

SYNODAL PROCESS - CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH, CLIFTON

We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this initiative of the Holy Father.

Background

Corpus Christi Parish is very diverse socially, culturally and ethnically. There are parishioners from Southern India, Africa, the Philippines and Eastern Europe as well as those whose origins are in the U.K. or Ireland. The parish boundaries include a primary school (Blessed Robert Widmerpool) and the Clifton Campus of Nottingham Trent University.

The Process

On each of 3 weekends, the congregation at the 2 masses was asked to write answers to 2 questions, during 5 minutes after the homily. This yielded about 100 responses on each weekend, so this constitutes a representative sample of the parish and a balanced view of the questions asked. The responses were read through by a sub-group of the Parish Pastoral Council over several sessions, and common themes identified, as listed below. The sub-group all felt moved and humbled by the responses, which showed sincerity, thoughtfulness, awareness and spirituality. As well as feeding into the Synodal process, this exercise will allow the Parish Pastoral Council to take the expressed views forward in the further development of the Parish.

Q.1. My dream for the Church & my parish, to become more missionary

Being inclusive; attracting more people to mass, especially young people; parishioners more friendly with each other and newcomers; reaching out to the community, especially other churches and lapsed catholics; more social events and more devotion, e.g. Bible Group

Q.2. How do we achieve this dream, to develop or change what we are doing?

Publicise the positive achievements of the Catholic Church; more involvement in Caritas; be more ecumenical; more/different singing; encourage young people to make changes with adult support. A small but significant number said that there was no need to change/nothing to improve on

Q.3 Who are marginalised or separated from the Parish or society?

Many groups were mentioned here, and this list is roughly in order of the frequency with which the group was mentioned (most frequent first):

Homeless; elderly, housebound, disabled; LGBTQ?+; young people (including babies, who may feel unwelcome); single parents; bereaved; lapsed catholics; those without access to the internet; divorcees; refugees and asylum seekers; the sick, including the hospitalised; people in jail; substance misusers.

A number of parishioners said they did not know who the marginalised were: which may indicate a need for education/heightened awareness

Q.4. How can the Parish respond?

Show respect and pastoral sensitivity towards the LGBTQ?+ community; work with existing groups for the homeless, and promote work already being done; build on the multi-cultural nature of the Parish to be more welcoming and inclusive; greater involvement with international students in the community; enhance Ministry of the Sick, SVP, Guild of St Elizabeth; resume/continue live-streaming of mass; promote parish website; update our faith formation by courses etc; hold regular social events.

Q.5 (A) Voice of the Holy Spirit in my life

(B) Signs of the Holy Spirit in the life of my Parish

(A) in prayer and scripture; active participation in Mass and the Sacraments; in family life; in helping and guiding others; feeling empathy and compassion towards others; sharing joy, feeling protection; being tolerant and patient

(B) sense of community, in prayer and action; work of volunteers and lay ministers; new people in the Parish, including the young; music; sense of pride in the Church.

Q. 6. What steps is the Holy Spirit calling us to take?

Be accepting and welcoming, without prejudice or judgement; wish to attend Mass; practising God's word in our daily lives, including parish ministries and promoting parish unity; sharing our time and talents; involving young people, including going on pilgrimage; recognise gifts of the Holy Spirit; working together as a community, including care for God's creation; help the needy and less fortunate; promote devotional groups; examine the role of women in the Church and maybe women priests

Two Practical Actions:

1. **(Immediate).** Institute the practice of greeting and conversing with a neighbour at the start of weekend Mass. This aims to address the issues of welcoming, inclusivity, parish growth, and involvement which have been listed above.
2. **(Long term).** Arrange a social area within or adjacent to the church (at present there is none). This will address the issues of community outreach, need for social and devotional gatherings, giving practical support to the marginalised, all of which are listed above.

Responses from Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy; the children and staff met in House Teams to discuss the questions.

What are your dreams for our Church and School?

For our school to continue to be loving and friendly and help everyone to learn about themselves and God. For our Church to be very welcoming and hold welcoming days for all parts of the community.

We think we should welcome children from other non-Catholic schools to our schools.

Some young people find it hard to connect with the Church because they don't understand it, don't find it entertaining. We would like to get more young people to come to Church by inspiring them, having fun things like cake sales, playing chess after Church. We think this will make it more of a community. We want to have fun things to do before or after Church.

We would like more up-to-date hymns in our Church so we know them and better music that will inspire us. To have singing and praying is the heart of both our school and Church. Prayer life is important to us; we want to pray for our families.

For our school to continue to have child-led liturgies for young people.

For our Church to be full of people, kindness and love.

We would like to learn more about the Bible with Bible study groups for young people.

Who are the people who might feel left out or excluded from the Church?

Older people because they might get to Mass late or have difficulty getting there. Could we offer more help to enable them to visit Church or have visitors?

Disabled people can feel left out because they feel Church is not for them and not many young people go. Those who have lost their connection with God for whatever reason.

Some people are worried about getting COVID so may not want to visit Church as they are afraid, they could feel excluded.

How does the Holy Spirit inspire us?

It inspires us to spread the Good News, not just in our school but throughout the world which is what Jesus wants of us.

The Holy Spirit inspires us to pray more and connect with God.

To spread kindness and love to everybody, to be happy and loving, to be good and help others.

To make a difference and give money to those in need.