

## THEME #9 – The Church at Prayer

- Many expressed the need for excellent preaching - inspired by the Readings of the Mass, relevant to people's lives, and linked to the experience of shared ministry in the Church and in the broader community.
- Participants commented on the need for in-person worship, the affirmation of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the importance of the regular reception of Holy Communion.
- A desire for opportunities to strengthen and deepen faith was expressed: such as Adoration, Scripture study, Rosary, Spiritual Direction, Stations of the Cross, faith sharing groups, etc.
- Many emphasized the importance of a beautiful celebration of the Eucharist. Some expressed a desire for a more inviting, devout, and faithful celebration of the Mass in English or other modern languages; and others sought to have more access to the Mass in Latin.
- Sacramental preparation of school-aged children/youth was addressed by many. Some saw value in the newer parish-based model; others expressed concern that the current program is not fully reaching parents and children of sacramental age.
- Many participants spoke of the critical importance of prayer to;
  - o help people walk humbly and faithfully;
  - o intentionally turn toward God for wisdom and strength; and
  - o engage in an ongoing dialogue of faith with God.

## THEME #10 – Future Planning

- Participants emphasized the importance of rooting future planning in prayer and the Church's mission.
- Some expressed concern that the demographics of parishioners (numbers attending and age) should help determine the Diocesan planning. Maintaining underused buildings might divert resources away from pastoral programs.
- Some observed that various church buildings did not have the flexibility of space to accommodate pastoral programs.
- The following issues were identified as key to pastoral planning: evangelization and mission, the demographic of parishioners, church and facility usage, financial sustainability, accountability and transparency, the place of Parish Councils, and re-structuring.
- Some participants commented that the changes may entail hardship and feelings of loss so it will be important to engage in pastoral planning sensitively, courageously, and prayerfully.

## Where do we go from here?

- The Diocese has been receiving input from the ThoughtExchange and Google Form surveys, school board meetings with youth in high schools, campus ministry outreach, parish-based sessions, online surveys for parishioners, lay organization meetings, and letters or emails received at the Pastoral Centre.
- The next step is to collect and collate this input and develop a draft plan of pastoral strategies responding to the feedback.
- The draft plan will benefit from much consultation with the clergy and the faithful before it is finalized with the goal of an Easter Season release in 2023.
- For more information about the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Process, please go to this webpage: <https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/about-us/pastoral-planning.aspx>



## Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough

# PASTORAL PLANNING SURVEY SUMMARY

## What are we hearing?

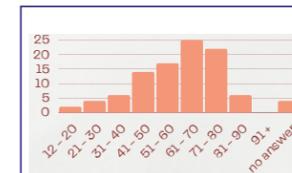
### PARTICIPATION

1,291 People participated in the survey  
 3,015 Thoughts were shared  
 35,384 Ratings of thoughts were noted  
 66% of participants were female  
 31% of participants were male  
 6% of participants preferred not to answer

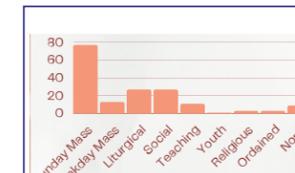


### PARISHES

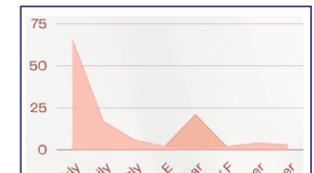
Members from 85% of the parishes and missions participated in the survey.



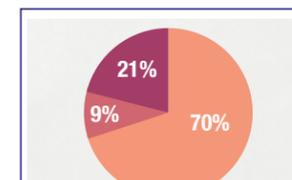
**Age**  
Age range of participants



**Involvement in Church**  
How participants are involved in the life of the Church



**Mass Attendance**  
C & E = Christmas & Easter  
W / F = Wedding / Funerals



**Post Pandemic In-Person Worship**  
Yes 70% No 9% Unsure 21%



**Concerns about Returning to In-Person Worship**



**Themes**  
Comments from participants fell into ten categories. The number of mentions is shown on the graph.



## What are we hearing?

### THEME #1 – Youth

- Deep concern for the future of the Church was expressed with the hope that the younger generations find and embrace their rightful places within the Church community.
- The importance that youth ministry, Catholic schools, and social justice projects play in the faith formation of young people was noted by many.

### THEME #2 – Families

- Emphasis was placed on the attendance and involvement of families at Church.
- Pastoral ministry to the family was mentioned many times noting:
  - o Reaching out to and supporting a broad range of families
  - o Appreciating the demands and stresses families face today
  - o Recognizing the family as the seedbed for future vocations to ordained ministry

### THEME #3 – Community

- Various aspects of the Church as a community of faith were highlighted:
  - o The desire to be welcomed in the Church
  - o The importance of hospitality, belonging, and participation
  - o The need to accompany each person wherever they might be in their life's journey
  - o The call to be compassionate and understanding towards the marginalized

### THEME #4 – Reconciliation

- Anger and disappointment were expressed about:
  - o abuse by clergy and the wounds that remain
  - o the historical and ongoing trauma from the Residential Schools Policy on the Indigenous Peoples of Canada,
  - o the experiences of persons who have felt marginalized or excluded by the Church,
  - o the division in the Church among traditionalists and liberals,
  - o issues related to the roles and contributions of women
  - o the rupture and fragility of trust
- Embarrassment was expressed for the failure to take responsibility and to make amends for serious transgressions.

### THEME #5 – Social Justice

- There is a need to take a more active role in ministry to the homeless, the addicted, the poor, the marginalized, and those suffering from mental health issues in our local communities.
- A desire for better communication about what the Church does through St. Vincent de Paul, Development and Peace, and other outreach efforts.
- The Church must continue its strong advocacy on life issues from conception to natural death, stewardship of creation, and quality of life initiatives related to justice.
- Many participants called for more inclusion of the Catholic Social Teachings in Sunday homilies and other parish programs.

### THEME #6 - Ministry / Mission

- A desire to see the Church continue to proclaim the truth of the Gospel and the fullness of the Church's teachings.
- A priority to support lived examples of priestly and family life.
- There is respect and concern for priests along with a recognition of the complex role of pastors today.
- Participants had various expectations for their priests including faithfully presenting the Church's Teaching; showing respect and kindness; and extending welcome and outreach to those not connected to the parish.
- A concern that priestly ministry has been hindered by the historical handling of sexual abuse cases by the Church and a culture of clericalism that exists in some places.
- A concern that ecclesial structures don't make sufficient room for laypeople.
- There is concern about a shortage of vocations to the priesthood and its impact on Church life including:
  - o More dependence upon priests from other countries or missionary priests and/or
  - o New ways of exercising ministry.
- Some suggested that the Church retain a traditional model of ministry while others suggested that new models be explored:
  - o More shared ministry opportunities between priests and laypeople
  - o Parish teams to reach out to the sick, to visit the elderly and to bring communion, and to keep them connected to their communities
  - o Strong support for more involvement of women in the life and leadership of the Church

### THEME #7 – Well-Being

- Since the survey was completed during the pandemic, many responses dealt with the pandemic health precautions.
- The comments were mostly supportive of the health precautions and procedures put in place.
- Some perceived a government over-reach into areas of church life while others were critical of some disregard for the health precautions which left them feeling unsafe and concerned to attend worship in person.
- Many highlighted the need to reach out to parishioners as the pandemic eases and to welcome them back.
- People are eager for a return to regular liturgical practices, especially the music ministry.

### THEME #8 – Communication

- Many noted the importance of good communication within the Church at the diocesan level and at the parish level.
- People highlighted that communication is a two-way interaction involving both listening and responding.
- Specifically, the communication needs to provide:
  - o Messages of welcome to the faith for all people
  - o Encouragement to be involved in Church life and excitement about the Catholic faith
  - o Transparency in how the Church manages finances and responds to controversial issues such as clergy abuse, Residential Schools, etc.
  - o Assurances that people are genuinely being heard.