Catholic Diocese of Lansing, Michigan
Synod Interim Stage Report
April 08, 2024

Approach

College/University Students and Hispanic/Latino Parishioners

With encouragement received from both USCCB Synod Team meetings as well as regional resources, we focused our efforts on hearing from groups of individuals who may not have been heard in earlier stages of the Synod. We discerned that in our diocese, two of those groups were college/university students and Hispanic individuals. These are two groups of individuals who often feel under-represented in the mainstream efforts of the Church. Thus, we held one listening session for Michigan State University Students in East Lansing, Michigan and another at Christo Rey Parish in Lansing, Michigan.

Methodology

We were given two "guiding questions" to focus upon during this interim stage. As provided, the first question contained two questions within itself. We divided that question into two, separate questions making a total of three guiding questions.

- **Question 1: Where have I seen or experienced successes within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that encourage the mission?**
- **Question 2: Where have I seen or experienced distresses or failures within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that hinder the mission?**
- **Question 3: How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?**

Each session began with the Adsumus Prayer to the Holy Spirit. In the following pages, please find a summary of the feedback we received from the aforementioned individuals.

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Question 1: Where have I seen or experienced successes within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that encourage the mission?

1. Welcoming Environment at Campus Ministry Center: At St. John's, the campus ministry center fosters a welcoming atmosphere where students feel embraced and supported. The willingness of students to mentor others and the kindness of priests contribute to a sense of community and belonging.
2. Humanity of Priests: When priests share their humanity, it creates a connection with parishioners, fostering a deeper sense of relatability and understanding. When priests share their interests and personalities, it humanizes them, making them more approachable and relatable to parishioners.
3. Explanation of Mass: Churches providing explanations of Mass rituals and proceedings, whether through spoken explanations or displayed materials, facilitate understanding and inclusivity, making non-Catholics feel welcome.

4. Implementation of Traditional Liturgies: The incorporation of traditional liturgies and worship practices enriches spiritual experiences, connecting worshippers with the Church's rich heritage.
5. Enthusiastic Priest Presence: Passionate and engaged priests during liturgies demonstrates dedication and commitment, enhancing the worship experience for congregants.
6. Relevance of Homilies: When priests relate readings and homilies to real-life situations and provide contextual explanations of scriptures, it deepens understanding and relevance for parishioners.
7. Nurturing Community: Solid and nurturing communities within parishes foster support and fellowship among members, strengthening bonds and collective spiritual growth.
8. Incorporation of Roman Gradual Antiphons: Inclusion of antiphons from the Roman Gradual in liturgies provides more scriptural content, enhancing the depth of worship experiences.
9. Increased Opportunities for Confession and Adoration: Expanded opportunities for confession and adoration at schools and parishes provide avenues for spiritual renewal and deepening of faith.
10. Emphasis on Personal Encounter with Jesus: Greater emphasis on encountering Jesus personally and the call to discipleship (Kerygma) inspires individuals to deepen their relationship with Christ and actively live out their faith.
11. Acknowledgment of Human Feelings: Understanding that the Church and God care about people's emotions and well-being acknowledges the humanity of the Church, fostering empathy and support within the community.
12. Access to Both Species of the Eucharist: Providing access to both species of the Eucharist, especially the precious blood for those unable to receive the host, ensures inclusivity and full participation in the sacrament of communion.

Question 2: Where have I seen or experienced distresses or failures within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that hinder the mission?

1. Unwelcoming Home Parish: Some students experience a lack of warmth and approachability from priests, leading to feelings of alienation and disconnection in their own parishes.
2. "Holiness Wars" and Inhumanity: Tensions within the Church lead to a perception of "holiness wars," where individuals strive for holiness in a manner that feels inauthentic and disconnected from human experiences.
3. Lack of Boundaries and Accountability: Clergy who blur boundaries erode trust and dignity, compromising the integrity of their vocation and the Church's credibility.
4. Sterile Church Environments: Churches perceived as sterile and lacking aesthetic beauty fail to inspire reverence and worship, becoming more akin to social gathering spaces than places of spiritual devotion.
5. Poor Catechesis and Mass Understanding: Insufficient catechesis regarding the Mass and the sacrificial offering of oneself impedes understanding and participation in the liturgy.
6. Overemphasis on Welcome at the Expense of Sacredness: Prioritizing inclusivity over sacredness in liturgical practices diminishes the transcendent nature of worship, leading to a loss of reverence.
7. Inadequate Youth Catechesis: Youth often receive inadequate formation, leaving them ill-equipped to understand and live out their faith, resulting in disillusionment and disengagement.
8. Generational Divides and Power Imbalances: Divisions between generations within the Church, compounded by perceived power imbalances favoring older, wealthier parishioners, create discord and hinder collaborative efforts.
9. Contradictions in Faith and Practice: Discrepancies between professed beliefs and lived actions, particularly concerning the Eucharist, undermine the integrity and witness of the Church.
10. Lack of Reverence and Unity: Instances of irreverence and disunity within the Church contribute to a sense of fragmentation and discord among its members.
11. Poor Quality of Homilies: Homilies that lack substance, push personal agendas, or are overly complex fail to inspire and nourish the faithful, leading to disengagement and apathy.
12. Limited Outreach and Support: Insufficient outreach and support for marginalized groups, such as international students, contribute to feelings of exclusion and unwelcome within the Church community.
13. Denial of Communion Under Both Species: Withholding the precious blood during communion deprives individuals of a fuller sacramental experience and undermines the Church's inclusivity.

Question 3: How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?

1. Lectio Divina: Promote practices like Lectio Divina to deepen engagement with Scripture and foster spiritual growth.
2. Embrace Traditional Liturgy, Worship, and Art: Emphasize traditional liturgy, worship practices, and art forms to enhance reverence and beauty in worship experiences. Create opportunities for individuals, especially students, to explore and experience the traditional Latin Mass.
3. Increase Reverence: Foster a culture of reverence, particularly towards the Word of God and the liturgy, to deepen spiritual encounters.
4. Connect Homilies to Gospel and Catechism: Ensure homilies are connected to the Gospel and teachings of the Church, providing practical applications for daily life.
5. Seek to Understand Parishioners: Invest in understanding parishioners as individuals, addressing their spiritual needs and concerns.
6. Utilize Roman Gradual Antiphons: Incorporate Roman Gradual antiphons in liturgical celebrations to enrich worship experiences with scriptural content.
7. Offer Formation in Apologetics: Provide resources and formation in apologetics to equip individuals to defend and explain their faith effectively.
8. Revive Intellectual Traditions: Revive the intellectual traditions of the Church to deepen understanding and engagement with the Faith on an intellectual level.
9. Increase Sacramental Accessibility: Make sacraments more readily available to remind individuals of the mission of the Church and foster a deeper love for Christ and His Church.
10. Ensure Diversity in Preaching and Offerings: Offer diverse spiritual nourishment to cater to individuals at various stages of discipleship.
11. Strive for Church Unity: Work towards healing divisions within the Church and promote unity as a unifying force.
12. Preach Goodness and Service: Emphasize the goodness of the Lord and the Church, encouraging service to others out of love for humanity.
13. Restore the Precious Blood in Communion: Bring back the reception of the precious blood during Holy Communion to enrich the sacramental experience.
14. Utilize Existing Spiritual Treasures: Take advantage of the richness of the Faith, including prayers, scriptures, traditions, and works of mercy, to nourish spiritual growth.
15. Encourage Devotion to Blessed Mother: Promote universal devotion to Blessed Mother, fostering a deeper connection to her intercession and protection.

HISPANIC/LATINO PARISHIONERS

Question 1: Where have I seen or experienced successes within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that encourage the mission?

1. Rich Tradition and Cultural Engagement: Deeply ingrained cultural traditions foster cultural identity and spiritual engagement.
2. Promotion of Vocations: Efforts to nurture future leaders and clergy demonstrate a commitment to sustaining the Church's mission.
3. Openness and Inclusivity: Demonstrated openness to different ethnicities fosters inclusivity and diversity within the Church.
4. Leadership Training Initiatives: Training programs prepare individuals for leadership roles, enhancing organizational capacity.
5. Parental Involvement in Religious Education: Empowering parents as primary educators promotes a holistic approach to spiritual formation.
6. Regular Catechesis from Bishop: Our Bishop's regular messages and teachings enhance communal understanding and unity and strengthen the Church's spiritual foundation.

7. Communal Gatherings: Diocesan assemblies facilitate communal worship and engagement in the Church's mission.
8. Diocesan Support for Retreats/Formations: Support for individual spiritual development reflects a commitment to growth.
9. Establishment of Perpetual Adoration Chapels: Opportunities for Eucharistic adoration deepen spiritual encounters.
10. Access to Sacraments: Ensuring access nurtures spiritual well-being and facilitates sacramental encounters.
11. Bishops' Leadership in Advocacy: Moral leadership in advocating for social justice and ethical values is demonstrated, especially through Bishop's online messages on various moral issues in our state.
12. Genuine Invitation to Serve: Authentic invitation fosters a sense of sincerity and engagement in the Church's mission.
13. Preparation for Sacramental Encounters: Helping leaders and parents to prepare children to receive the sacraments deepens spiritual experiences and strengthens faith.
14. Sense of Family: A supportive and nurturing family environment promotes spiritual growth and communal engagement.

Question 2: Where have I seen or experienced distresses or failures within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that hinder the mission?

1. Lack of Hispanic/Latino Vocational Discernment: Insufficient encouragement within Hispanic communities hinders future clergy growth.
2. Underrepresentation in Church Leadership: Limited representation hinders understanding and support for diverse parishioners.
3. Cultural Devotion vs. Catholic Identity: Emphasis on cultural traditions may overshadow core Catholic teachings.
4. Youth Disengagement: A trend of youth leaving the Church suggests a failure to meet their needs effectively.
5. Lack of Practical Application of Church Teachings: Gap in practical guidance affects spiritual formation and growth.
6. Discrimination and Lack of Diversity: Instances of discrimination hinder inclusivity and ethnic diversity within the Church.
7. Underrepresentation of Black Catholics: Lack of outreach and inclusion efforts toward diverse communities.
8. Selective Scriptural Interpretation: Omission or misinterpretation of scriptures may lead to misunderstanding of Church teachings. Failure to teach and preach challenging topics.
9. Empowering Men for Leadership: More engagement of men in our communities. Too often women are more active.
10. Valuing People Beyond Financial Contributions: Perception of individuals being valued solely for financial contributions.

Question 3: How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?

1. Cultural Awareness in Seminary Training: Prioritize training priests and seminarians in Hispanic/Latino immigrant cultures.
2. Facilitating Dialogue and Engagement: Provide opportunities for dialogue and questions during or after Mass.
3. Community Outreach and Evangelization: Encourage outreach beyond familiar communities to share the Gospel.
4. Openness to Questions and Authentic Answers: Foster a culture of openness and provide authentic answers.
5. Parental Formation as Primary Educators: Offer more formation for parents as primary educators.

6. Acknowledgment of Evil and Hope in Christ: Provide more acknowledgment of evil within the context of hope in Christ.
7. Promotion of Vocations to Religious Life and Matrimony: Promote vocations to religious life and marriage and offer support for discernment.
8. Fostering Sacredness and Awe: Cultivate a sense of wonder and awe in Christ and His Church.
9. Understanding Church Traditions and Sacraments: Provide education on Church traditions and sacraments.
10. Preferential Option for the Poor: Prioritize outreach and support for the poor within the Church.
11. Increased Access to Catholic Education: Create more opportunities for Hispanic/Latino students to access Catholic education and catechesis.
12. Intentionality towards attracting more people as volunteers and for ministry: It is always the same people doing everything. Also be more intentional on how to attract the young people to the Church, have youth groups where they can learn about the Sacred Scriptures and learn devotions such as the Rosary.
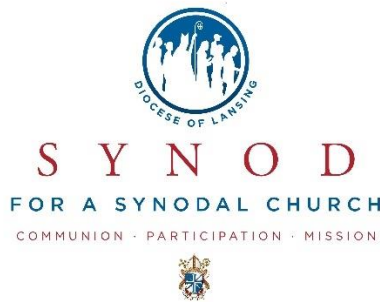
Addendum

In addition to the two, primary groups that our diocese solicited with the guiding questions for the Interim Stage of the Synod, we also heard from five additional groups: Diocesan Presbyteral Council, Deans, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Parish Pastoral Councils and Random Parishioners.

DIOCESAN PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL/DEANS

Our diocese has recently adopted the Canonical model of "deaneries." The diocese has been divided into ten deaneries, each served by a "dean" who pastors a parish within the deanery. In addition to the Presbyteral Council, our Bishop asked the guiding questions of the deans. Since the members of the Diocesan Presbyteral Council as well as the Deans are all priests, much of their feedback is similar in nature and is thus presented as one set of responses.

Question 1: Where have I seen or experienced successes within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that encourage the mission?

1. Team Building, Collaboration and Support: There is a positive development in the diocese regarding team building, where freedom and encouragement are given for pastors to work together. Pastors are providing vision, and effective communication is occurring within teams. Priests are demonstrating better care for their fellow clergy members, fostering a supportive and nurturing environment within the Church.
2. Creativity and Implementation: Teams and staff are allowed to be creative in implementing the vision, with a focus on action items. This fosters innovation and adaptability within the Church's structures.
3. Integration of School Personnel: There is integration of school personnel in parish planning, promoting cohesion and cooperation between different facets of the Catholic community.
4. Organizational Health: Initiatives such as Amazing Parish and teachings from author and speaker, Patrick Lencioni have contributed to organizational health. Silos are being broken down, and there is greater clarity of vision within the diocese. The introduction of the new deanery structure and the upcoming establishment of a new Pastoral Council facilitate consultation and collaboration, allowing for greater input and participation from various stakeholders.
5. Strategic Planning and Communication: The diocese has a well-developed plan and a positive communications program to facilitate its implementation, ensuring alignment and understanding among stakeholders.
6. Consistency in Messaging: Increased consistency in messaging from organizations such as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) provides clarity and direction, aligning efforts across various levels of the Church hierarchy. Communication within the diocese is characterized by positivity and helpfulness, facilitating transparency, understanding, and unity among its members.
7. The diocesan offices and many parishes are delivering more consistent and impactful messages on discipleship and conversion from sin, inspiring greater spiritual growth, and commitment among the faithful.

Question 2: Where have I seen or experienced distresses or failures within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that hinder the mission?

1. Confusion and Distrust: Confusion surrounding Fiducia Supplicans and concerns about the direction of the Church hierarchy have led to developing distrust among some members. This may result in a reluctance to engage actively until clarity is achieved.
2. Stress and Uncertainty: The necessity to close and merge parishes presents significant challenges and uncertainty. Stress about the direction of the Church, particularly related to matters of doctrine and the Synod, has created uncertainty among the faithful. Secretive elements of the synodal process in Rome have contributed to a lack of assurance about the future direction of the Church.
3. Complex Approval Processes: The levels of approval required for parish projects remain complicated, causing delays and inefficiencies. Simplifying these processes is crucial to enable timely implementation of initiatives that further the Church's mission.
4. Financial Permission Levels: There is a need to reassess and potentially adjust permission levels for financial actions within the Church.

Overall, while there are areas of success in fostering collaboration, innovation, and strategic planning within the Church's structures, there are also challenges related to communication, trust, and uncertainty that need to be addressed to fully support the Church's mission.

Question 3: How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?

Since the guiding questions were presented here in the form a discussion, there are no specific responses to Question 3, though it can be inferred that the Church needs to continue promoting and enacting what are listed as successes in Question 1, and work to address and heal the confusion, distrust, division, and uncertainty caused by the issues listed in Question 2.

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

Question 1: Where have I seen or experienced successes within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that encourage the mission?

1. Parish and Ministry Organization: Despite ongoing development, there's progress driven by the Holy Spirit through leadership efforts in the city of Flint.
2. Initiatives and Activities: Various programs like Bible studies, personal formation, women's prayer meetings, and youth engagement in serving the poor demonstrate an active community.
3. Focus on Evangelization and Community Building: Increased emphasis on the Holy Spirit, evangelization efforts, and community growth within the church.
4. Diocesan Support and Formation: Professional diocesan staff, coaching for priests, and access to formation resources indicate dedicated support from the diocesan offices.
5. Mergers and Outreach: Successful mergers of churches, outreach across parishes, and effective ministries like the "Road to Emmaus" highlight tangible mission progress.
6. Discipleship Programs: Effective RCIA/OCIA programs fostering real Christian discipleship as well as pastoral initiatives such as door-to-door prayer outreach.
7. Clear Structure and Leadership: Efficient hierarchy for communication and unified mission, with clear local leadership and a focus on tradition to engage younger generations.
8. Vision for Healthy Parishes: Diocesan vision and structures like the Deanery model aim to align everyone towards a common mission.

Question 2: Where have I seen or experienced distresses or failures within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that hinder the mission?

1. Collaboration Challenges: Struggles among priests to collaborate and address community needs, especially when resources are limited.
2. Financial Concerns and Parish Closures: Financial issues resulting in parish closures raise questions about follow-up and support for affected communities.
3. Challenges in Evangelization: Difficulties extending evangelization efforts beyond the parish, leading to uncertainty and inaction among some members.
4. Lack of Support and Accountability: Issues with support and accountability for priests, unrealistic demands on leadership, and a lack of structured problem-solving mechanisms.
5. Division and Inconsistencies: Differences in parish rules and traditions contributing to divisions, alongside challenges in online environments affecting discourse.
6. Catechetical Shortcomings: Poor catechesis across many parishes, resulting in superficial understanding of the Faith among both children and adults.
7. Weak Leadership and Moral Guidance: Some priests avoid authoritative stances on moral issues, leading to confusion and perceptions of weak leadership.
8. Rogue Behaviors and Parish Pride: Instances of parishes or individuals acting independently, disrupting unity, and causing distress within the community.
9. Issues with Homilies and Church Messaging: Concerns about the quality of homilies and confusion stemming from ambiguous messages regarding Church teaching, as seen in the case of the Pope's document on blessing same-sex unions.

Question 3: How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?

1. Emphasize Sacramental Life: Focus on sacraments as foundational to faith.
2. Evangelization Training and Testimonies: Provide evangelization courses and encourage personal testimonies to articulate love for Christ.
3. Connect Ministries with Parishes: Bridge external ministries with parish communities to address community needs effectively.
4. Diversity and Unity: Increase diversity, particularly in language, and promote unity among all baptized Christians.
5. Supportive Small Groups: Foster small groups for prayer, mutual encouragement, and outreach.
6. Reinforce Mission and Expectations: Continuously remind the faithful of the mission to reach out and transform lives while upholding core beliefs.
7. Solid Leadership in Schools: Ensure schools have strong Catholic leadership to support families and maintain order.
8. Clarify Expectations: Clearly communicate expectations for Catholics to spread the gospel message.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

Our Bishop invited pastors to ask the guiding questions to their Parish Pastoral Councils. The feedback we received is combined into one set of responses.

Question 1: Where have I seen or experienced successes within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that encourage the mission?

1. When the Bishop visits our parish.
2. The use of current data to focus evangelization efforts on those in our communities who are not practicing the Faith.
3. Implementation and promotion of opportunities for people to encounter Jesus, such as Alpha.
4. When lay people initiate missional activities, such as morning prayer, at their parishes.

5. Non-sacramental/liturgical community events such as festivals and fish fries, which help provide witness to the Faith.

Question 2: Where have I seen or experienced distresses or failures within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that hinder the mission?

1. The closing of Catholic Schools, which are one way of assuring that children have daily encounters with Jesus.
2. Colleges and universities negatively and immorally influencing our youth, leading them away from the Church.
3. Failure of institutional Church to be transparent in the clergy sexual abuse crisis.

Question 3: How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?

1. More training and formation options to give the Baptized the knowledge and confidence to share the Faith.
2. Celebrating the sacraments well; particularly weddings and funerals, in order to give witness to any unbelievers present.
3. Allow women to discern the diaconate.

INDIVIDUAL PARISHIONERS

Since our target groups for the Interim Stage were college/university students and Hispanic/Latino parishioners, we did not hold listening sessions for the general public. There were, however, some individual parishioners who have been following the Synod who wished to contribute their feedback. The following responses are a summary of their feedback.

Question 1: Where have I seen or experienced successes within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that encourage the mission?

1. Issuance of pastoral letter by our Bishop guiding the faithful.
2. Making evangelization a priority.
3. Diocesan- wide assemblies.
4. The election of Cardinal Bergoglio as Pope.
5. The existence of this current Synod.
6. When the Baptized live their lives following the same openness modeled by Pope Francis.
7. The creation of and existence of local bible studies and faith-sharing groups.

Question 2: Where have I seen or experienced distresses or failures within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that hinder the mission?

1. Lack of accountability for pastors in how they treat or mistreat lay employees or parishioners/ Lack of support structures in place to protect lay employees.
2. Lack of structures to allow lay people to contribute to the governance of the Church/parish without fear of losing their job/fostering a culture of fear.
3. Lack of transparency regarding allegations of impropriety by priests.
4. Poor communication of diocesan synodal efforts from diocese and parish.
5. Exclusion of women from roles of leadership in the Church.
6. When the Church prioritizes organizational efficiency over its spiritual mission, cautioning against losing its soul in pursuit of worldly success.
7. When the Church is inconsistent in advocating for issues beyond abortion, highlighting a perceived lack of strong voice on matters such as homelessness, migration, hunger, clean water access, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and criminal justice reform.

8. When clergy align with political candidates solely based on their stance on abortion, while ignoring broader moral and ethical concerns like misogyny, injustice, and exclusionary policies.
9. Disconnect between the diocesan offices and parishes in the diocese.

Question 3: How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?

1. Keep Jesus, not culture wars as the center of all missional activity.
2. Creation, promotion, and implementation of more opportunities for lay people to be co-responsible for the mission of the Church.
3. Greater promotion of women in non-ordained leadership roles withing the Church.
4. Openness to all individuals regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation is seen as crucial for dispelling judgmental attitudes and fostering a welcoming community where everyone can participate in proclaiming the Gospel and living in love and mercy.
5. Stop disparaging the youth and instead engage them actively in the life of the Church. This involves addressing concerns about liturgies being perceived as boring by creating spaces where youth and all members feel engaged, not merely entertained or passively present.
6. Structure its celebrations intentionally to engage all members. This involves going beyond mere adherence to rituals and texts, and instead cultivating a spirit of inclusivity, openness, and genuine engagement in liturgical practices.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, five predominant themes emerge from the collected responses, solicited from our two primary target groups as well as the additional groups as described in the addendum.

1. **Community Engagement and Participation:** This theme encompasses various aspects of community involvement within the Church, including welcoming environments, nurturing communities, and active parish life. It emphasizes the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and involvement among members, particularly college/university students and ethnically diverse individuals.

2. **Leadership and Church Structure:** Discussions about successes and distresses within the Church's structure, organization, and leadership highlight the significance of effective leadership, collaboration, and support mechanisms. It reflects both positive experiences, such as supportive leadership and clear communication, and challenges such as division, lack of accountability, and financial concerns.

3. **Evangelization and Mission:** The text underscores the central role of evangelization in the Church's mission, focusing on initiatives to spread the Gospel, engage with the community, and deepen faith. It addresses successes like passionate preaching, personal encounters with Jesus, and outreach efforts, as well as challenges such as limited outreach, poor catechesis, and generational divides.

4. **Cultural Diversity and Inclusivity:** There is a notable emphasis on embracing cultural diversity and promoting inclusivity within the Church, particularly regarding ethnically diverse communities. Successes include cultural engagement, leadership promotion, and openness to diverse ethnic backgrounds, while challenges involve underrepresentation and insufficient cultural integration.

5. **Sacramental Life and Spiritual Formation:** This theme encompasses discussions about the importance of sacraments, spiritual growth, and deepening faith experiences. It highlights successes like reverence in worship, access to sacraments, and spiritual formation programs, alongside challenges such as poor catechesis, youth disengagement, and issues with liturgical practices.

These themes collectively reflect the multifaceted nature of the Church's efforts to fulfill its mission, addressing various aspects of community life, leadership, evangelization, cultural diversity, and spiritual development.