

Our Lady of the Angels Nuneaton

Synod 2021-23

Parish Consultation



The Process

In September 2021 the Synod process began:

- Pope Francis wanted to hear from the whole church about what is happening in local parishes, and he and Archbishop Bernard Longley would like to know what individuals think we should all be doing to help make our parishes better.
- Two words to explain simply, clearly, and aptly what we mean by Synod: **Walking Together**
- Three key concepts to shape this walking together process: Communion, Participation, and Mission.

The questions we asked:

1. What are your hopes and dreams for the church?
2. Drawing on your own experiences, in what way does the church community fail to journey together and show love?
3. From your own experiences, what do you value most about how the church community journeys together and shows love to the world?

Some context:

- We found the responses varied, with many talking about their hopes and dreams for the global church and how we move forward in faith, but an overwhelming majority that had opinions on how we grow as a parish ourselves.
- Many of these ideas for our own parish included practical and feasible actions for us to consider.
- From the responses the next step was to offer an open invite to all members of the parish (with a focus on leaders of groups within the parish) to consider what we felt was most important and pertinent to Our Lady's.

Feedback from Question 1 (Hopes and Dreams for the Church):

- *Involve all schools in the Liturgy at Mass-listen to the youth / devise appropriate parish activities for the ongoing faith development of our young in the parish. Youth groups – youth prayer groups*
- *Opportunity for contemplative life of the church / the importance of personal prayer.*
- *Encourage more women to be involved in the decision making of the parish.*
- *Become a 'CAFOD Live Simply' parish and continue to work for climate change*
- *We need to look at the decrees of Vatican 2 again.*
- *That as a parish we reach out to families preparing for the sacraments/prayer partners from parish for each sacrament Sunday Mass for children and parents perhaps once a month*
- *Encourage families to grow in faith e.g., Bible course/ Scripture group*
- *Parish groups for young families to share experience of parenthood.*
- *Adoration of Blessed Sacrament during week and rosary before Mass each day.*
- *To encourage community - perhaps more pilgrimages together (suggestions given)*
- *Welcoming new parishioners, for example a welcome pack, list of groups to join, etc...*
- *The Church shows compassion and pastoral care for those Catholics who are unable to live up to some of the teachings, for example those whose marriages have broken down.*
- *Regarding same sex partnerships- We ask the church in the words of Pope Francis to – go to “the margins”—the peripheries—and strive to “accompany” the people it finds there on their spiritual journeys, through a willingness to “encounter” them in their specific personal circumstances. Together diocese and parishes ought to be creative*

and resilient in finding ways to welcome and encourage all people in our family of faith.”

Feedback from Question 2 (Where the Church Fails to Show Love)

- *There is a large gap in the way the church supports and encourages teenagers and those in the 20-30 age range in engaging with the church and actively participating in the life of the parish.*
- *Some groups, including the LGBTQ+ community, do not feel welcomed at church.*
- *There are not enough opportunities to talk before mass starts to be able to see how everyone is feeling, in these strange times we need more chance to show love and empathy when people arrive to church.*
- *Not enough attractive events for children and families to attend to encourage their involvement in the church.*
- *Communication is an issue, internally and externally. Things are too self-referent. The way we use social media and technology could be improved, for example some links on the church website seem outdated or not working? Do we have an online presence?*
- *Communication is too self-referent/top down just any other typical organisation. We should reach out to non-Catholics in charity and friendship more.*
- *We have not united locally to support each other for climate justice.*

- *We do not work enough with other Christian communities and non-Catholics.*

Feedback from Question 3 (What do you Value Most from the Church Community?)

- *Praise and worship together at Mass. Prayer groups and intercession prayers for all in the community.*
- *Love shown through charities, use of the SVP, winter night shelter, feeding the less fortunate and homeless.*
- *The church community opens doors and invites everyone to attend Mass and have a relationship with God our Father. All are accepted and equal.*
- *The Sacraments are the best way that our Church shows love.*
- *Our Church is so welcoming, even parishioners who have attended for a short time feel welcomed and part of a family.*
- *Different nationalities sharing the faith together with spiritual input from Fr Simon and Fr John, it is so refreshing and totally inspirational.*
- *Prayer groups (Way of Life), Parenting Courses, Care of the elderly and dying. Visiting the sick (lay and Priest). Taking Holy Communion to those who need Our Lord.*
- *Attending Sunday Mass and Holy days, having and seeing support. We collect for various charities. Teas and coffees after 9.15 Mass. Support for CAFOD. The way members of our church respond to calls from Fr for help in the parish.*