

Summary

Support and Stability, Past

13. Tell the story of a time when you felt your faith was most relevant and inspiring in helping you to deal with a challenge or difficulty in your everyday life.

The stories centered around times of crisis; death/divorce/serious illness/family matters. During these times we rely on our faith, our prayers and the prayers of others. We look for the support of the clergy and others to get us through. *“My faith helped me deal with cancer.” “When my prayers helped in getting my husband to AA and me to Al-Anon.” “When Mom passed away the people in Conneaut helped with grieving period.” “Faith has always been solidified in my life. The process of annulment has helped me through my divorce when my children were young. My faith has helped me through numerous health issues with my children.”*

Also, the discipline of attending Mass keeps us grounded in our faith. *“When I found out that my wife had cancer, I went to church and prayed and went to the hospital chapel and prayed.” “During times of illness and death, her faith helped. Also Mass is a time to reflect and give thanks.” “When I am stressed, I can go to church and ask for help. I can sit quietly & work things out. Relax.”*

Support and Stability, Future

14. If our parish leaders could say or do something creative that would help our faith to become much more relevant in your everyday life, or in the lives of people you know that might be more marginalized, what would be done?

Responses all centered around improving communications:

through homilies that meet people where they are at and on their level, using everyday life experiences as examples. *“Relate our Sunday readings to everyday life.” “...they need to be more on our level and more down to earth. More on the lay peoples level.” “More real life examples in the homilies.” “Homilies could give relevance to everyday life.” “Simplify sermons - relate to people and what is going on in their everyday lives.”*

with non-practicing Catholics – come up with ways to bring people back through invitation, social functions, face-to-face, etc. *“Programs to reach out to the non-active Catholic parishioners; along with new parishioners.” “Anything that will encourage people to gather...such as monthly dinners, fun activities, etc.”*

with Parishioners – clearly communicate changes and what’s going on in the church.

“Be open-minded to ideas presented and LISTEN.” “The Pastor and parish leaders need to be more open in sharing what is going on in the parish and with the people of the parish.”

“Find some renowned speakers to come to the parish.”

with homebound/sick.

“Pastor could be more involved with ill parishioners. Have a calling committee, so he can be more aware of ill parishioners.” “Have a telephone chain line to check on elderly and homebound parishioners. Go to hospital weekly to give communion. Have a monthly healing Mass asking God to heal parishioners with cancer, etc.”