

Walking Together

Describe what happened in your parish, how you went about the Synodal process? Approximately how many people were involved in your parish, including those who have stopped coming to church or who never came.

- All parishioners were able to take part via a questionnaire which was available in church and on website, enabling church goers and non church goers to participate.
- Informal discussions between groups of people
- School children were involved via class discussions and opportunities to voice their opinions and ideas.

Participation

What was your experience of listening and discerning? How did this feel? Did you have a feeling of participation in this journey?

- Good opportunity to stop, think, discuss and discern
- Everyone has had a chance to give their thoughts.

Enrichment

How did it feel to be a part of this process? What were the joys? What did you find enriching?

Explain how the Holy Spirit was at work in your parish during this time. What was particularly significant, surprising, or unexpected about this process? What new perspectives emerged from this process?

- Enriching to be able to talk to others about our faith – you don't usually do that!
- Interesting to see how some people want return to more old fashioned masses and some want much more modern liturgies – how does Universal Church cater for ALL people throughout the world? Holy Spirit has a lot of work to do!

Responses

In the box below, outline which of the questions your parish discussed / dialogued about, the responses made, and the issues raised.

- Make the Church more relevant to modern day life so all Catholics can participate fully
- Important to keep articles of faith and remember Church traditions, but necessary to amend / discard some church-made rules which are meaningless today (like head covers for women was discarded here) in order to make more meaningful today. Church traditions need to be explained and understood.

- Too much dogmatism eg. marriage (you have to *promise* to bring children up as Catholics in a mixed marriage) or non-attendance at church by children (fault of parents) preventing children from receiving Sacraments – turns some people away from Church
- Be more inclusive. Be more compassionate and less judgemental
 - *divorced, single parents, LGBTQ+ can feel church is only for the ‘holy’ and not for them
 - * allow divorced Catholics to receive Sacraments
 - * allow re-marriage after divorce – circumstances vary and some ‘innocent parties’ are disadvantaged through no fault of their own
 - * allow contraception
 - * abortion – circumstances vary and should be able to be taken into account
- Less emphasis on rules and penance – more positivity . Make Church laws more accessible.
- Why do we need to go to Confession when we can confess directly to God without a third person’s involvement? Why can’t a Penitential Service be introduced instead of Confession, with a duty to attend at least once or twice a year.
- **We need more priests** – local priest is a vital cog in the wheel that keeps the Church alive in every locality – not the Deans or Bishops. Sometimes it seems these are merely copying the bureaucracy of globalised business in order to garner funds.
 - * we need to support our trainee or prospective priests in their initial discernment, their training and their subsequent role in their locality – too many training colleges etc have closed due to financial reasons.
 - *Relying for vocations from the secondary schools doesn’t seem to be working well as government requirements for exams etc to grade schools is a purely secular way of judging schools
 - * why not allow women priests
 - * why not allow priests (and nuns) to marry if they want to – no pressure, no hierarchy of married/unmarried priests
 - *media has a responsibility to do more to raise awareness of religions inc Christianity, but ‘religious programs’ like Songs of Praise and an interview with Archbishop of Canterbury at Christmas and Easter seem to be the only nods to religion nowadays.
- Length of time required to become a deacon -why so long? Would women ever be considered?
- Church is ‘too woke’. So many changes due to Vatican II that we are more like low C of E church now!
- Have masses in Latin so that you can follow, no matter where you are in the world.
- Mass obligation to be once a week. Not necessarily held to Sunday’s.

- Masses are too staid – need more lively music / Masses are too ‘happy-clappy – need to return to more traditional music
 - Introduction of webcam was a good move – enabled more people to view Mass and feel part of the worshipping community. Could better use be made of other media eg Twitter, Facebook etc to promote events at the church and to raise awareness of what is going on?
 - Hold open day Services
 - Could there be a list of reliable/trustworthy tradespeople in the local area for parishioners to call on?
 - Can there be a children’s’ liturgy?
 - A fortnightly children’s meet up after Mass – games, drink etc
 - More colourful flowers
 - Bibles, Mass readings available for use in Mass
 - Ushers/ welcomers to help visitors, elderly or sick at Mass
 - Youth Club / Duke of Edinburgh Awards
 - Street Pastors
 - That everyone feels safe and welcome to come into God’s presence
 - Prayer cards for use during Mass
 - Bibles etc in different languages available for use during Mass
 - Engage children more in raising money for charities -using their talents
- Continue with your amazing work – we are very lucky!

Dreams

If you were asked to ‘dare to dream’ about how you see the Church in the third millennium, what might your dreams be?

- A vibrant, inclusive, egalitarian, working with the poor to spread the Gospel of Christ non-judgemental community where all are truly welcomed and which is alive in God’s worship, throughout the world, – with enough priests to enable this.
- A well-attended, thriving community – for people of all ages – which works with other faiths for the good of all and which is not afraid to identify good practice in other faiths and adapt our own practices.
- A truly inclusive church where ALL are included and recognised in the organisation and running of the parishes and dioceses, regardless of ability/disability, gender, race or orientation.
- Young people are well educated in the Catholic faith in their school (by well-educated and faithful teachers); they are listened to and feel a real part of the church community; their views are taken seriously; they are fully involved in/ leading church activities and voluntary groups.
- Lots of young people being involved – in liturgies, in parish groups, in charity work

- Less pomp – reserve this for special occasions – thereby making less ‘removed’ from normal people. A less formal, more inclusive Church.
- A wider variety of times for worship to enable families with weekend / work commitments to take part. A wider variety of types of worship – some more formal, others more lively and child oriented.
- More use of Parish Halls for after mass get togethers and to help the poor and homeless – food banks, shelter etc
- Church buildings being made good use of – for the community, not just for Catholics - and an ever-growing list of activities in parishes which involve all ages and interests, run by lots of different people - not just the ‘usual volunteers’. Community feels ownership and feels comfortable enough to be involved. Perhaps by opening up to non-Catholics, they may come to want to know more about the church and the faith, thereby increasing numbers of faithful.
- More clarity and transparency in Church finances – many feel that the Church is a very rich organisation and so feel antagonistic (especially when continually being asked to give more). Educate people in the aid given by the Church, enabling others to see that Church is one of world’s biggest benefactors.
- More clarity, transparency , honesty in Church historic dealings with unmarried mothers and instances of abuse – people need to be able to trust the Church.
- Information is shared freely -by spoken word in church and using all technology available – including more clarity / information about the different groups within the church (SVP, UCM, Catenians, choir etc) and the work that they do – may also result in more volunteers
- Everyone feels welcome and not put off – people are confident to become involved in Church matters. People are willing to put themselves out for their faith. More explanation of the FAITH
- Be more egalitarian. Be more missionary and use technology to reach out to those both inside and outside the Church.
- Offer our skills, and time to initiatives that we can take part in. Take up Ministries in and beyond the Church. Use Public Facing Events to offer engagement with the Church.
- Do a skills audit to see what talent can be tuned into. To share Gifts and Talents.
- People would simply live lives reflecting the true values of the Catholic faith!
- The church is the people, not the place.