

TRADITION v CHANGE: All participants noted a desire for a vibrant, holy, universal faith. Comments were split into two basic categories for accomplishing this

Tradition v Change

Traditionalists lamented that the world is pulling the Church and its followers toward secular trends and mores rather than leading the way by being examples of our Catholic faith and Christ's teachings. They called for better education about Catholic precepts and traditions that guide our behaviors and endorsed a return to historical reverent liturgical worship.

Why do bishops and priests stay silent and not condemn trends in our country that corrupt the morals of our children/young adults?

We need to get back to the old ways, to the basics of what Christ teaches us. No one goes to the Father except through our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't need new ideas. We need education in the catechism of the Eucharist, of Confession, and all the sacraments.

It seems like our Church is looking to change for the sake of change. That's not a reason. I feel that the Pope is making our Church too secular. We are chipping away at our foundations to keep up with secular society.

We need clarity and consistency across the Church. Different bishops, pastors, and religious groups within Catholicism believe/interpret things differently. We get mixed messages throughout the world within our own faith.

We should get back to the Latin Mass, the universal traditional language of our faith.

I feel the Vatican abandoned Catholics in China when Pope Francis said he would recognize the bishops appointed by the Chinese government.

People need to embrace all it means to be Catholic. Our faith is not for the common, do-whatever-is-easy/comfortable attitude.

Rather than change to fit the times, the Church needs to strengthen its message – not water it down.

We must get back to personal holiness, marriage and family, and education on the foundations of being Catholic.

The church founded by Jesus is the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Jesus instituted the church to be essentially hierarchical. It is not a democracy where everybody can have a say. It is up to every one of the faithful to accept and believe from their most inward depths, the essential dogmas and teaching handed down from the apostles as expounded in the Gospels and taught by the Magisterium and tradition through the writings of the ancient fathers, doctors, and saints through all the ages.

Others said the Catholic Church needs to be less entrenched in tradition and evolve to be more accepting of people on the margins – people of different colors, cultures, gender identities, and women who want to serve more fully. They advocated for positive changes that galvanize our faith in ways relevant to people's corporal and spiritual needs.

Some recommended the Church change its stance on birth control, without condoning fornication, because preventatives are better than unwanted or neglected children and much better than abortion.

I would like all Catholics to have an acceptance of the value, truth, and validity of other religions and beliefs. I would like parish priests to reach out to people who come to Church who may have a deep desire to pray and be acknowledged, even when they are not Catholic. I would like the Catholic hierarchy to encourage this practice of meeting with the outsider.

I am appalled by parishioners who refuse science, vaccines, and any consideration for the health of our community and at being force-fed a conservative agenda. Are we not to be a place of reconciliation, rehabilitation, hope, love, and acceptance? The Church is people, not a building.

My attempts to join the Catholic Church for nearly five years involved one encounter after another of absolute indifference. RCIA was attempted three times and completed, but there was no real investment or concern that I could sense if I was confirmed or not. I felt completely expendable and marveled at the lovelessness. The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference.

We need to work together by finding common ground through faith and education that bridges political, economic, lifestyle, and cultural divides. We must support each other, be patient, and be open because the joy of celebrating our faith together, even in different ways, is enriching.

There needs to be restoration and healing for religious abuse survivors. Where is it? The Church is indifferent to the tremendous wounds she caused by not providing meaningful restoration to sexual abuse victims or their families and not seeking out and offering them healing, redemption, restoration, and peace. The apologies were late and not sufficient. The question needs to be asked, "What would restore you? What would bring you peace?"

Indian country is profoundly wounded by boarding school abuses, a genocide of culture, and we are guilty. Hear this Church, you that turn out the destitute as you grow fat on your privilege.

Many respondents said there needs to be more listening. People need to be heard.

We need to meet people where they stand, accept them, and welcome them to join our walk with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

I love the Church. I love being Catholic. But I remain frustrated and disappointed in the atrophy of our religion. We don't have to (and shouldn't) adopt all societal trends, but we do have to be an evolving, living entity. We have lost good people to secular society by being rigid.

Jesus taught us to reach out, meet people where they are, and welcome them into the Holy Spirit. We need to do that and not be so quick to judge. Rather than handing people a list of rules and telling them to follow dogma, we need to listen more and apply common sense, Christian principles, and love.