



Saint Camillus Parish was established in Silver Spring, Maryland in 1951 and opened its school, now the Saint Francis International School in 1954. In 1983, the Franciscan Friars of Holy Name province assumed administration. Since the late 1970's Saint Camillus has grown into a large, multilingual, and multicultural parish. Through the 1990's to present day St. Camillus Parish grew into a thriving and even more diverse parish. Prior to the Covid-19 epidemic population at the eight weekly Masses tripled; and today, more than 4,000 people regularly gather each weekend to worship in English, Spanish and French. Originally made up of European descendants, St. Camillus is now home to immigrants from the four corners of the world, primarily Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Bangladesh. Multiculturalism is one of our hallmarks, and we view diversity as a true gift, continually striving to preserve and celebrate the richness of our own individual cultures, while growing in appreciation and understanding of one another's.

Saint Camillus held two in-person listening sessions, divided into English, Bangla, and Spanish language groups and one via Zoom. Additionally, some of our ministries held their own sessions and shared their input for this report. Approximately one hundred people participated in total, which is a significantly small representation of the parish community.

All summaries are a synthesis of all the communities' responses except for areas in which there was a marked difference in the responses by language group. However, across the parish landscape, there were some common themes that emerged. What follows is a list of themes that appeared in several reports and appeared as common threads across the diverse collection of groups.

Common Themes

- Joy in the rich ethnic diversity of our parishes and groups and the commitment to renew efforts to outreach to these groups of diverse cultures.
- Appreciation of the universality of the Church.
- Finding beauty in the art and liturgy of the Church; one example: "Transcendence and wonder [helps me] find common ground with others"
- Joy as Catholics who live out the works of mercy and Saint Camillus being dedicated to social justice.
- Concern for Young people: Millennials, Gen X, Gen Z are GONE! They care about systemic racism, how to heal that, gender identity issues, poverty grinding people down.

- Concern for the understaffed and reduced parish.
- Concern for loss of community because of COVID 19.
- Concern for the faith formation and sacramental programs.
- Concern of Church leadership that is not as responsive to the people, both the Universal and local Church.
- Hierarchy not listening to the faithful as much as they should.
- A need for a renewed investment in spiritual and formational accompaniment in the Church especially of laity and lay leadership, LGBTQ+ youth and their families, and young people

General Observations

Despite the challenges inherent in synodality and attentive listening and dialogue, many of the participants prayed for the strength to be steadfast in this work and hope they can be part of what they want to see in the Church. Other general observations include the following.

- Synodal conversations are, in theory, open to all, but the process of analyzing, prioritizing, and applying their wisdom is still hierarchical. It is difficult for laypeople to believe that their contributions will make a difference.
- It will be important to gain wisdom from models of ministry from the early Church.
- Routinely and openly involve laypeople, theologians, and clergy together in conversation in all important processes of discernment.
- Recommit to radical inclusion of people of all cultures.
- True formation involves apprenticeship and mentoring.
- Programs never solve problems; rather, building personal relationships does.
- We do a poor job of going out to the marginalized; instead, we often wait for people to show up at our church door.
- Amongst the English-speaking community, there is a lack of African American parishioners in this “intercultural” parish. The parish has shown a lack of initiative on addressing racism. The African American congregants do not feel “totally accepted.”
- The Latino/Hispanic community while expressing gratitude for the accompaniment of the current priests in residence did strongly voice their desire and need for a Hispanic/Latino priest.
- Currently, there is little opportunity for people 40 years and under to have a voice in community.
- Inactive members of parish are excluding themselves and thus have no voice. There is no space for inactive members to bring their concerns forward.
- In general, the Bengali, African, and Latino Hispanic communities felt significantly more “listened to” by parish leadership than the other participants.
- The current reality that many in the Universal Church are weaponizing the Eucharist in polemic and political battles is a crucial issue which must be stopped.
- Appreciate that the liturgy is the source and summit of our faith and the manifestation of our unity, we, therefore, need to continue to dialogue with those still fighting the liturgical reform.

- Ordain women, married men, and others currently excluded from ordination to guarantee greater clerical familiarity with lay life and sense of accountability to laypeople.

Recommendations from the Participants

Participants offered a variety of recommendations for moving forward. Some were self-reflective, looking inward at next steps that need to be taken within the parish; others were focused on outward efforts to be taken up by the Church at-large.

- Develop mechanisms and processes to guide the hierarchy in carrying out synodal initiatives and hold them accountable for doing so.
- The Synod process should continue and allow for more listening opportunities in institutional structures within the Church.
- Greater investment in accompaniment and formation and social justice, especially with
 - Youth (adolescents)
 - Young adults in general (20s and 30s)
 - Young couples and young families (20s and 30s)
 - Laity, especially women
 - Seminarians, especially related to issues of laity, young people, women, and marginalized or underserved populations
- The Church's education and formation experiences, especially in its parishes, must be intergenerational, intercultural, and interracial and show the Church's openness to varied perspectives
- The pastors and bishops must be increasingly open to the lay leadership particularly women in his parish/diocesan community.
- A return to the spirit of Vatican Council II, robustly affirm by word and action the *sensus fidelium*, the communion of saints, and the priesthood of the baptized.
- Permit the priests to be married to survive and grow the church
- Permit qualified women to celebrate the Holy Mass
- Recommit to St. Camillus' history of collaboration between clergy and laity.