



Sacred Heart Church
Flitwick
February 2022

The Synod Listening Programme

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The Church of the Sacred Heart, Flitwick

Approach

1. PPC conversation
2. Small subgroup formed
3. Briefing and appeal for inputs at all Masses
4. Pamphlet prepared and issued at all Masses and copies made available in the Church
5. Information printed in the weekly bulletin

Parishioners were invited to share views in several ways:

- Drop-in session at the church where views were shared and recorded
- Email to the parish secretary
- A phone line was provided to take any feedback
- And direct response to diocese was also offered

Responses

1. Two Focus Groups were formed at the drop-in session and good conversations and input received
2. We got ten email submissions
3. The phone line was used only once
4. Feedback themes from recent parish conversations were also considered and included

Questions

1. An independent group was appointed in Southwark to gather this information – why was this not done in all dioceses?

Question 1.

What does it mean to be a Catholic?

'I Belong'

Community – parish and worldwide

Being part of the worldwide church, Mass wherever you go, included wherever you are

Active member of the Body of Christ, the church in the community, using my gifts for God's glory

Good Caring and Thoughtful

Church buildings – potential to be more than a place for Mass, a place of welcome, part of the community

Connected/ Identity

It means to belong

Whole life part of the Catholic Church

Can take Church for granted having been brought up in the faith

Rules and structure to guide and live up to

Shared values

Faith

To be sure of God's promises and eternal life.

Grace through the Sacraments

Love through the Liturgy and Sacraments

Supports me in many circumstances

Help through prayer

Spiritual guidance, leadership and education

Questions

How different is being Catholic to being a Christian?

What went well

Spiritual Life / Values

Dedication of Clergy and Laity

Good Works

- SVP/ Visiting
- Food bank
- Christian Unity
- Climate Change
- Charity and education in developing countries

Life Moments Matter

Best at 'life events' – marriage, baptism and death and preparation for death.

Support through illness

Welcome/ Inclusion

Welcoming is strong, but sometimes hard to break into a parish on arrival

Involving laity in parish management and parish secretary

Pandemic

Use of modern technology in communication enabling the community to worship

Helped me is to know the names of so many of our parishioners and they know me.

Even Better if

Management of Allegations

The way the **Child Abuse Allegations** were handled has damaged the Church in particular in its lack of transparency and its tendency to 'close ranks' and take a position of denial.

All People Matter

The experiences of **divorced** and re married – long standing issue – process for annulment

Treatment of **LGBT+**, 1 in 5 people are gay, but the Church condemns this huge number of people. If God is said to love them why doesn't the Church love them

The **Youth** must be catered for / Lack of focused youth ministry

The church does not recognize the huge contribution made by **women** – role of women was strong in early church – women feel side-lined – how can the Church's current model survive with so few priests – need to ordain women

Lack of consultation in with and in parishes

Clerical power v laity – many man made rituals

Position on **Contraception** Most young women today use contraception.

Question 2.

What are some of your experiences of the Church doing something well?

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Question 3.

What are some of your experiences of when things have not gone so well?

'People will forget what you said, they will forget what you did but they will never forget how you made them feel.'

Maya Angelou 2003

Grow and Flourish

To see a Church that **grows in numbers** but more importantly in the Spirit and his gifts.

That the churches would **have real spiritual direction** if the running of them taken away from the priests

For the Church to survive things have to change. The parish priest model in particular as our priests get older. **Paid roles** will be needed to sustain parishes Management skills of many priests to manage parishes lacking – shouldn't be doing these jobs. **Our priests need more support.**

Laity need to be involved in all levels of the organisation from the Vatican downwards

We need to be outward looking rather than inward looking. We need outreach /to be doing more, focused projects that give people opportunities to contribute

That we will always have **enough priests** to keep our churches open and be able to **celebrate Mass** regularly

My dream for the church would be full of music

All people in the Church

Recognition that many people have been hurt and disaffected because of the rulings from the Church. Recognition that all groups need targeted and dedicated support.

That the old men at the top see that **women** who are +50% of the church should be able to take a more active clerical role. Greater parity for women / ordained roles within the structure

To make greater provision for the 1 in 3 people whose **marriages break down.**

To make everyone welcome and feel valued especially the LGBT community who feel rejected by the Church.

Church attendance is not 'cool' for teenagers, many of whom stop attending. We need to make it 'cool' again somehow. Youth worker for the pre-teenage and teenage groups for parishes (possibly shared with other Christian churches)

A community of all ages, who all feel valued members of the community, The body of Christ

Support for the partner in marriage that is not the Catholic

Question 4.

What is the dream for your Church?

'May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you may know the hope to which he has called you.'

Ephesians 1:18