

Better communications and use of technology

- 'Who are we listening to and for whom are we planning?' Listening to people properly and fully will help to really understand what people are asking for or perhaps what they need even if they aren't saying it directly

Making the most of technology & virtual media. The need to use modern media better to communicate in a simple way which arouses interest. Ask some of those more "tech Savvy" to help others access mass online. Put our own service online with a link on the parish website. To update the Parish List.

My advice would be - keep things simple and communicate in a style which excites interest: expressed in a manner which appeals to young and old alike; from various cultures and educational backgrounds.

Actions

Immediate action: to implement welcoming group and to find those Parishioners who are not on the Parish List in order to better Communicate.

Longer term action: To develop a Parish Vision & Pastoral plan to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit and implement the above



Parish of Our Lady of Victories Market Harborough

Parish mission statement:

We, the faith community of Our Lady of Victories Parish, with our values rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, accept our mission: to come together to worship God, to welcome everybody, to work with and in our local community, as Christians in the Catholic tradition in openness and fellowship with Christians in Churches together, in Market Harborough, to love, learn from and support each other, in our spiritual growth, to witness to our faith in words, actions and compassionate service to others

From Fr. Chris

Dear Parishioners,

I present this summary of the many contributions to the Synod process after consulting the PPC. Many thanks to all who have contributed to this.

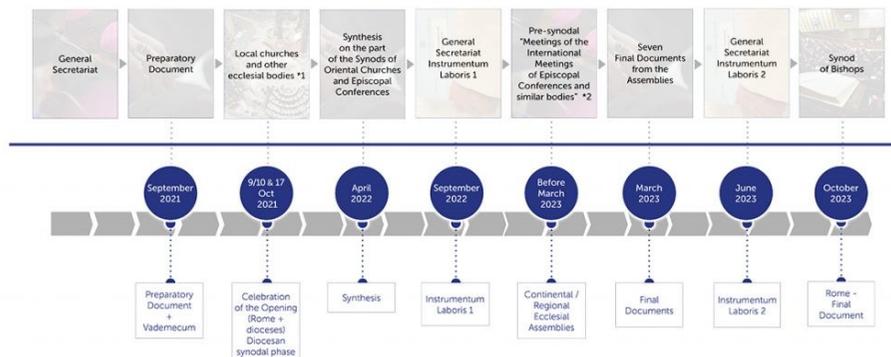
They form a beginning from which we can move forward as a Catholic Community of the Diocese of Nottingham. The key as Pope Francis has said is to walk together listening to the Holy Spirit. The Synod process is not a question so much about what the majority says but rather discerning together what the Holy Spirit is saying to us. It is a launching pad to our walking in faith with our Lord.

Our responses have been forwarded to the deanery and will form a part of the Diocesan Response which the Bishop will finally discern which in itself will form part of the response of England and Wales. I hope we can begin to move forward as a Parish as COVID reduces in the coming few months.

However, it will need all of us to participate with our gifts to build our community or the Communion among us so that we may share our faith hope and love with others in mission. These are key words

FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION

XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS



in the Holy Fathers view of the Synod. Interestingly they are shared in our Synod responses. We all have gifts to share.

Synod Consultation

Method of Consultation

The Parish was consulted through email, letter, Newsletters. A parish handout was given out with questions. Responses were received from individuals, by letter and email and also from Parish Groups who met together such as Confirmation group, Coffee Group and others. There were also two open meetings. A small group was formed to go through the responses and draw up themes. The PPC further reflected on the responses. We grouped the responses under themes which emerged. In italics are quotes from some of the responses to illustrate a particular theme.

Need to rebuild and develop parish and community: only a strong parish community can evangelise

This was a strong theme in both the Spiritual and social senses. The need existed before Covid and has grown since.

Points raised:

- The need to know each other better outside the circles of people we know and thus more of a community.
- There is very little interaction at Mass.
- Make current activities more social.
- Through a stronger community we would become more welcoming of marginalised people and more evangelising.
- We can appear unfriendly whilst trying to respect newcomers' privacy.
- To encourage more participation in activities rather than leave it to the few.
- The need to encourage participation of working age people

We need to become a Community of love for each other, being willing to speak to everyone we meet in the parish if only to say 'Hello' and 'How are you?' and talking with those who speak to us

We need to present the Beauty of Christ to those who consider us to be bigoted, outmoded, old-fashioned or irrelevant. In this respect we might like to reach the local gay, lesbian and trans-gender groups. We cannot endorse some aspects of their lifestyles but can strive to show that we embody St Augustine's dictum 'with love for mankind and hatred of sins'.

It was agreed that before this can be done, we must ensure that all members of the Parish are firmly rooted in, and have a good understanding of, Church teachings and morality, on the basis that we cannot spread any message if we aren't clear and consistent in what that message should be.

PPC

The need for a better awareness of the role of the PPC which and communication of its meetings, agenda and decisions and how it is constituted. To reflect the make up of the Parish Community. Such as the young and the travellers Community.

At the heart of Parish organisation and , yet , there's a lack of clarity amongst many of us as to how members are appointed how it operates, what decisions are made ; are they widely circulated?

The Parish Council members should reflect all the groups in the parish, of all ages, all ethnic groups and gender

Churches together

There was appreciation of the work in the town and of good relations between Churches. Many felt we should become more active participants in Churches Together and its activities building in the good work. Collaboration between Christians is essential in present circumstance of Society

Locally I think it would be best for all Christian denominations to recognise their core values and work together

vigorate the music at Mass and make it more attractive to the young. To reintroduce the Bidding prayer groups.

We need to honour the sacrament of the Eucharist by changing the way in which it is received. Contrary to popular opinion, altar rails were not removed by way of a Vatican II ruling. Could they be restored so that we can receive on our knees? Can we encourage an additional sense of the sacred, the set apart, the holiness of the Tabernacle?

For me personally, hearing and responding to the voice of the Holy Spirit, is by spending some quiet time each day in the presence of the Lord, and discerning how I must respond in the events of my daily life. I find using Morning and Evening Prayer of the Church an aid in knowing God in my life and how I should act.

Pray ask for wisdom that God will show us who the marginalised are in our community

Adult formation : “We need to evangelise ourselves to evangelise others”

We need to be reminded constantly our commission given by the Lord is to make disciples, to teach and evangelize. Formation in faith, encounter with Christ and understanding of our faith. Study groups Bible Catechism. *We cannot share what we do not have.*

The church today in my opinion sacramentalises its followers but does not necessary evangelise them We need to stop being church pew warmers and understand what is required of us as followers of Christ. To study the Word of God, pray and ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Start by evangelizing ourselves, parish and then we will become a relevant Catholic presence in our community. Be a voice for the weak, vulnerable and marginalised.

My dream is that the Parish becomes a welcoming community, engaging with each other, and so contributing in a small or big way to evangelisation in our town.

There was a general consensus that there was an urgent need to build a real sense of community within the Parish , as a forerunner to reaching out to those marginalized .

Do we rely too much on emails and questionnaires and not sufficient ‘ face to face ‘ recruiting ?

In looking outward , we may have to ‘ swallow the bitter pill ‘ that , to outsiders , we may appear ‘unfriendly , our Harborian respecting of a newcomer’s privacy at risk of being misinterpreted.

A conscious effort will be needed to “kick start” Parish life again .

How are the laity listened to? all ages all sections of the parish

Marginalised groups

Groups on the margins locally figured strongly: the youth of the Parish, travellers, homeless and the socially isolated (the sick and elderly). Particularly a better welcome of Travellers. More widely: the homeless, refugees, ex-offenders, lonely, single parent families, families suffering with debt problems.

The traveller community within Market Harborough is the subject of much prejudice, even (sadly) within our own congregation.

Formulate a strategy to reach out to those who feel excluded starting where they are, rather than where we would want them to be. Whilst we cannot endorse aspect of the lifestyle of some, we should show them Christian love. Do we offer sufficient support to those from that community who do occasionally attend Mass? Could they be a seed in their community, with our love and encouragement?

One aspiration is that we all make a conscious effort to really listen to other people, to consider if people are asking for help and support but in a vague and subtle way. Listening to people properly and fully

will help to really understand what people are asking for or perhaps what they need even if they aren't saying it directly

Young people & Families

Young people were highlighted. . There should be space or forum for them at the PPC/Newsletter/ Website. And the need for them to be involved with Ministries such as welcoming. There could be more collaboration with the school. The need to reach out and welcome families especially after COVID when many are no longer attending. To reinvigorate the relationship with St Joseph's School.

Young People: there is nothing for them at a parish level, nothing to make them feel part of, or belonging to the parish

If the Parish is to really thrive in the future , there's a pressing need to include the youth of our Parish at the heart of future plans

My thoughts for a more outward looking church is for the focus to be on young families and the youth (teenagers) of our community

Closer relationship between the school and the parish. The school has a thriving faith life which we could surely learn from.

Keeping in touch with older people

The need to communicate and keep in touch with the elderly and frail. Through letters and through some sort of befriending group to visit and chat to them who are often so involved in parish life. Could we find a more organised way of getting them to Mass?

Are there elderly, frail and isolated individuals within Market Harbour? Do we know who they are, where they live, what help they might need?

Going outwards

To create a better perception of Catholics who are often seen as out-moded or different. To make better use of our facilities for the service of the community and make them welcoming hubs of compassion. Our coffee mornings could open to others outside the Catholic Community. Is there a specifically Catholic charity or initiative that might be a good means of evangelisation in that it would be a demonstration to the wider world of the way the members of the Parish are living out the message of the Gospels. It could also be something young people can be involved with. Mention was made of the Pro-life tradition of this parish which needs revitalising and could be a focus.

Use of church facilities – if we consider only the church proper to be a temple, what better community-facing use of the rooms/hall could be made? How could we transform these areas into welcoming hubs of compassion?

Churches should look outwards and not stare at their feet

I resist the term - 'of no faith' replacing it with 'those not choosing a religious affiliation': for those describing themselves as agnostics or atheists, whom I have known, invariably make choices based on principles and a standard point of reference, when seeking purpose and meaning to living - and indeed show qualities of loving kindness and generosity of spirit which cannot be depicted in an entirely logical or materialistic fashion

The spiritual life of the parish:

It was felt that the prayer life of the parish had disappeared over the last two years and people no longer feel connected with each other or with God. We need to find some ways of coming together, both spiritually and socially to rebuild relationship. Prayer, Bible groups were mentioned and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. To rein-