

SYNOD 2021-2023

HOLY TRINITY PARISH – NORTH VANCOUVER CONSULTATION REPORT



RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

To proclaim the “Good News” of Jesus Christ

- ✦ Within our families
- ✦ Within our church communities
- ✦ Within our social circles
- ✦ Within our work life
- ✦ To our community in general and especially to the poor, the homeless, the disenfranchised, the lost, the lonely and the weary.

And further, to witness by our words, deeds and actions, to the presence and impact of His saving grace and love thereby drawing all we encounter closer to the living God.

Every person, throughout their lifespan, has the capacity in greater or lesser measure to be active and engaged in the Church’s mission.



SUMMARY

Throughout the consultation process a number of issues were relevant under several questions and broke out into 5 broad themes:

1. **Perceived lack of relevance of the Church in today's society.** This being fueled partially by current and past scandals but in addition many people do not clearly understand the church's position/teachings on such issues as gender identity, same sex marriage, divorced Catholic's, and contraception in marriage among other topics.
2. **Need for continuing catechesis across the life span** to nurture and build a relationship with God. This need must take into consideration the broad needs of the catholic population and make information available in ways that fit peoples schedules and family/work situations and preferred learning styles. Modern technology allows for greater diversification in timing and delivery.
3. **Retention:** many people commented on the alarming exodus of youth and young adults from the Church. How is it we cannot retain those who have grown up in the Church.
4. **Supporting a culture of Life** – feels like a loosing battle. With increases in abortion, euthanasia and MAID and increased prohibitions on even peaceful witness it seems that a new approach is needed that has more political bite.
5. **Reconciliation** with our indigenous brothers and sisters is a deep subject with many layers. For the local church consultations and planning at a diocesan level and/or deanery level could bring about positive dialogue and actions to the benefit of all.



INTRODUCTION

PROCESS

The Pastoral council invited members of the congregation to participate in one of three ways:

1. Paper submissions responding to the 5 questions returned to the office for inclusion with the written submission
2. On-line submission through the diocesan website
3. By invitation to an in-person consultation/discussion

PARTICIPATION

Thirty-one paper submissions were received. 20 people responded to the in-person invitation. An unknown number responded to the on-line questionnaire. This report represents the consolidated thoughts of 50 parishioners from Holy Trinity Parish.

RESULTS

The results of the paper responses and discussions was compiled looking for themes and frequency of response. All responses were considered valid and were incorporated. Excessive repetition was avoided by blending similar responses.

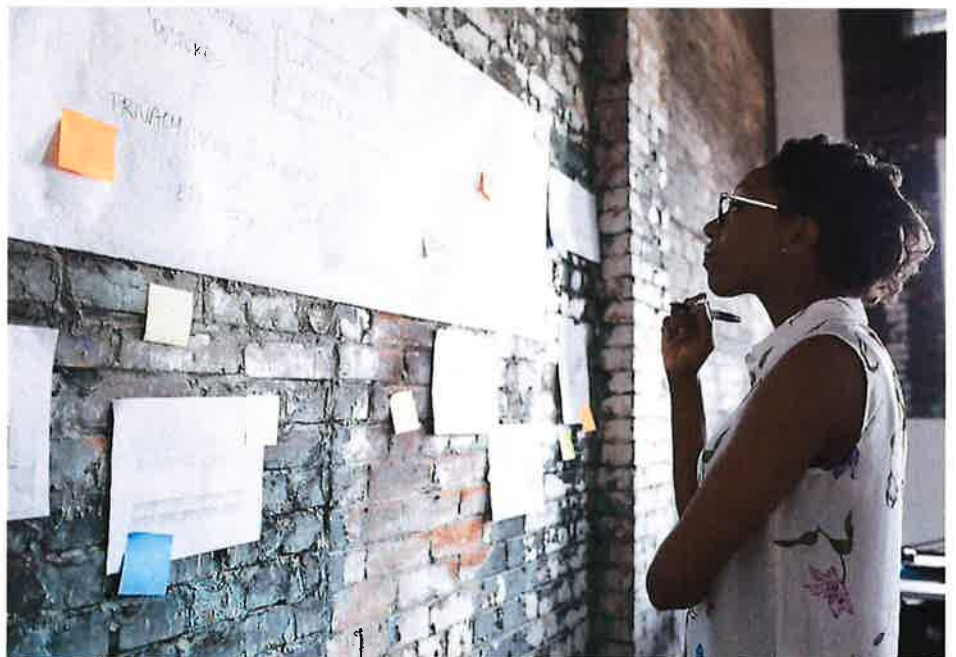


Figure 1



Q1 - PARTICIPATION

Priority

- Building a relationship with God

ADDED PRIORITIES

- Improve social media use to the church's advantage
- Lifelong catechesis

OPPORTUNITIES

- Local initiatives to be a welcoming church
- Respond with transparency and action to right past wrongs
- Support people throughout the age spectrum to be contributing members

SUPPORTIVE FACTORS

- An existing relationship with God
- An understanding of the church's mission and how individuals can contribute at a given stage of life
- Supportive family culture and role modelling to young people
- Fresh, engaging educational opportunities to promote lifelong engagement in catechesis (on-line; self-study; seminars; conventions)
- Clarity at the parish level of the commitment required for the various ministries.
- Programs at the parish level that are stimulating, relevant and offered at times and in formats that are accessible

CHALLENGE

- Lack of understanding of the church's mission and how it pertains to daily life
- Lack of understanding some of the more complex and difficult teachings (contraception within marriage; the church's stance on different sexual orientation; role of separated/divorced Catholics)
- Personal factors:
 - Family – work – church life balance
 - Physical/Mental health/addictions
 - Age – with increasing age social circles shrink and mobility becomes a challenge leading to fewer contacts and increasing social isolation
 - Fear of becoming obligated to a ministry – no way out – fear of being judged
- Societal attitudes – from perceived irrelevance to outright hostility over past (sexual exploitation scandals) and current issues (Residential schools)
- Local church community's attitude:
 - Welcoming of newcomers
 - Support to/acceptance of young families at Mass
 - Useful parish website for information sharing



Q2 – Missing or neglected areas of the Church’s Mission

Priority

- Providing opportunities to keep Catholics engaged in meaningful ways

ADDED

PRIORITIES

- Ensure that information and programing is accessible and artificial barriers are minimized

OPPORTUNITIES

- Engage youth and young adults in dialogue to grow their commitment to the church
- Develop or expand existing programs
- Diversify programming and leadership

- Inadequate and delayed action on the Church’s commitment to Indigenous reconciliation. Action and sustained initiatives are needed to pay the promised restitution. There needs to be a commitment to continued dialogue and action to bring healing to everyone and improve the reputation of the church in Canada.
- Local initiatives for reconciliation throughout the archdiocese
- Retention of Catholics of all ages
 - Contemporary evangelization with up-to-date delivery methods to get the message out
 - Address topics that are relevant to today’s problems
 - Increase active outreach programming and education – Alpha; Bible studies; seminars (understanding same sex attraction; separated and divorced catholics in the church etc)
 - Target programs to 18 – 35 yrs. old or singles 30-55 yrs. old to bring like minded people together for both catechesis and socialization
- Ensure that local parish programs do not feel exclusionary; are cross cultural and welcoming
- Ensure that resources are accessible
 - Languages - translations
 - Language levels – not everyone can process a Papal encyclical
 - Audio books/files
 - Local lending library for spiritual books
- Services to the poor, homeless, marginalized in our own communities – sporadic responses.
 - Develop local initiatives that are sustainable year round



Q3 -Issues we need to pay more attention to.

Priority

- Retention of practicing catholic parishioners

ADDED PRIORITIES

- Continuous Education across the life span
- Shortage of vocations

OPPORTUNITIES

- Women in leadership roles
- Use of technology to the Church's advantage

- Retention of Youth and young adults – the future of the church
 - Overcome the perceived lack of relevance of the church in their lives
 - Generational relevant speakers on their lived experience
 - Why they left
 - Why they came back
 - What it means in their lives today
 - Youth targeted faith programming
- Continuous education for all ages
 - Living your faith in a secular society
 - Living your faith in a mixed marriage
 - Why faith in marriage matters
 - Sacrament of confession – “Forgive me Father, but I don’t think I have sinned.”
- Women in higher leadership roles – (eg Barb Dowding) an untapped well of talent who would bring a fresh perspective to a male dominated Church.
- Shortage of vocations to the priesthood and diaconate.
- Transparency in the Church as related to past and current transgressions
 - Act more expeditiously on promises made
 - Engage more openly so that the world can see the progress
- Use technology and social media to support the Church’s message and mission
- Retain programs that keep people connected to the Church eg Latin Mass
- Broader political action on life issues – abortion, euthanasia, MAID; Physician’s conscience rights
- More instruction on contentious topics such as LGBTQ and same sex marriage. How do we as a church reconcile our our teachings with these realities.



Q4 -Societal issues that need more attention.

Priority

- Combatting anti-religious attitudes in society

ADDED

PRIORITIES

- Reverence for life initiatives

OPPORTUNITIES

- Development of social media campaigns to support Church's message

- Social Media – develop its use for the Church's purpose of spreading the "Good News"
 - Platform for seminars
 - Highlight the good work being done
- People struggling with gender identity
 - How to be welcoming as a community
 - Non-judgmental
 - How to bring God to them to aid in their struggle
- Combatting anti-religious attitudes toward Christians in the media, in schools, laws.
- Rise in the disregard for life.
 - Abortion
 - Euthanasia
 - Maid
- Cancel culture/woke culture



Q5 -Journeying toward Healing & Reconciliation.

Priority

- Transparency moving forward

ADDED

PRIORITIES

- Meaningful consultation at local levels on how the local church can play a part in reconciliation

OPPORTUNITIES

- Deanerywide consultation with local First Nations to create local plans

- Transparency:
 - Pope should apologize for the Church's role in Residential Schools
 - The Church should meet its financial obligations as quickly as possible
 - Records and any artifacts should be turned over
- Consultation with First Nation's Elders to hear what would be meaningful actions on the journey to reconciliation?
 - **Listen:** invite indigenous leaders to share their story. Invite priests and religious who have experience to assist locally providing education from their perspective.
 - **Understand and discern:** listen openly and without prejudice to overcome our ignorance and biases. Try to understand and feel the trauma
 - **Act:** Acknowledge and show empathy. Avoid tokenism.
- Use a generational approach to ensure that information is targeted appropriately to levels of understanding.
- Information/experience with the melding of Indigenous practices into Catholic worship
- Land acknowledgement during the welcome before Mass