

SYNOD LISTENING GROUP, St Osmund's, Salisbury

Sunday 30th January 2022

Questions about journeying together

- How is this journeying together happening in your parish?

This 'journeying together' happens when we come together as a faith community to celebrate Mass, and meet afterwards for coffee and a chat in the hall. This part is very important for me, as it's an opportunity to ask people how they are, to pray for each other, and to support and encourage one another. We can also meet at our homes and share food, or stay in touch via telephone calls.

I believe the Holy Spirit is inviting us (clergy and lay people) to pray more together, to discern together how best to move forward as a faith community, and to be more outward-looking, being especially attentive to those on the margins of society.

Questions on the Holy Spirit

- How is the Holy Spirit inviting your parish community to grow in journeying together?
- Where in these experiences do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit?

No responses.

Questions on hearing a diversity of voices

- How is God speaking to us through the voices that are in our midst?
- How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore?
- What space is there to listen to the voices on the peripheries?

God is asking us to be a loving presence to those around us, wherever we find ourselves.

God is asking us to be more attentive to those on the margins, to listen deeply to them and always be kind.

As a faith community I would like to make more space to listen to those on the margins, and to become more inclusive so that all feel welcome.

Questions on speaking out

- **What enables or hinders you from speaking out?**

What hinders:

Having the time to do so

Not wanting to hurt others' feelings

I feel that I don't have the knowledge / I lack authority to do so.

Lack of confidence (x2)

Fear of 'cancellation' and reprisals for unpopular opinions.

Very poor catechesis and formation.

Poor homilies.

Fear of being thought to be out to convert, change or criticise someone.

Other people find it embarrassing – they don't want to hear about my faith and church life.

Our opinion does not change, but what is considered acceptable, popular or correct does change; making the Catholic view marginal when it used to be mainstream.

I feel like a child in the church, even though I am 40 years old.

People do not feel that they have permission to speak out, they feel as if they are children and the Church is the judgemental parent.

I am frightened of being contradicted. If I raise an issue and get it wrong I will feel foolish and ignorant of things I'm expected to know.

What enables:

An invitation to the inactive members, but who is "inactive"?

I have an active role in the parish and I feel listened to.

We could do more outreach to bring people back to mass (x2)

- **What space is there in your parish for the voice of the people?**

The church is good at leading people through the sacramental life.

More than enough space: through clergy (x4)

Contact numbers on newsletters and through the web site.

I have not felt the need to voice an opinion.

Very little. We concentrate on doing. The exigencies of practical tasks always takes precedence.

Questions on sharing responsibility for our common mission

- How are baptised members of the parish able to participate in the mission of the Church to proclaim the Gospel?

It's mostly old people, we need a youth worker.

Volunteering in the parish office, maintenance in the church, doing flowers.

Involvement in the liturgy and in the schools.

C19 has made it clear to people that the church needs lay help, cleaning, stewarding and organising.

Young people following the good example set by parents, grand-parents.

Living a good, sacramental life.

Lay-lead prayer groups and activities.

- What hinders people from being active in the parish?

Distance from the parish.

The expectation that the clergy will do it all.

Full-time jobs, family and financial prerogative.

Distraction by worldly cares (x2)

Society

Lack of support for Catholic families, especially where only one parent is a practicing member of the church.

Clashes with sports on Sunday, and people work on Saturdays.

Questions on authority and participation.

- How is authority and governance exercised in your parish?
- How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice in the parish?

The Pastoral Council

Correction and guidance from the parish office.

It's the priest, isn't it?

The Pope.

Coordination of stewarding and other tasks.

Reducing dysfunction by getting better at governance and teamwork.

It's all coordinated by Caroline Williams; what if she leaves? What then?

Questions on discerning and deciding

- **How does your parish use the methods of listening and speaking to make decisions?**

The use of listening and speaking.

I'm not a part of a decision-making process or group.

Don't know (x3)

Practical decisions are taken by parish staff and clergy by consulting with acknowledged experts in music, building maintenance and other specialisms.

I like this consultation.

We have never done anything like this before. It is an acquired taste to say the least. Most people would not turn up for three hours on a Sunday afternoon; they have better things to do (x3).

Being on committees is something that older, middle class people do.

I don't think it does, except in an ad hoc way. Therefore, the most frequently repeated messages and the loudest voices and the most erudite opinions are the ones that get listened to.

- **Do the decision-making methods in your parish help you to listen to all members of the community?**

Don't know (x3)

I'm on the periphery, and I'm not consulted about anything.

In order to be heard, you have to make a big effort.

I would always wait to be asked before giving my opinion.

I enjoy being part of these consultations.

People send critical comments to the parish priest.

I would welcome a process of decision-making, if it was carried on.

People who are "on the periphery" could be included through remote means or personal contact through home visits.

No, there isn't a method for this. Ethnic groups and sections of the church – such as the most conservative and traditional – do not get heard.

Questions on celebration.

- **How does prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and guide the parish?**

It is the centre of parish life.

The bedrock of our life is the Mass.

The closure of the churches in lockdown gutted me.

The Mass is the foundation of the community, without Mass there is no community.

I like the spirituality and conservative nature of the Mass.

The organisational Church failed the People of God when they asked the government to close the churches.

The simplicity of the Mass helps me concentrate on what is important in the liturgy.

The Mass is the highlight of our weekend, we find it uplifting and could not do without it.

By bringing us together; the suspension of the Obligation and closure of the churches has been very detrimental.

- **How does your prayer life and celebration of the Mass inspire your personal decisions and those of the parish?**

It can be very helpful in dealing with non-Catholics and non-Christians.

It shows me when I'm getting things right in my life.

It helps when I struggle.

It helped me with the decision to get my kids vaccinated against C19.

The evening examen is very important in all my personal decisions.

Totally.

- **How does the parish invite all baptised Catholics into the active life of the parish?**

Churches are not friendly to less abled – many of the churches disable people because they are so hard to move within.

The squabbles in the church, such as Latin Mass, make the church look dictatorial.

We are good at this in Salisbury.

How do we do this in Salisbury?

We used to have an international mass, that was great and worked really well. (x3)

The growing disbelief in the Real Presence is a real drawback.

The Pope's example discourages people when he is so dictatorial, sides with authoritarian regimes or speaks outside his remit (for instance on vaccines and the environment).

Cultural issues may cause the invitation to be misunderstood or ignored.

*Through remote means, but not by example as much. We should do more events – such as BBQ, social events and pilgrimages that demonstrate and activate the invitation.
The Salisbury Catholic congregation is one of the most ethnically diverse community of interest in the city.*

From your small group sharing, name one insight where you heard the voice of the Holy Spirit

When I heard a description of children in RE lessons “over-thinking” Christianity – it made me realise once more that it is through experience and not catechesis that we meet Jesus.

He answered my prayers for listening and discernment by giving me a job writing where I had to listen and seek to understand, rather than speak.

In hearing the voice of a young person.

I feel more confident now that we can achieve good things together.

My take-away is that we should do this more, where people speak without interruption.

The Holy Spirit works through people, but so does The Devil.

Through our imagination, we listen to each other.

We are being called to increase our visiting and reaching out to people. We should be helping Deacon John Detain with his ministry.

We are being called to work with people who lack confidence to speak out.