

Summary of the Parish Assembly, June, 2016

As a parish community we came to share our thoughts, listen, suggest and dialogue; not necessarily to walk away with answers, directions or conclusions but to hear what others had to say. Many said they'd return next year. The range of topics was broad yet they fit into the 4 major categories of our mission statement. Some of what was discussed follows:

LITURGY—Overall, folks like our liturgical experiences here; mention was made of different seasonal liturgies as well as the Sacraments. High marks were given to our celebrant, our liturgical ministers as well as those in the pews. We love our music. We were asked to remember that some come here grieving and we need to allow members to be where they are. Others wanted opportunity to share their thoughts on the homilies. Some were just trying to find breathing space within our Catholic tradition, and it was suggested we find ways to stand together before God.

OUTREACH --This category was all about inviting others in. Several groups mentioned making connections with Muslim communities for dialogue, activities or even adopting one as a sister parish. Concern for refugees and other interfaith connections were also vocalized. We need to become agents of change, to get out of our comfort zone and continue finding ways to reach out to the marginalized. We need to understand that "HOLY" is the same in all religions. Also, we need to find more personal ways to invite and welcome others in.

COMMUNITY -- One theme that came up several times was how to keep our young people coming back. One suggestion was to make things more intergenerational. Working with parents and the need for support was voiced. It was noted that few of our young families were present at the Parish Assembly. There was also concern about our aging population. A suggestion was made that some that have been active forever might take on the role of mentoring the next generation--to share, in a sense, the richness of St. C's history. Overall it was noted we all want to get to know each other better. Concern was mentioned over those in the business community who feel their voices and input are not being put to good use--that teaching and reassessing how to form good moral and ethical values are of great importance. We need to learn how to communicate better and become more transparent. We'd like people to feel free to talk about their needs, concerns, or illnesses without being judged or broadcast, and to honor their privacy. Being put on the prayer chain could be initiated at the first phone call. Cards sent to those who have lost loved ones have been greatly appreciated. Maybe we can find ways to reach out to those who no longer drive, have appointments to keep or just need a visit.

FAITH FORMATION --People want to know more about what's going on; we hear about things briefly and then we never hear about them again. A write up in the bulletin on a periodic basis might work. Much was brought up on using and forming our conscience--looking for training and education to become adult Christians acting by faith and conscience, and not by fear. Others wanted more scripture studies and felt small groups work best. We need to listen to people--who they are and where they're coming from. Some would like a directory that has more personal information that could be used for networking.

In conclusion, the greatest value of this Parish Assembly is that we are talking and we are listening. We hope more people will join us next year and become part of the dialogue.