

## Synodal Conversation Recorder Notes 30 January 2022 St Osmund's

### Sharing on Listening

- God speaks in personal prayer, through the Word of God, and when meeting other people”.
- A newcomer to Salisbury has been impressed by the welcome and friendliness experienced in the parish and wider community, has felt God speaking through them. However, another spoke of feeling excluded, even by speaking with a different accent, has had to be self-reliant’.
- Another praised the initiatives to share with the poor, eg through the provision of food, and appreciated the space for those on the periphery.
- The Indian community was extolled as providing a model of strong family worship retaining the Faith.
  
- Concern was expressed for the current serious social problems particularly affecting young people. In the past Salisbury was renowned for its provision of support through youth clubs, etc. Now they feel detached, rely on peer age groups. There is fear among young people of wider social engagement. The voice of young people is therefore not heard.
- The approach to marginalised groups, eg LGBT, must be in a spirit and practice of inclusion. It is not enough to love others: all need to feel they are loved.
- It was suggested that members of the parish take responsibility for particular post codes in seeking to make contact with marginalised members of the community.
  
- During the pandemic the leadership from the hierarchy of the Church has been perceived as weak. Many other voices have been dominating
- In listening we must “test every Spirit”(St Ignatius), that the voices we hear are ‘foundational’. Church teaching and practice are divided. It is good to hear other voices, but discernment is needed. There is one single truth we should all be following. We should not support those who want to change its traditional teaching in the promotion of homosexuality, abortion etc.

### Sharing on Speaking Out

- Vulnerability is experienced when expressing what is felt “from the depths of the heart.” Society is judgemental. Concern was expressed for the impact of peer pressure on children.
- It can be uncomfortable to express views among other Catholics, leading to a perception of intolerance, being intimidated by the vociferous, even feeling ostracised. Three participants spoke of their wish for the traditional Latin rite being obstructed by the Diocese, causing more division.
- There is no forum for discussion between those who disagree. A common platform inviting people’s views and welcoming a variety of opinion is needed. It was new to be asked for them in this meeting.
- People need to be more open, more honest. The importance of sensitive listening to minority viewpoints was emphasised. However, one participant criticised the toleration of “religious individualism”, of views at variance with the true voice of the Spirit in tradition.
- Youth work is vital for the Churches, but it is difficult to establish and communicate information about groups and events within the confines of a parish, in comparison with the opportunities and networking in London and bigger cities.
- “There is no way to enter a group if you come from outside it. You don’t feel involved. “There is no open door for involvement.” It was felt that Covid has exacerbated the limitation of opportunities to visit and meet.
- The Salisbury Catholic Churches newsletter is useful, and the promotion of groups helping children, Bible study etc , but more are needed : a particular serious omission has been the lack of any focus on the Pope’s encyclicals.
- The “What’s App” group established during lockdown was shared as an example of effective contact through prayer between the housebound, providing regular contact outside of church attendance. The development of outreach courses and groups wanting to share their faith will continue.

### Sharing on Sharing Responsibility

- Closer teamwork and sharing of responsibility between priests and deacons is valued by them. “If there is shared responsibility, teamwork can be put into practice.”
- “People don’t know about governance.” Communication is needed about “whom to go to.”

- Wider involvement of the laity in co-responsibility should be encouraged and developed, utilising skills and experience, for instance in reaching out to and helping the lonely and housebound.
- People need to be brought together. The pattern of Masses obstructs coming together across the parishes - even within St Osmund's people identify themselves with one Sunday mass. Parishioners do not even know one another's names, need to be helped to get to know one another. "People can be lost on the way."
- Parishioners were congratulated for their perseverance and example in "bringing up their children as Catholics without the support available to them in the past."

### Sharing on Discerning and Deciding

- While views have been sought before, eg on SCORE monies' distribution, decisions have been made without understanding formed through praying together.
- Deeper listening is needed to the Holy Spirit within each of us. What is the Holy Spirit saying? A process that takes a lot of time, needing greater elaboration.
- The Synodal style means all must be involved in the whole process, including priests who need formation; concern was expressed at the loss of seminaries. There must be clarity regarding which decisions are appropriate for the parish and which should be left to 'a higher authority'.
- Meetings may be intimidating for newcomers, need time to develop confidence, but may not always achieve their objective. One participant felt that a decision coming from a group praying together "need not necessarily be good".
- We are fortunate in living and worshipping in active parishes with effective communication through the shared newsletter. Wider consultation is needed, in order to reach those who no longer come to church and may feel excluded, eg through questionnaires.
- A proposal was made for whole-day retreats with a programme enabling optional attendance on a drop-in basis for activities and joining discussion groups so that the inactive can get used to them, build up confidence, feel more comfortable.

## Sharing on Celebration

- We are a Eucharistic community, participants sharing the importance of attending Sunday Mass for individual spiritual needs and also social, including coffee mornings.
- Prayer life with the Gospel “informs life”. Participants praised Homilies based on scripture, commenting on the Word, especially when related to issues of the day.
- The International Mass has a special significance and value, should not be confined to an annual event.
- Provision for communal saying of the Rosary within church worship is not uniform among the parishes. Morning and Evening Prayer have also lapsed. More celebration should be made of Feast Days. It was recommended that saying the Rosary be introduced in the space between Mass and Exposition.
- Publicity and encouragement needs to be given to participate in excellent retreats and study days(on-line as well as in-person) being provided by Belmont and Worth Abbeys, and from Walsingham.
- The scheduling of readers to develop wider participation was appreciated. More opportunities should be made for young people to take an active role within the liturgy. Reference was made again to the importance of celebrating and involving diversity in worship.
- Beyond Mass, there is a need to provide for “people who are exhausted”, emotionally, spiritually. Focus needs to be made on how to make the liturgy “meaningful for everybody”, including adults with learning disabilities(successful practice within Salisbury was shared) to ensure “a feeling of belonging.”