



From Parish to Mission

Parish	St Joseph's, Pontefract
Parish Priest	Canon Tim Wilely
Facilitators	Carmen Pearce, Mary Day, Ryan Wilkinson
Date of Meeting	Wednesday 17th November
Number	11 inc. Canon Tim
Approx Age Range	27-80?
I. The journeying companions	
As we journey together let us look around. Who are you on the journey with and what persons or groups are marginalised and why?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We feel everyone is welcomed and included in our church. X2 - As I don't consider myself to be part of a marginalised group, I don't feel I can speak for those who are, but I do feel our church tries to make everyone feel welcome. - We feel that no groups are purposely marginalised. However, there would appear to be those who do not feel encouraged to participate. - Companions – friends, family, colleagues. Marginalised (not intentionally) – housebound, youths. - Some groups in our parish appear not to feel included in parish events because of their nationality or age. - I feel the above is not the case. - The Church should do more to engage people, and keep them engaged, in the Church. - This process in itself hasn't captured all groups. Lack of men and people of different nationalities at the meeting. 	
II. Listening	
How might our local Church better listen to lay people (and especially young people and women) and minorities and those who are not respected?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To have regular meetings and open discussions. For the Catholic Church to be more accepting of women in the Church. X2 - The Church needs to find ways to encourage or incentivise young people to get involved in the life of the Church through groups or events maybe by appealing to things that interest 	





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them e.g. environment and social justice. The make-up of tonight's group is interesting: 11 women and 1 man – all white and mostly middle aged and older even though our congregation is much more diverse (age groups excluded). X2

- We feel that more informality is needed when inviting young people to meet and talk about parish matters.
- I appreciate being asked about parish decisions and having the freedom to share my ideas however and whenever I like rather than in front of everyone.

III. Speaking out

How can everybody be encouraged to communicate appropriately what is important to them?

- Listening, respect, inclusion. A good leader in the Church.
- Fostering an environment in which people don't feel like they're being judged and are respected.
- Ensuring that when opinions have been voiced, that they are not only heard, they are acted on in a visible and concrete way.
- Younger people are naturally communicating using social media. The parish could encourage dialogue and discussion using this. However, it would need to be carefully supervised!
- Listening and respect for all.
- Avoid social media as I feel it can be a platform for disrespect.
 - Or *educate* our young people about how to use social media in a respectful way to spread and listen to Christian values. X2
- Some people are scared to share their opinion for fear of backlash, trolls etc.

IV. Celebrating

How might I be better able to participate in Mass and other liturgies?

- Music, for me, contributes greatly to my liturgical experience.
- Mass and liturgies affect total outlook on life.
- Provides focus on our daily lives from a Christian perspective. X2
- Possibly having sight of next Sunday's reading to encourage a deeper understanding of the weeks focus (not everybody has a missal).





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- To be active in the Church, and more people to get involved in the activities of daily management of the Church i.e. leading prayer groups etc.
- Mass and other liturgies are the foundation of our faith and provide a sense of community as we come together.
- A deeper level of participation could come from personal reflections guided for example by CAFOD's weekly reflections.
- Being at Mass is a comfort for a lot of people.

V. Co-responsible in the mission

How can each Baptised person become a "missionary disciple", revealing Christ to others through their words and deeds?

- Through the way you are as a person and the way you live your life. X3
- Being *strong* enough in the workplace or other settings to express a viewpoint which reflects our Christian values. X3
- Deepen our knowledge and faith by prayer and study of scripture.
- Talking to your friends about your faith and how it sustains you.
- Treating other people with kindness, respect and care.
- Being prepared to recognise and share talents and skills that are relevant.

VI. Dialogue in Church and society

How might we improve our conversations within our diocesan family and also outside of it, (for example with people of different faiths, those who have no faith and those who have particular roles and duties in society)?

- It's about respect for others and being open to other faiths (multi faith meetings). X4
- To improve our own knowledge of different faiths (Ignorance provokes fear). X4
- Churches together services, alternating with different faith churches. X3
- By listening carefully to everyone's point of view even if we don't agree with them. By inviting others to take part or witness our faith and practices e.g. open days at the church. X2
- Perhaps arrange visits to other religion's places of worship e.g. mosque, Hindu Temple etc.

VII. With the other Christian denominations

Are our relations with our Christian brothers and sisters good? How might they be improved?





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- Fair! Interdenominational prayer groups and services. X2
- Due to COVID, relationships have not been helped to develop.
- Due to COVID, people have thought more of the practical needs of others.
- Relations with other brothers and sisters in Christ are not as good as they could be.
- See others as equals and respect other faiths.
- We need to encourage more people to get involved with inter-faith activities/events.
- We need to make people feel more comfortable about entering a church that is unfamiliar to them – perhaps by arranging visits to other Christian churches for groups and even starting doing this with groups of children or young people.

VIII. Authority and participation

How might we develop teamwork and a sense of co-responsibility in our local Church?

- Example: Leader has promoted and developed a team of stewards during the pandemic. Friendship and faith group newly formed. Encourage music group participation. Prayer group can be re-instated.
- Be open and inviting to new participants. X3
- It's got to be something the individual is interested in. X2
- Guidance about what areas of responsibility need to be focussed on.
- Need information re groups etc. and clear responsibility direction from the priests.
- Perhaps create a booklet outlining the parish's groups – what they do, what it involves and a person to contact.
- We need to try to get young people involved, giving them a sense of responsibility and engagements.

IX. Discerning and deciding

How might we improve the process of decision-making in our local Church, so that we truly listen and recognise that the Holy Spirit can speak through each one of us?

- Everyone needs to be consulted. This could be by way of parish meetings – but not just a select committee. A good example in this church would be when Canon Tim asked parishioners' opinions about the timescale for lifting COVID restrictions. X3
- Set up a new parish council. Find a method of encouraging young people to contribute to decision making. X2





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- Involve the parish and school together.
- The opinions of *all* ages must be valued and therefore the younger members of the parish really encouraged to take a more active part in decision making.
- Need a listening council and to communicate with the congregations.

X. Forming ourselves in synodality

What formation is necessary within the local Church if we are to become better at listening to one another and sharing our insights with one another?

- Perhaps some form of inter-cultural events so that we learn to understand other people's experiences and therefore them better. Group reflections or study. X3
- Introduce activities that allow people to share skills, knowledge and experiences. X2
- Maybe re-introduce some Parish events. X2
- Prayers.
- I feel that more people from the parish get opportunities to interact with the children in our schools.

Other Comments

- Parents have a responsibility to educate their children about the Catholic faith and bring them to church.
- How do we get parents who don't go to church to teach their children about the faith?
- Need to learn how to keep parents and children in church and learn what motivates them to have their children receive the Sacraments.
- The Church needs to recognise that women have a key role to play in the hierarchy of the Church and its survival – not just religious sisters but lay women too.

