



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Parish Listening Sessions Synod Summary Report

This form is to be completed by the Parish Delegates, drawing on all the group listening sessions and activities that have taken place in the parish. It can be emailed to Synod@cliftondiocese.com or completed on-line at www.cliftondiocese.com/synod.

Parish Listening Session Synod Summary Report

Name of Parish and Deanery

Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury – Glastonbury Deanery

Name of Parish Priest

At the time of writing, we are without a Parish Priest.

We very much look forward to the arrival of our new Parish Priest, Fr Dominic Findlay-Wilson, at the end of February.

Name of Parish Delegate filling out this form

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Please provide a brief summary of your parish's listening session for the Foundational Question:

A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together". How is this "journeying together" happening today in your parish? How is the Holy Spirit inviting your parish community to grow in "Journeying together"? Where in these experiences do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

The responses to these Foundational questions, fundamental to the Synodality process, reveal the present lack of cohesion in our parish, which currently impinges on our ability to "journey together". This lack of togetherness has been amplified by covid, with many acknowledging the pandemic as the primary reason for the marked reduction (circa 50%) in numbers attending Mass over the last two years [Note 1-a]. With a predominantly elderly age profile, anxiety and concern over coming to Mass during the pandemic is understandable. For some, following Mass online, has been a "happy" alternative and has possibly become the "new norm" [Note 1-b].

For a small, but passionate number, the Papal recommendation and Diocesan ruling on the Latin Mass has created a division in the parish, with some feeling "shut out and excluded" and "saddened and dismayed". Others have opted to leave the parish and go to Mass elsewhere [Note 1-c]. At the same time, it appears that a significant number left the parish due to not liking the clericalism and more traditional approach of our departed parish priests [Note 1-d].

It was remarked that if we are to "journey together" we need to have a common destination in view and the journey could involve change, such as greater emphasis on growing the congregation (especially the younger generation), relieving the priest of many practical aspects of running the parish, and working for changes that would allow for married priests.

Many parishioners are concerned about the lack of young families coming to church, a factor that was less of an issue under previous parish priests, where children were more included in Mass [Note 1-e]. Again, the impact of the pandemic was acknowledged as a factor, as was the absence of a Catholic school in the parish.

Of concern to several long-standing members of the parish were the comments from newcomers, expressing their feeling of isolation and exclusion. Again, this has been magnified by Covid.

Glastonbury is identified nationally as a town for alternative life styles, and parishioners acknowledged the homeless and addicts as people on the edges of our community. Equally and less geographically specific, the divorced, the housebound and the elderly, immigrants arriving in our parish and LGBT members of our community are mentioned as currently not necessarily being part of the "journeying together" in our parish.

The recognition of "fault lines" in our parish may be the work of the Holy Spirit, prayed to before all our Listening Sessions, as are the many positive resolutions and actions that have already been put in place as a result of this Synodality process. For example, we have re-introduced the custom of welcoming people before Mass,

chatting and handing out bulletins and hymn books. Suggestions have been made as to how we can “reach out” to more people, such as handing out leaflets and booklets; organising events (for example musical evenings) to draw people into our church, and encouraging active engagement between parishioners and newcomers, so aiming to rectify the perception that we are “a cold parish” [Note 1-f].

Within the parish there is support for Churches Together in Glastonbury and during Christian Unity week our parish was well represented. The Food Bank is supported, helping those on the margins of society. Information is being gathered for the re-introduction of Instruction for children during Mass, and a member of the parish has suggested that her older children could be willing to mentor younger members who would like to serve on the altar. This would be inclusive of girls, re-establishing that tradition which was forbidden by our previous parish priests. We are confident too that our new parish priest will re-introduce a pastoral church council, which folded under our previous priests and was made difficult in any case during the pandemic. Suggestions have been voiced that the Narthex notice board could be more visual and engaging. It appears that we are hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit [see Notes 1-g, 1-h, 1-i 1-j].

The positive feedback and active involvement by many parishioners in the Foundational Question of the Synoldality process suggests that we are willing to “embark upon a new chapter of evangelisation marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come”, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis.

Core Question 1 – Listening

How is God speaking to us through the voices that are in our midst? How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore, including those on the peripheries? What space is there to listen to the voices on the peripheries, especially cultural groups, women, the disabled, those who experience poverty, marginalisation, or social exclusion?

The many responses to this question would appear to reflect the complex skills required in listening. Listening “with the heart” was acknowledged as a skill which we need to work at and pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit, and learn from others experienced in this field [Note 2-a]. It was noted that we need to learn how to be good listeners, allowing timid voices to be heard and allowing thoughts and ideas to be considered before a quick rejection [Note 2-b]. Comments were also made about the necessary environment receptive to listening, and it was acknowledged that the pandemic restrictions had seriously limited opportunities to listen [Note 2-c]. In the past, prayer groups, the Healing Ministry, Rosary sessions, and social gatherings offered opportunities where listening to each other was facilitated, in addition to the customary refreshments after Mass. Recently the 7:30 am prayer group has resumed, as the Traditional Latin Mass is no longer being said, following the departure of our previous Parish Priests, and a hope was expressed that with a new parish priest, and as we return to a sense of normality after the pandemic, prayer groups and the Legion of Mary will re-commence, with guidance from the Holy Spirit. Many parishioners hope for the re-establishment of the pastoral church council.

In addition to the hopes for a rapid post-Covid return to normality, many comments were made regarding a general need for improved communication, be it in the welcoming of newcomers to the parish or dissemination of information on parish matters, and also more global issues [see Note 2-d]. It was hoped that we could resume our support of organisations such as CAFOD.

Our listening sessions also revealed an openness and acceptance of the need for change within the parish, in line with wider changes in society. It was suggested that we need to accommodate working mothers, families and school children in our congregation, and be welcoming of the families, newly settled in our parish, arriving from other countries and regions. Currently, Mass times and other services generally better suit the retired, and concern was expressed that we need to listen and acknowledge the need to be flexible if we are going to attract and retain younger members of our parish [Note 2-e]. It was noted that technology could be better used to help involve more people in the church (online meetings, streaming of services etc.) [Note 2-f].

If this was possible it could create opportunities to engage with a wider community, possibly including “voices on the periphery of society”. Continuing the need for greater openness, it was suggested that invitations could be made to women speakers and ministers from other denominations, where the writings of Pope Francis are greatly respected, and the question of married priests was again raised, as was women priests. It was noted that in the Early Church there were women deacons, and the question “why not now?” was posed. However, it was mentioned

that whilst acknowledging the changes in society, we also must hold on to and respect our traditions [Note 2-g].

Many acknowledged that “listening with the heart” is deepened by being open to prayer and praying with others. To “listen with the ear of the heart” is a long-term process beginning with prayer and trusting that we are open to the Holy Spirit.

Core Question 2 – Speaking Out:

What enables or hinders you from speaking courageously, candidly, and responsibly in your parish and society. What space is there in your parish for the voice of people, including active and inactive members of our faith?

In the past “speaking courageously, candidly and responsibly” was the accepted practice in our parish, as was noted by parishioners in their responses to the question [Note 3-a]. It was mentioned that when Canon Law dictated the introduction of a finance committee in the parish, Father Kevin Knox-Lecky, the parish priest at the time, was adamant that he was an equal member of the committee, not the “boss”. The “clericalism” of our previous parish priests, with its innate hierarchical characteristic, made this less easy [Note 3-b]. Committees could discuss but the parish priest alone made all the decisions Under our most recent parish priests, parishioners representing organisations such as CAFOD, and local charities, were not supported (i.e. not invited to speak during mass as they used to be, or allowed to hand out charity boxes).

The omission of relevant subjects such as climate change, poverty, inequality, social injustice, from addresses by our former priests was also felt strongly [Note 3-c]. It was remarked that the pervading atmosphere provided little space for the voice of the people and therefore for “speaking courageously, candidly and responsibly”. This situation was exemplified by a comment made by a parishioner on the announcement that our parish, formerly Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury, was to be re-named as the Community of Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury reflecting that the parish was the centre of this newly formed monastic community. This newly established “modus vivendi” combined with the restrictions imposed during the Pandemic severely restricted “speaking out” [Note 3-d].

Several comments were made relating to the inadequacy of the “tools” that we have for communication, and strategies have been established to make the necessary improvements. It was suggested that the noticeboards in the Narthex need updating and could be used much more effectively, for example, as a visual aid to support fundraising for our urgent floor repair project. Plans to update the website are in place and it was suggested that the Healing Petitions book should be re-instated.

Finally, on a positive note, in the words of a parishioner: “with the Synodal process we have been given an opportunity to listen to each other and to be listened to”.

And in the words of Pope Francis: “he [God] makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew”, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis.

Core Question 3 – Sharing Responsibility for our Common Mission and Sharing Authority and participation

How are the baptised members of your parish able to participate in the mission of the Church to proclaim the Gospel? What hinders people from being active in your parish? How is authority or governance exercised in your local parish? How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice in your local parish?

The majority of responses to the first part of the question were very positive, demonstrating that parishioners believe they are free to participate and do take responsibility for our common mission, both in their personal lives and as members of the parish community [Note 4-a]. The importance of living our Faith by example was also mentioned by many parishioners and the poignant words of St Francis of Assisi were quoted: "preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words."

Our church is also the Shrine of Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury, and as one of the oldest Marian shrines in Europe, attracts visitors of all ages and nationalities throughout the year [Note 4-b, c and d].

Our church also hosts the annual Diocesan Pilgrimage in the grounds of Glastonbury Abbey, which until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539 was a foremost Abbey in the country, second only to Westminster Abbey [Note 4-e]. The pilgrimage attracts fellow Catholics from around the Diocese, as well as national and international tourists visiting the Abbey, and provides an opportunity to proclaim our faith. The praying of the Rosary in procession around the Abbey grounds, demonstrates the deep devotion to Our Lady. The archaeological remains of the Abbey's Lady Chapel suggest that it was built on the site of a former church which was destroyed by fire in 1184. Visitors to the Pilgrimage often comment on the warmth of the welcome shown by our parishioners working there, as well as the excellent quality of the tea and cakes! As a consequence of the global pandemic the Pilgrimage was cancelled in 2020 and 2021. The commitment and energy of our parishioners in the organisation of the Pilgrimage exemplifies participation in the mission of the Church in the past, whilst comments in the Listening Sessions of the Synodality process reflect the awareness of the need to re-energise our mission [Note 4-f].

Sharing responsibility for our common mission was also seen to be exemplified in participation in the local Churches Together, and Christian Unity meetings, as well as the World Day of Prayer [Note 4-g]. There were however some contrary comments, suggesting that "we do not proclaim the Gospel" and that we are either "too timid" or simply not active in participating in the mission, intimating that more energy and focus is required by us as parishioners [Note 4-h].

A parishioner quoted from our visiting priest, Canon Michael FitzPatrick, "This is a time we must change", a comment reinforced in Pope Francis's work (*The Joy of the Gospel*, see Note 4-i). Pope Francis's feelings on our duty to our environment were also quoted by a parishioner and referred to in our parish dialogues [Note 4-j].

The consensus of opinion regarding the “sharing of authority and participation in our church” reflected the autocratic governance which was imposed by our previous parish priests, summarised by the comment: “There was no consultation regarding decision making, as the structures for shared decisions, e.g. the Pastoral Council, were disbanded. Our parish church became a monastic place of worship” [Note 4-k]. Many positive comments were made concerning the hope for the re-establishment of the pastoral church council; improved census details collection; and the creation of a welcome pack to encourage those who have been reluctant to return to church after the pandemic, as well as for newcomers [Note 4-l].

Without doubt, the combination of the pandemic and the clerical, hierarchical approach of our previous priests has impinged on the effectiveness of both “teamwork and co-responsibility” within our parish. This was reflected by the comment: “there is no team-work or co-responsibility practised in the parish, except for the Choir and flower arranging”. Historically, these elements had been excellent under different priests, with “Healing Ministers, Catechists, a team who produced a quarterly magazine, The Shrine, and volunteers for social events”. Throughout the pandemic there was cooperation between the Eucharistic Ministers of the Blessed Sacrament, who organised themselves to take communion to the housebound.

The Synodality process has facilitated expressions of frustration and a great deal of positive energy, with many thought-provoking comments, such as: “we need to look at ourselves and ask if we are really sharing responsibility” [Note 4-m]. On the subject of participation there were some comments concerning a need to review the language used in the Mass, to enable greater understanding by children and those newly received into the Church.

Core Question 4 – Discerning and Deciding

How does your parish use the methods of listening and speaking (consultation) to make decisions? How does your parish promote participation in decision making within the hierarchical Church? Does the decision making of your parish help you to listen to all members of the community, including those who are on the peripheries of parish life?

It will be apparent from all the comments reported in the previous three core questions that “consultation” in decision making has not been a common practice in our parish of late. Historically, decision making was an inclusive process [Note 5-a]. The restrictions imposed under our last parish priests were exemplified by the following comment: “The Holy Spirit has endowed us all with particular gifts. I am a Reader and our former priests/monks introduced a public promise when we were commissioned which we, Readers, read aloud at Mass, where we promised we would not alter any word of Scriptural text. Some of us wished to do this to make the language inclusive. It was not allowed. Previous priests in the past have themselves changed the text to make them inclusive and allowed Readers the freedom to do the same”.

The opportunity to have open and frank discussions, as presented by the Synod process, was welcomed and recognised [Note 5-b]. In relation to decision making within the hierarchical church, there was a positive suggestion that we have a “link” person in the parish whose sole job is to liaise between the parish and the Diocese [Notes 5-c and 5-d]. This would also allow for a more inclusive decision-making process, unlike the authoritarian traditions which characterised the church and society in the past [Note 5-e].

The Synodality Listening Sessions also highlighted the need to provide support to new members of our parish, who possibly perceive themselves as sitting on the peripheries of parish life [Note 5-f]. The need for a more active role in taking the Church out into the community was also voiced, using personal gifts of communication to respond to articles in the media, and thus reaching a wider audience.

Core Question 5 – Celebration

How do prayer and liturgical celebrations, especially Sunday Mass, inspire and guide your parish? How does your prayer life and celebration of the Mass inspire and inform your personal decisions and decisions in the parish community? How does the parish invite all baptised Catholics, including our ethnic communities, youth, families and persons with disabilities and their families, into the active life of the parish, especially Sunday Mass?

The written and spoken answers to the first two sections of this final question reflect the profound faith of our parishioners and the importance that it has in inspiring both their individual lives, and for some, the life of the parish. This was passionately expressed by one parishioner who wrote, "Yes, the Eucharist is the centre of my life. It is the beginning of the mission for the week. The joy I feel from the Eucharist, I want to share with people....it is one thing everyone (at Mass) has in common."

The pandemic lockdown had various consequences. For some, taking part in live streaming of Mass was inspirational [Note 6-a]. For others, reading from their Mass Missal was more helpful, but for many, receiving Grace from the Eucharist was mentioned as pivotal to living our faith, and bringing us close as a Christian family [Note 6-b]. The schism resulting from the introduction of the Latin Mass by our previous priests, was referred to [Note 6-c].

Following from the observation that numbers attending Mass had fallen since the pandemic, suggestions were made that the parish could use electronic communication to reach the elderly, maybe an Online Group, and a lift rota to help transport elderly to Mass. Concern was expressed about the dwindling numbers of young members of the congregation and ideas for a Youth Group Leader and the re-establishment of Catechism classes were voiced.

The words, "with Hope, Loving Kindness, Friendship and hopefully more loving kindness", were written in response to the question as to how we as a parish invite Catholics, old and new, and other members of the community from all walks of life to share in the active life of our parish. These words echo Pope Francis's reference in his book, 'The Joy of the Gospel', "What counts above all else is 'Faith working through love'" (Gal 5:6).

In conclusion, the Synodality process is being welcomed by many parishioners as marking a "new beginning" for a parish steeped in history, with a profound devotion to our Christian faith and a willingness and commitment to embrace the core messages reiterated by Pope Francis.



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APPENDICES

St Mary's Glastonbury

Note 1: Foundational Question – “Journeying Together”

1-a. “Current attendance at St Mary’s is only 50% of what it used to be, and we need to reach out to those who no longer come.”

In answer to the question: “do you know anyone who no longer walks with us who used to?”, one parishioner wrote: “Yes! 2 traditional priests/monks, and a congregation of 50 plus people and growing. Especially young families and about 9 new vocations!”

“Historically, people have been given a warm welcome at St Mary’s. Covid restrictions paused this activity, but it is being re-established.”

1-b. “Many watch mass online, now sometimes daily.” “People are getting into the habit of staying at home.” “Online mass has provided a very personal experience of praying.”

1-c. “Those who prefer Latin Mass have been shut out and excluded from parish and diocesan life. Ignored by our Bishop we feel unwanted and excluded now. Those of us who want to receive Communion kneeling, and on the tongue, out of reverence and love of Our Lord, are made to feel ridiculous...traditional Catholics are the new lepers.”

“Several parishioners were saddened and dismayed by the sudden cancellation of the old rite masses last July. Some who attended these masses now no longer walk with us and so a plan of catechesis should be developed.”

1-d. “Those parishioners who felt that we were being divided by the Pre Vatican II theology of our last priests and therefore went to Mass in other parishes in the Deanery. The church and particularly our parish have been hurt by this division and we are in sore need of catechesis to address this.”

1-e. “I came 14 years ago with my husband. There used to be a Family Mass. We used to think that we were a small, friendly community. There were children helping and many families attending Mass.”

1-f. “This seemed to be a very cold parish due to the time of covid restrictions, but this has changed dramatically at the start of this year with the reintroduction of welcomers.”

1-g. “I have been coming to this parish for sixty years. We have to trust in Our Lord. This church is so special.”

1-h. “I came from another parish. Underneath here is a parish that has been working hard. We need to work together today this has been the first time I have seen this happen.”

1-i. “Our Church is an oasis of peace within Glastonbury, where we live happily alongside other faiths...so I feel the Church itself needs to stay peaceful and quiet and be in the stillness and quiet of the Holy Spirit.”

1-j. I was received into the church in January last year. I had not spoken to a soul however coming here today... it has been brilliant. I am feeling a lot more cheerful.

Note 2: Core Question 1 – Listening

2-a. "We can deepen our listening by being open to prayer and pray with others".

2-b. "I feel that we do not do enough listening to each other as many times people jump in with their opinions...so no one has a chance to speak really."

2-c. "I do think that people in our church listen to each other. Because of Covid, communication has been restricted. The wearing of masks has been a liability to being able to communicate. Over the years that I have I have been in this parish I have found that we are like a family and we do care about each other."

2-d. "We are the church. It is our responsibility to be informed about the culture in which we live, both good and bad aspects, and to respond to the needs of society, our own and world-wide, including issues like climate change, social justice, pollution, poverty, racism, inequality which Pope Francis has asked us to actively address in the way we live. Forming study groups and prayer groups to consider what "*Laudato Si*" means to us at St Mary's might be a way forward."

2-e. "All our Masses and other services, and social events need to be timed to suit the needs of potential attendees, e.g. morning masses on weekdays to attract young mothers after they have done the school run, and also welcome pre-school children with their mums. World Days of Prayer are often too early."

2-f. "Technology can help (online meetings, streaming of services etc.). Need to try to help those without technical experience, as they are otherwise left on the margins. Recent Churches Together meetings have been on weekdays, technology could help to involve those who aren't available then. Would be useful to build an online community and involve young people."

2-g. "We need to aim to interact with other denominations and be prepared to learn from them. We could invite women speakers and ministers from other denominations to come to our Church and talk. The Church needs to change – married priests and women priests. There are so many positions and tasks women could do given the chance - so many talents wasted. In the early Church women were deacons so why not now? We need to hold on to our tradition of unmarried priests - I would not feel comfortable with married or women priests."

Note 3: Core Question 2 – Speaking out

3-a. "Historically communication has been good." "Communication has never been a problem in the past. There were social events, meetings, talks, prayer groups, fundraising, and visiting the sick at home. Weekly bulletins and the quarterly magazine, "The Shrine" were filled with information."

3-b. "People will not go to a church where clergy 'talk down' to them in their homilies and dismiss them".

3-c. "The voice of people representing such organisations as CAFOD has been discouraged and issues such a climate change, poverty, inequality, social injustice,

have not been addressed from the pulpit or in Bidding Prayers. As a community we did not pray for the success of COP 26. It was as though it was nothing to do with us."

3-d. "Our formal systems of communication have been disbanded and we hope that as we rebuild our parish, new systems will be established and our community will grow in the love of God guided by the Holy Spirit."

Note 4: Core Question 4 – Sharing responsibility for our common mission and sharing authority and participation

4-a. "It begins on every level, first inwards then unfolding outwards with constant eyes on the Holy Trinity and prayerful intentions to do our best".

4-b. "This church is so special. I was here once and a lady visiting from Germany walked in and said that the church was absolutely amazing!"

4-c. Glastonbury has been a "Shrine of Our Lady since earliest days of Christianity" (Shrine website) "as a place of pilgrimage it reminds us in an earthly way of our pivotal journey in faith" Words of Father Knox-Lecky , former parish priest of St Mary's. The Shrine was canonically restored by the Holy See in 1955. Ten years later the statue of Our Lady was crowned with gold, as authorised by Pope Paul VI. She is one of only 7 Madonna in the UK, crowned with gold. A parishioner wrote "Over the years, the Shrine of Our Lady has been a focus for those who have the gift of faith and those who are seeking it. The pilgrimage ...was a powerful and public sign of a worshipping community."

4-d. "We participate in the mission of the Church to proclaim the gospel by being a church that is open to everyone, where people of any race and colour come in off the streets locally or from other countries...and on entering the church they feel the presence of Jesus and the Angels."

4-e. "It was the richest monastery in England at the end of the Saxon period and was second only to Westminster at the close of the Middle Ages... The Lady Chapel was venerated as an associative relic of the early church at Glastonbury...which was destroyed by fire in 1184", extracts from *Glastonbury Abbey, Archeological Investigations 1904-79* by Roberta Gilchrist and Cheryl Green.

4-f. "In Baptism we are baptised prophet, priest and King. As prophets we are called to read the signs of the times and respond to them. The Gospel proclaims the love of God as Father and Creator. and each other as well as His creation, of which we are an integral part. We have a responsibility to love God and each other as well as His creation of which we are an integral part."

4-g. "I participate ... by carrying the Easter Cross with other churches and by organising the Food Bank for the local community."

4-h. "I do not think that we are participating in the Mission. We come to Mass on Sunday but what are we doing from Monday to Saturday? We should be living the Mission outside of Mass."

Also "The church is marginalised in the modern world and we must stress that the Gospel is relevant in our modern world, it is not standing on a soap box, it is about the way we live our lives. We can spread the Gospel by example, but we do need to be bold and speak out about our faith"

4i. "The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and creativity of the pastor and the community." *The Joy of the Gospel* by Pope Francis 2013

4j. "The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversation. Living a vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience", *Laudato Si* – 2;17

"We are the Church; it is our responsibility to be informed about the culture in which we live, both good and bad aspects, and to respond to the needs are our society, our own and world-wide, including issues like climate change, social justice, pollution, racism, inequality which Pope Francis has asked us to actively address by the way we live."

4-k. "As our former priests were of a clerical nature, lay involvement was minimal."

"Recently, from the top down".

"As we have had a Monastic presence in our Church this has been difficult as the priests have really kept themselves to themselves."

"There was no consultation regarding decision making as the structures for shared decisions, e.g. the Pastoral Council were disbanded and our parish became a monastic place of worship".

"As the previous parish priests were monastic, they made decisions behind closed doors...hopefully our new parish priest will be more aware of our spiritual as well as our material needs."

4-l. "People have attended Mass and then gone home without engaging with anyone else ... We need to welcome people, ask their names and, if appropriate, invite them to receive a blessing...We have the challenge of being a very scattered parish geographically. Would it help if we had a book where people could write their details ... or a Welcome Pack?"

4-m. "Are we really part of a team? We may not have volunteers simply because people are waiting to be asked."

"On a practical level we can all do a bit more in helping with the various tasks in order to keep the parish going, and not rely on a few people, some of whom are inevitably getting older!"

Note 5: Core Question 5 – Discerning and Deciding

5-a. "There seems little opportunity at the moment. However, in the past this was a very active parish, so we hope that with a new parish priest and relaxation of Covid restrictions things will improve".

5-b. "There is no forum for accountable and transparent decision making. The synod is the first opportunity", and, "We currently have no way to listen to all the members of the community other than the Synodal journey the Holy Spirit is inviting us to do".

5-c. "It is difficult to support the Bishop in practice as we do not know what is happening at a Diocesan level".

5-d. "We can support them (Bishops and priests) indirectly. They have their roles and responsibilities and as there are fewer priests now, their workload is heavier...WE must all be willing to help. Having an active group of parishioners in place...thanks to the Synod process...we can go forward."

5-e. "I think that the parish has always felt the need to support the Bishops and Priests, as one has seen them in a position of authority, but now people have different attitudes and they want more say in the future of the Church".

5-f. "I am not initially from the Catholic church, and I have some limits as to what I can do."

Note 6: Celebration

6-a. "Attending Mass online with a charismatic priest has helped my spiritual journey and brought me closer to God This priest is filled with the Holy Spirit and teaches us how our loving, beautiful God loves us."

6-b. "Spending time in prayers and liturgical celebrations bring the community and people within the parish close as a Christian family under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When we can celebrate with Jesus in a place where people can pray and sing together one's souls is uplifted."

6-c. The Eucharist is a centre of my life. Under the former set up the parish was split into two separate communities and there was little interaction between those who like the Latin Masses and the rest of the parish community. Now there is just one type of Mass, the parish seems to be happier"
