet space.
10. Art from schoolchildren via lay teachers in Church.

Pope Francis

1. Leadership – Pope Francis.
2. Leadership of Pope Francis.

Presence of Children

1. Children celebrating sacraments
2. Particularly the participation of children
3. Involvement of young in Sacraments
4. Children – seeing children at Mass and making their noises -Beautiful
5. Participation of Children.

Relationship with God

1. Faith.
2. An anchor for my spirit.
3. Passing of faith within Family.
4. Relationship with God.
5. A hopeful great message/The Gospel gives meaning to personal life in all its dimensions. Wonderful people I've met through the Church.

The Joy of the Gospel

1. The message of Hope that is part of the Church
2. The wonderful social teaching of the Church that upholds the dignity of each person and the pursuit of the Common Good
3. The message in the Gospel
4. The reassurance of the purpose of life and the Promise of Eternal Life and meeting deceased relatives and friends
5. Faith and peace

6. The Gospel.
7. The Joy of having a pathway for life
8. I get joy from being a member of the Church and the mystical Body of Christ. I feel privileged to be a member and the thought that one day I might get to meet Jesus in person fills me with Joy
9. Hope & continuity in having faith in of Gospel

Celebrating the Eucharist and Sacraments

1. Ongoing understanding of Gospel in participating in Ministry and Music
2. Sacramental Ceremonies where family and community come together, whether it be for a wedding or a funeral, give me Joy.
3. Celebrations in Church; early morning Mass.
4. Confession – the joy of feeling that God has forgiven me my failings, leading to a fresh start.
5. Joyous group celebrations, eg. First Holy Communion, Baptism RCIA for large group in Paris.
6. More than joy, I have a sense of satisfaction at connection with God through the Church: Mass, the Sacraments.
7. New members, Sacraments; commitment from Clergy, Laity.
8. Celebration of the sacraments as milestones in my life and in every Catholic's life.
9. The reverence of the Sacraments, through the holiness of the Priest, his meaningful sermons.
10. The Eucharist and the consolation one receive.
11. Celebration – the many joyous occasions over the years celebrating sacraments, connecting us to past and future generations.

12. Amid all the struggles throughout life and history, we have Christ present to us all in the Sacraments – joy is always there and an eternity of joy is available for us all.
13. Having the Sacraments for all the important times in our lives makes sense of our lives. Also, it helps us accept the difficulties of life and see God’s hand in them.
14. Celebration of major life milestones (Communion, Baptism, Marriage, Confirmation) with family.
15. I feel Joy at early morning Mass – it sets me up for the day; I love being part of special family Liturgies with everyone happy; I feel Joy when I experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation – I feel so new and good!
16. The formal structure of Mass is a “life vehicle” to reflect on God’s place in our lives
17. Significance of Eucharist & Sacraments in general – important.
18. Sharing Liturgy; Sacraments; Church Music; Participation of Children.
19. Church rituals.

Other

1. Bulletin is very good
2. Microphone, use it!!!
3. Constancy of the Church; the bells
4. Awareness that the Church is searching; becoming aware that we do not have answers
5. Broad Church – many experiences – role of conscience

SHARING OUR SADNESS/DISAPPOINTMENT

When you think about your experience of Church, what brings you SADNESS?

Theme: Scandals -Historical Abuses

1. That Church scandals have driven so many away
2. Failure to deal with sex abuse scandals
3. The scandals, especially, sexual abuse of children, mad me very sad and the subsequent problems in the Church seem to be very related to these scandals
4. Handling abuse scandals. 1990 Cardinal Cathal Daly did not know the damage it did. 2022 Pope Benedict/Cardinal Ratzinger and hypocrisy of handling German abuse scandals
5. Fallout of scandals
6. Ongoing abuse & scandal revelations in Church
7. The Church does not deliver on its promise – the depth and depravity of institutional abuse and the inadequate response of the Church to ask forgiveness and to change
8. I am not disappointed with the Church, only the people who have behaved badly and given bad example to other Catholics
9. Historical child abuse
10. Not owning failings
11. Scandals. Good overlooked in face of it
12. The bad deeds of some of the priests and lay people who gave the Church a bad name
13. Disappointed that all priests and Church as a whole are accused negatively
14. Child abuse scandal and in particular how it was handled by Church leaders
15. Bullying: sexual, financial

16. By the experience of the Church, negative feelings. The experience of sin/denial/abuse – shame, guilt/anger
17. Sadness that so much good that was done has been lost in the fog of what was not done or badly done. In trying to conserve itself, the Church has contributed to damaging itself
18. Not acknowledging past hurts caused
19. Child abuse scandals & how Church handled it
20. The actions of some in the past – it did not reveal a caring Church
21. The extent of the stories of scandal & failure and of attempts to cover them up
22. Dark history – Dominance; sexism; abuse; stuckness, not moving with the times; lack of innovation
23. Child abuse scandals
24. Baby out with the bath water ie. There is a perception of nothing being good in Church because of past scandals by minority
25. The lack of tolerance and empathy for unmarried mothers
26. Abuse scandals;

Theme: Failure of Leadership of Institutional Church

1. Vatican II; Ban on artificial contraception, unrealistic decision widely ignored
2. Disjointed Church, hierarchy, clergy, very apart from people
3. That there is no vision about the relevance about Jesus' message and getting it out there, bigger, better advertising, bigger, better events.
4. Our Bishops: write into Google "Alive-O legacy" and go page 4. That's says it all. It is a 45 page assessment of the Alive O Primary School Program from aprox 2000 to 1900. It also touches on Secondary school too. Catholic religion hasn't been taught for 40 years. Dr. Johnson, the author, says it is incomprehensible; Anne Cusack wrote online paper (October 21).

5. The confused, lazy, complacent, cowardly refusal of leadership to teach the Faith is beyond belief
6. Rigidity: our definition of Church; reluctance to take up the responsibility of catechists; abuse of power
7. Lay not participating
8. Failure of the Church as an institution
9. Institutional failure(s); poor leadership; failure to adapt to a changing world
10. Difficult to find spiritual direction and guidance within the Church
11. Failure of the leadership of the Church
12. Need more direction, fearless direction from the Clergy as to what is moral and immoral and what the Church views are
13. No non-liturgical leadership from the Church
14. The absence of a response or remedies; no change so far has been able to stem the decline in participation
15. A complete lack of capacity for fundamental change – lack of energy and willpower to change;
16. The Church is past uncaring: institutions, attitude;

Theme: Attitudes towards Women, Divorcees and LGBTQ

1. I am disappointed that the Church does not allow women to make a full contribution to our Christian Church.
2. That people feel excluded over sexual orientation and broken marriages
3. The Role of women in the Church; the Church's attitude to homosexuality
4. The alienation of women who feel their role is not recognised and affirmed in the Church of today. Disappointed that there is justification for it.
5. Disappointed how women and diverse community LGBT have been treated by the Church

6. Role of women in the Church needs renewal and to be equal
7. We need to ask ourselves what witness we are giving to the young people – do they see an inclusive Church looking outwards and reaching to the marginalised. I don't think so.
8. Women are 2nd class citizens STILL
9. Disappointed women are not accepted for roles in Church
10. A sense of inequality and discrimination against women and gay people
11. That the involvement of the laity and particularly women has been discouraged so much
12. Failure to permit female clergy, married clergy
13. No women in leadership roles
14. No married priests
15. Lack of full proper equality for women, the fact we do not have women priests
16. Why cant lay people influence the Curia – Mary McAleese, Maria Collins
17. Sad that the Church has failed to understand, meet those who went by the wayside – those on margins – unmarried girls etc. – no reaching out
18. The limited voice given to women and LGBT Group, treatment of same
19. Lack of equality and respect for gay people
20. Lack of female ordinations in Church
21. The lack of respect and dignity for gay people
22. Church is Not inclusive
23. We need dynamic change – young people – women priests – all beliefs welcome – coloured clothes for priests
24. role of women

Theme: Aging Clergy, Pressure on existing Clergy, Lack of Vocations

1. It makes me sad when I think of the Clergy who have stuck at the job amidst the most horrendous of times – including COVID
2. Lack of priests to carry on and aged priests and the actions of certain clergy to damage people
3. Why can't a priest have a choice to marry or not
4. Lack of ability of clergy to ask for assistance
5. Decrease in number of Priests
6. Lack of vocations to the priesthood
7. Role of laity' pressure places on priests to carry on;
8. The fact that priests must be celibate, this is ridiculous – it should be a choice so that we have proper respect and dignity. Celibacy is holding the Church back

Theme: Need for Faith Education

1. Life long learning is needed as a faith community as there is little adult education at parish level or once you leave school.
2. Children are being taught by teachers who themselves have lost their faith
3. No alternatives to religious education in catholic schools, no other forum for religious education of catholic children
4. Lack of formal education in faith for my generation. Even less for the current school generation
5. School based education – tokenism; abuse/sacraments – depends very much on the faith of the teacher
6. Readings at Mass are not explained re. time, location etc
7. Spiritual depth not cultivated enough
8. Failure to counter an increasingly materialistic society

9. Adult ignorance of Christian doctrine and teaching of religion to youngsters
10. Few forums for adult education except sermons which are a paraphrasing of the Gospel. No/few opportunities for lifelong education
11. Pressure on catholic schools to pass on the faith
12. Lack of Faith Development for adults

Theme: Declining Numbers

1. The fall in numbers at Mass;
2. The massive reduction in congregation numbers
3. Falling numbers of faithful especially among young people
4. Sad to see small numbers going to Church
5. Falling numbers ----- at fault
6. 9/10 down to 1/10 attending Church over the last 50 years, in my time
7. Church viewed as a social service only
8. That most of the congregation is of the older generation
9. The amount of baptised Catholic

Theme: Connection to Youth/ Younger Generation/Young Families

1. Young people feel disconnected from the Church
2. The alienation of young people from the Church
3. We are losing our youth – the Church is irrelevant to young people, teenagers and even young families
4. The decrease in prayers in Family Life
5. The loss of conversation about our faith and the young who have moved away from the Sacraments

6. Young people alienation – it is seen as a reactive conservative force
7. Sadness to think Will my children have a faith?
8. As a Dad, I am sad that my children, although espousing spirituality, do not attend church on a regular basis. They did until they were 18 years old.
9. Sad that young people less involved
10. Losing grip on educating the next generation.
11. Fewer families attending Church today
12. That most of our children do not want to belong to Catholic Church
13. The drift of young people away from formal Church ceremonies.
14. Difficulty lack of young people
15. Church has no connection to young
16. Very few younger members participating in Church
17. Bring back youth! We need a clear plan to bring young people back
18. We need Influencers
19. The extent of religious decline in our time and the difficulty of reaching the minds and hearts, especially of young adults, with the truth of the Gospel
20. Failure to attract young families – or retain families after, eg. First Communion, which is an even more serious failing
21. The younger generation doesn't know what they are missing
22. We haven't discerned what's going on with the youth and their beliefs. Its more about the Mass
23. Young people no longer attending –
24. Young people losing faith, thinking it has nothing to offer them.

Theme: Secularisation

1. The increasing rise of a secular society;
2. A feeling that faith is a dirty word.
3. Sadness at the declining role of the Church in personal and social relations
4. Waning interest in the things of God – this makes me sad. Lack of interest in faith and religion, and so there is little invitation to take part in Church activities
5. Lack of respect for Christian beliefs; the ease with which people have given up their faith
6. Church seems meaningless; priority not prayer, sports taking over.
7. Underestimation by the Church of the degree of cultural change
8. The importance of recognising the importance of staring “upwards” towards God and Heaven, as opposed to accepting of what is

Theme: Sadness at Decline in Vocations

1. Lack of priestly vocations: seeing our priests growing old
2. Lack of ordinations – what the future of the Church will be.
3. Lack of vocations

Theme: Sense of Community & Belonging

1. Lack of sense of Faith Community
2. Difficult to develop community relationship in Parish
3. I feel sad when I see the lack of community spirit and support
4. A lack of connection to congregation outside of Mass. People walk in and out of Mass with little sense of Community. No tea and coffee afterwards
5. There is little sense of community at parish level – we go to Mass and then leave

Theme: Sadness at lack of opportunities to express Faith

1. What brings me sadness is the lack of opportunities for regular rosary and Hours of Adoration
2. Few opportunities for laity to share faith and views; few opportunities for laity to discuss faith issues
3. I regret that scriptures don't play as important a part in liturgy as they might.
4. Disappointment at personal shortcomings as a Catholic
5. Everyone else's disappointment with the Church, leads to my disappointment and discourages me from continuing my faith

Theme: Lack of Reverence

1. The lack of reverence inside the physical Church is something that makes me sad. I feel it has contributed greatly to the decline in attendance
2. Lack of reverence towards the Sacrament of Communion

Theme: Language used

1. Language and culture – communication difficulty
2. Some vernacular in Church is old-fashioned
3. Lack of good preaching
4. Communicating with clergy is difficult

Theme: Music

1. Lack of joyful music to literally lift the congregation

Theme: Pope Francis

1. Pope Francis's influence has not reached me

Theme: Parish Issues

1. I am disappointed that laity does not get invited to talk about forthcoming structural changes in our parish life: amalgamations
2. Parish Council needs to be more visible
3. The Parish Council – what is it?
4. Unwieldy – nothing happens e.g. November 2018 Assembly Meeting in Parish – nothing further since then
5. I'd like to see the Parish/Diocese – be more active regarding climate change

SHARING OUR FEARS/ANXIETIES

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings you Fear or Anxiety?

Theme: Fear of Aging Clergy, Pressure on existing Clergy and lack of Vocations

1. The Church will die if there are no Priests.
2. Few new vocations.
3. Will we have Priests in the future to celebrate the Sacraments?
4. The possibility of our clergy becoming completely depleted causes fear.
5. The decline in vocations.
6. No Priests/Nuns may result in Churches closing.
7. Few training to become Priests. The Church has to change.
8. There will be no religious ceremonies.
9. No generation to carry on the Faith.

10. As the number of attendees diminish so to will number of Priests and Religious orders.
11. That there will be a shortage of Priests in the future and that Mass may not be easily accessible.
12. Ageing Priest population.
13. Our own clergy are challenged by a heavy workload, with no secretary and no days off. How do they cope with this challenge?
14. Anxious about the falling number of Clergy and absence of realistic plans to replace this service.
15. Lack of Priests to say Mass.
16. Will we have Priests in the future to celebrate the Sacraments?
17. Who will take over from the current Priests? Who will fill the roles that are coming?

Theme: Fear for the future of the Church

1. for the future existence of the Church in Ireland
2. for the future of Church
3. that Faith/Church will be deemed irrelevant by society.
4. Fear of the closure of churches
5. Fear that churches will be knocked down and be replaced by shopping centres and apartments
6. Fear for the handing on of the faith
7. That there will not a church to go to
8. Fear for the future structure of the Church both local and global.
9. Fear that there will have no church to hand on to our grandchildren if the clergy and laity do not succeed in working together.

10. We have a good product that has lasted 2000 years but the packaging is poor.
11. Fear that the Church will become irrelevant if it does not change
12. The Church is dying and we are sleepwalking into irrelevance.
13. Will the church survive at all? In Ireland or in the Western World?
14. Fear for the emptiness and cruelty of a world that has neglected Christ.
15. The Church is changing and what will the result be in the future
16. Fear that if the Church does not give voice to all it will become irrelevant.
17. Fear of not finding enough labourers in the vineyard, faithful parents and Priests
18. Anxious that there will be a failure to adapt to modern media e.g. bulletins and information via email.

Theme: Fear of Lack of connection to Youth and future generations

1. Fear of lack of relevance and connection with the youth.
2. No real connection with the youth
3. Fear for the future of the Church because so few young people attend services
4. Lack of Faith support for parents.
5. Anxious that the pace of change is dangerously slow in adapting to meet young people and their family's needs
6. Are we the last generation to practice? Who will follow us?
7. Any organisation that has such a low rate of participants must be doing something wrong
8. A fear that children will not practice the Faith and will be at a loss as a result
9. A fear that grandchildren will not know Christ

10. There is a lack of interest in younger people and a lack of energy in the Church no younger people coming through
11. Anxiety is at the core of the next generation of the church. "Deliver us from anxiety"
12. That future generations won't have a faith
13. That our children will not have a faith

Theme: Secularisation

1. The fear of losing sight of Jesus in a secular world.
2. Fear of losing heart.
3. The challenge of delivering the message of a Jesus in a secular populist society.
4. A fear that the aggressive secularisation fanned by the media is likely to frustrate the positive efforts of the church.
5. The feeling that the Church is becoming lay is a fear that should be discounted because the laity is the foundation of better Church to come.
6. An anxiety about the Spiritual V Materialistic interests of society.
7. Fears of the constant media criticism of the Church.
8. Fears that the good work of the Church has been forgotten.
9. Fears that other groups will take over the vacuum - can the centre hold.
10. A fear of the polarity in Society when the Christian message is only respected by a minority.
11. A fear that we will remain insular and closed with no real dialogue with other communities of other Faiths.

Theme: Lack of Leadership

1. A fear that the Church is not showing leadership of true Christian values in society.
2. A fear about Pope Francis and his leadership.
3. A fear that the Church does not lead.
4. A fear that the hierarchy in the Church will not see the need for change.
5. A fear that local Priests do not have a forum to bring their concerns.
6. A fear that the hierarchy will not listen to what is be said by the laity – the Church's greatest resource.
7. A fear that we may not hear the voice of the Spirit and knowing how slow the Church can be to meet a changing world – that it fails to carry the message and it's celebration into a new configuration of Church life.

Theme: Lack of opportunity for Laity

1. A fear that the laity are not heard
2. A fear that lay people will not be invited to participate in Church affairs.
3. A fear that the laity will not play an active role in the Church.
4. Responsibility for the Church needs to be delegated to the laity but who will teach the laity?
5. The Church are not prepared for the increased role the Laity will have to play in the Church.
6. Thinking of changing face of the Church. How will it work in practice?

Theme: Fears for the Exclusion of different people from the Church- Married Men, Women, Divorced, LGBTQ

1. Fear of losing the presence of women or others in a political arena.
2. Lack of female participation in involving and planning the churches future.

3. Fear that the Church won't let Priests marry which would increase vocations and be more human.
4. Fear that the Church is racist.
5. We need women, married Priests and more empowerment of the laity to address the future leadership needs.
6. Afraid that the Church won't change its views on divorce and homosexuality. Afraid that the Church will continue make to make some people feel excluded from the Church.

Theme: Lack of Education and Faith Formation

1. A fear that the message of the Gospel will be lost.
2. A fear that the Church won't listen to the views of the Synod and won't change or will interpret the views of the synod in such a light that it changes very little.
3. Not enough being done to educate catechists, for both adults and children
4. Anxious that there is no communication of the good works being done by the Church.

Theme: Fear for less Opportunity to receive Sacraments

1. A fear for the lack of availability of the Sacraments in the Future
2. Who will administer the Sacraments in the future?

Other

1. Lack of connection with parishioners.
2. Anxious about the low level of participation at Mass and in the Explorers Group.
3. A fear that family will not make it to heaven.

SHARING OUR HOPES

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings you Hope?

Theme: Hope for Change

1. My hope is that the Church is finally willing to fundamentally change and will listen to the views of the people through the Synod
2. Church is at a crisis point – that radical steps will be taken
3. For a more inclusive Church growing out of crisis
4. For dynamic and speedy change from the power
5. That Church will be more inclusive, humble and diverse
6. The promise of reform and renewal so that we are more inclusive and less institutionalised
7. I hope that the Church will again become the catalyst for a true Christian society
8. That the Church will take the next step and action our views
9. For breaking down of the “old” to make way for something new to come
10. Moving away from a clergy-centred to a more people-owned Church
11. The hope is that the Institutional Church focuses more on fomenting awareness of God being present and working, particularly in the relationships of two and three persons, gathered in his name.
12. I do have hope for the future of the Church, as St. Paul’s Early Christian Church struggled and succeeded and so shall we. But change is necessary and we (clergy and laity) must have courage.
13. The Church can be a voice for social justice, including leading on climate change via organisations such as Trócaire.
14. There is hope for the future if we can learn from the vibrancy of the Church in Africa and Gospel-type churches in the U.S. and copy the good features of their forms of worship without losing valuable features of the Church as it is at present.
15. Church can be a voice for social justice including leading on climate change

16. I believe many non-practising Catholics are open to the Church if it changes to reflect society
17. I have hope because we are having these Synod discussions – that the Church needs renewal
18. I hope the practise from Rome dramatically changes
19. That a mixture of the Church past with a renewed spirituality, will get us through.

Theme: Hope in Laity

1. I have hope that the laity will have more of a role in the Church
2. The potential in using modern communications to help laity share views within Parishes
3. More radical use of the Laity
4. Most renewal within the Church emerged from among the Laity
5. More Laity involvement
6. Listening to the Laity and their experience of faith.
7. The innate goodness of Clergy and Laity – an indication that they can always come to the rescue
8. That the Parish website could have a discussion forum incorporated for expression of Laity views on Church
9. That there be greater participation by the laity NOW
10. that there may be sufficient clergy and laity to continue the sacramental value of the Church and pass on mystery of the message of Christ

Theme: Hope in the Church's Ability to survive

1. The Church has survived for 2000 years. It will evolve to overcome present difficulties
2. I can weather change and evolution and even become an advocate for change
3. We are the Church and our hope in the goodness of the process guided by the Holy Spirit will bring us through to Salvation
4. The Church can never die because the Holy Spirit sustains it
5. Hope is supported by the fact that many crises of past centuries have been countered
6. The Church has had worse crisis (history) and came through it. There is hope

Theme: Hope in the Leadership of Pope Francis

1. Hearing Pope Francis – door is always open
2. A Pope like Francis who identifies relevant issues in our conversation with the world; committed to reform and evangelisation
3. The fact that Pope Francis has instigated this Synod
4. Pope Francis' background among the poor of S. America helps to bring their voices to the fore
5. That Pope Francis (ie. The Top Man!) has instigated this gathering in each parish
6. Pope Francis (know him more)
7. People of authentic witness to the Gospel. Pope Francis exemplifies this for me.

Theme: Hope in the Message of the Gospel

1. That the Holy Spirit will guide and be with us
2. we are loved unconditionally
3. God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Where two or three are gathered.
4. God's Word

5. The Message of Eternal Life with God
6. Jesus' message and that people still want children baptised, marriage and funerals.
7. Belief in God and that he will always be with the Church
8. That Jesus said the gates of Hell will never prevail against the Church.
9. Faith, hope and love, these 3 abide
10. It gives me hope that the message of the Gospel is still relevant in today's world.
11. The love and forgiveness of God.

Theme: Hope in People and Groups

1. Bodies such as Trócaire that open our minds and hearts to the call of the Gospel to be People of Service
2. Good people working in the Church; the message that the Holy Spirit will be with us.
3. The kindness of strangers
4. I have talents – ask me to use them for the benefit of the Church
5. The innate goodness of people gives me hope
6. Discussions/listening gatherings like today's
7. The fact that 8 people stepped forward onto our Parish Council this year
8. The kindness and empathy of individual Christians
9. The hard work of current aged, over-worked Clergy as inspiration for all.
10. The generosity of people who seek authentic meaningful lives in spite of disappointments & change even if not regulars in Church
11. From efforts of groups like Explorers to deepen our acquaintance with scripture
12. The openness among us to explore; the recent change in the Vatican Constitution

13. That more genuine love will be expressed in thanks and encouragement of people who have left the Church, to return
14. In the goodness of Christian people

Theme: Hope in Prayer

1. The existence of prayer groups, unknown to each other
2. The power of Prayer and Intercession
3. That there are groups of Christians who pray together outside the confines of Parish Churches
4. Prayer as a hopeful experience
5. Hope from prayer which gives tremendous support – belief
6. What gives me hope? God's mercy: St. Faustina, private revelations, Chapel of Divine Mercy

Theme: Hope in Parish Communities

1. Parish communities who, however small, are committed to the Christian way of life and who are both welcoming of the stranger and able to meet them where they are at appropriately
2. The loss of faith that people are experiencing from secularism
3. The world is full of good caring people who are already in their own way, living the Gospel
4. The faithful communities I've known in Parish Ministry – who hold the Church in gentle service
5. The fidelity and generosity of our Priests in serving God's People, despite hostility from media and politicians and despite them getting older

Theme: Hope in the Synod

1. What gives me hope is that this Synod is happening
2. I hope there will be honesty from Rome

3. This forum and others will hopefully help the laity to open up discussion about the faith in particular with the young.
4. This Synod process; the ecumenical efforts at various levels of Church
5. Organisations that advocate change and evolution; We, the Church
6. This Synod looking to find a pathway 1 The Church's efforts to address issues and problems in an attempt of renewal and enlightenment; 2) the positive voices of so many parishioners; 3) even this Synod gives encouragement; 4) the Church as a "Listening" Community
7. My greatest hope is in the power of the Holy Spirit who will bring the Church to rebirth

Theme: Hope in Young People

1. Young people are very generous. God's spirit is always at work in the Church. God's spirit will/may direct the Young
2. Kids are generally good – lets channel this goodness
3. Shining a light on youth involvement
4. From being in Medjugorie, seeing young people and the religious community being immersed in the Catholic Church
5. Many young people are searching; expressing faith differently
6. I am hopeful of the Church. Young people are involved more and in Church they sing and read the Epistles. There is hope.
7. My hope is that the younger generation will embrace the Church and be encouraged to get involved
8. I have great hope in young people and they just need to be given the truth and included in our Church
9. Seeing young people rediscover their faith
10. Young peoples' crusade to save our world gives huge opportunity for finding common ground and has been recognised by Pope Francis

11. Our hope rests in the younger people – they have been given opportunity to communicate and to “probe” concepts, importantly as they grow and develop

Theme: Hope in my Belief

1. The Sharing of Faith
2. Springtime; life triumphs over death and hardship
3. That Hope will give/bring peace; – great sense of belonging
4. That I will one day be re-united with my family and friends in the Presence of the Lord
5. Those who have faith will persist and share their faith
6. The Resurrection; the thought of seeing loved ones again
7. The fact that there are still some Believers
8. Strength that God gives you to face what life throws at you
9. I still have hope in the message of the Church
10. The role of conscience and the depth of wisdom within the Church
11. Allows for freedom of conscience; - can be flexible in real life situations despite the strict “Church Rules”; belief that most people want and hold on to trust in God and count themselves as Catholic
12. Hope in the Church comes from 1) The Sacraments – access to the true meaning of love; 2) The Charity – access to love of each other.

Theme: Hope in Future Role of Women

1. That young women will have a greater input/role in Church for future
2. Women in key positions of the Church

Theme: Miscellaneous

1. Difficult to find Hope
2. Don't stop now

Answers from Yellow sheets left in the Church

When you think of your experience of Church, What brings you Joy?

Access to the Sacraments.

Sense of Community.

The unending selflessness and hard work of our clergy.

The Mass, singing, friendship.

The goodwill of the people that belong to the church.

Believing that Jesus can come into my soul every day. What a wonderful privilege. In Penal times the fact that our ancestors risked their lives for the church

The Universality of the Church. The core of God's Message and teaching

Bringing people together, sense of community.

The massive charitable outreach. The access to Mass and Reconciliation.

Community.

Eucharist.

Lay Leaders.

Our option for the poor.

The coming together of family.

Gratitude for my own faith.

That we join together to praise God.

Message of the Gospel- the love of God.

Richness and beauty of tradition, its teaching, liturgy, music and other arts.

Coming together in Community.

The stories of the Old Testament

A nun who was a sister of the doctor of one of my best friends. Her name was Sr..... or ...Also Brother who taught maths at the Patrician Academy in Mallow. Br XXXXX was past retirement age but he continued to teach as there was no one else to teach honours maths.

Also I like the way the church is so helpful to my wife.

Joy is when I go into church and all the spotlights or strong lights are turned off and soft lighting falls over the statues, and there is low sound or soft music. This inspires more prayerful prayer and more joy

Everyone rolling up their sleeves and going outside their comfort zone to find a way to help others.

Church music of nearly all kinds, incense, flowers, the interiors of old and beautiful church buildings.

The Eucharist well celebrated with awe, reverence and prayerfulness, brings me great joy. The gospel message proclaimed as good news and joyful news. The good news of Christ that makes a difference and an impact in our lives. When attending church it is good to leave with hope and encouragement.

Singing in church during the Eucharist is a source of joy in a prayerful manner. It lifts mind soul and heart in singing praise and prayer to God. Singing is like incense from the voice raised to God to his greater glory. Singing in the Eucharist enhances the prayer of the Eucharist. It brings awe and reverence to the mystery of God's presence. Singing in church gives me great joy.

Prayer is the heart of the church. We are a praying church and therefore a praying people. We need guidance from leaders, men and women of prayer, to lead us into prayer, meditation and contemplation, as part of experiencing the joy of the living God in our lives. When we are helped to pray in church it can be a very enriching and joyful experience.

Answers from Yellow sheets left in the Church

When you think of your experience of Church, What brings you sadness or disappointment?

The failure to prioritise the church over worldly affairs.

The scandals brought tremendous sadness to our church worldwide.

The cover up by the Hierarchy was a serious matter and very disappointing.

That there is still harshness and inflexibility; that older men's voices seem to be still the only ones that are heard. Growing up with Irish/ Catholic guilt has created deep sadness in me and has stopped me allowing myself to deserve the family I always wanted.

People disregarding prayer and The Mass and thinking that they cannot get a Spiritual outlet in the church.

The discrimination against women.

The governance disaster in the handling of the abuse of minors and nuns.

So many good priests and religious personnel leaving over the years makes me sad. Men or women who found it difficult to live with the law of celibacy but desired deeply to continue in the ministry. With such a shortage of priests nowadays why were they not allowed to remain in the ministry or requested to remain in the ministry. A shameful waste of good priests and religious people with a lack of priests and religious in the world today. This saddens and disappoints me. It raises the question is the 'official' church discerning what the Holy Spirit is saying to us today?

What saddens and disappoints me most is the abuse by some priests and religious throughout the world of innocent vulnerable people. Under their leadership as 'shepherds' in pastoral administration there has been a huge loss of respect, astonishment and unbelief in the 'Church has been totally lost by such behaviour. The cover up and the scandal by those in ecclesiastical authority has added to the crime of the abuse. Priests and religious ordained ministers were moved around in full knowledge of their abuse and in the new parish or location the repeated pattern of abuse continued. Unforgiveable. The unforgiveable sin mentioned in the scriptures against the Holy Spirit. This saddens me greatly. The cover up from some of the 'princes' of the Church to safeguard the integrity of the institution.

Because of the great decline in recent years of young men and women going forth into the priesthood and religious life, I feel there is a need or a demand or desire within the 'people of god' for women priests and married priests. The spirit of the living God is asking of us to discern his spirit in honesty and truth. Half of the world and maybe more than half of the world are women. They are equally made in the image of God and equally are called by God as men are. By excluding women from the ministry of priesthood we are excluding the feminine side of God and all that includes. What women would bring to the table of the lord would complement what men bring - an all-rounded God that works equally in women as in men for his greater glory. This saddens and disappoints me that this has not happened as of now.

Slowness in dealing with abuse.

Clericism of structure.

Lack of place and voice given to women.

Choice and language of parts of Liturgy.

Failure at times to communicate well to educated society in country today. Failure of promise of Vatican 2 to be fully realised.

I am disappointed when the church continues to exclude women from the clergy.

Disappointed that Catholic clergy are not allowed to marry.

Disappointed about the way the church has failed to deal with Child Abuse by a small number of clergy.

I deplore the guilty feelings which the teaching of the Church caused me when I was young.

That modern thinking has become alien to the Church's teaching. It's sad that there is such falling away from the Church.

Mother and Baby Homes, Abuse, cover up.

The tragedy of Clerical Sexual Abuse of Children. The cover-ups of it.

The refusal to welcome back to their Priestly Ministry those who fell in love with a woman and married her.

Our church for many decades now have welcomes and received into our Church, ordained Anglican men with their wives and families and yet exclude those I mentioned previously.

There is only a token of recognition of women in our church on the whole. . We have many wonderful women who could be energetic, spiritual leaders.

We are still a male clerical controlling Church.

Lack of communication between groups and priests.

Lack of encouragement to young people.

The lack of love in today's society that people have for each other even among religious people.

Not that abuse took place but that it was covered up including at the top.

That not everyone is included: Divorced and remarried, Married gay Couples, LGBT community.
That people are so disillusioned with the Church's inability to apologise.
Clericalism.
Lack of Women's Leadership.

The Church lives in the natural and relies only on its human strength. Its focus is to create a warm fuzzy feeling for 45 mins. On a Sunday rather than an encounter with the Divine. Its always on the defensive to make sure Mass is short and doesn't interfere with the rest of people's Sundays. It has very little understanding of the supernatural and power of the Holy Spirit – (Acts of the Apostles). It has forgotten/does very little to communicate faith as a way of life where we are ultimately spiritual beings and we live and move and have our being in Jesus.

At a society level the Church is afraid to stand up for what it teaches, its always apologetic, so afraid of offending. The Church forgets that Jesus was countercultural in His time.

The Church does not demonstrate that you can have a personal relationship with Jesus leading you to put him first in your life and become your best friend. One finds out by accident.

The Church doesn't express/share the belief in a real God who loves us, has a purpose for our lives and supplies all of our needs. Often there is very little expectation that prayers of intercession will be answered, and testimonies of miracles are frowned upon. Where is true faith to be found in the Church? It is very simple.

There is a tendency of parish councils to turn the Church/Parish into a corporate organization with power and control at its worst.

Answers from Yellow sheets left in the Church

When you think of your experience of Church, What brings you Fear or anxiety?

Diminishing numbers of people going to church, becoming less relevant.

The church will not successfully change its structures and practice in order to carry Christ's message to today's world.

That we will loose energy, courage and hope to keep faith with church.

That faith will be lost in this country.

At this moment we need to pray for vocations

That the Synod will make not a bit of difference to our present reality.

The reluctance to introduce general absolution. The discrimination against women on every level.

Not that it should change its core beliefs but that it should be in tune with life and be more inclusive, especially women's place in our church.

I have not experienced fear or anxiety as it does not seem to cause any threat to people in this country today.

The authority and power that the church holds and the misunderstandings people have.

We will have no Parish as it will fall apart.

The future- will young families find a place.

Exclusion of women, divorced and remarried, LGBTQ

That the church won't change with contemporary understandings of sexual diversity, gifts of all ethnicities.

Anxiety when I feel I am wasting my time on superficial distractions, I feel adult education or public (non silent) retreats where one can learn what the bible actually means and what the catholic religion really means would go a long way to release anxiety.
Losing followers, finding ways to bring them back in a free will way.

Childhood memories of mortal sin; of dying in mortal sin;

The reduced role of the Church in the modern world

The reduction of members attending mass and also their lack of interest or belief in God.

Our faith is about melting and moulding us in the image and likeness of God, serving him on our journey to heaven, leaving a legacy of love behind us. We need to be challenged, to grow in grace, to love more, we cannot remain as we are and continue to be praised for just turning on a Sunday. The Lord asks for more. My fear is that the Church no longer encourages our need of God in our lives and the benefits of the same.

The Church in my mind is irrelevant to a vast majority of Irish young people. I suppose with all the scandal within the church over the years all over the world, people have become disillusioned and scandalised by the hypocrisy of the Church's message. The teachings of the church do not touch people's lives. This is an anxious reality. How does the church bridge this gap.

Answers from Yellow sheets left in the Church

When you think of your experience of Church, What brings you Hope?

That the third world countries will increase membership and that there will be a renewal of members in more affluent countries.

The everlasting nature of the Church.

The Signs that there is life after death and that those who have passed still are indirectly involved in our lives.

The mentors or people I look up to, that in an understated way, they get out there to help on the ground. Highlighting their way of doing things inspires others.

That as God said "The gates of Hell will not prevail"- So Hopefully it will be renewed and come back in glory.

The current Pope.

The perseverance and dedication of so many men and women, ordained/not ordained. The generosity of the Laity.

There isn't much that brings me hope. But perhaps, that one or two younger priests I know are good, kind and caring people.

The joy of heaven.

Fixing problems like war and inequality.

Pope Francis. He is a man of hope. A man of prayer who speaks from the heart. He speaks from the heart of Christ and his teachings are uppermost in the Pope's teachings. He is a compassionate man of prayer. Like Christ he has compassion and concern for the good of the underdog, the marginalised, the refugees, the boat people. He is an icon for people and their human dignity and rights. He calls a spade a spade to world leaders. He seems to me a passionate man with the passions of Christ within him. This gives great hope to a dying Church.

At the core of the church is prayer. Liturgical, eucharistic and personal prayer. We are a people of prayer. What gives me hope is the prayer of the praying church and people at prayer, 'asking and seeing that the Lord is good'. I think of Taize and their way of praying before the cross or crucified Christ, singing, reading scripture, reflection, praying in silence. Allowing the spirit to enter into our hearts is a wonderful experience that I enjoy immensely. The spirit of the living God becomes palpable within the praying group individually and collectively. This type of prayer leads to contemplation and brings one in touch with hope and love for a needed world. Silent prayer and centring prayer is another form of prayer that we need at a common level. These aspects of prayer fill me with hope.

Maybe we will have a more authentic and inclusive church. Welcome all people to our church. That they be one.

Divorced couples.

LGBTQ persons.

That so many people find the church a home.

Generosity of the Church to the needy, outreach!

I hope that the church will continue to bring social benefits to people who still lack health, educational and welfare benefits in many parts of the world.

I believe that the church has brought Hope to many people who need supporting particularly those in difficult circumstances.

The message of the Gospel.

Pope Francis' work on renewing the Church

The likes of Catholics who really live faith.

The Church's teaching on areas such as social justice, the environment.

Insights from biblical studies and areas such as science and religion available as resources.

The fact that the Holy Spirit is always guiding the Church with His wisdom.

Bringing faith out of the Church building into our homes and community into all situations. of our lives. We need to be more like brothers and sisters each concerned about the physical/spiritual needs of our community. It's a bit like little home churches, if you are not well you ask your community to come and lay hands on and pray. Testimonies then grow everyone's faith.

Focus on praying/bringing everyone into a relationship with the Holy Spirit who Jesus left behind to be with us here on earth. The gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit should be very evident and will certainly make life exciting.

The Holy Spirit can teach us how to develop a personal relationship with the Lord, how to spend time and hear from God and develop a love for scripture which is alive and active.

**Answers from school age teenagers
Synod Survey Summary (Whites Sheets) April 2022**

When you think of your experience of Church, What brings you Joy?

Holy communion
Mass
The priest's sermon
Praying my sins away
Music
Weddings
Confirmation
Seeing my friends and learn about the Lord
First communion
Singing
Family spirit
Learning about God with others
Being taught the word of God
Feeling closer to God – eating the body of Christ
Remembering others who have passed
The community
Seeing everyone come together
Going with my Grandparents when I was young
Music
Talking to other people
Being with Mam and Dad
Seeing my family
Being able to pray with my mother
Easter prayer
Young people there
Knowing people will be there for you
The church itself bring me hope

When you think of your experience of Church, What brings you Fear or Anxiety?

Confession
At the time of mass Offering and have no money
Going up to the alter
Covid
When I had to sing in front of the whole church
Social interactions
Knowing that I had sinned and can't take holy communion especially in front of my parents
Funerals
A day that we will be judged by him
Some don't believe in the word of God
Doing something wrong during Mass

When you think of your experience of Church, What brings you Sadness?

Funerals
My sins
The atmosphere
The people
The people who suffer in the world
People without a blessing
All the people who have lost their loved ones come to mourn for those who couldn't be there
Eternal life
Not seeing my Granddad, he died before I was born
Confessions
The fear of going to hell
How Jesus died and the way he was treated
Sometimes I feel sad about the mistakes I have made
Death of a relative

When you think of your experience of Church, What brings you Hope?

Praying to God
Bible verses
The priest because he blesses my sins away
God
Jesus
Bible singing
Seeing people going to Church and be happy about it
Seeing other young people
That Jesus forgave our sins
The Roman Empire will prevail once again
Hearing the Word
The belief
When everyone so kind and welcoming, no judgement
Jesus
The belief that there is someone who can help me
Praying
The preaching of the Priest
Wedding
Baptism
Enlightening people about Jesus
The hymns
Being able to talk to God
Gives me hope for a better life