

A) COMMUNION

1. In what ways has the unity of our parishes in faith and charity, above all in Eucharistic communion, been strengthened or weakened by the experience of the past two years?

When the churches reopened, we were so happy to attend Mass in church. It brought home to us the great privilege it is. *Others added:* especially if you live on your own. *Others said:* what is also true is that seeing all the other celebrations online also had a strengthening effect: to realise how many of us worship all over the British Isles !

People seem to be more caring and respectful of each other. Some things are stronger: the stewards work well together and there are emerging lay leaders.

We lament that we have lost some of the families who seem to have got out of the habit of coming on Sundays.

Someone gave a middle line: The parish itself has been neither weakened or strengthen in that those parishioners who are committed have come back and there is a continuing sense of community which has not been weakened by the pandemic. However, it is not noticeable stronger, either.

Someone expressed a more negative view: discouraged when I felt the church leaders needed to stand up to the Government on allowing public worship sooner.

2. What gives you joy in belonging to our parish?

When I have had a bad week, I gain spiritual strength – recharge my spiritual batteries – by attending Mass, paying attention to the Bible readings, and by spending the rest of the week reflecting on the homily.

The friendliness and welcome that we get. There is an “inclusive” culture in our parishes. It is like being part of an extended family.

The trust in God we had during the pandemic.

3. What would you like to see happen in the parish / (What frustrates you?)

One couple wrote: This is a very difficult question to answer as what I would like to see is a community where people are disciplined into their fullest potential in the Lord, so they are living full out for him and bringing change into the lives of all round them. However, that seems a far off dream in the context of the Catholic church in the UK, and there is the question of what is possible in the circumstances that we are in and how much that we can achieve.

Someone said: all go back to normal as it was before !

Other comments: Keeping the homily simple and clear ! *Likewise:* More thought needs to be given to how to nourish the faithful in teaching in the homily. Good music, a good sound system, a warm church.

We need to pick up the reins of what was happening before. We feel the teens, twenty-somethings and thirty-somethings are missing.

More devotional life: Holy Hours, Rosary, Stations of the Cross.

An inappropriate flag was allowed to stay on a coffin.

B PARTICIPATION

1. What has the experience of this time taught us about participation in the life of the Church?

How very important it is and how much we missed it during Lockdown.

I get great peace attending mid-week Masses and spending time afterwards with Christ at the Exposition of the Eucharist, just sitting for a time with our hidden Christ.

That we need to be more aware of others and to make an effort to look out for each other.

It has taught us that we can participate in a number of practical ways – but we need to be aware that active participation is to pray the Mass with our heart, soul and mind. This needs to be emphasised.

We also need to emphasise that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of the world!

According to the Diocesan Year Book, the Catholic population is estimated at 170k but the Mass attendance is 9k: that is just over 5%. How do we involve the missing 95%?!

Someone else said: The senior hierarchy must recognise that this is not a numbers game anymore, and should welcome, and foster the expression of the catholic faithful in the myriad forms it takes in different parishes.

2. How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy? How do prayer and liturgical celebrations actually inspire and guide our common life and mission in our community?

Good communication about the Bible.

By keeping it all as simple as possible.

Concern that Communion under Both Kinds may not be restored: there are more creative ways this issue could have been approached.

It is not easy: there are so many things pulling people away.

We need enthusiastic leadership and inspired teachers of the Scriptures.

Participation depends largely on the person – but also the home background.

The Liturgy is important but we need to people to be involved on a human side first of all: revive social events now that we are able to.

3. How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore? How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people?

We need to create opportunities where women and young people can air their views with confidence.

We encounter Jesus in those whom we do not expect: when we give food/drink to the poor we give to Jesus – but we also need to pray as, without this, these are no more than social activities.

C. MISSION

4. What hinders the baptised from being active in mission?

Lack of knowledge of what it is to be a follower of Christ.

The non-involvement of the parents !

Getting conflicting messages and when those in authority don't practice what they preach.

Regular bad publicity in the media: mostly historical, thank God.

5. What areas of mission are we neglecting?

A St.Aidan's parishioner said: Most mission in the parish is conducted via Gerry Flannigan and the Pastoral Centre. The parish needs to use the centre more fully, in order to reach out to the community. Those in power could facilitate that much more than they do.

Reaching the lapsed.

Reading the Scriptures, poor knowledge of Mass, the Sacraments, prayer. We lack ongoing Religious Education. How do we promote a personal love of God ?

Visiting people in their homes.

Someone felt that the Latin Mass community is being “reined in” (maybe referring to the Holy Father’s latest decrees) but that those on the liberal side of things were not being reined in in the same way.

6. How does the community support its members who serve society in various ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, education, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, caring for the environment, etc.)? How does the Church help these members to live out their service to society in a missionary way?

Mainly by giving purpose to the lives !

By being seen on local and national media, actively supporting those members.

White flower/ anti-abortion stances.

How does the community learn about what is going on in society, what are the issues? Those we know of – we pray for them.

On the other hand, someone said more bluntly: We do not think it does in any meaningful way.

7. How is discernment about missionary choices made and by whom?

We tend to leave it to the priest ! *And someone else said:* those in authority as they have the power. *Someone else said:* by the priest and the secretaries (*by which I understand: those who run with things at parish level*).

As individuals, in these financially hard times, we must make choices about what areas of mission we support with our giving.

A couple made an important point: The absolute failure to promote the real integration of the Keralan community into the English community is a huge missed opportunity – the Keralan community tend to have a lively faith and have encountered Christ. They could do much to evangelise the English population if the two communities were brought together. The English church has historically relied on overseas Catholics to invigorate it.

8. How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?

Good teamwork and good communication in practice.

Listening – but also emphasising Church teaching and having no heresy. Better homiletics to do this.

In the daily life of the church, there are different groups who look after the basic needs (Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, readers, flower-arranging, linens, cleaning). They promote good fellowship.

We should encourage the faithful to support these ministries more !

Leadership is sometimes exercised by those least fitted to do it – which can cause great harm to the parish. We should hold the hierarchy accountable.

There needs to be proper subsidiarity of responsibility - for example, so money could be spent on necessary repairs without having to refer back to the priest, or through an inefficient process involving part-time parish secretaries.

9. Is there anything that you would like to add to what you have said above on journeying together as a member of the church? This might include suggestions for priority items for synodal consideration.

It was nice to see the Anglican and Catholic bishops in Liverpool meeting publically and processing together: more of this please !! *But someone else said:* emphasise the truth of Catholicism and exercise true Ecumenism.

An awareness of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

An ongoing journey of Faith: continuous religious education.

There should be more home-visiting.

We should take great care when organising groups about changing normal practice.