



## DIOCESE OF KAMLOOPS

In October 2021 Bishop Joseph Nguyen invited the Diocese of Kamloops to participate in the XVII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops – “For a Synodal Church; Communion, Participation, and Mission.”

Dialogue groups were established throughout the diocese covering the themes: Listening, Speaking out, Celebrating, Decision-Making, and Co-Responsibility in Mission.

Each of the Parishes and Missions were encouraged to gather in groups to discuss the different topics and discuss how we could move forward toward unity. With so many issues and challenges being brought forward in the Kamloops Diocese, all at the same time, some discussions were tending toward the negative side, but over-all the group discussions were well received. Most discussions took place in smaller groups and the people were respectful to each other. The Parishes worked together engaging in their groups to have meaning dialogue, to bring forth ideas, and ways to work together in unity to bring the parish communities and the diocesan community together as a family.

### ***Listening – How do we listen to each other?***

Very poorly was the overall census.

“When we have not been heard, when we are blamed or labelled particularly by a pastor, it isolates us and divides us.”

“Speaking up becomes so challenging in the present world today as the voice of the devil becomes so powerful and highlighted by the social medias there by the public perception comes to the conclusion that the Church is dying.”

Overall people feel that there are not open communication lines between parishioners, priests, and diocesan staff. They feel steps need to be taken to open the communication lines and have transparency.



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People want to know specifically where the money collected for the Healing and Reconciliation collections are being allocated for.

Having Parishes send out communications from the diocese contributes toward inconsistencies in reporting and information. Not all parishes include the same information.

“Needs to be communication between the parish and other parishes in the diocese.”

Minorities such as single women, divorced, and those who have married someone outside the Catholic Faith feel that their voices are not heard and feel they excluded from the church.

Suggestions made:

“Having the diocese under one umbrella of websites and technological communications. Have one person/team updating the local parish websites and at the diocesan level.”

To have more transparency from the Bishop’s office in reporting on misconduct allegations, the Healing and Reconciliation issues in the diocese. This could be done by having more reports being issued from Chancery offices.

“To have more cohesiveness with Parishes. Not have Parishes as stand-alone entities.”

### ***SPEAKING OUT - What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and in society?***

“Some responses were about frustration - that ideas brought forth are met with slow implementation and response.”

“No immediate communication with Kamloops graves, no support groups to talk about massive issues / concerns.”



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“Is there room / dialogue / opportunity for conversation of conflict?  
Generally, no there is not an opportunity for this in many areas pertaining  
to the Church mission / function.”

Overall thoughts:

“Important for the Church not to judge.”

“Co-responsibility is important.”

“Looking for patience / trust.”

“Openness to do God’s work is important.”

“How do we reach those who have left the formal Church – where is their  
voice in the Synod?”

How can the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society?

### ***CELEBRATING - How do we celebrate in Church?***

The Covid pandemic brought many challenges to celebrating Mass together  
as a community. Different efforts were made throughout the diocese to  
include as many parishioners as possible for Mass while still abiding by the  
many different levels of restrictions that were in effect.

“Need to celebrate as a community by being willing to share our individual  
talent richness that can be received through diversity.”

“We tend to neglect the elderly. We don’t seem to have made much effort to  
identify those who are ill, lonely, in need or not included.”

“We could do more to support evangelization in our young people and their  
families.”

“Confusion among the laity due to inconsistency between priests e.g.:  
divorce, receiving the sacraments.”



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Quite a few suggestions mention they would like to see traditional Catholicism, the Latin Mass, and orthodox teachings in The Catholic Church.

Suggestions that were made to make improvements in this area:

“Educating laity so they are able to bring this back to the church and share with others (i.e., theology classes). In a time when there is scarcity of clergy, more and more leaders to evangelize as a dedicated member or committed families.”

“Know your vocation/talent and live it joyfully. This joy witness shared among the people only we have real source of Joy.”

“Reach out to others and invite them to participate in the celebration of the liturgy and prayer at an individual level and community level by various community programs and youth gatherings,”

“Embrace different cultures of the community present around us.”

“How are we living our lives? Are we an example of the Church’s mission? In the workplace witnessing spirituality will influence others.”

In general people are looking for consistency throughout the diocese to have uniform programs for the parishes.

“The celebration of faith should take the direction towards building up the relationship with the Lord and one another. Where all should be able to see others as children of God and love another. Church has to move a lot from the institutionalized format to more relational and family spirit. Where we all, the Bishop, Priests, Deacons and lay brothers and sisters love one another, respect one another, and accept one another in the Lord.”

For those parishes that do not have a Catholic School attached to them, Parishes could provide the same opportunities when celebrating “Catholic Schools Week” in the diocese.



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Smaller parish communities that are close to each other could gather once a month to build upon community within the diocese.

“It would be nice to see the Parishes and schools working more closely together, bringing the youth and older generations together as one.”

“Foster social and spiritual connection as transition from celebration to mission in the world by encouraging and developing activities such as casual gatherings, parish events and meals, prayer and study groups, hospitality and outreach ministries.”

### ***How do we make decisions in the Church?***

The consensus was that decisions were made by the clergy and Bishop, and that as a parishioner they were not always included in decisions that affected the Parish or the Diocese. Transparency was the common theme, people would like to see more visible leadership in the Diocese, how are the decisions being made and implemented in a consistent manner.

“Need to have clear lines of communication, clarity over who has decision making authority and over what decisions. Who has the ultimate decision-making authority?”

“Weakness in structure has led to decisions that have been hurtful to some parishioners and has led to some parishioners leaving the parish-unintended outcomes of decisions.”

“Changes in priests leads to different leadership styles and different responsibilities over who makes what decisions.”

“Need for a clear framework to make decisions and choose future priorities; importance of having a functional pastoral council.”

“Decision making without consultation will alienate people.”

Suggestions for improvement could be:



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“Developing a process for building partnerships with all groups in the parish creating an environment of engagement. IE: KOC, CWL, Social Justice, Caring Committee, Men’s group, MOM’s (Moms On a Mission), Faith Formation for Children, Bible studies, etc.”

The diocese can improve by publishing and implementing the directives that are used for making decisions in the diocese. People would like to see more transparency throughout the parishes and diocese about the decisions that are implemented. To have more open dialogue at all levels and implement leadership teams and parish councils where there are none presently.

“Needs to be a restructuring/strengthening of our parish temporal structural body.”

“Revitalize the Parish Council. It should be the focal point of lay activity in the Parish and the community, especially through the various Ministries in the Parish.”

### ***CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION - How do we Carry the Church’s Mission Together?***

How are we called as disciples of the Church to participate and in the mission of the Church and share our faith with others?

Some of the challenges and suggestions on how to be united in the mission are as follows:

“We recognize that this is a time of transition (from Covid Restrictions to In-person attendance). People will return gradually, and we need to prepare for how parishioners can become more involved with the church and participate in the Mass.”

“Create, and improve upon, a culture of volunteerism in the Parish. Urge all parishioners to go through a process of prayerful discernment, to identify, and appreciate, their giftedness, and to offer it to one of the Ministries of the Parish.”



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“Enthusiasm for the World Youth Days was expressed as a means to keep the young people alive in the church.”

“World-wide I think of the sisters, brothers and priests who carry out the church’s mission by living with the poor and standing up for the poor in the underdeveloped countries, sometimes dying for them. That is the church’s mission being lived out from a global perspective. I think of our parishes here and see a disconnect from that type of mission. Locally we do a great job regarding a vertical connection with God but not in a horizontal connection. In other words, we focus a lot on prayer and devotion but not much on social justice.”

“Parents of young children are often made to feel their children are more of a hindrance at church if they are not sitting still and quiet.”

“The diocese of Kamloops has an aging demographic. How are we moving toward trying to inspire and engage the younger generation?”

### *Suggestions:*

“The aspect of mentorship should be in place to replace members as they leave the committee. It needs more younger people to be involved and taught to take over in due time and others to guide to in the right direction as our communities filled with the older people.”

Provide more options for families with small children at church, ie. Children’s liturgy, providing children’s books or coloring sheets so they can learn at their level and still feel included in the Mass.

How are the Catholic schools engaging the Catholic Faith?

Provide more opportunities for different youth groups to engage at a parish level as well as a school level.

Welcome volunteers at their comfort level and match with their talents.



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The majority of people want to work together as a Diocese under the direction of the Bishop rather than having the Priests and Parishes working separately from each other and doing their own agendas.

A lot of parishioners are concerned with the aging community of the priests, the “burn out” of them in their duties, as they are covering so much more than just the spiritual guidance in their ministries.

How are we as parishioners supporting and caring for our priests?

Are we always complaining of how dissatisfied we are with what we are seeing and hearing or are we bringing forth ideas on how to support each other and the Priests?

Are we giving our time and talents to the Church to assist the priest with ministries in the church? Actions speak louder than words.

How can we as lay people promote Vocations in the diocese, there has not been an ordination in over 10 years.

Bishop Joseph would like to see the Diocese be more engaged, finding ways to join together in our parish communities and as a diocesan family to walk together in unity as to prepare us to set out as a Church “on the move” towards the world of our time.