

Synodal conversations. Notes

11th January 2022

What has been your experience of your Church community 'journeying together' these past few months?

1. Technology brought people together – zoom calls, whatsapp, courses on zoom with break out rooms, meeting people on-line. Gave ideas of the possibility of using technology in the future.
2. Shared experience of watching Mass on-line and feelings of being bereft. Sadness of church closure and staff furloughs. Missed opportunities to reach out to the less committed.
3. Parishioners became comfortable with watching Mass on-line (or not) and not receiving the sacraments. Concern that this may be permanent and that outreach is going to be vitally important.
4. Many people became involved in keeping the church going who are not usually volunteers. Others phoned or delivered groceries etc.
5. Awareness of different experiences between rural and town communities
6. Fear that the bereaved have been neglected and memorial Masses have not taken place.

How has your parish community 'journeyed' with others outside the community?

1. On-line Masses. Zoom: retreats, meeting other church leaders.
2. Visiting Catholics can lead to introductions to their neighbours.
3. Talking to neighbours, going out to clap, delivering groceries
4. Village life enabled people to keep in touch. Attending outdoor ecumenical services.
5. Began outreach – Nicodemus Group open to everyone.

18th January 2022

Recalling your experience of the pandemic and perhaps thinking more broadly when does the journeying bring you joy? When might it bring you pain?

- Joy
1. People coming together. Volunteering, Seeing the NHS in action
 2. Levelling of society – all at the same risk. Sharing smiles. Barriers come down. Heightened need for community
 3. Positive desire to make others happy and give encouragement.
 4. Time to reflect and pray. 1st lockdown – opportunity to enjoy nature.
- Pain
1. Not receiving sacraments. Loss of festivals and sense of joy. Restrictions
 2. Parishioners preferring to watch Mass on-line. Loss of parishioners. Baptismal preparation has shown up the ignorance of the faith of some parents.
 3. Fear that everyone will resume busyness of life and nothing changes.
 4. Fear and frustration. Worries that people might die.

25th January 2022

How are baptised members of your parish able to participate in the mission of the church to proclaim the gospel?

1. Parents catechise their children – new first Holy Communion programme should teach parents as they go through the programme.
2. How we live our lives – gives opportunities to speak. Actions speak louder than words.
3. Baptism and marriage preparation courses. Groups to gather people together – Catholics and non Catholics e.g. Nicodemus Group, Alpha. Different sorts of services – Taize, Agape.
4. Social groups. Having fun together – community.

What hinders people from being active in your parish?

1. Are we one or three parishes? People move round churches. Is outreach centralised. How to find the best way to approach people. Fear of doing the wrong thing.
2. Lack of time. People are very busy especially those with children. Activities may prevent them from coming to church. Retirement age raised.
3. Lack of joy. Groups can be discouraged, sometimes by clergy. Lack of commitment and understanding.

1st February 2022

How does prayer and liturgical celebrations, especially Sunday Mass, inspire and guide your parish?

1. Mass speaks through preaching, singing, feeds through the Gospel and sacraments. Need for different types of Masses to inspire parishioners.
2. Bringing community together. Meeting before and after Mass important for fellowship.
3. It's not our Mass. We are privileged to be at an encounter between Jesus and his Father.
4. Other meetings should have a time of quiet to allow God to speak to us.

How does your prayer life and celebration of the Mass inspire and inform your personal decisions in the parish community?

1. It is integral. Any problems, difficulties – pray first. If we take a prayer to Mass we shouldn't be surprised to get an answer.
2. After prayer it is important to follow it up – phone call/visit etc. Be obedient to the prompting.
3. Listen to God and use your imagination to enter into the spiritual world.

How does the parish invite all baptised Catholics, including our ethnic communities, youth, families and persons with disabilities and their families into the active life of the parish, especially Sunday Mass

1. Personal invitation – make a conscious decision to be inclusive.
2. Contact with schools can be productive.
3. Encourage young people to share at meetings. Need interaction -retreats etc.
4. Beware a sense of involvement can be an illusion