



# **'WALKING TOGETHER'**

*Diocese of Plymouth Synodal Synthesis  
Appendices*

April 2022



*'Dear brothers and sisters, have a good journey! May we be open to the Holy Spirit's surprises, the grace of encounter, reciprocal listening and discernment, joyfully convinced that, even as we seek the Lord, He always comes with His love to meet us first.'*

- Pope Francis



# APPENDIX A: DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH SYNODAL JOURNEY: OUR MATERIALS

## Week 1 Material



### ADVENT WEEK 1: LISTEN

"The Synod offers us the opportunity to become a Church of closeness, that does not stand aloof from life, but immerses herself in today's problems and needs, bandaging wounds and healing broken hearts with the balm of God." Pope Francis

#### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day, We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!" Amen.

Henri J.M. Nouwen

#### Jeremiah 33:14-16

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I am going to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

In those days and at that time, I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David, who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land. In those days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell in integrity. And this is the name the city will be called: The-Lord-our-integrity."

#### Luke 21:25-28

Jesus said to his disciples "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand".

#### Psalms 24:4-5

Lord, make me know your ways. Lord, teach me your paths. Make me walk in your truth, and teach me for you are God my saviour.

Time for prayer and silent meditation (you may wish to light a candle)

#### Reflection

"The gift of being a compassionate listener, a gift which requires constant practice, is perhaps the most healing gift anyone can possess, for it allows the other to be, enfolds them in a safe space, does not judge or advise them, accepts them as they are without desiring to change them, and communicates support at a level deeper than words."

Gerard W. Hughes SJ in "Cry of Wonder"

#### THEMES FOR REFLECTION

In exploring the themes below participants are invited to:

- Listen actively and without judgment to the Holy Spirit and to others
- Pay attention not only to the words, but also to the tone and feelings of the speaker
- Listen actively to yourself, mindful of your own thoughts and feelings as you speak

Opening question - What has your faith meant to you these past 18 months living with Covid?

How do I listen to God? How do I listen to others?

Who do I listen to?

Do I listen to minorities, the discarded, and the excluded?

How do I foster a culture of encounter?

How does our parish listen to others? How does our Parish listen to God? To whom should our parish be listening? Are there groups we don't listen to?

How is everybody in our parish listened to?

Does our parish talk to believers of other religions and with non-believers? What is their perception of how we listen and worship?

How do we as a Church listen to others? How do we as a Church listen to those outside the church?

How do we promote a free and authentic style of communication in the global church?

How does the wider Church relate to the society of which we are a part?



The next step will be for the facilitator/scribe to share the group's reflections with the Synodal working group. But this process doesn't end there. This listening process will become part of a longer-term shift in the way we walk together as Christians and helps us grow in faith as individuals and as a Church.

## Week 2 Material



### ADVENT WEEK 2: MISSION

"There is so much richness in our dioceses which we need to be open to encountering and receiving; such diversity but all united together in the power of the Spirit of the Risen Jesus." Bishop Mark O'Toole

#### Prayer

God of hope, we cling to you, for you renew the face of the earth.

Through the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus, we follow you on the path of dawn.

Enlightened by your love and wisdom, help us to lead each other and all creatures back to your open arms. Amen.

Rachel McCarthy/CAFOD

#### Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip, tetrarch of the lands of Iturea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight."

Time for prayer and silent meditation (you may wish to light a candle)

#### Reflection

In his letter, 'The Joy of the Gospel', Pope Francis wrote: I dream of a "missionary option", that is a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. We need to regain our missionary spirit so that the call to holiness we heard in our baptism is expressed by a change of direction.

#### THEMES FOR REFLECTION

In exploring the themes below participants are invited to:

- Listen actively and without judgment to the Holy Spirit and to others
- Pay attention not only to the words, but also to the tone and feelings of the speaker
- Listen actively to yourself, mindful of your own thoughts and feelings as you speak

#### What is our mission?

What do I understand by mission in my own life?

How am I called to be an active participant in the mission of the Church? What is my role as a disciple in mission?

What spiritual sustenance and formation do I need to be more committed to the mission of the Church?

#### What is the mission of our parish community?

What does our parish understand by 'mission'?

How does our parish support its members committed to service in society (social and political commitment, scientific research and teaching, the promotion of social justice, the protection of human rights, caring for the Common home, etc.)?

How does our parish identify the goals to be pursued, the way to achieve them, and the steps to be taken?

How does what our parish is doing relate to the Great Commission of Jesus: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:18-20)?

What impact is our local parish making in the area? Do we make a difference?

#### What is the mission of the whole Church?

How are we the church as a whole adapting to the changing world and Missionary needs in our society?



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## Week 3 Material



### ADVENT WEEK 3: CELEBRATE

"The Synod offers us the opportunity to become a listening Church, to break out of our routine and pause from our pastoral concerns in order to stop and listen." Pope Francis

#### Opening Prayer

Lord we pray, May our synodal preparations inspire people to dream about the church we are called to be, to make hopes flourish, stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds and restore strength to our hands for our common mission. We trust in your Spirit who journeys with us.

#### Philippians 4:4-7

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord. I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone; the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry, but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

#### Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Time for prayer and silent meditation (you may wish to light a candle)

#### Reflection

"The Lord walks with us! How often we forget this fundamental truth of being a disciple. The Lord does not stand aloof. He is completely present to them. He is open to encounter. Nothing leaves Jesus indifferent, everything is of concern to him. Encountering faces, meeting eyes, sharing each person's history. That is the closeness that Jesus embodies. He knows that someone's life can be changed by a single encounter. Jesus did not hurry along or keep looking at his watch to get things over. He was always at the service of the person he was with, listening to what he or she had to say. We too are called to take time to encounter the Lord and one another." Bishop Mark O'Toole

#### THEMES FOR REFLECTION

In exploring the themes below participants are invited to:

- Listen actively and without judgment to the Holy Spirit and to others
- Pay attention not only to the words, but also to the tone and feelings of the speaker
- Listen actively to yourself, mindful of your own thoughts and feelings as you speak

How do I celebrate the presence of God in His Word and in the Sacraments?

How do the Word and the Sacraments inspire my most important decisions?

Does the liturgy of the Church inspire a deeper encounter with the risen Lord?

#### How does our parish celebrate the Word?

How do prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and direct our parish "journeying together"?

How does our parish support a full Catholic life and Mission – evangelization, catechesis, formation, liturgy and social action?

#### How does the Church celebrate journeying together?

How does the wider Church promote everyone's active participation?



The next step will be for the facilitator/scribe to share the group's reflections with the Synodal working group. But this process doesn't end there. This listening process will become part of a longer-term shift in the way we walk together as Christians and helps us grow in faith as individuals and as a Church.



# Week 4 Material



## ADVENT WEEK 4: LET US DREAM

"In his freedom, the Holy Spirit knows no borders, nor does He allow Himself to be limited by memberships. If the parish is home to all in the neighbourhood, not an exclusive club, I recommend leaving the doors and windows open... Allow all to enter..." Pope Francis

### Opening Prayer<sup>1</sup>

Mary, pondering  
What is this seed that God has planted,  
unknown, uncompromised, unseen?  
Unknown to everyone but angels  
this gift has been.

What if the baby I embody  
unable to enter life deformed or strange,  
unable to be known as normal,  
to thrive or change?

And who am I to be the mother,  
to give my womb at heaven's behest,  
to let my body be the hospice  
and God the guest?

What if the world, for spite, ignores him,  
and friends keep back and parents scorn,  
and every fear of every woman  
in me is born?

Oh, what a risk, in such a nation,  
in such a place, at such a time,  
to come to people in transition  
and yet in prime.

Still, I will want to love and hold him,  
his cry attend, his smile applaud.

I'll mother him as any mortal, and just like God.

### Luke 1:39-45

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zachariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment our greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

### Acts 2:17

In the days to come - it is the Lord who speaks - I will pour out my spirit on all mankind. Their sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

### Time for prayer and silent meditation (you may wish to light a candle)

<sup>1</sup>used with permission www.ionabooks.com

### Reflection

"Jesus in the power of His Spirit wants us to help one another along the road, to find our home in Him, and to find new ways, new models, new pathways which will help us to reach out, to invite others in our world to join us on the road. For the Lord desires so very deeply that they too find their home in Him. May the Holy Spirit help us to encounter one another, to listen deeply to one another, to show us the direction the Spirit wants us to travel, so that we can be more effective witnesses of Jesus to those who do not know Him." Bishop Mark O'Toole

### THEMES FOR REFLECTION

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- Listen actively to yourself, mindful of your own thoughts and feelings as you speak

### What is God's dream for me?

How am I called to serve?

How might I reach out to serve others and share the Faith?

### What is God's dream for our Parish?

How might our parish 'walk better together'?

How do we form people, especially those who hold roles of responsibility within the Christian community, to make them more capable of 'journeying together', listening to one another and engaging in dialogue?

How might our pastoral provision look in the future?

### What is God's dream for the church / world?

What fruits can the wider church draw from this 'journeying together'?

How can our global church foster a missionary spirit adapted to the constantly changing environment?

**Closing question** - In the light of the last 18 months living with Covid and your reflections on the four themes, what are you most looking for from the Church/Diocese moving forward?



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# Weekly "Reflections" Material



## ADVENT JOURNEY GATHERING FOR WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

Thank you for Sarah Barreto for these inspiring ideas.

The journey through Advent could be created in the entrance of the church or other suitable area each week with an activity. Some suggestions:

(A) Each week a banner made by the children or creative parishioners could be displayed in the church. The banners would be the themes of the Diocesan Synodal journey: Listen, Mission, Celebration, Dreams

(If you want to make banners for each week you should start making the 1st banner in your programme one week before Advent so it is ready to hang in the 1st week, then work on the 2nd banner that week and so on for the 4 weeks.)

(B) A poster saying "THE SEASON OF ADVENT: YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE" could be displayed on the outside door to the church entrance.

(C) The theme for each week is about journeying towards Advent. People are invited to use the activity to help them explore the key themes.

### ADVENT WEEK 1: LISTEN - Advent Spiral (see separate document) or Tree Branch.

A spiral of candlelight symbolises light emerging from darkness.



Each parishioner adds a leaf with a prayer for the diocese or a question and watches it come alive in hope.



## ADVENT WEEK 2: MISSION - Footprints: a way in the desert

John the Baptist called the people of Israel to repent, to find peace with God. John also declared that it is in our actions of love and justice that God's peace is shown.

Take one of the footprints. As you place your footprint down the aisle of the church, think about where we might need to go, or what we might need to do to bring God's peace to our world.



## ADVENT WEEK 3: CELEBRATE - A PATH TO HOPE

Parishioners add a stone from the entrance to the church to create a path up the Tree branch to celebrate our journey together.

Take a stone and place it along the wilderness path as you think of how you might help to make the journey of others through their wilderness this Advent: a little lighter, a little less taxing, a little more Joy-filled.

## ADVENT WEEK 4: LET US DREAM - CANDLES "THE LIGHT OF CHRIST"

This Advent, let us make room for the arrival of God's love, in our hearts, in our homes, in our parishes and relationships together. Emmanuel shall come and dwell within us... Even if it is sometimes unsettling. He may arrive with the face of a stranger and crash on the couch... or in a manger.

Pope Francis: "In his freedom, the Holy Spirit knows no borders, nor does He allow Himself to be limited by memberships. If the parish is home to all in the neighbourhood, not an exclusive club, I recommend... leave the doors and windows open... Allow all to enter..."

Take a candle into the church and place it at the front. As you light it, remember the promise and message of Christmas is God's great love for the world.

# Guide for Parishes Material

## Walking Together - Diocese of Plymouth Guide for Parishes

At the heart of the vision of Synod 2021 is 'together'.

Encouraging us to fully engage with the important process in the life of the Church, locally and nationally, that we can all be our most authentic missionary disciples. Very important is our purpose in this Holy Spirit as that we listen to what God is saying to us, as well as listening deeply to what we are saying to one another. This Holy Spirit guide us on the journey together and give us a share in God's mission and understanding. Bishop Mark O'Toole

During the Diocesan phase of our Walking Together, parishes, schools and individuals are invited to reach out and involve the greater number of people possible, and especially those who are often excluded and forgotten. This is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to contribute to the future of our Church.

Parishes are encouraged to decide how best to run their Walking Together reflections. The following are some suggestions for an Advent journey.

### Advent journey suggestions

Four Listening and Discernment sessions in small groups during Advent, covering four main Walking Together themes in the parish, school or organisational setting. It is envisioned that each of these sessions will take about 15 hours.

A one day listening and discernment event combining all four themes.

Local Connections at coffee mornings or other events.

Individual reflection.

Some groups may not wish to do all or participate in a four-week process or a one-day event. People are welcome to use the resources individually and explore smaller areas of the themes each week and to gather with others at a convenient time, either after Mass or through an online service, to listen and respond to the themes.

There is a set of reflections and themes to explore during each week of Advent. Parishes are invited to reflect, discuss and then feedback thoughts and ideas. The most important part of this journey is listening back to the Holy Spirit and each other.

We are invited to become 'open to the art of encounter'. We do so not as much by organizing events or designing about systems or planning strategies for better engagement, but by being open to encounter the Lord and one another. This is about to journey and to be vulnerable - 'the Spirit of power that we are all together' and to hearing what the Spirit wants us to do as individuals and as the Church'. Bishop Mark O'Toole

### The Themes

The overarching themes for the four weeks of our Diocesan journey explore how we listen, our mission, how we welcome, and our dreams. There are three questions to explore each week with some resources for use as needed. The questions follow a pattern from listening and reflection about us as individuals, about our parish and about the wider Church. The main questions are below and there are handouts for each week of advent to offer further prompts for discussion or needed. Please detailed guidance is available for facilitators.

There is a checklist of questions to be answered for some prompts for groups and individual discernment. The questions are accompanied by resources, reflection and reflections.

WEEK OF	OUR DIOCESAN JOURNEY POINTS FOR REFLECTION
28 November	<p><b>OURING</b> Question - What has your faith meant to you these past 12 months living with Covid?</p> <p><b>LISTEN</b></p> <p>How do I listen to God? How do I listen to others?</p> <p>How does our parish listen to others? How does our parish listen to God?</p> <p>How do we as a Church listen to others? How do we as a Church listen to those outside of the Church?</p>
1 December	<p><b>MISSION</b></p> <p>What is my mission?</p> <p>What is the mission of my parish community?</p> <p>What is the mission of the whole Church?</p>
12 December	<p><b>CELEBRATION</b></p> <p>How do I experience the presence of God in His Word and in the Sacraments?</p> <p>How does my parish celebrate the Word and the Sacraments?</p> <p>How does the wider Church celebrate our journey together?</p>
20 December	<p><b>DREAM</b></p> <p>What is God's dream for me?</p> <p>What is God's dream for our parish?</p> <p>What is God's dream for the wider Church / world?</p>

### Resources

We will provide a number of resources which will include:

- The Sacred Prayer
- A Guide for Facilitators
- One-page guides for each of the four sessions which can be used in a one-day event or individually
- Feedback forms which can also be completed online

There are many other approaches that parishes can take - it is up to each parish to choose for itself how to approach this journey and what to discuss. There will also be opportunities for people to join online discussions offered by the Diocese. The following are some resources that participants may wish to reflect on before heading:

- Bishop Mark's reflection on 17 October and 17 December see our Diocesan journey - <https://www.dioceseofplymouth.com/our-journey-together/>
- Synod 2021 - a vision for the next ten years in the life of the Church For a Synodal Church, Communities, Pastors - Catholic Bishops Conference - <https://www.catholicbishops.org.uk/>
- Other resources are on our Diocesan Website - <https://www.dioceseofplymouth.com/>

The most important action is listening to the Holy Spirit and to each other and not the production of a document or summary of what was discussed. However, we would welcome some feedback so that we hear what each other has to say and what the Holy Spirit is saying to us.

Please complete your reflections as the forms provided and send to [walktogether@dioceseofplymouth.com](mailto:walktogether@dioceseofplymouth.com). Facilitators will be able to talk to you in the summer unless you are able to do this. This summer is an important season in our journey - a time of reflection of some of the main themes and vision that emerge.

The overall vision group will draw together selected themes to early 2022 and we will be starting process with online for parish responses. The reflections gathered will inform both the wider Diocesan process but also our own Diocesan reflections and the ongoing work as part of a Precious Place of God's Grace.

### Any Questions?

The Synodal working group will respond to questions about process or resources and will set answers on the website. Our view is not to offer solutions to initial issues raised but to explore what has been shared and restore the breadth of contribution for the next phase of this healthy journey [walktogether@dioceseofplymouth.com](mailto:walktogether@dioceseofplymouth.com)



Walking Together - Diocese of Plymouth Guide for Parishes



This guide for parishes should be read in conjunction with the other materials provided

Walking Together - Diocese of Plymouth Guide for Parishes

Walking Together - Diocese of Plymouth Guide for Parishes

Walking Together - Diocese of Plymouth Guide for Parishes



## **WALKING TOGETHER, APPENDIX B: CLERGY VOICE**

### **Summary**

This is a brief summary of key themes which emerged from two Clergy online gatherings in March 2022:

Most clergy did not directly participate in the local gatherings to allow people to speak freely but supported and encouraged people to come together. Those who did join groups found that parishioners wanted the Priest there to hear what they had to say.

The role of the facilitators was crucial to the success of the journey.

Mostly the experience was very positive and the focus on active listening was welcome. People liked coming together to talk and this needs to continue

There was disappointment in some parishes about the lower numbers of participants and questions about how to reach the 90% who didn't share their thoughts.

Clergy would like their own opportunities to come together to talk about their dreams for the Church

We need to work with each other, learn and share and listen more to the Holy Spirit. People struggled with the idea of hearing the Holy Spirit and wanted more opportunities for formation and discussion.

Everyone wants to know what will happen next. Feedback and visible change are very important in terms of people feeling they have been heard.

### **Experience of the listening journey**

Overall, many people got involved and this in itself was encouraging, irrespective of the content of the discussion. Most parishes were encouraged by lay participation, but this was not universal. People who came were very enthused and enjoyed the opportunity, but many did not participate which makes it hard to judge what is happening in the parish.

There was a great deal of positivity in terms of the process. People felt listened to and given an opportunity to speak, which hadn't been offered in the past. There was appreciation for the Church being willing to listen. However, some felt we curtailed the Holy Spirit by only looking at 4 out of 10 questions. 3 questions looked back and only one looked forwards.

Some were really enthused by the liturgy sent out and particularly listening actively without judgement. Some hope to use this methodology to consider local initiatives.

Because we are not being used to being asked what we think, it can be very difficult for people to enter the process. There was a particular challenge in reaching migrant communities who are perhaps more used to 'pay, pray and obey' and found this approach more difficult. The Polish community were under-represented.

People appreciated being asked but some felt that 'no one is going to listen to us so what's the point of saying anything'. People need to know what is going to come out of this. Many hope that this is not a one-off programme but a way of thinking that will continue.



## Issues raised

There was a lot of celebration – the joy of the liturgy, coming together, the Sacraments and relationship with God. More controversial issues such as priesthood did not come up as much as expected. But there was also pain. There was a cry for the Church to be more inclusive. Many people feel they are being excluded from the Church e.g. those excluded from communion for a variety of reasons, the exclusion of priests who wish to marry; people in irregular relationships, (not married, gay), Those who weren't excluded still felt these were injustices.

The congregation did enjoy the opportunity to talk about some of the issues they wanted to raise including the age of the congregation, the lack of young people, the role of women in the Church was a constant thread; the Church hierarchy is not listening to everybody's struggles and their challenges are not met in the Church; some are disillusioned with church because of scandal.

The people who took part would like to have carried on and some parishes are doing this.

There is a great desire to be an outgoing community – attractive to people and a fulfilling experience. Many welcomed the sense of being together. But people struggle with not being confident in their faith. They want more direction in how to live out the faith and help them understand their faith more deeply.

People want good Liturgy, to feel faith come alive on Sundays; they want good homilies and engaging music; to transcend daily life and receive the courage to go out and live their faith.

Some people were disturbed by what they were hearing from others and stopped coming.

Many are concerned about youth. We don't grasp the seriousness of the chasm between the present young generation and those who are faithful in old age. We are not the ones who know how to pass on the faith to this generation. We don't tackle the issues that are important to the young. Some felt that issues like ecumenism were not addressed.

There is concern that the feedback will go to Rome and stop there.



## APPENDIX C: TIMELINE OF THE DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH SYNODAL JOURNEY

July 2021	appointment of Diocesan co-contacts Canon John Deeny VG and Deborah Fisher OBE, Caritas Manager
August 2021	working group of ten people set up – 6 lay and 4 clergy, 5 women and 5 men.
September 2021	Overnight meeting of prayer and reflection to prepare the Synodal parish materials for Advent
September 2021	Creation of a Synodal website and email address
October 2021	Recruitment and training of parish facilitators
November 2021	Walking together prayer and reflection materials sent to all parishes and schools via email and in paper form. All materials accessible via the Diocesan website.
November 2021	Online events to encourage participation in the journey
November 2021 – April 2022	Regular communications through Facebook and Twitter, the website and monthly newsletters. Ongoing support for and communication with facilitators. Updates for Trustees and the Bishop's Council.
December 2021	Creation and distribution of materials for wider outreach and appointment of a wider outreach worker to support this work. Creation of a short online feedback form and sharing the link widely.
January and February 2022	Wider outreach to groups: homeless, LGBTQ+, and migrants; victims and survivors of abuse; victims of domestic violence
January 2022	A day of reflection and discernment on the materials received so far (working group and others)
23 February and 9 March 2022	Online feedback events for facilitators
26 February and 12 March 2022	Pre-synodal events (face to face) in Poole and Plymouth
23 and 24 March 2022	Online events for Clergy
31 March/1 April 2022	Final overnight reflection by the working group to agree the synthesis
6 April	Presentation to Bishop Mark

Activity	Number	Participants
Online and face to face events	13	835
Group discussions	67	1005
Individual Submissions short form (adults)		166
Individual Submissions (youth)		228

\*We estimate an average 15 participants per group based on feedback from 23 facilitators about participant numbers. Some of those attending group discussions will also have attended the online events.



## APPENDIX D: WORKING GROUP AND SYNTHESIS PARTICIPANTS

### Working group

Anthony Akinpelu, Chief Operating Officer  
Fr James Barber  
Sarah Barreto, Diocesan Schools Commissioner  
Canon John Deeny VG (Diocesan Co-contact)  
Maria Edwards  
Deacon Richard Edwards  
Deborah Fisher OBE, Manager Caritas Plymouth (Diocesan Co-contact)  
Saskia Hogbin Youth Events Coordinator  
Canon Kristian Paver JCL  
Liz Toy

### 22 January Synthesis Event Participants (\*working group)

Liz Toy\*  
Sarah Barreto\*  
Saskia Hogbin\*  
Fr John Deeny\*  
Fr Kristian Paver \*  
Monika Manser  
Fr James Barber\*  
Fiona Hutchings  
Deacon Richard Edwards\*  
Anthony Akinpelu\*  
Gary Martin  
Jane Martin  
Declan Keogh  
Fr Jose Romero  
Maria Edwards\*  
Deborah Fisher\*

### Additional Reviewers

Caspian Lipman (data analysis)  
Susanne Kowal  
Sr Berenice McNeil  
Alison Muxworthy



## APPENDIX E: DIRECT QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE SYNODAL JOURNEY

### Is the church welcoming?

“Says it welcomes all but doesn’t in practice.” “Makes people feel inferior, excluded and isolated.” “Elitist language. There is a need for language we all understand.” “The Catholic Church excludes more than it includes.” “Where is the compassion in the Catholic Church?” “The pain people experience by being rejected by their church is tragic.” “Holy Communion: The pain in people’s eyes as they are denied the gift of God.” “Our focus on sacraments and deciding who can receive them and who cannot, is judgmental and excludes many.” [God’s dream for our parish is to] “improve communication, welcome people of all ages to serve and contribute. [In relation to newcomers] “An actively welcoming policy and most of all – a welcoming culture – otherwise the ‘welcome’ at the door seems meaningless.” “We were welcomed warmly from the beginning.” “Catholic faith is strong amongst believers, it is universal and international and you can feel welcome wherever in the world you go to mass.”

### Inclusion

“Feelings of inequality and injustice can lead to a disassociation with organised religion if there is a perception that the Church does not seek to become involved in social justice, dialogue, healing, reconciliation, inclusion and participation.” “Truly accept and welcome everyone.” “People hurt by issues of prejudice. Treating everyone as equal.” “An inclusive church which is open to all, accepting that we are all imperfect beings.” “Less emphasis on sin and failures, more positive, more involvement of the laity.” “Children today are raised in a society which focuses on equality between genders.” “Accepting of lifestyles: LGBTQ, divorced, remarried, co-habiting, all those with disabilities: physical, mental, learning difficulties.” “I don’t think the church should bless gay marriage or transgenderism.”

“Pope Francis moving church in a positive direction: more meaningful and accessible.” “Build bridges of hope and peace between ourselves and other communities.” “It is important that all are welcomed into the church and encouraged to find ways they can participate in the life of the church and share their God-given gifts.” “Catholics in need of healing and prayer – special services.”

“Variety of services to meet needs of all.” “Making mass more accessible.” “Celebration needs for everyone to be inspirational of our thoughts and decisions etc. e.g. we do need regular local youth Masses and variation of styles (e.g. at “Gather” etc.)” “Form a Youth Council and take ideas to the main Council.” “Our dream for our parish is to attract younger families and retain the few teenagers we have.” “Younger people have to feel engaged in their faith.” “We are losing our young”

### Communication and listening

[God’s dream for the wider church is] “the continued use and development of communications technology.” “Communication is important -we need to communicate beyond the technology to which many people still do not have access.” “We encourage communication and encounter with people who need our support.” “Listening openly to the views of other people within the church and outside, contemplating what they are saying, and remembering that none of us have exclusive rights to true understanding in this world / listening to the needs of others with a willingness to help and support others where we can.”

[The Catholic church can show it welcomes everyone] “by listening to and learning from those who have stopped attending mass.” “By listening to the quiet voices of its members. Sometimes it seems that only the loud get heard.” “Listening to people outside our faith and interacting with other faith communities was not generally undertaken.” “It was generally felt that there needed to be clearer channels of communication and that these needed to be two-way.” “There is little communication between the parish council and the rest of the parish.”

“Our Bishops are too good at changing things without listening to people.” “The synodal pathway heralds a change in the way we listen to each other, and listening is important.” “The Catholic Church is probably better at speaking to others than listening to them!” “We all pray that our voices will not be watered down in a mire of Diocesan and Vatican bureaucracy.” “It can be difficult to raise genuine concerns about Institutions due to the number of hierarchical levels and a residual guilt in even questioning practices.”



## **The Role of the Holy Spirit and Jesus:**

“Let the Spirit truly guide the church; what the Spirit wants for the future of the church.” “We must all pray for Grace.” “We are all sinners and Jesus always reached out to sinners.” “Jesus never judged people he just loved them.” “Jesus rules: to love Him and love our neighbour.” “If Jesus was here today, would he deny someone his touch, his healing, his love.” “Other churches: individuals have found healing and been reunited with Jesus.” “Alpha course is a great way to listen to the Holy Spirit and to other people.” “After Alpha listening to the Holy Spirit makes more sense to me.” “Alpha showed me how important it is to listen.”

## **The role of tradition**

“Most of faith has been watered down in order to be ‘all embracing’ with other faiths.” “Why should the church accept everyone?” “Why not teach true Catholicism?” “Church must be strong, bold, rigid and robust in speaking out against errors and not fall for the guise of false compassion which is not merciful.” “Remove all restrictions on the Latin mass, unless traditional Catholics are no longer welcome.” “Perhaps as a church we should have more opportunities to hear about more modern theologies and doctrines of the church are saying to help us deal with today’s problems, which should help us listen to God.”

## **Formation**

“Lack of catechesis within the catholic clergy.” “Not enough formation in the Catholic Faith to give us confidence to speak to those from other religions and no religion.” “Need more formation to be able to become fully involved in parish life.” “More formation around what we are celebrating through on-going teaching” “Miscommunication on do’s and don’t i.e. divorced people; not going to confession etc; too many man made rules.”

## **Clergy**

‘We keep getting great priests who give great Homilies, we are very lucky.’ “We’re very lucky here with the insights into Scripture given by our priests” “Our Priest is very welcoming at the beginning of mass and always thanks us at the end of mass for our active participation.” “Priest has so much to offer” “I believe that our parish is listening to God and putting God's hopes for our community into action” “Our priest gives a lot of his time to whole community, is available before and after Mass, is approachable, and welcoming” “The priest has been helpful, encouraging and asking people to get involved. He has given so many people the opportunity to listen to God through streaming services.”

“I need holy priests, I need an example I can follow; an example of how to follow Jesus and not lose any of His teachings in the modern world full of temptations and people constantly bringing us down and trying to prove that God is not necessary, or just an addition to life.” “Clericalism works against a culture of open communication, as do the traditionalist view and behaviour of so many newly-ordained priests.” “More teaching that ‘priests are fallible human beings too.’” “When undertaking sacramental duties priests are representing Christ; but the rest of the time informality is needed.” “The pressures on our Parish Priest and the limited number of priests – need to look at new ways of running our parishes. Need to be more open about this.” “The issues around structures that hinder inclusion and participation of the laity in decision making, the lack of vocations and the possibility of married clergy.”

“God’s dream for our parish] should start with women deacons” “The church should consider the possibility that women may be being called to the Priesthood.” “There was fear that if ordination was offered to women, it might attract some women who saw this as a women’s rights issue as opposed to a sacred calling.” “Married clergy would also help. Clergy might be given a choice as they start to decide whether to be celibate or not.” “Celibacy should not be regarded as an essential requirement of ordination to the Priesthood and that married men ought to be considered as possibly having a vocation to the Priesthood.” “The admission of married Anglicans to catholic priesthood has caused confusion and given mixed messages to laity and clergy alike.”

## **Mission**

“We should be evangelising as part of our Christian mission.” “Hardly anyone seems to be able to articulate with any clarity any more what the Church’s mission actually is.” “As a parish community our Mission is to bring people to Christ and to share the Good News of Christ’s salvation with all we contact, e.g. families, friends,



church groups, social connections, churches together.” [God’s dream for the parish is] “to be better witnesses than we are. To be more welcoming and inclusive. To journey together!”

“My mission is to proclaim about God and his love for people.” “I feel uncomfortable with evangelising – the Catholic Church does not feel invitational. It feels that our mission SHOULD be to be invitational.” “Our mission is to build up the Church, bring people back in, knowing why they stay away and how we can bring them back. Knowing what we need to change.” [Our mission is] “to welcome and support, in particular, teenagers to our parish, in recognition of how challenging it is to be a Christian for teens in a society which is often discriminatory towards people of faith.”

“The mission of the church is to defend values such as the right to live from conception to natural death, and family and marriage based on a union between a man and a woman.” “As long as the church refuses to acknowledge the responsible use of contraception, women will always be second class citizens under the power of men”

### **Sacraments**

“I used to value the mass as a source of wisdom but have found it increasingly out of touch with the spirituality I now experience as Christ living within me and within everyone/thing I meet.” “Never shut churches.” “Opportunities for confession so few – this should be a priority.” “I cannot imagine my life without confession or receiving Holy Communion.” “I listen to God in prayer, retreat and in silence in front of the exposition of the Holy Eucharist and confession.” “To worship in his name and remember Him when we celebrate the Holy Communion. His sacrifice for us is not to be in vain.”

[God’s dream for the wider church is] “removing barriers for people to return to full communion and the Church becoming more welcoming, more joyful, and full of hope.” “I attend our local Catholic church with my husband, it saddens me that we cannot take communion together.” “I feel very sorry for remarried Catholics who attend Mass regularly but cannot receive the Eucharist.”

### **Laity**

“The Laity should have a greater say in the running of the church, including women who should have a more included role.” “Too much ‘active participation’ from the laity.” “Given the crisis of priesthood we should have a more empowered role for the laity including Eucharistic services which would give a role for women otherwise missed.” “People wanted a much closer working relationship between the laity and the hierarchy of the church.” “We are given spiritual gifts to serve others.” “The laity are gifted through the Holy Spirit, however we greatly need the support and encouragement of the clergy to exercise our gifts in our parish and beyond.” “The laity need to be made aware of the importance of sharing their giftedness and more access to training made available.”



## APPENDIX F: DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH SYNODAL JOURNEY: VIEWS OF YOUNGER PEOPLE

### COMMUNION

#### Parish and Priest

Homilies do not address the real issues ie how are people supposed to know what the church's view is on things like sex before marriage, contraception, family planning, gay relationships.  
Homilies should bring the gospel to the people with real examples of how to carry it out in the present day.  
Priests should be careful to be compassionate during confession.  
Priests should not marry. They would not be able to give enough time to the parish if they were married.  
The role of Deacons could be enlarged to help priests.  
There is a real need for small groups within the parish for prayer and discussion which could bring the young people together.  
We listen to the priest too much and not enough to other people.  
Community written bidding prayers would enable participation. They would be more personal to the community.  
Re-instating the Sunday obligation so parishes flourish in joy and communion with God.  
When I think of church I think about the lovely, kind priests.

#### Sacraments and Liturgy

Celebrating the Eucharist should be the pinnacle of Catholic experience, we should try to find an opportunity in every Mass to grow closer to God. The Latin mass provides a sense of reverence and awe to some.  
I am conscious that it is the body of Christ and he is dying for us.  
Reflecting back on our actions as preparation for reconciliation can be really helpful in making choices for the future.  
My first confession changed my life and returning to mass gave me strength to stop sinning.  
People struggle to find the time and space to hear the still small voice of God. Mass is not always the best space to hear God due to eg music, language, style. Having visuals and powerpoint slides would be more engaging and interactive.  
Music is very important to help people experience the Spirit and it calls people to go to church. Include modern Christian rap songs. New composers of church music.  
Worship through more songs, dancing and more relaxed atmosphere. We should have a dance at the end of mass.  
There should not be hierarchy of sin with sexual sin often seen as the worst. Everyone has a right to Jesus. Why can't everyone experience Jesus in the form of the Eucharist? Shutting people out is not love, Jesus physically interacted with sinners, so why can't everyone receive the Eucharist?  
Need to make it more normal for adults to go up and receive a blessing.  
Blessed, peaceful, calm, full of love in Mass. Beautiful.  
A little less serious and sombre.  
At my church they used to do children's liturgy and answer questions which made you feel part of church, but they don't do that now.  
More opportunities to help out with different things such as the offertory.

### PARTICIPATION

#### Role of the Laity

I think once you understand 'why' the church teaches something and not just 'that' it teaches something, then it becomes much easier to accept it yourself, and to evangelise to others.  
God gives us all unique and different talents and we have to use them for good and the will of God.  
Young people: There are three groups to consider: the very young, teens and young adults all with different needs. No participation of young people in the decision-making process of the church. Not many events happening for teens and young adults. FLAME and ice-skating were positive and inclusive.

#### Role of Women

The church needs to have women's perspectives.  
Women should have the chance to lead homilies.  
Girls should have the opportunity to preach the word of God.  
Excluded from leadership roles within the church.  
Some believe in the need for female priests.

#### Community

We celebrate our faith through the experience of working with others and spending time with family and friends.  
The lack of fellow Catholics even in catholic schools increases the challenge for young people trying to embrace faith, particularly when their older siblings or parents themselves do not have the depth of understanding or knowledge to respond. Children's liturgy can sometimes resemble entertainment, however many young children wished church could be more fun.  
Increased ecumenical involvement. Most young people say they have never been involved with any ecumenical events; some had e.g. Remembrance Day



The Church needs to foster strong Catholic communities to equip people for the mission on evangelisation and provide a welcoming community for those looking for somewhere to practice the Faith and progress on their spiritual journey.  
Youth Service, really got involvement aimed at young people (11 – 25-year-olds)  
Community events in church and outside.  
There is not a lot to involve us outside of the Mass so some activities such as walking, and cycling would be good.  
The church supports those in need. It brings peace to the world.  
Make the church more noticeable in towns.

## MISSION

### Welcome

Ensure parishioners and priest meet people with an open heart and open mind  
Choose to see God in everyone and notice people in a positive way  
Whilst we should not try to change the truths, we should not scare people off by making Catholic values a barrier to engagement.  
Young people often feel most valued by the elderly parishioners.  
Groups not made to feel welcome: LGBTQ, divorcees, single parents, disabled, those unable to attend mass in person, those using contraception, anyone criticised by a priest. The gay community shouldn't be punished because of how they are attracted to people. Non-judgemental.  
When the church expresses opposing views from those accepted in the community, it puts people off. Churches core values can be embarrassing.  
Barriers include pre-conceived ideas about how they will be received, fear of ridicule or being criticised  
The church needs to meet people where they are in order to listen to them and speak to them in a way they can identify with. This may be age, culture and background specific. Contrasted with the church needs to focus on the truth that has come down through Catholic tradition.  
Culture and tradition in the church take precedent over personal choice.  
For disabled people there should be more comfortable seats.  
A basket of toys and other treats by the front door would be welcoming.  
Little leaflets explaining what happens in the church and what events and games are coming up.  
We should welcome everyone and be thankful that we have all these different people coming in.  
More comfortable furniture in either church and/or hall eg sofa, bean bags, prayer cushions.

### Communications

Our mission is to help people see the light of the truth and bring as many souls as possible to the mass which is the only key to the door of eternal life.  
The importance of young people being listened to and actively encouraged to question came up repeatedly.  
More needs to be done to set out the church's view on things like sexual morality and contraception so the people really know what the church teaches.  
The church should be more specific about where all the money from the parish is going and work more on specific projects for the poor.  
Statues need to stop being white and should be more appropriately coloured.  
People to people communication only happens with the sign of peace.  
Use of technology to engage people and promote the message of Jesus.  
Promote and build peace. Spreading the Good News: The Word of Christ.  
It would be good to discuss and understand context and application of the bible to current day.  
I find the language is hard to follow and needs to be in more simple terms, broken down so I can understand it.  
We should talk to others outside the church and evangelise and be bold in our evangelisation. Important to focus on catechises to help in our mission.  
God's dream for individuals and the church is that we reach out to help the world and show we care i.e. a missionary church.  
A board where all can draw or write about community memories.  
A Leaflet telling new people what everything means and when they should sit and stand.

### Faith

All gifts come from the Holy Spirit, which is the foundation of mission, but poorly understood by many  
Recognition that we are all gifted and work in different ways to serve God  
Time spent in nature praying with the beauty of creation either alone or with friends  
God does not mind what you eat or wear, but what is in your heart  
God will never ask you to do something bad, but he may give you two good choices  
Only genuine faith through Love is the way to bring people to Christ  
We all experience God's love differently and yet all have faith.



It is great that the Catholic faith represents the truth and is not subject to change due to political pressure or social change.

Faith is strongly believing in something with all your heart.

God is infinite goodness, so is good in infinite ways. Each characteristic of our personality, which has the capacity to be expressed in the good ways God intends, is only a part of the goodness of God. The specific combination of potential good qualities in our personality is what gives us the potential to be different, but equally wholly good individuals.

Church and God is coming together/belonging, community/togetherness, family.

## Synodality

Importance of the giving the individual full attention ensuring you are actively listening and not just waiting to respond. Looking at an issue from another person's perspective makes you recognise you may have the same opinion as them in their situation, even if it is different to your own position due to different circumstances.

Importance of discernment in identifying the voice of God; reflecting and praying with scripture.

Recognition that sin and pride are barriers to listening whether at an individual or institutional level.

Listening implies a response.

<b>Positive things about Church</b>	<b>Things which need to improve in the Church</b>
Teaching good morals	Inclusive of all communities / no active ways to engage with minorities
Sense of Community including regional and global	Less judgmental and intimidating / misogynistic and homophobic / less discrimination
Inclusive, all equal, welcoming	More youth activities
Music and Children's Liturgy	Reaching out to people with no faith
Faithful to tradition	Most decision top down
Youth events	Not enough interaction in mass
Creates a purpose on earth	Lack of communication between people and hierarchy
Connects our spirits to the Holy Spirit.	



## APPENDIX G: DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH CONTEXT

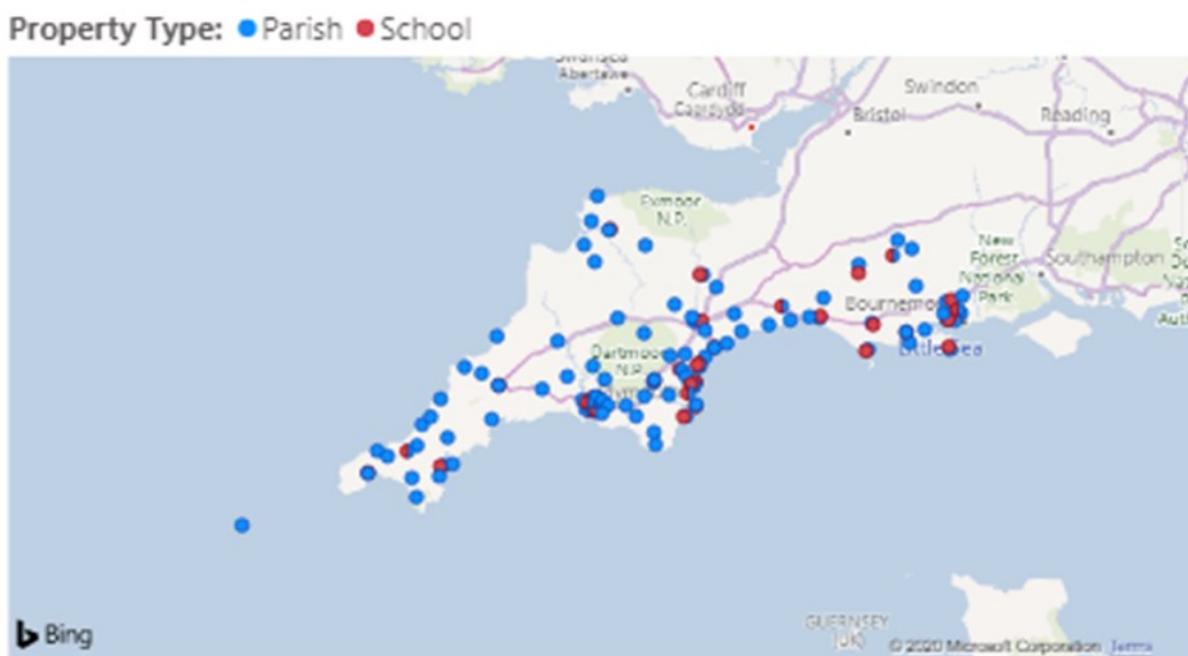
The Diocese of Plymouth – the Catholic Church in the South-West of England – was founded in 1851 and comprises the original counties of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. It includes the cities of Plymouth and Exeter and other historic towns and: an area with over 1.5 million people.

We have 67 parishes organised within 5 Deaneries stretching from the Isles of Scilly and Penzance to Bournemouth (approximately 200 miles). Our Deaneries are Cornwall, Plymouth, Dorset, Exeter and Torbay. Normal Mass attendance was approximately 11,000 before the pandemic and in 2020 was 5427, although this does not reflect the numbers joining online.

Our demographic is largely rural and ageing. Five of the ten areas in the UK with the highest proportion of over people over 65 are in our Diocese. One church in Dorset is in an area with the highest proportion of people over 85 in the UK.

The activities of the Diocese are carried out through our 108 churches and religious houses, of which 24 are listed historic places of national importance attracting visitors from all over the world. The Diocese of Plymouth has 117 Employees and over 3000 Volunteers. All our churches provide support to their local communities through social and outreach activities, often in partnership with local organisations. We have a recognised role providing support and volunteering opportunities for older people. Caritas Plymouth was established in 2019 to give fresh impetus to our work putting the Church's Social Teaching into action.

There are 33 RC primary schools, 2 RC secondary schools and a RC pre-school contained in a single multi-academy trust called Plymouth CAST. In addition to this, there are two joint church secondary schools St Edward's in Poole and St Cuthbert Mayne in Torquay, Leweston School is an independent Catholic day and boarding school near Sherborne in Dorset, which consists of a Nursery, Prep School, Senior School and Sixth Form and finally Trinity School, a non-selective, co-educational, day and boarding school in Teignmouth, Devon for children aged 3–19. The school was founded in 1979 as a joint Roman Catholic and Anglican school.



# Holy Family Parish



## Walking Together

Participation

Mission

Communion



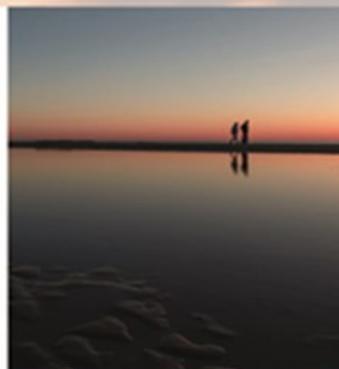
**Diocese of  
Plymouth**

The word of God  
summons us to  
journey together.

Advent: a time to listen.  
Everyone is invited to join the  
local discussions.  
Let your voice be heard.



**Diocese of Plymouth  
Walking together**



Our Diocese has begun  
"walking together". Are you  
signed up and ready?

<https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/synod/>