

Diocesan Assembly Theme 3 Families and Vocation

Reflecting on this topic, what would a parish or diocese living the joy of the Gospel be like?

1. Having support groups in parishes; grouping new young couples together; role of man and woman; investment in youth, importance of marriage courses; more inclusive parishes, being more welcoming to new parishioners/families, clique in parishes; relationship with the Trinity; prayer groups, welcoming card for newcomers, priests not to be seen as on pedestal; people are the church;
2. having good relationship with priest, importance of extended family for discussion, role models etc; more affluence the less need for God; being a kind, generous and welcoming parish;
3. church capitalising more on social media; need to move with the times, need to change the way we deliver the gospel;
4. rules are wishy washy; need to be brave enough to talk about peoples suitable for vocations; need to live the life of Catholics, not just come to Mass; need to make being catholic "more appealing".
5. acceptance of the diversity of family structures; families having challenging conversations with the love of God; parish is the centre where families feel welcome and comfort; all priests and lay work together as a family at a local level; parish to have welcoming essence drawing all cultural traditions within the parish; listening is important; provide an opportunity for those in stressful times to be listened to; invitation to pray and role model prayer with family; messages preached need to reach all diverse structures; work within the limitations of Church teachings eg gay marriage, however, respecting the relationship
6. Promote who we are as Christians, historically we haven't openly promoted who we are as followers of Jesus"
7. Build trust, inclusive, charity, church becomes the extended family, support, embrace all people despite the brokenness, looking beyond the immediate family unit and seeing who is their for us, modelling faith to our children through prayer, attending Mass - being the witness to others, more faith formation (refresher course) or sharing teenager faith with younger students after the sacrament of confirmation, important to build the foundation in the early years,
8. The readings place divine love at the centre of the Family. Love is God's gift. We are loved and then, imitating this Love, which then animates the family, and the spreads to wider world. Love knows no judgement; just love of person, but condemning the sin. Forgiveness, imitating Christ, is a key quality. Create conditions to grow the sense of divine love:
 - a. Model the divine love in family. to nourish, protect and grow the love by doing things together without judgement.
 - b. Family prayer shared and use 'Focus on Family' to build the relationship based on divine love.
 - c. Who are the people who are hurting in the parish?
The parish where families have this vision, will be a parish family, inspired by the Spirit. The parish will live the Joy of gospel.
9. The people who are hurt by the Catholic Church.
 - a. LGBTI people
 - b. Called 'disordered'. Do they scare us? It is new, Is the church accepting of them?
 - c. Divorced couples,
 - d. Married to non-Catholic.
 - e. Unmarried.

Question: Why should these differences exclude them from Church community? Is there a disconnect from an institutional church?

Recommendation: That the Church shown full acceptance to these communities. Be open to the Spirit and give the Church time. Reach out and listen to them"

10. "A strong feeling of belonging. Acknowledge diversity, proclaiming the gospel to all...the whole of creation. Balance of mercy and diversity of those living outside traditional Church teaching. Focussed on people rather than rules and regulations. We would know one another and treasure each other as made in the image and likeness of God. We would share our stories and honour them. We would be joyful, dynamic, fun, nurturing ...and noisy. We would welcome ALL ages/stages/circumstances. We would know people by name. There would be community action. We would all have the opportunity to encounter Jesus...through Scripture, tradition and each other. We would be a community of missionary disciples.
11. Celebrating to the love of God in our families, support one another, and then taking that relationship to the extended family like schools. A community that will speak about God and the involvement of God in their lives even when they are at a picnic or out with friends. Saying Rosary and Prayer before the meals regularly as a group or a family. One that is energising, vibrant and a place of growth. Supporting and "idealising" the long and lasting marriages openly by celebrating in the parish and during the Mass in public. Even if the family is not in a sacramental marriage, we should still promote and support them to live and sustain their marriage for a long term.
12. Celebrating love in the love in the family by always being connected even if we live in different cities. Forgiving and non-judgemental in our attitude. A community that turns from materialism into person-centeredness. Person or the human beings become the centre of everything that which lives the joy of the Gospel. Liturgies and those groups that make contact with people and their real life situations like death, marriages, and sacraments, etc. A family/parish that celebrates love and forgiveness. Families that makes contact and stays in contact and support with other families within the parish (outside sunday mass and other important parish gatherings. Families should support each other and their relationship should transcend the occasions of Sunday Mass.) - A parish that has strong relationship with other families and not afraid to receive and offer support to struggling ones.
13. Family prayer- reinforce it. Younger families... make them welcome and comfortable in the parish and that way make the parish more lively. Ready to embrace change as the opportunity and situation knocks. More youth movements.
14. From the fundamental unit of family it all begins. Without a vibrant family that lives life joyfully, there will not be a vibrant parish or diocese. So, find a way to celebrate life and faith in families. Some ways are through praying together, coming to Mass and regular to sacraments. (suggestions: make schools the centers of contact for the church and the families. Schools is the last and only tangible point of contact for us with the families.
15. A community that provides a sense of enjoyment that a young man receives so that he feels the need to come back to Mass or the Church to feel the same.
16. Priests having connection to Families and social activities including priests. Recognizing and acknowledging important moments of the life of a person or family... like.. celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, etc. Encourage and implement ideas that come from people rather than imposing priest's ideas.