

RESPONSE OF ST. CHARLES GARNIER PARISH TO THE SYNODAL QUESTIONS

NOTES FOR THE READER

The synopsis of questions 1 to 8 below is the result of a process by ten members of SCG parish, (listed hereafter, and tentatively named the Synod Questionnaire Group - SQG) in which they winnowed the questionnaires submitted by seven members of the parish. The very low number of respondents, it seemed, was due to overwhelming task that the very long, detailed and hard-to-understand questionnaire posed for prospective respondents. A tight timeframe for response and a lack of understanding of what a synod is, and why they were being asked to participate via a questionnaire also complicated the lack of parish synodal responses. Even the SQG had to look up the meaning of such terms as Oriental churches, sui juris, patrimony, parrhesia, as most would not be familiar with these legal and theological terms.

In three Saturday afternoon sessions (of 2-3 hours each), the SQG were able to pick out the main point made by all the respondents to sections 1 to 8 (and their sub-questions) which were recorded, and which appear below in bullet form. To respect the deadline for a parish report, the SQG were unable to process questions 9 and 10, and so the text of those two questions were added by one member of the group, so that if main points were desired, the original response would be available.

The Synod Questionnaire Group:

Fr. Gabriel, Pastor
Bernie Schneider, Chair of Parish Council
Chris Schmidt
Steve and Nicole Horsman
Rhonda Sali
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Sr Phyllis Giroux, facilitator

1. COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road.

1a In our local Church, who are the ones "journeying together"?

- Family and friends
- Ministry groups (Liturgy, Eucharistic Ministers, etc.)
- Service groups (St. Vincent DePaul, CWL, K of C etc.)
- Clergy
- The Elderly
- Young families with children
- Anyone who enters the Church
- The people of God and the Holy Spirit
- There are concerns that the indigenous, other Christians and the poor are not 'journeying together' in our church.

1b Who are our companions on the journey, including those outside the boundaries of the Church?

- Non-practicing social friends and family
- The sick and the elderly

- Other groups with common moral values
- The hierarchy in the church
- Other parishes
- Those we encounter daily (at work, in the grocery store etc.)
- Other denominations
- Catholic schools and faith-based communities in the rest of the world
- We also consider nature, music and literature (including online) companions on this journey.

1c **How are we called to grow as companions?**

- Through Covid we have been livestreaming our Masses
- Zoom meetings by and between the various church groups
- By witnessing and telling our stories
- Listening to others especially those different from you, in order to celebrate our differences
- Unity in love in receiving and giving
- Participation in a church service group
- Listening to the Holy Spirit
- Recognizing our interdependence
- Reaching out, talking, finding common values
- Getting organized
- Doing it all with respect and esteem.

2. **LISTENING**

Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.

2a **How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore?**

- Listening to the signs of the times
- Through everyone around us
- Through literature and nature
- Through those beyond our group, the poor, needy and indigenous peoples
- One's own conscience
- Elders with wisdom
- The innocence of children
- Personal devotion
- The gift of the Eucharist

2b **How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people?**

- Through functioning parish councils and diocesan councils
- Discussing the big issues
- Include young adults on councils
- Listen to individuals as well as groups
- Interaction with priests, ministry groups
- Catechism and faith formation (more opportunities to listen to youth)
- Talking one-on-one and not complaining.

2c **What facilitates or inhibits our listening?**

- Hierarchical structure inhibits our listening and being listened to
- More power to make decisions given to laity, including women
- Our inwardness (not going out)
- COVID has had an impact on our listening
- Fixed on our own ideas, egos and judgments
- The lack of silence, to think, also inhibits our listening

- A belief by laity, that our voice is not needed
- We need education
- Creating a safe space to facilitate listening

2d **How do we integrate the contribution of Consecrated Men and Women?**

- At the present time we have no brothers within our parish. We have 3 Sisters.
- Invitation to the consecrated men and women to speak at schools and within our families, while respecting their privacy
- Working as co-administrators with the priests

2e **What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?**

- Limited to actions of certain ministries
- Little space; we must take concrete steps to include the minorities
- We do have parish education and outreach to refugees and indigenous people
- Before COVID we had an outreach group who had regular contact with shut-ins
- We are working to increase our outreach
- We financially support groups like Freedom's Door, Rachel's Vineyard, Central Okanagan Pregnancy Care Centre etc.
- We are also working on publicizing more information on who's doing what in the form of a booklet so as people will know what programs we do have and who to contact

2f **What are some limitations in our ability to listen, especially to those who have different views than our own?**

- Personal bias
- Indifference
- Lack of valuing all voices
- Resistance to change
- Not involving those on the margins
- Fear, ignorance, unwillingness, egos
- Power and control
- Constraints
- Limitations of our life experiences

2g **How do we listen to the social and cultural context in which we live?**

- Use the wisdom/guidance of the Church teaching in listening to the news
- Get educated regarding the moral values
- Use of conscience guided by the Holy Spirit
- Personal interest
- Take time to find out
- Have an open ear
- Learn about cultural difference by reading
- Speaking with relevance to young people
- Sharing our stories
- Be open and honest
- Unpack the realities and truth and deal with the implications

2h **How well do we listen to those on the peripheries?**

- We listen, but to possibly biased sources
- We may resist listening as it may involve change and change requires work
- Some, not all, rarely listen

- We need to publicize what we are doing so as to answer to the false information out there that we are not doing anything

3. **SPEAKING OUT**

All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity.

3a **What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and in society?**

Hinders:

- Fear of being judged
- Fear that it won't make a difference
- Apathy
- Close minded clergy/hierarchy
- Personal good takes priority over common good

Enables:

- Anchoring oneself in wisdom, mercy and God's direction
- When valued, respected and safe;
- Being open-minded
- Listening clergy/hierarchy (2 way);
- Church feels like home/parishioners take ownership

3b **When and how do we manage to say what is important to us?**

- No organized time and place
- Small base communities could be a way forward
- Talk or write letters to bishop/priests
- Town hall meetings
- Parish groups
- Parishioners can speak to any authority anytime
- Clergy/bishop visit
- Talk to person concerned first
- Involvement brings connection
- Despite Covid, people did things behind scenes
- Craving connections that work for families.

3c **How does the relationship with the local media work (not only Catholic media)?**

- Very lacking/sporadic/hostile; focusing on the negative when positive news is also present
- Have someone in Public Relations role for local parish, diocese (that person works with appropriate authorities)
- No cohesive diocesan identity to portray
- Misinformation
- We need to be more vocal – especially where the church excels in charitable works
- Education on how media works

3d **Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?**

- Parishioners to congregation (not media)
- Teachers to questioners (not media)
- Educate re who has authority to speak on what (where authority resides and its limits)
- Social media is opinion based
- Parishioners need to know who is on parish council and how they are chosen (basis – common good) (few willing)

4. **CELEBRATION**

"Walking together" is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.

4a How do prayer and liturgical celebration inspire and direct our 'journeying together'?"

- Mass helps me place myself in God's Presence
- Pray/meditate together
- Everything comes back to the Word of God
- Eucharist is central to our faith life/community
- In person is necessary and essential
- Personal prayer should be in service to community worship and action
- Bonding in faith = journeying together
- Sharing with others leads to stronger individual faith
- Equal members of the Body of Christ

4b How do they inspire the most important decisions?

- They inspire sometimes but not explicitly
- Personal prayer/discernment
- Centered on the discernment and living out the Gospel message
- All meetings (big and small) should start with the Word of God
- Need for full, active, and conscious participation in the liturgy – this leads to inspiration.

4c How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?

- Enthusiasm
- Educating about lay roles
- Simple and nourishing message
- Personal connection with priest
- Passion for your ministry – i.e. lector; altar server, Eucharistic Minister etc.
- Conviction and love
- Promote service to the community
- Continue with livestream liturgies – simple easy connection for those unable to attend Mass in-person due to illness or physical challenges
- YOUTH – we need to connect with the youth
- Great need for a youth minister (parish and diocesan)

4d What space is given to the exercise of the ministries of Lector and Acolyte?

Clarification – Acolyte is a person who assists a member of the clergy in a liturgical service by performing minor duties.

- Must explain the JOY and importance of being a lay minister
- Having a role helps us be more full, active and conscious participants
- Offer more regular training; more education needed
- Everyone is welcome...but how to let them know that?
- Message needs to be shared that we are all unworthy...this should not be a hindrance
- Personal invitation to be a lay minister

5. CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION

Synodality is at the service of the Church's mission, in which all her members are called to participate.

5a Since we are all missionary disciples, how is every baptized person called to participate in the mission of the Church?

- Being there; praying together; sharing faith journey with others

- Volunteering for various ministries
- Evangelizing
- Enthusiasm
- Not believing they are 'missionary disciples' therefore education
- Sharing gifts and talents
- Showing by how you live and how you treat them
- Witnessing; by being active and involved

5b **What hinders the baptized from being active in mission?**

- People are too busy
- Apathy
- Ignorance of responsibility
- Lack of education re what mission is
- Weariness of old age
- Individual / personal difficulties
- Avoidance of change
- Negative past experiences
- Fear of stigma
- Outside influences, social media, work etc.
- Family circumstances
- Low priority to faith

5c **What areas of mission are we neglecting?** *Mission – Sharing the Good News of Christ*

- Depends on personal circumstances
- Feel uneducated re mission
- We don't have a youth ministry
- Special focuses: abortion healing; pornography

5d **How does the community support its members who serve society in various ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, education, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, caring for the environment, etc.)?**

- Through organizations connected to parish
- Financially – individually; (not via parish right now due to lack of funds generated through collection)
- Writing letters
- Speaking at Mass – at proper time
- Sharing
- Some feel Church does not support in named areas

5e **How does the Church help these members to live out their service to society in a missionary way?**

- Nothing visible
- Leaves it to the people
- Church offers various mass times
- Service groups help financially (K of C; CWL; SVdeP)
- Encouragement by clergy, parish council

Sf **How is discernment about missionary choices made, and by whom?**

- Ministry fairs
- Talking to various ministers re their roles
- Silent listening to God/Scripture
- Support for discernment for personal spiritual life, regular confession

- Teaching in Roman Catholic schools
- Via parish council's efforts and calls
- Personal invitation to use one's talents for ministry

5g **How are the different traditions that constitute the patrimony of many Churches, especially the Oriental ones, integrated and adapted, with respect to the synodal style, in view of an effective Christian witness?**

- Within this Diocese few Oriental churches
- Minimal interaction with Ukrainian Catholic Church

5h **How does collaboration work in territories where different *sui iuris* Churches are present?**

- Minimal interaction
- Form of collaboration not known
- Educate about Catholic Rites which come under authority of Pope

6. **DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

Dialogue is a path of perseverance that also includes silences and sufferings, but which is capable of gathering the experience of persons and peoples.

6a **What are the places and means of dialogue within our particular Church?**

- Town Hall meetings (affected by Covid in last 2 years)
- Forum to discuss Truth and Reconciliation – Forums through small groups, online, discussions at parish level
- Informally after mass, between family and friends
- Parish Council and Liturgy Committee
- CWL and K of C
- Moms' group
- Fellowship (in hiatus because of Covid)
- Where? – Parish Hall, Catholic Schools
 - Online – livestream mass, Zoom small group, Facebook groups
 - Whatsapp Catholic groups.

6b **How are divergences of vision, or conflicts and difficulties addressed?**

- Discussed at parish council meetings
- Parish priest (mediation/discussion)
- Invitation to open dialogue (Q & A)
- Had a speaker come to educate on Truth and Reconciliation followed by Q & A
- Begin at a one-on-one level

6c **How do we promote collaboration with neighbouring dioceses, religious communities in the area, lay associations and movements, etc.?**

- Catholic Schools collaborate with other dioceses to have cohesiveness
- Administrative level (i.e. accountants meet regularly)
- Bishops meet regularly
- Vancouver Archdiocese/Kamloops diocese retreats could be promoted better – announcements, personal invitations
- CWL – diocese, provincial, national conventions
- Lay movements and organizations
- Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO – Canada)
- NET Ministries (Canada)
- Face 2 Face (Saskatchewan)
- The history of the local church and religious communities in the area needs to be shared and celebrated.

6d **What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to?**

- Perspectives of youth and young adults
- More inclusive of people of colour
- Human sexuality
- Separated and divorced Catholics
- Ecological justice
- Clericalism
- Scandals in the church – sexual abuse and residential schools
- Social justice
- Poverty

6e **What experiences of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other religions and with those who have no religious affiliation?**

- Personal interactions
- Ecumenical dialogue within diocese (was done in the past)
- Rachel's Vineyard
- Pro-Life Movement
- Freedom's Door
- Central Okanagan Independent School Association (COISA)

6f **How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society: the spheres of politics, economics, culture, civil society, and people who live in poverty?**

- St Vincent de Paul – InVincible Housing – direct dialogue/interaction with the poor
- Ozanam House
- Catholic School partners with Mamas for Mamas, Inn from the Cold; youth homeless, Gospel Mission
- Rachel's Vineyard
- Pregnancy Care Centre

7. **ECUMENISM**

The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one Baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey.

7a **What relationships does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions and denominations?**

- Interdenominational Breakfast
- World Day of Prayer
- Bikes for Africa (in the past)
- Connections through common mission ex: Ozanam House, Gospel Mission, Kelowna Right to Life, Pregnancy Care Centre
- Youth Groups
- Parents Who Care with Prayer and Mothers Who Care (in the past)
- University Campus Ministry (UCM)
- Retroville
- ALPHA
- Marriage Encounter
- Engaged Encounter

7b **What do we share and how do we journey together?**

- **What we Share:**
 - Common belief in the Trinity
 - Sharing understanding and experiences of faith/life

- Values
- Morals
- History
- Prayer
- Baptism
- Marriage
- **How we Journey Together:**
- Listen and encourage dialogue
- Sharing common mission – ministries/service work

7c **What fruits have we drawn from this "journeying together"?**

- Mutual understanding
- Appreciation of the whole Body of Christ
- Respect and tolerance
- Ability to work together
- Stronger sense of community, support, and progress
- Greater impact (when we journey together)

7d **What are the difficulties?**

- History
- Focus on the differences rather than similarities
- Different theologies (i.e. Devotion to Mary)
- Lack of understanding
- Indifference
- Isolation
- No leaders/organizers
- Power struggle – pride
- Individualism

7e **How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?**

- Communicate and PRAY!
- Take initiative
- Invite enthusiastically
- Calling forward the gifts/talents in others
- Delegate to avoid burnout
- Build relationships

8. **AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION**

A synodal Church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.

8a **How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to reach them, and the steps to be taken?**

- Parish Council
- Townhall meeting
- Communicate the vision and mission to empower the community to act
- Create a Mission Statement
- Pope will identify for universal church
- At the Parish level – simple questionnaire in pews; Townhall meeting; Suggestion Box

8b **How is authority/governance exercised within our particular Church (Diocese/ Eparchy)?**

- Bishop >>Clergy>>Parish Council

8c **How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice?**

- Through various parish groups
- Parish Council has representatives from each group (Moms' group; K of C; CWL; Liturgy etc.)
- Priest works with council

8d **How are evaluations conducted and by whom?**

- Priest does personnel evaluations
- Evaluation of programs, leaders and volunteers – done with discretion
- Training necessary for priests to do this?
- Seminarian training in administration/management/leadership

8e **How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted?**

- Inspired, enthusiastic empowerment
- Saint stories! Especially lay saints
- Educating on the roles of the laity
- Add different ministries/roles to the Prayers of the Faithful
- Through different parish groups, people are encouraged to volunteer
- Personal invitations (start small)
- Invitation in the bulletin
- Need heart-driven sense of responsibility

8f **Have we had fruitful experiences of synodality on a local level?**

- Truth and Reconciliation town Hall
- The Synod Questionnaire Group
- 24 Hour Adoration Chapel
- Changes due to Covid created new opportunities in the parish (i.e. Website, Facebook, online presence)
- Recognizing other parishioners' gifts/talents
- Responses to abuses/scandals have led to accountability and protection

8g **How do synodal bodies function at the level of the particular Church (Pastoral Councils in parishes and dioceses, Presbyteral Council, etc.)?**

- Parish Councils
- With accountability
- Through dialogue
- Ministries come together in Parish Council

---From here on, replies are verbatim as they appeared on the response papers---

---No attempt was made to get the “nuggets” because of the looming deadline.---

9. **DISCERNING AND DECIDING**

In a synodal style, decisions are made through discernment, based on a consensus that flows from the common obedience to the Spirit.

9a **By what procedures and methods do we discern together and make decisions?**

- 9a – 9g We need to understand what is happening and be given full reasons for what is happening. Often being told instead of being invited.
- Decisions are made in a top/down manner, by the Bishop, the Priest and the Parish Council and Liturgy Committee.
- I am not on parish council which is where presumably this happens. On Liturgy Committee we have an agenda and discuss our way through it. We usually reach consensus but not always total agreement. We rarely vote.

- I don't recall this procedure being explicitly discussed. I think it goes something like consider the facts, review the pros and cons and the alternatives, act on what appears to be the best choice.
- Not by a discernment process as far as I've experienced, if discernment is consensus in obedience to the Spirit. It's more like discussion, I think, with significant people or opinions holding sway because that's how society does it. People don't realize that discernment is the church's way, what discernment is or how to do it.

9b **How can they be improved?**

- Decision making could be opened up to parishioners. I would suggest a consultation with the Bishop and the priest and among parishes in our diocese, regarding the greening of our parish and diocese i.e. solar panels, divesting of fossil fuels, composting for parishioners who live in multi-family buildings.
- They work fairly well most of the time. When Fr. Bart was here, the Liturgy Committee actually studied and discussed the Vatican documents most relevant to liturgy. I found that helpful because it gave us an understanding of the teachings of the church on the topic and also the rationale for some of them. On some topics it might be helpful to not be on too-tight a timeline and to be able to re-visit an important topic after allowing time for personal study, prayer, reflection. I think it is also positive when there's an atmosphere where it's o.k. to disagree and to speak one's mind without pressure to join the majority. We probably learn and grow as much (more?) through our disagreements than through our easy agreements.
- A process could be consciously developed and then clearly communicated to those involved.
- Education to start.

9c **How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchically structured communities?**

- It is difficult to promote participation in decision-making within hierarchically structured communities, so that has to change.
- I think we have to WANT to promote participation in decision-making. It seems to me that often hierarchies don't actually value such participation. They tend to want efficiency and obedience, or, put more bluntly, power.
- Again, I don't think participation in decision-making IS promoted within hierarchical structures. If so, it appears to something like weight the higher levels of the hierarchy more heavily and limit the lowest level (lay people) to the parish council.
- Educate the people as to their right and responsibility to speak around the table of the baptized when it comes to setting directions. Educate them about discernment. Plan an in-depth, adult learning process for this.

9d **Do our decision-making methods help us to listen to the whole People of God?**

- Not in my experience.
- No.
- No
- The "whole People of God": Not at present. A limited segment perhaps.

9e **What is the relationship between consultation and decision-making, and how do we put these into practice?**

- Consultation and decision-making should be related but often they are not. Consultation can be ignored by decision-makers in a hierarchical system.
- Consultation can be extremely valuable because it's a way of actually inviting sharing of information, recognition that we don't know everything but that there are people who can tell us what we don't yet know. (Of course, if the consultants are specially picked to endorse the hierarchy's favourite view, all the benefits become bogus.) Consultation-informed decision-making can lead to better decisions, if done with sincerity. At the parish level we might start by seeking consultation(s) on topics of current concern. If a roof needs to be replaced, I trust we'd consult more than one roofing company and get advice as well as bids. If we make as a goal to "green" the parish, we might have a consultation or two to determine what needs to be done, what could be done, what might bring the most environmental value for money spent and invested. If the question is how to involve more young people, it would make sense to read the research literature on the topic and then consult some young people to listen to why they do or don't seek involvement. Unpaid consultants like the young can be just as valuable on some topics as paid consultants. By seeking consultation and then

actually using it to help us make decisions we'd likely discover that it's a way to make better decisions.

- Ideally there would be relevant consultation of those with expertise and those who would be affected by the decision. The decision would be made with that input top of mind. To put it in practice, we'd first have to develop a way of determining the relevant consultants and soliciting their input in a systematic and fair manner. We would also need to be sure to communicate the decision to them and the rationale for that decision.
- Consultation is seeking information to prepare for decision-making. Decision making may or may not be done by discernment. Regardless, seeking information is necessary.

9f **What tools and procedures do we use to promote transparency and accountability?**

- We can open up to all parishioners, whether it is Parish Council or Liturgy Committee, let people come see how decisions are made. Invite people in.
- We've taken one step by printing the names of those on parish council so that's no longer hidden information. I think it would also be important to regularly communicate the decision to those consulted and potentially impacted. There would ideally be a follow-up review to determine to what degree the decision was a good one and , if not, how the process could be improved or tweaked.
- Publishing a bit of financial info in bulletin. Publishing some decisions in bulletin/website. That's all I can think of. Is that enough to promote accountability and transparency? Seems minimal. Why didn't we who answered this questionnaire know who else was invited to do so?

9g **How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?**

- Some of the articles and websites I see in the bulletin help me, such as Indigenous Connections, Care of Creation, a book study on Laudato Si' perhaps, Franciscan at Home, New Pilgrim Path. We could share book titles which inspire our journey with one another, another type of book club. Centering Prayer gathering. Use the St. Charles Garnier and Nelson Diocese and our Facebook page for links to these websites.
- We 'll only grow in communal spiritual discernment if it's valued, practiced regularly (not just within parish council) and the results communicated. Honest, most of us in the congregation probably don't know what's going on outside of our own little group.
- Educating about and using discernment in parish groups and deliberations, both small groups and town halls with trained facilitators for large group discernment.

10. **FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY**

The spirituality of journeying together is meant to become an educational principle for the formation of the human person and for Christians, families, and communities.

10a **How does our church community form people to be more capable of "walking together," listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue?**

- 10a to 10c By having more people involved and not sure how that can happen. Our involvement is because we see value in helping others and have been raised with an awareness of church community.
- We have CWL, Knights of Columbus, Saint Vincent de Paul Society.
- Those of us fortunate enough to receive spiritual direction learn this as part of the process. Making spiritual direction more widely available would be one positive step. In some committees within the local church, an abbreviated form is practiced. Probably the process could be more consciously developed through the formation and use of small faith groups.
- Not sure if it does, and therefore how it does.

10b **What formation is offered to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a synodal way?**

- First Communion, Confirmation, RCIA, our priest, leaders in the community all help in listening to each other, participating in mission and engaging in dialogue, but we need to somehow involve more young people. Some churches have activities where older children play with younger children, games, LEGO, with lessons about spirituality in Christ interspersed, with guidance from a formed adult.
- Spiritual Direction
- None that I know of. We have thousands of years of hierarchy ingrained in our Catholic psyche. It won't change

overnight. But the world is becoming less and less patient with hierarchy, and when the world gets restless, the church will get shaken up.

10c **What tools help us to read the dynamics of the culture in which we are immersed and their impact on our style of Church?**

- The newspapers, television, drama, books, all used in a critical way. Listening, talking with one another, thinking about how it all relates to our lives.
- The spiritual exercises of the Jesuits can be very helpful. Jesuits encourage reading the signs of the times with a bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. There are some online groups that also foster such a perspective. It would also be helpful if homilies helped with reading the dynamics of the culture and didn't just rely on simplistic, top-down, historical "solutions" to current challenges. Protestants teach lay people to become spiritual adults; Catholics could do that too.
- Media literacy. Research and self-education into the mindset of societal groups such as young adults' groupings, the elderly, the ethnically diverse.

11a. **Please describe in one or two paragraphs the experience of the local gathering(s) held, as well as of the entire local synodal consultation.**

- I did not do this questionnaire as part of a focal group, I did it alone, which is NOT the synodal method. I was asked to simply fill out the questionnaire. I did not so much as hear from the diocesan level that such a thing as a synod was even taking place, nor what were the plans for diocesan participation until a few peeps recently. No synodal gatherings were planned for the parish; even with covid other means were possible.
- We have not had any gatherings. We're just individually filling in answers to the questionnaire.

11b. **Based on the experience of your consultation(s), could you sum up in one or two sentences how the Spirit is calling us to grow in "journeying together" in your particular Church?**

- As I said, this was not a 'consultation' for me, but an individual exercise. I'm not sure how the Spirit is calling me to 'journey together' in my local church. I am old, disheartened and tired and I have scars from dealing with the institutional church over the years. I am not eager for more scars at this point. My hope is in the enSpirited church rather than the institutional church. There are saints and martyrs and little old lady friends whose faith holds my own up. The church has been in messes all down the ages, some worse than others, and saints and martyrs have kept the faith. I hope I can - till I see God face to face and get caught up in something far more permanent than this barnacled institution with its nuggets of faith.

11c **Are there any other important issues that emerged from your local consultation not captured in any of the above questions?**

- Preparation for the synod was inadequate. As church people we should have been educated as to what a synod was and what the process was and why, and the hope Pope Francis probably had in mandating it for the whole church.
- There needed to be education as to what discernment was and how it differs from information-sharing, debate and discussion. For something this important, bishops and pastors should have and should have been able to (i.e. deadlines) seriously promote it.
- Synodal town hall sessions should have been organized; not simply answering 8 pages of questions but focusing on key issues for discernment. Eight pages of heavy, jargoned questions is very off-putting to most church people. This evidences the lack of understanding of their audience by bureaucrats who created this tool.
- When the synod results are published, the synodal sessions should continue, to discern what the implications are locally and diocese-wide. The synod is hopefully, never going to be over. It will be messy, chaotic, conflictual but enSpirited!

Additional Remarks of Respondents:

- My experience of local gatherings held is only of Liturgy Committee and Parish Council. There has not been local synodal consultation. One person spoke with me and said she needed other people in conversation in order to fill out the questionnaire. I believe the Spirit is calling us to grow in "journeying together" by exploring different pathways together. I've been called to look at Indigenous and Celtic spirituality, both with a strong connection

to the land and all of creation through books and webinars and Wild Church Okanagan. Many important issues have emerged from my consideration of these questions and I would welcome dialogue with others. I've spoken with individuals but maybe we could meet in groups. I believe my spirituality has expanded beyond some of the traditional ways, moving forward from Vatican II, rather than closing down and doing things in ways that were done in the 50's, when I was a child. People, especially young people aren't attracted to that kind of church anymore, which is why our numbers are decreasing, in my opinion. We want a church that engages with the poor, with the marginalized, with nature, rather than one which is focused on a physical building and property and traditional ritual. I love the ritual and feel very immersed in the experience of Mass, but there is more to spirituality than that.

- It is our Faith that calls to be in relationship with our church community and to live our Christian values for others to see. We have to Walk the Talk. They will be seen as Christians by their actions.