



From Parish to Mission

The “Synod 2021, 2023 For a Synodal Church” was called by Pope Francis and every parish throughout the world has been asked to take part.

In the Diocese of Leeds each parish was invited to hold an open meeting, led by trained facilitators, to consider the ten themes that came from the Vatican and answer the questions based on these themes.

The Parish of St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross held their meeting in St Aidan’s Hall on 10th November, 2021. The answers to these questions were noted down on flip charts and then transcribed into this document without any changes.

If someone had already written on the flip chart what a parishioner wanted to say, they were asked to tick the comment to show agreement. These ticks are shown in this document as *. The more *s showing, the greater the agreement.





From Parish to Mission

Parish	St. Teresa Benedicta, Shipley
Parish Priest	Fr. Keiron Walker
Facilitators	Alison Park, Rose Lanigan, John Linskey
Date of Meeting	10 November
Number	22
Approx Age Range	'Mature'/Retired
I. The journeying companions As we journey together let us look around. Who are you on the journey with and what persons or groups are marginalised and why? Everyone. Friends and family. Community of Saints. Those who have died. Fellow parishioners. Some priests. Women, divorced, disabled, housebound, LGBT people, youth (lack of opportunity to be heard: schools could play bigger part)****. Homeless people, people in residential care, people who spiritual life is similar. Who is my neighbour? Are non- churchgoers part of the Church? I feel part of my journey is with the non-churchgoers. As a woman, marginalised in some of the more important roles*. I feel my companions are those who are eager to go to heaven. Any people who don't feel welcome are marginalised. As a woman I do not feel marginalised at all*. We should assist non-Catholics better who come to church. Welcoming and including partners of the Catholic parishioners, that this may create more unity in the family and more understanding. The parishioners in Windhill/Wrose who lost their parish church. I journey in Christ with everyone in the parish, realising we are a companionship empowered equally to use the baptismal gifts of all - drawing in the marginalised - to be missionary disciples.	
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II. Listening How might our local Church better listen to lay people (and especially young people and women) and minorities and those who are not respected?	





From Parish to Mission

Allow people of all ages to be involved in the church running it helping etc*. I believe they are already allowed but need to be invited and encouraged. Maybe change the time of the meetings. Maybe pitch it differently. We are an ageing church and need to get younger people involved. Need opportunities to get together and get to know each other - mothers' meetings, social events, toddler groups, prayer groups. Church outings to include children. We feel men need to be listened to as much as women and young people. Men are becoming more marginalised in church and society in general*. What people are not respected? Include the uniformed groups (many who are not Catholic) in events and church parades. People who are divorced, separated, single parents. Women who have had abortions can feel they are not respected as they feel maybe they are excluded from the sacraments they are not worthy. Priests are also there to provide confession. Many help organisations and counselling available; compassionate and non-judgmental advice for post abortion women. The church does a huge disservice to women and men by not talking about abortion and other life issues; for many abortion is a life sentence. Please bring pro-life issues back to the forefront in the church. The church presently talks about the protection of creation but does little to talk about God's greatest creation the human person made in his image and likeness. How do you define people who are not respected?* Consider a programme of scripture readings to be discussed at regular meetings*. Very important! Schools and church/parishes to have much closer links***. Schools to be more involved in getting views of young people (primary, secondary FE and HE***. Young people in non-Catholic schools need a voice too. Use school chaplains to keep channels of communication open and to take a lead in opening up communication process****. Invite parishioners to be involved in the process suggested above.** Parish forum or councils with regular meetings and minutes made available to all in a parish. Social occasions linked to forum council meetings. Parishioners who complain and who feel that they are not listened to and dismissed. Provide more opportunities for older parishioners to be involved. Agree as a community to find ways and means for an all-inclusive listening dialogue; agree its characteristics that will enable all to travel in mission; inclusive - especially with women, young people, schools the disadvantaged etc.

III. Speaking out

How can everybody be encouraged to communicate appropriately what is important to them?





From Parish to Mission

What do you mean? ** Encourage small group discussions and faith sharing. Clarify channels of communication. Agree as a community ways to create an atmosphere of trust and the confidence to speak out and to develop as missionary disciples **. Have the confidence to speak to their parish priest. Parish priests to cultivate open hearts and minds ****. Parish forums, social occasions plus question-suggestion box *. Things spoken about/ideas need to come back to the parish for discussion. Priest/ parish council should encourage the sharing of ideas *. Bishop must make encouraging parishioner involvement part of priests training *. It already is! It is 'our' Church. Make everyone feel valued and recognise that everyone has gifts to share *. Cultivate sociability between groups in the parish to get communication flowing. Welcome new parishioners well **. Parish priest to linger after mass to 'catch' people, to chat to/with; be available for communication (post COVID) *. This is done already in our parish. Facilitators who can encourage honesty and openness.

IV. Celebrating

How might I be better able to participate in Mass and other liturgies?

Encourage more volunteers. Ask in person - it works better. Adult Bible classes - priest led not laity-led. More chances to attend outside office hours. More Eucharistic adoration more often *. A larger pool of readers. People invited to read, include non-Catholic parishioners. The readers need training – pausing – slowly - every word counts; but not preaching. Bidding prayers read with meaning and preparation *. Involve the children in reading and bidding prayers and hymns and music (Yes!) ***. Involve families. Agree ways to revivify and expand the work of the liturgy group - to ensure the liturgy of the parish empowers our community to develop and create links to its mission. Need to see our faith as part of the wider world and live it out; act out what Jesus said in the Gospel. Encourage the reading of the scriptures as a foundation to the liturgy *. Introduction to the Mystics - Saint Teresa, St. John of the Cross, Thomas Merton. Groups in which scripture and the work of theologians can be discussed. Loop to be checked regularly. Liturgical language is inclusive. Brief explanation of Readings; for example Saint Paul and women! and context. More joyful liturgies. Music. We could all do more to share and help. Layout of church. Mass is a meal - it is the Holy Sacrifice, Heaven breaking through to earth **. Awareness of the real presence in the Eucharist ***. It's a bit priest-led; could be more priest-congregation inclusive. We should have





From Parish to Mission

more occasions like the Filey trip. Mass and the Eucharist, meals together, prayer and singing. And both churches are involved. Unity of presence.

V. Co-responsible in the mission

How can each Baptised person become a “missionary disciple”, revealing Christ to others through their words and deeds?

Welcoming people to and in church (Welcome Pack)**. By example, not preaching. Sharing how we do already act as missionary disciples*. Discernment about how our discipleship is enacted and how we do share as baptised people. Define what we mean by ‘mission’**. Be kind. Be prepared to share faith**. Love others. Look for people’s strengths*. Don’t gossip*. Welcoming new parishioners. Inviting other denominations to our services. Going out from the church building to spread the word of Christ. Through the way they live their lives. They will know we are Christians by our love. Choose kindness*. Go out into the communities more - feed the poor; spread the Good News through actions.. Agree ways to strengthen awareness that all are already missionary disciples; to make more explicit the links between the life and worship of the community and mission.

VI. Dialogue in Church and society

How might we improve our conversations within our diocesan family and also outside of it, (for example with people of different faiths, those who have no faith and those who have particular roles and duties in society)?

Inter-parish events, sharing of ideas**. (More practical) publicise more events*. ‘Open days’ things/ open doors for all people including those of no faith****. More for the youth. Everything seems to be at Hinsley Hall. We should do things in our own parishes**. Promotion of Churches together**. Who are the contacts in the Diocese of Leeds? In parishes? In Hinsley Hall?****. Open up conversations with people who want to talk, to share who they are, what their faith means. Visit places of worship/different faiths*. Continue the established good practise of inviting members of Christian churches to our church. Thank Fr. Kieron*. Commute to build the links with existing youth groups/uniformed groups and include funding to enable them to perhaps visit places of worship. Advertise our ‘open days’. More links with other Christian churches. More inclusion of lay people/important information from Deanery shared. Lay people to be included in real decision-





From Parish to Mission

making. Find ways to make Church relevant to people who no longer attend (divorced/birth control)*. Improve dialogue with people of other faiths. Show and share with other Christian groups and other faiths. Study the impact of living longer - the vocation of old age. Agree to petition the Bishop to consult the people of God as to the best ways to set up a diocesan pastoral Council and mixed lay and clergy Deanery conferences*; tasked with reaching out to other faiths and wider society in mission.

VII. With the other Christian denominations

Are our relations with our Christian brothers and sisters good? How might they be improved? Yes. We talk to each other rather than work in isolation*. Yes. But we need to find ways of encouraging more of us becoming involved with inter-denominational events etc. The ministers pray together regularly and have built up very warm relationships between each other, attending different services, pulpit drapes etc*. Widen to include lay people. Could involve secondary schools more, visits etc. from Christians of other denominations***. Improve communication of why people should attend*. Encourage first timers*. Encourage more people to join Churches Together, especially the younger generations. Cross-Church events; great relations with other churches in Baildon already but more can be done***. Two-way dialogue: how do we explain who we are; how we worship; how we are united in loving and serving Our Lord Jesus*. Agree to visit and join in each other services*. Shared communion with other churches would make people feel welcome, valued*. Women deacons and priests and married priests could make a big contribution***. Agree ways to strengthen ecumenical relations - focused on joint missionary work.

VIII. Authority and participation

How might we develop teamwork and a sense of co-responsibility in our local Church? We don't have any teamwork in our parish*. Our teams eg. Flowers, PPC, readers, music etc. are very separate. Possibly look at a new parish work structure***. A sharing of issues, challenges in the local church. Lines of accountability needed*. We are split into communities depending on which Mass we attend**. Representatives from both our churches working together on a work group*. Welcoming before and after Mass*. Get to know people in the parish better*. Think we do have teams in our parish - but dependent on talents and interests. Improve social spaces and encourage getting together. Making parish issues more obvious – posters, bulletins, 'help wanted'





From Parish to Mission

posters*. Encourage more volunteers, especially the youth. Same few faces doing many of the jobs. Needs more talent and find out what the youth would be interested in being involved in. The 'elders' in the Church need to pass on their skills and experience to the next generations - let others help. Individually we can identify and encourage and invite people to become involved as some people don't have the courage to become involved. What do we actually mean by the 'local church'? Can we engage with other parishes? Change Canon Law to clearly define responsibilities of priest and parishioners to the benefit of both. Each parish 'belongs' to the parishioners and is not the sole dominion of the PP*. Remember to thank everyone who volunteers to support the parish in anyway. Be more welcoming to new volunteers. Encourage more youth to volunteer. Discuss ways how best to support our priests; so discuss the best shape of a parish assembly or PPC inclusive of all - aiming at mission outwards.

IX. Discerning and deciding

How might we improve the process of decision-making in our local Church, so that we truly listen and recognise that the Holy Spirit can speak through each one of us?

A forum from each group in the parish*. Parish decision-making. More connection between different aspects of parish and church life. Democracy?*. Listening to and asking everyone's opinions*. But the 'diocese' what does this mean? Practical things – questionnaires, online, more advertising, phone calls*, visitors*, delivering bulletins etc. Really important and more of us can be involved*. Prayer is the centre of everything we wish to do and how we wish to be. Constant asking of the Holy Spirit to guide us. It must be priest-led not laity-led. Must be laity-led*. Need a synodal process for the parish. How we journey together*. What is this decision-making that is being referred to? What affects - must be discussed by all. Discuss ways to reach decisions affecting all, by consulting all in a spirit of listening, dialogue and discernment - so to relieve priests or individual laypeople of being forced to think the only choice is 'my way or no way'; to enhance the awareness of all that we are missionary disciples. Identify issues that we all should be involved in. The bishops should write pastoral letter to be read at every church, making it clear that the views of parishioners must be listened to. Both spiritual and practical matters. Remind people to look at parish website, as well as bulletins. Diocesan newsletter available in parishes. Awareness that not all senior citizens are computer savvy - some by choice!





From Parish to Mission

X. Forming ourselves in synodality

What formation is necessary within the local Church if we are to become better at listening to one another and sharing our insights with one another?

For the two churches to meet together more as one parish*. Talk to all people not just those we know*. Teach listening skills*. Tom Chigbo - what does this mean? (is a facilitator for young Catholics). Better understanding of our Catholic faith*. How do we explain simply who we are. Post COVID, reintroduce social settings eg. coffee after Mass*. Advent will see the re- introduction of coffee/tea in both churches. Missions with the Friars in both churches over the last few years****. Expand our idea of the 'local church'*. Become better at asking and listening to young people and those with different opinions**. Have more events. Create a better sense of community****. A return to the fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church – Mass, Confession, Adoration, Rosary. Be Spirit-led. Novena once a month. More parish meetings**. Missions led by different Religious Orders, lay organisers and hopefully include school age. Parish groups share what they do with each other and encourage more to be involved - maybe each group to have 5 minutes to share after Mass. Priest to ask parishioners to introduce themselves to another after or before Mass. We will listen better if we know each other. Discuss ways to ensure that the synodal process becomes part of our parish DNA - embedded in the life of a parish transformed into being a companionship, empowered for mission****.

