

Sacred Heart St. Stephen Parish Response Form

Who do we envision the "Church" is and how do we share our faith in and out of our community?

We have a narrow understanding of the Church and see it only as those in the building. When we understand a broader understanding of "Church" we have an opportunity to share our faith beyond the borders of the building.

Christ did not come to save the self-righteous. He came to share his ministry with those whom society deemed the "real" sinners, those most in need of his mercy. We lead by example and unfortunately, we are fairly utterly. The Church appears to many as a place of judgment and entirely out of touch on so many of the issues that align with the mission of the Gospel.

Need to get out into the community more. Show our faith. Do good to others.

The Church should be the views and wants of all of the people that are a part of the community. All races, creeds, genders (gay, straight, trans), women and children, believers and non-believers in Christ who want to do the loving and good for our community. Outreach to the poor, less privileged.

Community leaders, servers of the community.

The "Church" represents a place in the community (village, town, neighborhood) where social and faith activities take place (social services, Eucharist, etc.).

Bishops making decisions without knowing what the people of the Church really want. I share my faith everyday by the way I behave and treat others. I try to be as Jesus would - that's the best way to share our faith.

The Church is as much about the laity as the laity is about the Church. The Church is too hierarchical.

The Church should be a collective of parishes and the people making up those groups. However, the Church often feels like the direction of a select group of men dictating doctrine.

The vision of the Church is encompassing all of us. Most people feel power and response to this is from the top and we won't be heard.

The "Church" is supposed to be the whole community working together, many parts, one body, one vision, one God. However, I often feel this is not the case in function - there is a clear hierarchy and division within the "Church" causing friction and alienation.

The "Church" with a capital C seems more an institution (one seemingly uninterested in changing or admitting its infighting and many failures) than a group of faithful which is more of a parish level/community.

Every baptised Catholic makes up the Church. We share our faith by growing in our faith in order to explain it to others who ask. Seeing Christ in everyone particularly those souls who are suffering.

All who are baptised comprise the "assembly" aka the Church.

The people.

All of us. Attendance to worship services. Participaint in liturgies, Mass, Eucharist. Go the Mass has ended 0 fo live the Mass in our daily lives. Put our faith into action -

The Church consists of all our faithful community members who wish to grow in Christ and spread and emulate the message.

We need to reach out to the younger children and get them included with the Church.

Two levels: the greater hierarchical Church visible through the Pope, Bishops, clergy, etc. then secondly the Church at my level which is my parish and my participation in my parish.

Asking or attending different (if any) meetings about our faith and what Church is all about. Understanding is a big thing here. Understanding different communities.

The Church is set in its opinion and what they decide at the end is going to be reality.

We are family - everyone in Christ - but real Christians, not those who do not believe in salvation. Not sure, except by what the bible says - believers in Christ as Savior and true Son of God/part of Trinity. If the opportunity arises, always not hide the true feelings/beliefs as they relate to the situation - never hide Christian beliefs - but don't push them but never not state them.

Parishioners.

The baptized, and those who are Eucharistic.

The Church is anyone who believes in God even if they can't go to an actual church. Everyone is the church, no matter what.

The Church is a pillar and central to our faith and community. We can best share our faith by leading by example and welcoming others into our community in a non-judgmental way.

Church universal. Praying, kindness towards others, recognizing those less fortunate.

We, the parishioners, are the Church. We share our faith through example, through kindness to all.

I believe we must be as compassionate with others as we are with our families.

We are the church. The people

The church is us here at Sacred Heart and St Stephen.

THEMES

The Church is both the people of each parish (those baptised into the Church) and the greater community (believers and non-believers).

The Church is an institution represented by the (male dominant) Pope, Bishops, clergy, sometimes judgmental, too hierarchical and rigid.

We share our faith by actively participating in our parish (activities and Mass), growing our faith, understanding different communities, and by welcoming and serving

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Do we feel heard by the Church and do we as a faith community need to listen better?

I do not feel heard by the Church and it is not something that we need to listen better. I feel that Church leadership needs to listen better and more meaningfully and they must completely respond to what they are hearing.

No. The Church is divided, like our country, into two camps and each side chooses to only hear what "their" leaders are saying.

The Church is not heard by the Bishops. People have no say.

Yes. It seems that times are changing and the older views of the Church may not be in step with where modern spiritual practices are, especially in a big city like Brooklyn, NY. The Church needs to include more voices, not just the clergy. Women need to be heard more.

Listen? Don't feel it.

We are heard by the Church to a certain extent, depending on the topics, and how controversial are the issues, such as the acceptance of the concept of homosexuality by the Church and the acceptance of faithful people. Catholics by our Church, as many of them have left the Catholic Church and joined other churches and synagogues who accept them regardless of their homosexuality.

There is a misconception of both parties' role (individual or group role during Mass, on prayer and the parishes role in this).

Church definitely needs to listen better! As a woman I have felt at times to be excluded - women need a bigger role in the Church. Also, as a mother of a gay son, I am distressed that the Church doesn't include LGBTQ persons the way they should. As a result, my son has left the Church.

The Church hierarchy and many priests do not listen, but pontificate. Need more transparency and candor by the Church.

The Church is a slowly evolving institution that often seems to disseminate information in one direction. I am pleased to see their interest in hearing my opinion via this questionnaire, especially as a woman who will never be part of the clergy.

We tend to talk to people who think alike, not to get into differing discussions for fear of not being understood - and yes, we all can do with listening better.

We need to listen better to those who have left the Church and those who feel disenfranchised by the Church - especially communities who experience oppression (both historically and currently). We also need to have more opportunities for the big community to contribute to.

I have not found the Church as a whole to be very engaged with asking parishioners what their opinions are and what direction the Church should go in. As a woman, I do not feel that the Church equally values my voice and that I am lesser and could not be an active participant in Mass (as a deacon, priest, etc.).

Yes if we respond to the call to be one "companions of Christ." Listening takes patience. No sooner you speak, you are interrupted. Yes we need to listen better.

I am not heard. Why - no one asks unless I am in a parish or diocese council. We do enough listening! That's what we do during Mass - e.g. the homily.

Sometimes (leadership); worldwide - no.

Yes to both questions!! Open minds/open doors (Vatican I)/open windows (Vatican II)/open skylights (Vatican III). Church: Vatican I = Role of Pope; Vatican II = Role of Bishops; Vatican III - Role of Laity, especially Role of Women.

No. We need to listen better without losing our traditional values and feel like we need to conform to the flavor of the day.

No.

We need to do a better job of bridging the line between "the clergy" and us "regular" folks so that we feel our voice is one together. And also make Catholicism something not to be embarrassed about being a part of by this new generation.

Not all the time; we all have to understand more about religion, Church and faith. People have a lot of questions about the Church that they don't understand.

No. I don't feel heard by the Church. I feel whatever is decided by the Church is going to be fact. I don't feel "we" are the Church.

Church is large - how can it hear everything especially when it is struggling in this difficult world. I feel heard by God, not necessarily the Church, except that it is a physical place that brings believers together. That is big and powerful to be with others of like mind.

Sometimes, yes. Locally yes but not in the universal Church.

The Church in its leadership level seems not to listen. Basically, the Church is a primary organization not a symbolical (listening) community.

To me the Church is good how it is and I like it. The Church should include more people no matter what.

We all do not always feel heard by the Church. We as a faith community listen attentively but do not always receive clear guidance.

Depending on specific situations, sometimes it seems we are not heard but oftentimes, we are not listening because we seek individual answers

For the most part, I think we are heard by the Church. I know we are heard by our Monsignor Massie. We should always listen (through our ears and

The Church is made of the People that inhabit it. We Need to be heard

By our pastor yes but not always by the corporate church

If the CHURCH is interested in attracting young people to embrace the faith I have it from two couples that said the PRE CANA is like talking to teenagers and there is on the PRE CANA APP someone telling them the Homosexuality is a sin. That may be a quote from the OLD Testament but why is it on the Brooklyn Queens PRE CANA app. Homosexuals are not purchasing the app in hopes of getting married. That does not need to be included as it gives a bad taste of what the church is all about and turns young people away not toward the church

THEMES

Many feel heard on a parish/local level; depending on the topic.

On a global scale, most do not feel heard by the Church; the Church is too large; only disseminates information; the people of the Church are ignored; the Church needs to listen to its people more; the clergy pontificate rather than listen.

Women need to be heard more; the Church needs to be more inclusive.

Do all feel free to communicate their feelings with those most involved in the Church? Why do Catholics feel uncomfortable about speaking about their faith outside of their Church?

No - we have no access to those most involved in the Church. I do not feel comfortable speaking about my faith outside of their Church. Some Catholics are uncomfortable speaking about their faith because their foundation in the faith is not very strong.

The Church is seen as outmoded and out of touch on almost every social issue from the death penalty to immigration to the environment. There is a reason Catholics flocked to Trump - the very antithesis of a Christian. Honestly, I'm embarrassed to tell people I'm Catholic. The Church is beset by one scandal after another - molestation, murder of indigenous children, the election of religious extremists to our courts and government.

No - the little Church has no said (sic) in the full Church in Brooklyn.

I honestly do not know if I am qualified to answer this. I so strongly believe in God, in spirituality and community but do not know if that means sharing or praying through Christ is the only way. There is so much good about the Church AND so so much that is troubling. All of this has been documented for years and so much still needs to be Do not want to infringe on others' beliefs. Little open discussion of parish activities, priorities, goals.

I think many Catholics feel intimidated to talk about their true feelings and questions about their Church and faith, but not all. It's important to make (sic) comfortable that the Church leaders have a sincere listening and caring ear and will not just squealch what they are being told. Catholics in the United States, in our day and time, are being conditioned to feel that if they explain their beliefs too openly or too much, they will be impeding on and very possibly offending the "rights of others" and their beliefs, and we are sort of becoming afraid to open our mouths as it's no longer "politically correct."

Most do not feel free to communicate with those most involved (priests and some lay people). Some are outspoken about their faith, but most feel uncomfortable in public (not public approved, cancel culture).

We are not always comfortable sharing our feelings with those in charge. I do speak about my faith outside the Church. Sometimes I am very angry or embarrassed when I do - especially with the behavior of so many priests and the abuse cases. Also, again about the treatment of LGBTQ people. No one Unfortunately, there are not many "critical Catholics" of the Church and priests. parishioners do not to "rock the boat" even though they speak critically to their friends/family. parishioners need to be more courageous.

We know that the Church has specific laws and rules as well as a past plagued by scandal and hypocrisy. There can be shame in saying you are part of an archaic and hypocritical institution - which is why we may not proclaim our faith far and wide. The Church excludes giant walks of life so it's hard to be part of this exclusive group in I don't believe all feel free to communicate their feelings. I don't believe all Catholics are uncomfortable about speaking about their faith outside of the Church.

I don't think so. Often the clericalism and hierarchy build an illusion that those at the top - the clergy - are not accessible or open to hearing from the parishioners. This, coupled with feelings of intimidation, means that there is no dialogue. Furthermore, in the outside world, Catholics are afraid to share their faith because of negative stigmas about Catholicism, the Church and Christianity as a whole. The Church has abused its power for so many generations and remains highly conservative, patriarchal and exclusionary. LOVE, which ought to be at the forefront of all faith sharing, has become obscured and replaced by rules, regulations and false piety.

It doesn't feel like the Church as a whole is interested in my feelings. Speaking about my faith outside the Church doesn't feel comfortable because I do not believe fully in all the social issues the Church does and I do not wish to defend the Church's views about LGBTQ+, immigration, climate change, abortion, women in the Church and the We need to pray more in order to study more in order to speak more of our faith. Our faith is the best life has to offer.

No - there is no one asking questions. There is not enough teaching - Catholic education.

Because of the leadership. People ask me how can I support Catholicism. I say it is like a citizen and the Congress. We as citizens don't support the Congress.

Something is missing from evangelization in today's Church and tomorrow's future. CH - - CH (U R)

Yes I feel I can communicate with my Church community. Outside of the Church becomes difficult due to today's political views and how Church and government sometimes (a lot of times) conflict and conversations become confrontational.

Because they are afraid of being judged.

Catholicism is not "popular." Many people feel it's not worth it to speak up. All of the positive aspects need to be spoken about too. Otherwise who will want to be a part Catholics feel uncomfortable about speaking about their faith outside of their Churches because they don't know enough about the faith to answer some of the questions people ask.

No because I don't know enough about our religion to discuss this with others: what is fact and what is someone's opinion I learned.

Yes, in my Church. Not always in other congregations. Yes in other Christian conversations not necessarily Catholic. Because people just shut down so quickly when God/Christ is brought into the conversation. All those typical Catholic things that exclude people that I do not believe are really bible-based or that Christ would do. Also, what is baptism? Who is truly baptised? Does that exclude some? Also know so many people over time who do/did not take the Eucharist because of divorce. That is wrong and pushes people away. Be truly open doored does not mean compromising what Christ taught but stick with two most important "laws" as presented by Christ: "love the Lord thy God" and love thy neighbor as thyself.

Bureaucracy who do you talk to? People will not listen if they think you are a crazy Christian.

No. Catholics were not taught the faith well - they feel ill prepared to speak about our faith. Protestants were much better prepared in biblical knowledge.

Catholics fear being judged and also of being viewed as inauthentic and disingenuous.

As an older person, it was more acceptable in years past to speak of church but in today's society, it can be offensive to some.

I have always felt free to communicate my feelings, although many people my age still have old-fashioned notions and are hesitant to make their voices heard. I cannot speak for all Catholics and I will not guess at the hesitancy of some to speak freely.

some are very lucky to have Priests and Msgr. with a Great intellect and welcome discussion

The scandals are embarrassing

THEMES

Most do not feel comfortable communicating their feelings to those involved in the Church (i.e. clergy) because there is no access to these people; the Church feels out of touch on modern social issues; they feel intimidated and fearful of judgment; no one is asking for/interested in the opinions of people.

Many do not feel comfortable sharing their faith outside of the Church because Catholicism is not popular; Church scandals, position on LGBTQ members are embarrassing; they don't know enough about their faith to share it; fearful of offending people with different political beliefs; they are angry with the Church; they don't want to infringe on another's belief system.

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How can the Church and its people be more inviting to those not celebrating the Mass and Holy Eucharist with us?

The Church genuinely and sincerely needs to welcome the "other" and the "outsider" and not make them feel like they are excluded from the Church community. Despite all the talk of "community" Catholics appear passionate about community because they have so little of it.

The Church can and should be a radical voice for the marginalized and promote social justice on a whole wide range of political issues besides abortion. We need to be seen as a welcoming place of mercy and compassion for those on the fringes of society - the poor immigrants, people of color. LGBTQ - not a bastion of judgment.

The Mass is not open to new people. The talk is too long and the music is not good.

Having a more inclusive message and less didactic attitudes. The message of love, love, love and the well being of all. Create programs like food banks, education, music, movie nights, outreach for the poor and themes that are controversial to see where our interests intersect.\

Community outreach; youth program.

A hard rock to turn over - the Church right now is under scrutiny because of the scandal - maybe have to loosen up the traditional roles of the Church, that is, more like other Christian Churches (family, song, etc.).

Let them hear Msgr. Massie speak!! That is how we ended up at this parish. Make sure the message is one of openness, compassion and inclusion.

Our Church is very inviting to Catholics and non-Catholics. Other parishes should similarly have to be seen to have an "open/welcoming door." Perception is reality and we need to be perceived as welcoming to all.

Be more inclusive to those who are not within the walls of Sunday's Church service. Respect for all who believe or don't, have or have not, gay or straight. Demonstrate inclusiveness through women leaders at the top.

The streaming of Mass and TV Mass of Love helped.

Take accountability and responsibility for the negative actions of the Church. Acknowledge the pain it has caused. Commit to doing better, Let LOVE - real, Godly, unconditional love for ALL take center stage. Mean ALL - LGBTQIA+, disabled, poor, different social backgrounds, all ages, incarcerated, etc. etc.

I appreciate that in Mass people tell others to cross their arms for a blessing if they are not able to take Communion. I would like the Church to be more active in social issues in the community, like participating in Black Lives Matter, immigration rights, poverty and social inequality.

It's tough to invite people when we are attached to so many sins which we are not willing to give up. Many say "yes" I will come when you invite and don't. Keep trying is Broadcast Mass on the media. Have more community in the schools and school activities in neighborhoods.

Have an All are Welcome Sign outside.

All the "openness" mentioned in answer to question #3. More reaching out and calling out to others wherever they might be found.

I think our Church is on the right track but incorporate social media platforms to spread the Word and be more inclusive.

By trying to reach out and get everybody involved in what's going on.

Make Catholicism more "acceptable" in the world so that young people do not feel embarrassed being a part of it.

People have to understand (1) what the Mass is all about (2) What is faith.

The Church tries to be very friendly and have a relationship with the people of the parish and are very welcoming to all.

Stop pushing the sin issue. Be more relevant and less antiquated and ritualistic. Not be judgmental or present a way to live or how to vote or what to support. Can be wrong - jaded point of view. What would Christ do?

Example, as the followers of Jesus. Formulaic - follows rituals, stand sit, kneel.

Homilies must be understood and foreign priests in parishes make the Communion or Gospel almost impossible to hear. Poor homilies by deacons and priest.

Interfaith worship, volunteer activities, and social gatherings would invite more interfaith interaction and acceptance.

Actions speak louder than words. There are some changes to be more inclusive that would open discussion and provide more comfortable environments.

In this pandemic times and because of my age, I have come to rely on watching/praying the Mass online each Sunday with Monsignor Massie. Facebook has been a big help in getting the message to many people that they can tune in to become part of the congregation. I know that Sacred Hearts & St. Stephen Parish offers the Holy Eucharist to housebound people, and this is a wonderful option.

being open about our beliefs and always having the Mass as part of your life

It was a mistake to destroy our intmural sports

THEMES

The Church should be a radical voice to embrace marginalized populations, advocate for and be more active in current social justice issues, and have a more inclusive

The Church needs to be more relevant, less antiquated and needs to reconcile and be accountable for its embarrassing, harmful history of oppression, exclusion and abuse.

The use of social media outreach throughout the pandemic should continue to engage people not regularly participating in Mass.

Interfaith worship, social programs, and continued outreach and messages of compassion, openness and respect to all, including LGBTQ members and women.

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Do we as a Church people foster communion and unity within our Church amongst different cultural and economic backgrounds and within our larger communities with different religious denominations? Do we support the Church and surrounding community?

The Church does a terrible job of fostering an inclusive environment and so leads many to believe that there is an "in crowd" with privileges. Solidarity with different religious denominations and faith tradition is not actively encouraged or supported.

Monsignor has done an incredible job of fostering connections with the Jewish and Muslim communities but he is an outlier. There is a sense within the Church that we are the one true Church - therefore it is us - and only us - against the world. We can barely support the needs of the Church, much less the needs of the surrounding community. There is a reason why the Church is no longer the life blood and center of communities. It has stopped fulfilling people's needs so they've gone elsewhere.

No we don't.

SHSS seems to be very open which is why I attend even though I am very ambivalent about how I perceive the Church as being, For me being a Catholic is more cultural than anything else.

Spanish/French Masses; food bank/collection; addiction support.

Some parishes do and some do not.

No and yes. Reflects what society is today even though we say we do foster communion and unity, We are all prejudice in our own secret way.

The Church has become so politicized. Some parts of our City are very closed minded and some aren't. Those who are may not support the marginalized members of the

The Diocese tends to come across as Italian by ethnicity, culture, which can be perceived as un-welcoming to others. Proud that our Church celebrated AAPI Unity Mass this year!

Did the Brooklyn Diocese fire a teacher in Queens for marrying his long-term partner? This is the antithesis of unity and understanding that Jesus preached about. In a society which is non-pushing for inclusivity and acceptance, the Church is one of the most marginalizing and exclusive.

Some of us do foster communion and unity but probably never enough.

No there is a lot of alienation of the disenfranchised. There is often a lot of talk and no action. Like Paul said, faith with no acts is nothing.

That is a very calling thing to do when people typically belong to parishes where they live so they may not encounter people of other cultural and economic backgrounds. Perhaps instead of "sponsoring" a Church in another country, Churches could be linked together in different neighborhoods so conversations and fellowship between the two could more naturally occur (or even with different faith congregations).

Yes. We can't make everyone happy. Our Lord was rejected many times too. We do support. The question maybe do others support the Catholic Church by trying to learn the Catholic faith.

Yes. Yes but the money spent on social programs as much as is done does not create contact with others.

We did when we had an intramural sports program.

Outreach to Cobble Hill Ministry Health Center on Henry Street. Assisting with faith formation program (old CCD). Trying to get grandparents, sponsors, parents, more involved in passing on our beliefs and faith to next generations. Not thinking it's only job of parish priests/leaders of parish.

Yes in our parish but this may not be the norm in all communities, especially in areas that may sometimes be labeled as "underserved."

Yes.

On a parish level you are what your neighborhood is so unless it is a diverse neighborhood this will be a small circle. Maybe we can try to have more cross-faith gathering with other places of worship in the neighborhood.

Not everyone does. Some people are just not interested.

Our Church does foster unity within our community, however, more can be done.

Most parishes are homogenous and not welcoming to strangers. Closing Catholic schools.

Welcoming the people in Church depends on leadership of parish, community; social issues (vaccinations).

Catholics fear being judged and also of being viewed as inauthentic and disingenuous.

As an older person, it was more acceptable in years past to speak of church but in today's society, it can be offensive to some.

I have always felt free to communicate my feelings, although many people my age still have old-fashioned notions and are hesitant to make their voices heard. I cannot speak for all Catholics and I will not guess at the hesitancy of some to speak freely.

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This church does but this is not true of all Catholic churches.

I believe that we are doing a much better job to be inclusive in ways of race , economics, however our world has changed and we need to build dialogue with those who because of our doctrines feel their lifestyles would not be welcomed

Yes to both questions. Our parish has always fostered communion and unity - and even more so since Monsignor Massie joined the parish.

cultural beliefs often cause conflict, we have to be more open to different cultures and their use of the Church

Yes

We had a huge lose of communication when we lost our sports program. Even supporting it in a new from when we lost the school building. We could have looked to other venues like keeping the ball field even for our baseball league. We do reach out in an ecumenical way thanks to Monsignor's skills, interest and abilities in that area

THEMES

Many expressed believing that this parish, SHSS, fosters unity and inclusion (i.e. the parish has control over local customs) but the larger Church needs to build capacity in this area.

The Church also is perceived as alienating, not-inclusive, all talk and no action. The global Church is not perceived as inviting or creating an environment of inclusion.

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How does the Church and its people fit in with the whole of the greater society in which we live, culturally, politically, civilly, and economically?

The Church's public profile is often too rigid on hot-button issues and so alienates itself from broader discussions with the greater society.

The Church does not fit in.

The Church does not get involved in vaccines for 3rd world (countries), alternatives to abortion; Parishes at Mexican border should have procession to say Mass for migrants every Sunday.

The job of the Church is to grow the believer and their family so they can use doctrine to make decisions that do; Support of the family unit is the best level of support - allowing the family support to survive and thrive and grow in the word of God so through spiritual growth and stewardship we get more impact in the great society from that well supported family.

We are all separately living our lives. There is no sharing in the greater society because we are so different and religion (has) become very secular.

By educating everyone about different cultures and religious beliefs.

As Christians we need to do a better job of being heard. In this current political environment, we are being silenced and being forced to conform to ideals that conflict with our teachings.

We need to attend other parishes' events/gatherings to learn from each other and accept their gifts/talents.

They lost their authority with the scandals. Support education for adoption instead of abortion.

Almost irrelevant to non-Catholics and politicians.

The Church fits in very well. The Church has always brought blessings to the people as a whole.

The Church often stands apart but unfortunately often not in a good way. We should be protecting our environment, speaking out against social inequity, racial injustice, women's reproductive rights, not trying to keep a president from taking Communion or discouraging the people from being vaccinated.

The Church is often siding with the most conservative politics and not supporting the disenfranchised - not supporting the poor, the oppressed, the hurting, what would Jesus do? The Church needs to stand up for the Gospel truth, the radical gospel truth of love and inclusion and charity for all.

I don't see the connections anymore.

The Church has traditionally preached about a sense of watching out for ALL but still marginalizes women (i.e. no priests). We don't respect or acknowledge rights of homosexuals as people. This archaic perspective is degrading our relevance in society as an old, irrelevant institution.

Given the sex scandals in the Church, it is seen more as the fringe than ever before with little voice in the public domain.

The Catholic Church is not as strong as it once was - people are leaving the Church. Many members may feel uncomfortable where they are - but many times we avoid those in need.

The Church still does what it does throughout history (missionaries, hospitals, shut-ins, etc.) but it does not stand out to others in our work, country, locality.

It feels it is not in step with where modern times are. It feels lost - gay rights, women's rights, children's rights, poor people's rights.

The Church and Rome need to stop walking away from a fight. Stop making bypass roads.

We are a laggard in every sense. The Church - if it were living the actual Gospel - would be a fierce advocate for social equality, equal rights for minorities, a voice for immigrants, the environment, the sanctity of life (and not just the unborn), those on death row, the poor, LGBTQ, voter franchisement, social welfare, on and on. Instead, we sit on the sidelines - unless it's abortion or gay marriage.

The Catholic church is not always consistent, particularly in a political context. Its position vis a vis political figures who openly support abortion is stunning.

We are a divided people. Some go out of the way to be all welcoming but some are fire and brimstone. There is not consistency within the universal church. This makes for confusion and disharmony

There is always room for improvement; I think more people have come back to worshipping on Sundays since the start of the pandemic. This continues to be an ongoing process of listening, learning and accomplishing the Church's goals.

In the US we are too politically motivated. we need to see the world as more than just the US. Politics create divisions that are hard to dissuade .

Catholic charities helps the immigrants

Our outreach in Ghana is a wonderful thing.

THEMES

Most express feeling that the Church does not do a good job of fitting in with modern society; it holds onto to outdated ideas, is too rigid, doesn't get involved in pressing social justice issues.

The Church's message contradicts its practice when it doesn't evidence respect for and marginalizes LGBTQ persons, women, children and hasn't reconciled its history of sexual abuse.

The Church should be radical and an advocate for social equality and social justice but is not.

The Church has lost its credibility in the world because of its positions on gay rights, abortion, sexual abuse by priests, etc.

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How do we find in other Christian denominations a common purpose and vision that can bring our faith communities together?

We could start by actively talking to them and engaging them, which just has not happened. The assigned week for Christian Unity is not widely promoted or supported. Unfortunately, the future ahead is dark: there will be more and more frequent storms, droughts, flooding and mass migration due to the changing climate that will only exacerbate the differences between the poor and the affluent. Regardless of faith or denomination, we are all in this together - and it will be an unprecedented opportunity for the Church to lead and practice the Gospel and alleviate the suffering of the most impacted by the changing world.

More outside Mass in Summer. Take God out to the Streets in the area.

The belief in God and message of love and acceptance, inclusivity and community. Find the places where we are more the same than different. The message that God will meet you where you are.

Interfaith gatherings. Social events between parishes or (consoling) to bring more resources to serve the community.

Scripture, written understanding how it fits into our daily life through all denominations; all sharing in the purpose of the Eucharist.

I have rarely seen the Church work with other denominations of Christianity, though we could be stronger together.

Having (?) other faith groups and even in our past activities of service within a parish. Knowledge of what is going on around us so we could help.

We are the BODY of Christ - many of a greater whole. There should not be friction or animosity between denominations, but rather a joint effort in being in dialogue and eventually communion with one another. There's already so much division between Christians and non-Christians - let's not have division within the body too! We need to become unified - just as Christ prayed for in his priestly prayer.

This can be challenging if we stick to the "one true Church" doctrine rather than loving all. Growing up in a Lutheran/Catholic household my mother felt ostracized by Catholics and that they felt she was going to hell for her Lutheran beliefs.

Our Church should always present the true teaching of our Lord and in no way compromise the teachings in order to promote friendships. We love Christ fully - others need to also.

Simply doing projects with other communities - that's communion - others think we think we have a monopoly on salvation - we don't or else Elijah, Moses, Isaiah, Bartholomew and others along with Moses are in LIMBO.

Here to more/ or just start attending, reaching out or inviting others to see what we're about.

Our traditional values are very much in line with our Jewish community partners. We need to strengthen that partnership and avoid being shut-out by the current political

If we do not mix with other denominations how can we learn from each other?

By trying to learn about different cultures and understand their Christian denominations.

I don't know.

Build on Eucharist. Celebrate holidays together. Build strength on common community services. Building on commonalities and in particular those that do not exclude individuals but are inclusive. Not looking at other bonified denominations as "competition." Group resources - maybe for example common school opportunities for youth Build with each other to make a bigger impact on the community they are in and service. Breaking bread together.

Outreach.

Not.

Commitment to social and community causes and interests has potential to bring faith communities together.

By dialogue, being open and trying to understand the differences.

I do not have first-hand knowledge of other Christian denominations; however, the introduction of more and more participation in the activities of neighborhood churches is a good first step.

We must reach out to other communities to see how that accept God and His teachings. Others can lead us to a new knowledge of God.

Not sure

I liked it when the Episcopal church came and shared their singing with us, also special events like the asian american event

THEMES

Active engagement with and learning about other Christian denominations, build a community through common ground.

Sacred Heart St. Stephen Parish Response Form

Who do we see as the person in charge of the parish church? The diocese? What is our role in keeping the parish and diocese vibrant and full?

Education; Bishop meeting; priest; lay (?).

Pastor; bishop.

How do we grow a (desire) in people to want to grow in Christ? That is the big question. That is tough it is almost an attitude at a national level.

Pastor of the Church: Msgr Massie; the Diocese: Bishop. Having more discussion with the parish people.

By following to bear knowledge what the Church and Diocese expects us to do.

The Pastor and his staff. Our role can only be effective if we are part of the Parish.

We are all responsible for the Parish and we must all educate each other in what's going on.

I would not use the term "in charge." The Msgr leads us and keeps us on the right path on the Parish level. In order to keep the Church vibrant, I believe we must feel free to share our beliefs openly with others and not hide our values and traditions.

Our voice and feedback and support to Pastor/Bishop/Leaders of Parish/Diocese. I vote and serve with my feet! Getting involved in ministry.

The Pastor with the help of the people.

Pastor/Bishop. Participating is key - not in the fundraisers but in interacting.

Whoever the Bishop assigns to the Church to be in charge is the person. Whoever the Holy Father assigns to the Diocese is in charge. Be obedient to keep things vibrant

I see Msgr as the person in charge of our Church (although I'm sure he'd want me to say WE are). I do not have a lot of faith in the Diocese itself and wish we as Catholics in Brookly participated and helped make real social change for the good of our City.

The clergy. We as lay people are the body - we are the arms and legs of the Church - taking action out into the world and expanding our community.

Our Pastor is in charge. The Diocese is in charge of the Pastor. Our role is to help the Pastor know our minds.

We are collectively responsible with our priests in charge. The Bishop is in charge of our Diocese who should do more to listen and hear from the Parish.

The Pastor along with Deacons, staff and parishioners. We all need to recognize we have an integral role in keeping the Parish vibrant.

The Pastor. The Bishop. Start new programs to include more members - food bank, Chinese Mass, Hispanic Mass, LGBTQ Mass.

The Pastor and Associate Pastor, with help from various stewards. Money from parishioners.

Monsignor. Lay leaders. Volunteers. Participation in Mass.

Monsignor Massie

Ful Parish talking about things.

I see the Paris priest as the person most in charge, even though they receive their dictates from the Diocese. I'm grateful for the autonomy as I've disagreed with several of the Diocese's decisions in the last few years. The Parish priest is who we see and interact with and develop a relationship with - not the Diocese or a Bishop who visits once or twice a year.

It feels that there is a small nucleus of individuals running the Parish and that nothing can be done without their support. To keep the Parish/Diocese vibrant and full, we must continually challenge ourselves to embrace diversity and to challenge authority.

The priest is in charge of the parish church, supported by the vestry. The bishop or archbishop is in charge of the diocese. The role of the leadership is inspiration. Leaders must act as facilitators.

This is where many differences lie. Some pastors are controlling therefore they alone are in charge. In reality, it's the respective communities working together that comprise the parish. We must all work together with the pastor to be successful. Lay people play a major role in parish life. Along these lines, there should be more woman involved in this concept.

We look to Monsignor Massie for guidance. I, as an individual, value his opinion and vision. Our role will be more actively fulfilled once the pandemic is just something we remember and not something we are still worried about.

Our Msg and his Staff lead our parish. The Bishops must come from a community background. they must be aware of all aspects of the communities .

The bishop

Monsignor and his team are invaluable

THEMES

The Pastor, Bishops and other clergy are in charge of the local Church and Diocese.

All people play a role in keeping the Church active, vibrant and full; the Pastor develops and cultivates relationships within the Parish.

Some expressed feeling a small "in crowd" (priests, volunteers) are in charge.

Sacred Heart St. Stephen Parish Response Form

How do we see ourselves as part of the decision making process on a parish level? On the Diocesan level?

I have no part in decision making on either level, which generally does not bother me, but I do resent that I have no say on where funds are being allocated.

Communicating our concerns to the Parish priest and hoping they are passed to the Diocesan level. The Church is not a democracy and that's why I feel so powerless regarding the direction and future of the Church. Lay people do not have a voice within the Church's hierarchy, and it is why so many people have left and continue to

Don't see it here.

It is available, but few take part and only to complain. How do you get more participation?

I don't understand/don't know.

Most parishioners do not feel listened to nor part of the decision making process. On the Diocesan level, I see no voice in the decision making process of the laity. The Bishop pushes through his agenda without advance and substantive feedback to opinions.

Decisions will be made despite my feelings - those contributed in this survey and otherwise.

Do not see ourselves as part of the decision process - even less on a Diocesan level.

We, as lay people, have very little if no say in the decision and directions of the greater Church. In this particular Parish there seems to be more of an openness to hear the opinions, desires, and requests of the parishioners.

Monsignor and the Parish staff/lectors, Eucharistic ministers, all are welcoming and would be open to hearing feedback from Parish members. I do not feel that way about the Diocese.

If our interests are for the Church community we will always be involved with our prayers and voluntary activities. Same with Diocesan level.

No unless I am on a council.

Answer questions that the leaders ask.

On a Parish level I believe we have the ability to share with our leaders. As we expand out and it becomes more difficult to satisfy everyone's views.

That we can only hope that priests in the Parish made the right decision.

On a Parish level unless you are part of the various Parish committees I don't see how we can be part of the decision process. On a Diocesan level, again if you are not part of that, your voice cannot be heard.

We all have to get more involved with what's going on in our Church.

Honestly, I don't. I believe that whatever I feel will not count as the people in charge don't like change and just do this to satisfy some people.

On a Parish level, it depends. On a Diocesan level, not at all. Money always welcomed. Money always asked for up front in every e-mail, etc. like it is the most important item, not Christ.

Parish council.

Parish members must be active participants and contributors to the decision making process.

Again, this varies parish to parish. It is my personal feeling that oftentimes the Diocese has no clue what parish life is like on any given day. They need to be in the trench to see first hand how situations are and that some of the "rules" need to be flexible. It's not always cut and dry.

On a parish level, I think we parishioners are always foremost in the thought process behind any decision-making. I do not know about the Diocese.

We are lucky to have a Msg that is socially active. all are welcome to discuss with him. Many do not have that luxury. too often the Parrish is constricted by its leadership

Make our concerns known

Taking the pulse of the parishioners like timely questionnaires like this one

THEMES

Most do not see themselves as part of the decision making process on any level in the Church, although there is more opportunity on a local level and only when actively participating on a committee.

Sacred Heart St. Stephen Parish Response Form

Does the Church offer us enough to help us grow in our baptismal call? Does the Church remind us to grown in our faith continually?

Limited number of priests; married clergy; more responsibility to laity.

Catholic Parishes not consistent in what they offer. Many Parishes feel like they offer very little besides Eucharist, which actually is between the believer and God/Christ. Bigger questions is how we we help the Church desire to grow? Where is the hunger? Do clergy get continuous on the job training throughout their careers? Training and growth? How do they get it? Refresher courses, new teachings?

Once a year they renew our Baptismal vows and they discuss at the sermons to practice our religion better, be kind and donate to the poor.

Yes, if people want to grow in our Baptismal call, Faith is what it is all about no matter how much we are all reminded.

I don't feel we grow anymore after Baptism. We use to be guided with school, etc. in the past helping us to grow as Catholics. I don't see it happening now in 2021. I don't know how to grow faith if you don't have family and school reminding you, helping you grow in faith. Mass on Sunday alone cannot be the only way.

Yes.

Good idea to have a Synod of the people with the leadership.

No. The leaders of the Church are afraid of Synod infections. Yes, but at Mass but there is nowhere to demonstrate it - we need schools. Ipso facto.

Yes and Yes, Humility and experience is the key and orthodox teaching. To sum up, I believe the priest must strive to be holy in order that his people will be good.

"The Church" as a whole does not. Monsignor and the parishioners here do, on a weekly basis, help to remind me and push me to grow in my faith.

The more we actively participate in the sacraments, the more we grow. When we offer ourselves to God, He gives in abundance. Mass, faith sharing groups and discussions and prayer grow us.

No and No.

The Church is stifled in their own Baptismal call and have become stagnant.

Yes to those of us who want to grow but how to offer to those that don't feel the need to grow or how growing can help us in this life through our daily life and activities.

Yes.

Don't think so. Need more here not anything for us.

The Church as an institution does not. It is, to a certain extent, a business driven by profit motive. That may be cynical but the Church, as a whole promotes the status quo.

The Gospel is radical and it calls for radical change. Jesus was a disruptor and a dissident and would not be welcomed in the safe, ultraconservative place the Church has become. The Church rarely pushes us to live the Gospel outside of its walls - it reminds us to come back once a week and go on living as we always have.

We are sorely lacking in programs of adult faith formation and so we must find our own resources to grow our faith.

The Church needs to actively engage congregants and provide meaningful opportunities for participation.

Not enough. We live in such a divisive world. We need to be more contemporary in our approach.

Yes and yes.

Every day is an opportunity to ask how can i be of service . often we are very selective in our charity

From the sermons

If you listen to the sermons you learn