

**FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH
FEEDBACK
SESSION THREE: MISSION
1 FEBRUARY 2022**

There was a short video explaining the importance of and process for the Synodal discussions

Pre-discussion

- How will progress over the 2 year period of discussion be feedback; how will we be updated over time?
- How can people outside of the discussion groups be advised as to progress ?
- Can we expect there to be discussions at church about it ?
- How can we reflect the views of young people not attending church or not participating in the discussion ?
- Should a consultation be/ should a consultation have been carried out in schools ?
- We should bring as wide a viewpoint as possible in our discussions e.g. draw on our own experiences of discussions with others, pupils, children, grandchildren
- Support for the Church becoming more synodal : how do we make our own community more synodal ?

VIII. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

How is authority exercised in our communities? How do we preach the Gospel? How does our parish community bring people closer to Christ? What groups or courses are available, what initiatives are in place? What are the fruits of this collaboration, and what are the obstacles and challenges?

- Authority is seen as hierarchical, starting with interface with the priest, then moving up through the Church's structure to the Pope
- The Church's authority was seen as based on sacred Scripture, sacred Tradition and the magisterium, the interpretation of scripture and tradition through the teaching office of the Church, consisting of the Pope and Bishops
- Authority was exercised by priests through the catechism
- At the level of our own church, there is a move to give more decision-making responsibilities to the laity, through the Pastoral Team
- "Authority "has many components; in addition to those already referred to, every member of the church has personal authority to contribute and an obligation to do so, which must not be abdicated. Spread the Word by action and example.
- Evangelisation in the streets- we must leave our comfort zone and talk to people facing trials daily.
- We need to pray to the Holy Spirit, to be brave and walk with people, talk with them and share our faith.
- Each Mass should have a number of designated attendees whose role it is to talk to people, especially newcomers and to follow up.
- SHC website is best in the area.
- There is an obligation also for individuals to question authority if perceived erroneous or improperly exercised
- Members of the church should come forward to be involved in as much decision making as is possible

- In the past all decisions were made and given down through the hierarchy. This opportunity to be consulted was seen as a very positive approach
- Many discussions on substantial issues took place at the highest levels with no opportunity for views across the wider body and often no feedback
- Many admire the strong morality in the Church but have difficulties with sensitive areas such as homophobia and abortion.
- The Alpha course was seen as a valuable aid to participation, as were Lectio Divina and the Study Group
- How can we get more people involved in these activities; how do we find out why they are not getting involved ?
- Caution was expressed about too direct an approach; listen to people and welcome them when they are ready
- Lectio Divina and the Study Group were seen also a support to evangelisation, providing deeper understanding of the scriptures and in-depth discussions about substantial issues and our responses to them, promoting confidence to talk more freely about our faith
- The video was appreciated by all and comments were made about the need to LISTEN. Listen especially to young people, who will be more open and communicative when they feel they are being recognised and listened to.
- There was a need also to draw to young people's attention the "real drama" of life. More focus was needed on helping them to understand the purpose of life and to talk to them about salvation and the need for God's grace in our lives.
- The catechism was how many of us had learned so much at an early age
- Many older people still remembered the more rigorous approach to religious education of past years and felt that it had been damaging, but to attribute no rigour to the significance of our time on earth was serving young people badly
- For most, religious education had started in the home, which still retained that special status
- When encouraging a newcomer to participation in faith, caution and realism were needed. It was not appropriate to expect a newcomer to want to understand the mysteries of our sacraments immediately; better, rather, to meet as friends, perhaps invite them to participate in Alpha when the time was right.
- Education was key; the Study Group has learned so much.
- Consideration should be given to short video messages on key topics of Catholic Social Teaching, as an introduction to our faith
- Is there a role within the SHC to take this on ?
- Fr Julio has given the community the freedom to lead at SHC - the laity are taking more responsibility in church life.

STATEMENT : The Church is good at empowering participation

- **Overall : Agree ****

IX. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

How do we discern together the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading us? Is there freedom to exercise my particular gifts in the Church, and participate in this common work of discernment and decision making? Is my parish community

accountable and transparent in decision making? What can help improve this? Do I support the Bishops and the Priests in arriving at their decisions?

- Recognition and reliance on the role of the Holy spirit was unanimous
- Listen to the views of others to discern how the Holy Spirit is guiding us a community
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide leaders to make decisions for the purposes of peace rather than division or self -advancement
- Cardinal Newman said that we must do what we have to do, wherever we are. That is how to discern what the Holy Spirit wants us to do.
- Discerning is the ability to judge with prayer and the help of the Holy Spirit

- It was good that Nuala was present and in tune with the Holy Spirit to suggest these face to face meetings.
- In order to discern more we need to pray more and listen in silence to God; prayer groups may be better than individual prayer.
- How to reach those at the margins of the church, perhaps particularly those who would wish to be closer, but life choices have made that difficult
- Accept and respect individuals as they are. Make it easy for them to talk about their position; talk to them about forgiveness and encourage a discussion with a priest when they feel ready.
- No one asks what we think; no, we don't help the clergy with their decisions
- We pray at Mass for political leaders, but do we know them/ their positions well enough ? More dialogue should be encouraged between church and politicians
- We should all be willing to use our talents to the benefit of the church and its members.
- It is important to for us to facilitate flexibility and positive acceptance in our church.
- We should tell each other where we see their strengths lie and encourage them to use them for the glory of God; perhaps not a formal process but an open and friendly discussion
- We should look for and use every opportunity to take responsibility and participate in decision making
- An email or web address for questions to the bishop would aid accountability and transparency in decisions.
- Questions to the priests should also be encouraged; where appropriate these could be referred upwards through the diocesan structure
- SHC has good internal processes to make a priest available when asked for
- The opportunity to participate has never been greater
- The power of the Holy spirit must be invoked; we need His help in all that we do, especially for the change we are seeking. It is a huge task; only He can empower us.

STATEMENT : The Church is good at discerning and deciding

- **Overall : Neither agree nor disagree****

X. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

What additional formation do I need to be a missionary disciple? Is the local community effective in catechising and passing on the faith? What tools are necessary for the Church to be truly synodal, listening and journeying together? How do we continue the listening and dialogue beyond this process so that the Church have a “lived synodality” as the Holy Father asks

- SHC offers opportunities for discussion, but the question is how to encourage people to take them up
- More attendance at Alpha would help an exchange of view; but it must be with willingness, not a chore or an obligation.
- Those who have attended an Alpha course seem always willing to talk to and encourage others to have the experience; is there an opportunity for an Alpha “taster”, using some of the video materials from the course ?
- Could short “trailers” be created to introduce issues for discussion ? Encourage discussion between church and diocese
- SHC offers opportunities for discussion , but the question is how to encourage people to take them up.
- Build a synodal relationship through culture, celebrating what is important to us and not tolerating what is unacceptable to us. A conversion is always a cause for celebration but happens more often perhaps than people think
- The internet affords opportunities for wide communication.
- Do not overlook the power of prayer in small groups; small groups give us the opportunity to listen too.
- Groups can be a strength of the church, but may begin to develop too strong a position: be vigilant.
- Do not overlook the strength of the family and family catechesis, family prayer, the Rosary.
- Adoration and Benediction are good times for discernment.
- Follow the example of Jesus , praying through the night at times.
- Jesus told us to give up everything we have and follow him.
- We need a deeper prayer life, so pray to the Holy Spirit to empower us to announce the Good News.
- Raise subjects with the diocese through mechanisms such as formal petitions
- Again, how to involve those who are not currently attending Mass?
- Continue at local level with a process such as this to discuss issues?
- Rather, use existing structures to facilitate more in-depth discussions on key subjects, such as the discussions at the Study Group which has so far discussed Fr James Mallon’s books on Divine Renovation, the Pope’s encyclical “Laudato Si’ “on caring for and protecting our common home, Human Trafficking and just about to start reading and discussing the Pope’s encyclical “Fratelli Tutti”
- Laudato Si’ went further than just the environment, it was about how we live. This was the role of government too, but there was little dialogue/ interaction evident between church and government

- Catholic newspapers were not typically a source of information for most, but for those who did read them, there was a lot of information but no emphasis on the importance of a listening church.
- There is a lot of opportunity within the SHC to participate so we must advantage of what is on offer to help create a synodal relationship
- The Pope is highly regarded as a communicator who uses modern communication methods very effectively

STATEMENT: The Church is good at being synodal

- **Overall : Neither agree nor disagree**

Statements were answered in groups, responding from 1-5.

1 Strongly disagree

2 Disagree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

4 Agree

5 Strongly agree