

Charlotte Latin Mass Community

2022 Diocese of Charlotte Synod Survey

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The first synod question asked, "What are the most significant signs of the Lord's presence in your life?"

Our Community is made up of approximately 1,000 families distributed throughout the Diocese of Charlotte and, as such, these responses are not a reflection of any one parish.

For the 179 synod respondents from our Community, the most significant sign of the Lord's presence in our lives is found in praying the Traditional Latin Mass and following the traditional liturgical calendar throughout the year including customs, traditional blessings, divine office, and feast days. The Lord's presence in our lives is also manifest as we joyfully welcome newcomers to the Latin Mass each week.

Our Community is also blessed with many young families and a great abundance of children and vocations. Additional signs can be seen in the reverence that is shown for the Eucharist by our Community, where our Lord is received only kneeling and on the tongue, and where the congregation typically remains in their pews long after Mass to offer thanksgiving. The Traditional Latin Mass is the wellspring of grace for these signs of the Lord's presence in our lives.

A great many of the respondents to this synodal question credit the Traditional Latin Mass as being responsible for – and necessary to – their conversions and thereby the salvation of their souls. It carries us through every malady; inspires us to truth, beauty, and goodness; and strengthens us against temptations. But most of all, this Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in this ageless liturgy, offers up Christ as the Holy Victim in sacrificial worship to God in Heaven – making visible, through the Latin language, silence, Gregorian chant, contemplative prayer, and the unique readings and orations at the Mass – the Lord's presence for all to see.

The Lord's presence in our lives is uniquely tied to our worship at the Traditional Latin Mass. For our Community, this liturgy is responsible for drawing us into the Church, converting our souls, nourishing our vocations, attracting newcomers from the peripheries, inspiring our belief in Jesus Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, and allowing the Gospel to be proclaimed in a time of great difficulty. The Traditional Latin Mass with its silent catechism of reverence is why belief in the real presence in the Eucharist is nearly universal in our Community, as compared to the Church as a whole where polling shows that belief in the true presence has fallen below 30 percent.

The second synod question asked, “What are the biggest challenges or questions you face in responding to the Lord’s call?”

For our Charlotte Latin Mass Community, our greatest challenge is that while trying to respond to the Lord’s call, we are left with the feeling of being neglected by our Diocese, which instead prefers a rigid top-down pastoral framework without consideration of our spiritual needs. In particular:

- Our Community is left to a nomadic existence, forced to travel to different and distant parishes on select days, often at inconvenient hours, for Mass times without a consistent and stable Mass schedule.
- Diocesan priests are forced to minister to both Novus Ordo and Latin Mass attendees, who have different spiritual needs, creating division and limiting priests’ ability to serve the laity.
- Our Diocese maintains a rigidity and has been unwilling to dialogue with our Community preventing them from considering alternative pastoral solutions and inspirations by the Holy Spirit.
- Our Diocese lacks pastoral sensitivity by declining to invite outside religious orders to meet our Community’s spiritual needs while simultaneously inviting in several outside priests from far-away continents to meet the needs of the Novus Ordo faithful.
- Our Diocese provides dedicated chapels for numerous other ethnicities, nationalities, and rites, but refuses to consider a dedicated chapel for our Community.
- Our Bishop canceled our Community’s worship at the Latin Easter Triduum and the Sacrament of Confirmation this year without any explanation to the laity; ignoring our repeated requests for meetings to consider alternative arrangements.

As a part of this synod process, we surveyed our Community with additional questions in order to obtain a sense of their spiritual needs. The 179 responses clearly confirm the above concerns:

- 97 percent of respondents would prefer having a dedicated chapel with full sacramental life exclusively offering the Latin Mass daily and all the Sacraments as opposed to the current model of a Novus Ordo parish offering a Latin Mass.
- 85 percent of respondents were personally hurt and spiritually damaged by the recent restrictions and cancellations of traditional Sacraments by the Diocese.
- Only 13 percent of respondents felt that the Diocese is doing a good job of listening to our spiritual needs.
- 96 percent of respondents would like to see the option of a Traditional Latin Mass offered at the annual Eucharistic Congress.

Most alarming of all, there were 21 respondents who are either already ordained priests or in some stage of discernment toward the priesthood. Of these 21 respondents, 17 (81%) answered that the recent restrictions on the Latin Mass by the Diocese of Charlotte were an obstacle or danger to their vocation and/or discernment.

Some in our community have received the impression that the Bishop seems unaware of our concerns or that our spiritual needs are unimportant. We hope that this is not true, but believe the diocese needs to do more to repair this perception. The current pastoral framework makes us feel that we are on the margins of diocesan life. This makes it difficult for our families to pass the faith down to their children and limits our ability to respond to the Lord's call.

The third synod question asked, “What steps is the Holy Spirit suggesting to you and your community to respond more fully to the Christian vocation?”

Our Community is called, like all Catholics, to live our Catholic Faith in union with the Church. Canon Law (Can. 208 – 215) speaks eloquently on the obligations and rights of the Christian faithful. We are called to:

- Maintain communion with the Church.
- Fulfill duties owed to the Church.
- Spread the divine message of Salvation.
- Obey our sacred pastors in faith and morals, within right reason, only inasmuch as they represent Jesus Christ.
- Fulfill our duty to make known our spiritual needs to the Church.
- Fulfill our rights to receive from the sacred pastors the spiritual goods (i.e. Sacraments) of the Church.
- Fulfill our right to worship God and follow our own form of spiritual life as long as it is consonant with the doctrine of the Church.

We feel called to pray more for our priests and bishop. While the clergy in our Diocese, are pious, prayerful men, with a heart for Christ, it is with sadness that our Community feels at times, that our Diocese practices a rigid form of legalism by selectively imposing restrictions and limiting our worship without understanding the spiritual harm that they cause.

Due to the denial of our rights, families from our Community have felt called to move away to other dioceses that provide for their spiritual needs. Numerous other families have been called to worship at the nearby chapel run by the Society of Pius X or leave the Latin Rite altogether and worship at Eastern Rite communities. Sadly others, through the confusion of being deprived of their rights owed to them by the Church, have stopped attending Mass or even apostatized by joining schismatic sects. The current diocesan restrictions have only heightened this exodus from diocesan parishes.

To remedy this, our Community feels called by the Holy Spirit to renew our request to the Diocese to provide full sacramental life in the Traditional Latin Mass through a dedicated chapel staffed by full-time priests, allowing us to maintain communion and fully participate in the life of a diocese.

Our Community has something to offer to this diocese, as the Latin Mass is missionary and reaches out to those on the margins, and calls back the lost sheep such as lapsed Catholics, Protestants, or even those faithful Catholics who don't “fit in” elsewhere.

The Latin Mass and its devotees can assist in evangelizing the Gospel, as it draws people to learn more about the faith, helps to grow in holiness and in faith, strengthens marriages, and fosters vocations.

A fully dedicated Latin Mass chapel, during this time of liturgical transition, can allow us to respond even more fully to the Christian vocation here in Charlotte.

This Synod may be a providential opportunity for the diocese to reach out from these conversations, and create a renewed and constructive relationship with our Community, which will allow the Gospel to be more broadly proclaimed.

In 500 words or less, please reflect on how to respond to what emerged during the synodal conversations. As you think about your answer, I encourage you to discuss what you learned from the synodal process with your parish/group's leadership and those who helped you facilitate the conversations. To ponder the issue, you might consider the following questions:

How should the parish/group respond to what emerged in the synodal conversations? Are there particular steps the Holy Spirit is asking the community to take? How does the parish/group best respond to the questions and challenges that affect people the most? Is there a way to continue the conversation? How do we foster and give a space to grow in the relationships born thanks to the synodal conversations?

The process of gathering the "sensus fidelium" of our Community was a worthwhile and enlightening exercise. It was reassuring to see such a strong unity in the responses.

What emerged is we learned that many more in our Community have felt marginalized by the diocese and desire to be reached out to. Moreover, the conversation has made it clear that many more people in our community desire a full-time dedicated chapel for the Traditional Latin Mass so they can encounter our Lord's presence daily in a stable chapel environment where they are welcomed.

To continue this conversation, our Community is examining the feasibility of the received responses. We also desire to establish a dialogue with Bishop Jugis to give him the opportunity to understand our needs and to begin to meet them.

The Synod has been a wonderful opportunity to gather our community together and to be moved by the Holy Spirit in a way that can help meet our spiritual needs and be greater Communion with the local Church, and to live out our call to be missionary disciples of the Gospel.

We are grateful to Dr. Rovati and the diocese for providing this Synod opportunity.

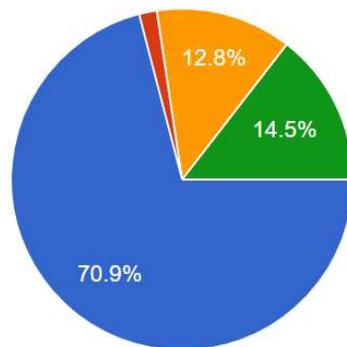
Appendix of Supplemental CLMC Survey Questions

CLMC Survey Questions

Question 1: Do you regularly attend the Traditional Latin Mass?



179 responses

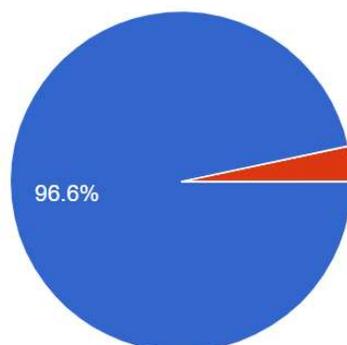


- Yes.
- No.
- Sometimes/Occasional.
- I would but cannot due to some difficulty (distance, timing, etc.).

Question 2: Would you prefer attending a dedicated chapel with full time priests exclusively offering the Traditional Latin Mass including multiple Sunday morning Mass times and daily Mass, along with confessions before Mass, catechetical formation, spiritual direction, retreats, talks, school programs, devotions of the liturgical year, as well as all of the Traditional Sacraments?



179 responses

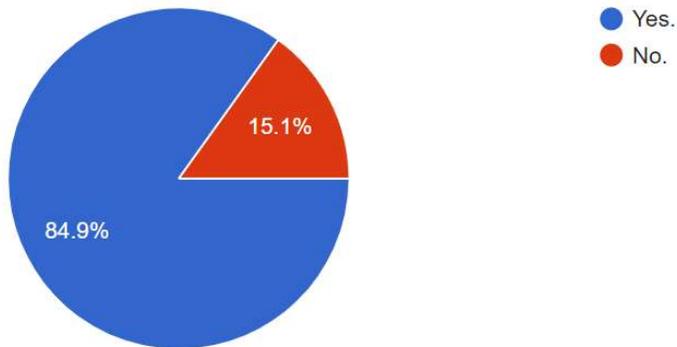


- Yes.
- No, I prefer having the Traditional Latin Mass celebrated with restrictions at Novus Ordo parishes and with no other traditional Sacraments.

Question 3: Have the recent restrictions and cancellations of traditional Sacraments by the Diocese of Charlotte (such as Easter Triduum, Weddings, Baptisms, and Confirmations) been hurtful to you personally or damaging to your faith?

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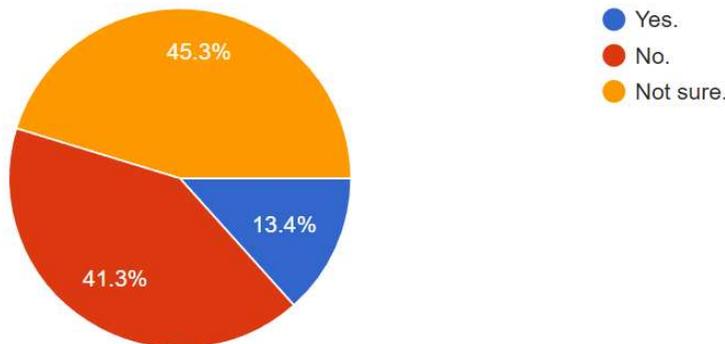
179 responses



Question 4: Do you feel the Diocese of Charlotte does a good job of listening and responding to the spiritual needs of our Charlotte Latin Mass Community?

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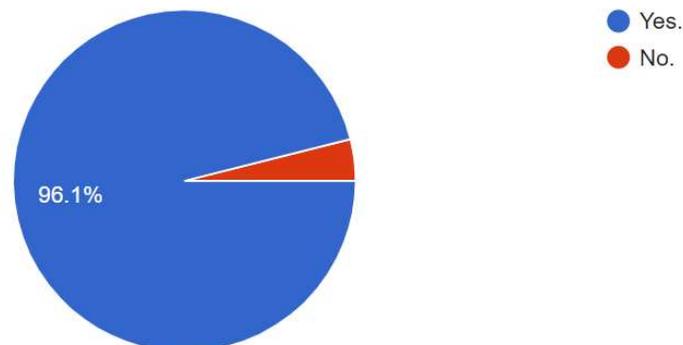
179 responses



Question 5: Would you like to see the option of a Traditional Latin Mass offered at the annual Eucharistic Congress provided by the Diocese of Charlotte?

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179 responses



Question 6 (For unmarried men, seminarians, and priests only): Do you consider the restrictions on the Traditional Latin Mass and Sacraments by the Diocese of Charlotte to be an obstacle or danger to your discernment and/or vocation? (ALL RESPONSES ARE COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS)



179 responses

