



## Listening Session Summary Report

**Location:** St. Mary's Iowa City

**Date of Session:** Nov. 4, 2018

**Facilitator:** Kent Ferris

**Your Name:** Mary Rae Meyer

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**Approximate number of participants:** 32 from St. Mary's & Newman Catholic Student Center

**Were small groups utilized?** yes no

**If so, how many small groups did you have?** 5 groups

**Briefly describe the composition of the group (age/race/gender/ethnicity).**

60% female; 40% male. Primarily Caucasian representation. Age breakdown; 20's - 2. 30's-40's - 3. 50's - 9. 60's - 4. 70's - 5. 80's - 8. And one 10 year-old with his dad.

**Were there any impeding factors that could have limited attendance?**

No.

**Chapter Large Group Responses. List with bullet points.**

### Chapter 1:

- Two perspectives:
  - 1. Service outreach - Free lunch, CEW, Catholic Worker House, Peace & Justice tithe, Thanksgiving Dinner, St. Anthony's Bread, Stephen Ministry, Communion to Homebound and Hospitalized, visits to Nursing homes
  - 2. Inviting others - Night Fever, 177 Project, City High Choir Performance, Greeters at Mass, Donuts & Coffee, Introducing visitors at end of Mass, broadcasting Mass on TV
- Are we finding those no longer coming to Mass?
- It would be helpful to have a script to evangelize to others
- Newman Center - Food on the Corner is the envy of other churches; community is fed spiritually and feel good when they leave church/Mass (one participant's comment, not a consensus)

### Chapter 2:

- Distractions from our faith; busy culture
- Closed-mindedness
- Double standard in vocations; fewer options for women
- Diversity - reaching out to and including diverse populations

- Creating a stronger community so people won't want to leave. E.g. Stephen Ministry creates bonds
- Getting the message out more effectively of the good things happening, via social media use and better marketing
- Other churches (denominations) have more of a culture of evangelization; Catholics have a fear of evangelizing
- Rules - we need to convey they are comforting, not restrictive; practice of faith leads to true freedom
- Standardize message so people know what to expect and feel included

### **Chapter 3:**

- Newman Center caters to a specific audience with community based events
- FOCUS missionaries - begin with a personal relationship, one-to-one; reach out through peers and friendship
- Newman Center has weekly Bible studies, prayer services, Thursday night Mass, etc.
- During Advent and Lent a community-wide schedule is published that includes services and Masses at all parishes in Iowa City/Coralville; this advocates attending other parishes
- Be a critical thinker rather than a critic
- Get more youth involved in parish communities
- Religious Education programs are good
- Regina - lots of volunteerism, service projects for students
- Children's Masses
- "Rediscover Catholicism" by Matthew Kelly provides a strategy:
  - 1. Befriend them
  - 2. Pray for them
  - 3. Share stories
  - 4. Invite them to church
- RCIA, Bible studies, CEW, youth program
- Need to promote activities enthusiastically

### **Chapter 4:**

- Free Lunch Program, Catholic Worker House, food bank
- Nursing home and hospital outreach

- Vietnames and Congolese parishioners at St. Mary's are not represented tonight; we need to get to know them
- One participant suggested that Kent Ferris is a resource to learn about new people in the Diocese

## **Chapter 5:**

- Resonates:
  - To be detached from earthly things brings joy, peace
  - Give to poor and be free of the bondage of "stuff"
  - Joy is "catchy"
  - Making ourselves available to others
  - Find out more about our Faith and helping others directly
- Challenges:
  - Looking at our limitations
  - Thinking that others are better or know more than we do
  - Lack of confidence to go out and evangelize
  - Fearful of being exposed/criticized as sinners, imperfect
  - Fear of coming across as judgmental
- Nuns on the Bus - a good example (one participant's comment; not a consensus)

## **Participant Surveys**

23 surveys submitted

**Question 1:** Yes - 13. No - 6. Maybe - 2. Blank - 2

**Question 2:** Yes - 8. No - 9. Blank - 6

**Question 3:** 8 surveys of 23 had no comments

**Question 4: List responses with bullet points.**

Note - these are individual comments directly from the surveys, and not a compilation or summary.

- How to appeal to young adults in the midst of other Christian organizations, including Salt Company and Cru. How to combat against non-denominational Christian groups.
- The parishes allow a lot of programs which is wonderful. However, many programs involve people coming, sitting through it, and going without any fellowship or relationships being built between people. Having people that are willing to reach out and build more fruitful relationships I think would make a big change.

- How parishes in same city can work together to coordinate activities and learn from each other.
- I'd like to hear more of the relationship of man in nature and its usefulness in God's work.
- We need to learn better how to market the Good News! to share the story of Jesus and his love for us!
- I think there should be an effort to coordinate the three parishes (St. Wenceslaus, St. Mary's, Newman Center) - especially the calendars of events!
- We need to evangelize and educate those in the pews so we have lots of people ready to evangelize outside of the parish. Move them from Consumers to Contributors (within the parish) to then reach out to those missing from the parishes. Strengthen all of us with authentic catechesis, including the difficult or unpopular truths of our faith. Show them to be liberating, not restrictive.
- Teach me to meet people where they are at without judging them.
- I will be praying and welcoming always. God Bless you all!
- Are we doing enough to educate and inform parishioners, especially the youth, of the various missionary opportunities that exist in our church and around the world. And how easy it is to become involved in them.
- Human resource issues - staffing with our priests - I'm for the marriage option; females in diocese level committees, etc. Priests who have children - continue - the mess in Sioux City is a prime example. Bishop was not really honest with his statement - same old story! The issue has done little for my faith in the institution. Amen. Thanks for asking.
- Adult ministry formation in the parish.
- What else besides discipleship/evangelization is in Vision 20/20?
- What can be done to illustrate what are the modes of evangelization? Many disciples, many gifts.
- I don't feel confident to be in this role. This is not a role that has been expected of Catholics in the past. Why now? I don't feel "on fire" or "joyful" in this way.
- Speaking for people my age (20-30), we have been raised from a young age to believe that men and women are created equal in nearly all things. That women can lead in all things men are able to, with the exception of the most important thing, faith. The fact that women cannot be priests drives so many women my age from the church. We need to be more open and accepting (sic) of the LGBTQ community. Injustice towards them drives so many away and if we truly believe in the love of Jesus Christ, this should not be an issue.