

St Francis of Assisi Church Sheffield

Synod Listening Process Report February 2022

Parish Priest: Canon Bennie Noonan

Parish Deacon: Rev Peter J Hyde

Pope Francis is calling all Catholics to take part in the SYNOD LISTENING PROCESS. Essentially the Church wishes to hear about everyone's thoughts, regarding the Catholic Church.

The process to gather all views, has been through Parish Mass meetings, Established Organisations and as individuals, all were invited to participate in this conversation, which places a special emphasis in reaching out to those currently marginalised, whose opinions are not currently gathered.

Bishop David is asking that, within the Diocese of Northampton, we all have an opportunity to get involved in this process.

Therefore within St Francis of Assisi, Sheffield, events took place that allowed all to provide their thoughts, during the month of January 2022, when specific dates and times were offered inviting people to participate.

PROCEDURE

This report reflects the conversations and written input, within the parish of St Francis of Assisi, Sheffield.

- The period covered was Tuesday 11th January 2022 to Sunday 30th January 2022
- One UCM Meeting – on 11th January 2022
- 6 Parish “Face to Face” meetings offered, after 9.00am Mass and before 5.15pm Mass
 - I. 16th January 2022
 - II. 22nd January 2022
 - III. 30th January 2022
- 3 Zoom meetings (held in association with St Peters @ Biggleswade)
- 4 individual written submissions, either via email or completed forms through the Parish returns box

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE A CATHOLIC?

- The Catholic faith is like an anchor
- A body of like minded believers
- The promise of eternal life is important and knowing that when we lose somebody that it isn't the end
- It is a privilege but also a responsibility to be a catholic
- It is home, never alone, identity, lifestyle, rich heritage – tradition
- Being a member of the one true Church, that goes back to Christ himself
- Being part of a Universal Church
- Having the magisterium of the Church backing us
- Having a deep spiritual friendship with other Catholics
- To listen to God and follow his teachings and to listen to God
- It means to listen to the one God and to listen to people who protect us and let us be in peace
- To go in a Catholic Church means to be a Catholic
- Being part of the one true faith, having an opportunity to hear the word of God and to try and live according to Gods will in our own daily lives.
- To spread the word and be part of our community of faith
- To be able to pray and hope for a better world and help those around us
- A great privilege and responsibility
- Our identity is in Christ
- Belonging and sharing together
- Living in Christ now and for Eternity
- A faith built on solid foundations, the truth
- At a time of such poverty, and when we know need and exclusion is likely to increase, we as a Church should reflect on the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching, and seek to find new ways of ensuring that the preferential option for the poor, grounded as it is in Gospel teaching, is understood to be as critical to the living out of our faith as is worship.
- First a Christian one Universal Church Worldwide
- Rich heritage and sacraments
- Knowing who my saviour is Jesus Christ
- The Mass, Rosary, devotion to Mary Mother of God and knowledge of eternal Saints.
- Life after Death
- Guidance on how to stay close to the Lord
- Believe the Church has the fullness of truth
- Community and family provides strength
- Helps me to live my life, courage and strength when weak
- Really need God in my life
- Strength in Parish family, still argue and disagree, but continue to love as a “normal” family does
- Need God in my life following bereavement
- Will pull together
- Comfort, great family link with God looking after us
- Generosity of Spirit, irrespective of belief
- Need to find our own way

- All roads lead to loving heaven
- Actions of individuals has adverse impact
- Part of a community with similar beliefs and values
- Church with a Worldwide membership

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR EXPERIENCES OF THE CHURCH DOING SOMETHING WELL?

- Welcomes all people
- Celebrations, Funerals and Weddings
- Baptism and Holy Orders
- Mission work; CAFOD, SVP, MISSIO Worldwide
- Christian unity, Churches together
- Education Catholic Schools, Colleges, Pilgrimages to Holy Shrines (Pro Life)
- Embracing progress. I believe that rather than contemplating whether the ordination of women or married clergy is appropriate, we as a Church must prepare for how to draw all such people into a life of dedicated service. Ours is a faith of inclusion and should be structured as such. Further, the already notable absence of sufficient clergy to cover the existing parishes reflects the urgent need to open up, rather than to seek to perpetuate a short-sighted exclusion. More important still, the exclusion of women from the priesthood is quite simply wrong. It must change, and I have no doubt that if the Church seeks to sustain and even grow, it will.
- Catholic Schools are important for teaching the faith
- Friendship within groups should be encouraged in the Church
- The Catholic Church has upheld and defended the deposit of faith
- Now the Church is beginning to open up acknowledging imperfections
- Administration of Parish with Priest shortage
- Welcoming and inclusive of all people
- Works of charity Worldwide
- Education
- Family celebrations in Church, embraces all the family (children)
- During "Covid 19 Lockdown" kept in communication with us, it was done well (and had to be done quickly) was a chance to see and hear other churches
- Having groups such as SVP, UCM & CWL, going out to other faiths or non-Christians
- Praying and passing on our belief of the power of prayer
- They help us to listen and learn about the one God and how we can help and learn about God
- To learn about discernment
- Stories in the Bible allows us to listen to the Church, God and they take and teach people to learn how to be a Catholic person
- Welcoming us into our Parish family, being supported in our faith especially in difficult times.
- The role of the Canon and the Deacon has been very important in our own family
- Pope Francis has connected with some key issues facing the world, e.g., Climate Crisis and the Church continues to try and help vulnerable people and support Catholic teaching around the world
- Historically, defending and passing on the authentic faith and doctrine. Apostolic succession Magisterium

- Upholding the faith doctrine, sacraments, giving us the Catechism, valuing the scriptures and deposit of faith
- Praying – We are a Church that prays
- Charitable missions i.e., support for others @ Sea/Homeless/SVP/Marys Meals/ CAFOD etc.
- Abundant support/literature/retreats/teaching on our faith is produced and available
- Books/DVD's/Courses/Online/Groups
- The Bible
- The Catechism
- Providing a stable and consistent platform on which to relate to in order that I can aim towards being a good Christian and a Catholic
- Not being afraid to hold firm and not moving with the “fashion” of the day

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR EXPERIENCES OF WHEN THINGS HAVE NOT GONE SO WELL?

- Not acknowledging Child abuse in the past and the hurt caused to people. Huge deception and denial
- Reluctance to face uncomfortable truths
- Unwillingness to change e.g., Latin Mass
- Worries about disunity within the Church (at the very core not at Parish level)
- Latin Mass separate from everyday Parish activities, it should not be banned, nothing wrong with it. To make it one again.
- Inclusive not excluding. By being more inclusive encourages non-Catholics or lapsed Catholics back into Church
- Latin Mass!
- I think that people should speak about people who thought in the way and people who do good to other people who let our continue lives in peace and are not taking care.
- I think we should talk about the people who bring peace
- Compassion for Separated, Divorce people
- Child abuse, failure to address the problems.
- Lack of sympathy or compassion for lapsed Catholics
- Failure to Listen to the People
- Harsh judgement on victims of domestic abuse, single parents
- At a much more local level, we should seek to integrate ourselves more actively in the community. Our own experience in Biggleswade highlights this. We have a growing and increasingly youthful community. What do we as a parish do to draw new families in, and to welcome and support them on their own journey of faith?
- Can we do more to play an active part in our communities.
- Pandemic – People denied access to the Church to worship, pray before the Blessed Sacrament. People denied the Sacraments. Churches locked. Churches should be open.
- Sexual Abuse – Failure to fully take responsibility for this evil!
- Lack of opportunity for the church community to “repent and pray” as a body of believers. Particularly in places where the Abuse took place. Repentance and Cleansing needed. Even though we personally did not abuse, we are part of the “body” which did.
- Victims poorly treated by the Church institution.

WHAT ARE OUR DREAMS FOR THE CHURCH?

- To enable and encourage one another to use the gifts we have, to build up the Body of Christ
- To emphasise the power of prayer
- To manifest the risen Christ by our lives
- To encourage and welcome the teenage group sadly missing from our Church community at the moment
- Retain young people – more vocations for all
- Church grows by people giving their talents
- Increase in Pastoral work
- To keep Churches OPEN
- People to share the joy of faith to all
- I support a return to our roots! Scripture/Sacraments/Good Effective Catechesis
- More women involved
- Christian Unity; Dialogue (in Ministry) Services
- Respect for every person (Pro Life)
- Bible studies and classes
- A Social Hall, large space with resources for the disabled body of people (Deaf, Blind)
- FAIR TRADE policy
- Good safeguarding
- Everyone will be renewed by the Holy Spirit and renew the face of the earth through our faith
- That the Church may grow and reach out to more people.
- That we get “back to normal” and be able to embrace others again, we’ve taken so much for granted before “lockdown”
- That we could be One in Christ again and we become more forgiving and so should the Church
- Ecumenical / interfaith action. Linking back to my initial proposal regarding our living out Catholic Social Teaching, we should seek to find ways to join with our brothers and sisters in Christ from other denominations, and those from other faiths, in seeking to serve the poor and those in need. In an increasingly secular society, we have much in common with those motivated by their faiths from different denominations and religions and should seek to build on this in celebrating the role of faith in our society.
- My hope is that this Synodal process reflects a commitment of our Church to listen to those voices of those who will play a role in continuing to carry it forwards into future generations. I hope we can seize this opportunity as the beginning of a process of greater inclusion, rather than a passing phase. There is so much to be hopeful about.
- Allow married Priests
- Allow Permanent Deacons to be Priests
- Return the “Sisters” into their “Habits,” because they are a visible representative of God on earth
- Return to kneeling to receive the sacrament, more respect and reverence at receipt of the Body of Christ
- Return to kneeling when the tabernacle is open, to venerate
- To become higher profile in and be seen as more important in a secular world
- To become energetic, vigorous, and alive in our communities

- To be seen as an important cornerstone of living a rich, giving, thoughtful life.
- For more people to learn and understand what it means to live a life in Christ
- For the Church to remain and strengthen in its place as an important part of society
- For more people to seek an opportunity to grow their faith
- To help those in need in the name of Christ
- That people listen and learn about our God and to bring people up as Catholic
- For friends and family to learn about the one God
- For people to have good lives and for people to remember people risked their lives for us to be able to live in peace
- To be able to pray about people when they die or special moments for them
- To manifest Christ to each other and all with whom we come into contact and to “do whatever he tells you”
- Receive evermore fully all that Christ died to give us and to share that with others
- Discover/seek to serve, what is our vocation?
- To encourage, enable and support each other to live gospel lives, by every means possible and to pray always for more, more, more! Amen