



## The Synodal Document of the Archdiocese of Glasgow- Abridged Version.

### Introduction.

This is a journey, a process, not a plan. It is a call to all the Baptised and beyond to be involved in shaping the church today and in the future by listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us through each other. We are in this together, lay people and clergy- co- responsible for the life of our church. Action must now take place to build on this consultative phase.

The following are a synthesis  
of the ten questions posed by the Holy See.(Vatican)

#### **1. Companions on the journey.**

Our companions on our Christian pilgrimage are those we live with now: believers and non-believers, the wounded and rejected, those who have passed onto new life in eternity. Many parishes felt they welcomed all pilgrims on this journey, others felt they had a lot to do to become more welcoming. There was a strong desire to be a more welcoming church, a less judgemental community by welcoming the divorced, those who have faced the trauma of abortion, those with alternative sexual orientations, those who lack the conviction of faith. The grass roots church really does want to welcome everyone and ignore no one. People are sad when the church they live in is not as welcoming as it should be and when priests and people do not work in tandem on this.

## **2. Listening.**

Many spoke with pride about our priests who were good listeners and who were approachable. People take pride in a priest who is helpful. It was also noted that in order to improve our future we must build on the past. We must listen to the wisdom and traditions inherent in our own faith. We must pay attention to all our companions on the journey, from whom we can learn much. When we don't listen to others our church is poorer and impoverished. Through the very process of dialogue and genuine encounter with another we are changed.

## **3. Speaking Out.**

Within the church we need to listen, we need to allow others to speak out. We need to let people share their experiences and know we do not have all the answers and that pre packaged solutions do not encourage openness and dialogue. "Cover ups" has damaged the church's ability to be taken seriously especially by our own young people. Issues that Catholics wish to speak up about are:

The role of women in our church. The ordination of women.

Global warming and the destruction of the environment.

Peace in our world.

Eradication of poverty.

Married clergy.

The abuse scandal.

The scandal of accumulated wealth in the face of so much poverty in our society.

Access to the Tridentine Mass.

(some of these will shock some and delight others, but they are among the topics that came up continually) It is in the collective choir of humanity that the Spirit's voice is clearly heard. People say they are comfortable speaking of their faith in their own environment, but lack the confidence to speak out in other faith settings or in hostile settings. More help from priests is desired as is the desire to interpret the changes in society from a gospel perspective ie helping God people interpret the signs of the times by the light of faith.

## **4. Celebration.**

Celebration is integral to the life of a Catholic. Mass and other celebrations are generally thought to be of a good quality, uplifting and inspiring. The increase of lay participation is very welcome, although it is

noted that many parishes struggle to recruit new faces to these valued ministries. It was also noted that the efforts during the pandemic to make worship more accessible was very welcome. It was also mentioned that this should be extended to assist the housebound, but noted also that it should not be the norm, as building community is our aim. Technology should be explored in terms of on going faith formation.

### **5. Responsibility for Common Mission.**

Being Baptised should bring an understanding that you must live your faith in an overt way and be involved in the mission of the church. Thankfully many within our parishes feel this commission to express their faith in a way beyond celebrating Sunday Mass and in personal prayer. They make the community more complete and more alive through their commitment to education, social services, pastoral services. Foodbanks, catechesis, bereavement ministry, Marys Meals, Jesuit Missions, SVdP, Eucharistic Ministry to the sick and housebound and many, many more. Our young people often have a different view of the common mission of the church. Often they don't see the responsibility they genuinely feel towards others as springing from a faith perspective; there is a disconnect between charitable acts and the faith that inspires them. Often they don't see the churches work out on the streets. Co responsibility for the churches mission is the way to keep people on board with the churches mission.

### **6. Dialogue.**

Within our own community there is a great need for dialogue, so many of our own people do not know of the richness of our churches self-understanding, particularity our young people. The dialogue between the church and the world is too often confined to the pulpit, with very few hearing a message that is good but its communication is ineffective. Dialogue concerns, not just what the Catholic church wants to say but what it may also hear. It is a two way dynamic. When we become like the world we empty our message of vitality. We need always to be counter cultural or celebrate culture when it is life giving and of God. More effective adult formation would help the laity be more confident in doing this.

### **7. Ecumenism.**

Must be a part of the daily life of our parishes. It is not an add on. Too often it depends on good personal relationships between our priests and

local clergy. We must also be upfront that sectarianism is a blight on our city of Glasgow and has no place in the life of our churches.

### **8. Authority and Participation.**

The church is a community more than an institution. We are participants in this great commission from God, "to make disciples of all the nations." We need to increase opportunities for formation of the Baptised, ( an RCIA for Catholics) we need to encourage young people to have a more positive view of participating in church life. We need to develop and use the spiritual and other gifts of the laity in the work of evangelisation. Councils at parish, deanery and diocesan level should assist in allowing a greater participation in decision making. Oversight from the diocese would assist parishes that are not able to be as supportive to their locality as they could be.

### **9. Discerning and deciding.**

We need to make decisions about what the Holy Spirit is saying to our whole community. A change of culture is needed in terms of co-responsibility for the direction of the church. We have many "intentional" disciples who can help here. Leadership in the laity and clergy need to be reformed here to be more discerning and more aware of how synodality works.

### **10. Forming ourselves in Synodality.**

Synodality means being open to change, aware of the need for on going learning, adherence to the tenants of the faith and a readiness to read the signs of the times in the light of that faith. It requires self reflection and a willingness to contribute the common good. This is a form of inner renewal, that may be difficult for some, but without betraying the faith would be able to prevent it become a rigid one size fits all mould. It is about inclusion, welcome, diversity, faithfulness and sharing.

# **Appendices.**

## **1. Schools.**

For many of our young people they experience the church alive in their school rather than in their parish. In our primaries, engagement with the parishes is strong, especially around the Sacramental events. Attendance at Mass however is weak and indicates a disconnect between parish/school and home. Perhaps more energy could be focused on parental formation.

In our secondaries there is an inspiring effort at charitable works, care for the environment etc. Also here there is often a disconnect for they don't see or hear of the church saying anything about this. Young people are also very sensitive to duplicity in the life of the church. They desire a church of honesty and openness.

## **2. Special issues.**

### **Children and Adults with individual needs.**

The church has a particular responsibility to those who feel vulnerable or who find themselves on the margins. We need to develop a culture of inclusion, especially as some are not visible. When one is excluded all are impoverished.

### **The Role of Women.**

If we do not hear the voice of women we are not listening to the whole church. Many advocate the ordination of women as priests and deacons.

### **Social Media.**

A group to explore better use of social media for our own diocese should be assembled. A diocesan app is a possibility. We could combine this with the need for greater lay formation.

### **Adult & Youth Formation.**

There are both very good parish initiatives and some specialised group initiatives that could wisely be built upon. A coordinated diocesan planning could be useful here.

### Church Structures.

A diocesan policy on parish life would be helpful, so that parishioners would know what they can expect in terms of service and provision.

### Extended Deanery Meetings.

Those who revisited this previous arrangement to assist with their deanery synthesis felt it was really useful and invigorating.

### Diocesan.

Overall planning to ensure priests are not overburdened by administration and maintenance and freed to be pastors.

### Tridentine Rite of Mass.

A clear call was made to ensure adequate provision for the celebration of Mass for those who wish to worship in this Rite.