



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@cliftdioocese.com](mailto:Synod@cliftdioocese.com) or completed on-line at [www.cliftdioocese.com/synod](http://www.cliftdioocese.com/synod).

## Parish Listening Session Synod Summary Report

Name of Parish and Deanery

Cathedral Church of SS Peter & Paul

Name of Parish Priest

Canon Bosco MacDonald

Name of Parish Delegate filling out this form

Wendy Allen

Contact Details of Parish Delegate 1

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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.

*We held a range of listening events – a series of 3 evenings in person (20-30 people) a series of 3 evenings on ZOOM (8); One Saturday morning (12) one Saturday afternoon (?). We put up a listening wall – about 46 people participated in this in total. We opened an email address – about 20 contributions including some lengthy ones listed in the appendix.*

There was a marked contrast between those who had a good experience of journeying together, participating in various smaller groups associated with the parish, and those who felt cut off, or lonely, or were hungry for more, both socially and spiritually. There was some sorrow, anger and disappointment about ways of journeying together that had ceased, in particular the pastoral council. We spoke about the particular ethos of a Cathedral parish, and the importance of a ministry of welcoming and of a need to provide good "landing places" for enquirers and newcomers in our particular context. There had been particular difficulties because of COVID, but a good few felt this simply exposed a previous "disconnect" for many - not all people want to connect; but many do. We reflected on the different ways people want to journey together or not at different ages and stages of life. We pondered whether to simply "come to mass" was sufficient, and whether other engagement was essential. The majority of the people who participated in the listening sessions wanted more community experiences and more engagement with each other, while recognising this is not what everyone wants. Social interaction helps with journeying together – how can we meet together for Mass and not know each other? This can be worship and formation events but a social dimension is needed. There was joy from rhythm of the liturgy - the quality and variety of the ways the mass is offered, and the homilies given. We were conscious however of some barriers to accessing mass, to journeying together and to feel we belong which are explored more fully in other questions – among these we spoke about age, caring responsibilities, being single, feeling "outside the rules" in our ethical understanding or actions, worries that we might say something that is not "approved of".

We spoke about it being each of our responsibility to listen to the Holy Spirit and act on the promptings we felt – that welcoming and community were down to each of us – and not simply a problem for the clergy or for "somebody else" to sort out! But we also said that sometimes we do act on a prompting, and we feel squashed by a dismissive or negative response to our efforts or suggestions. Many participants expressed their hope that this "listening" exercise might be the beginning of a new phase, and are looking forward to being more engaged with one another in the future, and participating in a renewed parish life.

The theme of missing "young people" was a recurring in all our discussions, and ably gathered together by our youngest delegate: "Regarding the support and formation to be provided to a hungry youth population of a variety of backgrounds. The young after confirmation are left "on their own" spiritually and are finding it hard to be part of the church when it comes to decisions. We all know how much the sacraments are

fundamentals to our faith and us being the Catholic so how comes there is less and less exposition of the blessed sacrament and time for confessions. Supporting the youth and any new project ideas they may have (online ministries, helping out the marginalised) and also giving them responsibilities in the church is essential for ensuring continuity and longevity of our traditions.”

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### 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?

Never thought of God speaking to me through others but this has made me think.

God speaks in all sorts of places but it's not easy hearing the voice of God. Others may influence the way I think about God.

Conscious that there are areas of disagreement between those who are “in the midst”. We named some! How can we genuinely explore these differences without hostility? Some feel that Vatican 2 was the best thing – and has been somehow a missed opportunity – others that we lost too much or the old reverence and awe – and that we now dis-respect the holiness of the sacraments. Some feel confused by these arguments; some affirm the certainties of the old catechism. One person spoke of the negative experience of literally having the catechism “beaten into them”. Some feel strongly that a call to the priesthood should be open to testing for all the baptised – while others want the current practice or restricting it to celibate males maintained. Which voices are being prompted by the Holy Spirit and which are not? Many delegates spoke of the views of young baptised Catholics they know, or those who don't come any more – who disagree with what they understand to be the Church's stance on women in the priesthood, or homo-sexuality. Do we discount those voices? Is the Holy Spirit speaking through them?

There were some who felt strongly that the list of those considered “on the peripheries” was itself fundamentally flawed. Among those present were members of those groups: women, the disabled, the poor, diverse “cultural groups”. Are we to think of ourselves as on the peripheries? Equally there were those present who feel on the margins but whose identity was not listed.

LGBTQI, single(never married, divorced, widowed), childless, former-prisoners, mental illness for example. Who are “we” and who are “they”? Where do we draw our boundaries? Where did Jesus draw boundaries? Realisation that to be Catholic is to be universal

The church feels to be good at putting up barriers or hurdles to belonging and participation. Many who used to come don't come because they can't conform (for many reasons) to being a “good catholic”. What is a “good catholic”? We are all “sinners, loved and redeemed”. Why do some “sinners” simply stay away, while others “keep quiet and come anyway”?

We spoke about the barrier of “cultural dissonance” – we need to do more to help enquirers with our “strange ways”. Most of what we take for granted is not familiar – people worry about doing the wrong thing – even as simple when to stand and sit. The suggestion to provide more opportunities for enquirers, and more prayers or other groups that are not “mass” for those who are wanting to find out about Catholicism or Christianity would be helpful. One person was honest enough to say “The marginalised are noisy and disruptive people so when they come into church do we help them? Are we open to all sorts of people coming in?”. That challenged us.

God is within and speaking in and to every human being – we need to become more open to listening to those that we “other” or consider to be “on the peripheries”. Christ has open arms of welcome to “oddbods” - every human is Christ to us/can show us Christ in some way.

Some participants spoke movingly of encounters with people from other Christian traditions, other religions and of cultures different from their own, and of what they had learned about God and themselves from those meetings.

Several attendees referenced the clerical abuse scandal, and feeling angry or sad about how this had been managed; do we listen to those who are still living with the consequences?

We acknowledge several individual contributions from active parishioners to the e-mail address we set up concerning particular areas about which they feel strongly (see appendix). We need to find a way as a Church listen to these voices, who often carry hurt and pain, and respond to what they say.

To go beyond simply knowing what each other is doing, to know the other is also knowing that part of Christ that I cannot know on my own because in the other there is also Christ. Yes, do we really believe that? Or are our intellect too enclosed/constrained on analyzing the way and behaviour or potential prejudices that the other might have on us? There is Christ in the other and as St John the Baptist our whole life is about two things: to know the Lord and to make Him known.

### **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?**

Sometimes we hold back from speaking: whether from fear of not being charitable, or offending/hurting, causing estrangement. Some fear expressing ourselves poorly maybe because we lack vocabulary to speak accurately. Sometimes there is too much speaking out – in our culture as well as in the Church – maybe a bit more reticence would help. Lots of conversation is not “in charity”. We have a responsibility to attempt to find out some facts/really understand an issue before we speak – that might save a lot of heated conversations! It takes courage to speak – I have a desire to not offend or make life difficult. I am afraid because of some past experiences where I didn’t experience being heard – at work/at home/in parishes. If I have been shot down/crushed previously it is hard to be resilient. If something you say seems to be ignored and there is no explanation, you stop bothering to speak.

Some people might have a greater right to speak because of their role, but similarly might be constrained by the role in what they can say or do. At what point in a conversation do we need to hear an authoritative voice? Do we hesitate to say what we think because we are just waiting for that person or persons to decide – so we wonder what is the point of saying anything. Does that feeling hinder good communication, and become a self-fulfilling cycle?

In our many large city parishes with more than one building, or several masses, we don’t interact as much with the clergy and other leaders as you might in the previously smaller ones, where everyone knows each other – this “distance” can hinder the relationship of trust which fosters good communication and provides a safe space to speak. Sometimes, even if we are in principle willing to speak out, we have felt completely invisible in meetings. They are often about a few people defending decisions already made rather than genuine consultation.

In society, sometimes we are inactive – wonder is this the right time to speak; is this the thing about which I must speak? Sometimes we fear being made fun of or thought weird – especially with those who are not Catholics. People sometimes think they know what we believe and it is good sometimes to be able to shed a different light. Sometimes the most powerful words can be “I don’t know” or “I’m not sure” - are we too ready with opinions and certainties, or “learned answers”? This post-modern generation are happier living with ambiguity and uncertainty and call out what they see as “unfair” or “unjust” readily – authority for them comes from right

actions rather than right words. There are some ethical issues on which the Church has things to say, and on which more could be done to give a stronger voice as the whole church. With age comes wisdom and experience and also courage. I do feel I can speak – but that has taken a long time over a lifetime. I trust God – but not sure about my neighbour – sometimes it is easier to stay quiet, but the more you speak the easier it becomes. What enables me is talking to God everyday – that opens my ears to him – keeps me sensitive. I was thinking about coming to this meeting all week. I was very nervous about contributing however I felt able to speak up and speak out I found the self belief to recognise that my experiences of the cathedral are valid and that I am capable of speaking up. I am able to recognise what I have to offer I'm not always aware of this. Many contributors spoke about the lack of a formal “space” such as parish council or forum, but some also spoke also about a perceived lack of informal opportunities to express thoughts through conversation and interaction. Some did feel that their voice was heard, but acknowledged that it took considerable courage to speak up and that their confidence to do so had grown over time. Informal hidden decision making processes, the network of a few “influencers” or those already part of an “in” group can exclude others unintentionally from a space where they can be speak out and be heard.

### **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?

#### Mission

Individually we have some struggles with proclaiming the gospel – It can be very hard to do it with family who are not part of the church, and with our friends. Some typical responses include: “I came into the church when my children were way beyond influencing. They are agnostic and regard mum and dad with puzzlement”. “I'm often the token Catholic token Christian in my groups – they say how can someone so intelligent as you believe in this stuff?” “Most friends are not Christian or Catholic. I get interrogated in the way that I wouldn't be if I was Jewish say, due to the bad things the church is done is confused with the message of the church. The message that Jesus came for failures, for people outside the church is missed. Is there something inside of people trying to make them resist Christianity? Why are some people so vitriolic towards us, I don't want to be enclosed and I want to be able to help people outside of our Church.” “It's easy to feel overwhelmed. What can I personally do? We need to develop our faith. We all need to feel secure and be accepted in the Church. We need to learn from others.” “We have to take the Church to the margins – preach the gospel. We need courage to push the boundaries. It can be very hard.” “Mission is a conversation – its about small things as well as grand projects”. There is much more that we could do together as a parish and with other Christians in social justice projects. It would be good to hear more about what people are already doing. The doors are open “come in” – this is our model – we don't “reach out”. Is that ok? ? I feel the Church is embarrassed to admit that it is about saving souls, instead people believe in universalism and that they do not need to go to Mass when they are not in the mood. Then how can there be mission? We have to get back to saving souls or what is mission about? Do we really believe Christ is everything or just a “nice to have”. If He is just a nice added extra then there is no mission, If He is essential and my all in all then how can I be content with not making knowing Him my mission for reaching out to others. In writing this I recognise my own failure in this regard.

As parishioners we have a responsibility and a mission to draw others in by invitation. What does it mean to be a baptised Catholic? All baptisms are baptism. We should reach out to and include all the baptised. We could use the feast of the Baptism of the Lord to invite all baptised through our doors to celebrate. We should be more encouraging and welcoming to both the baptised and the unbaptised. We need to encourage people to 'come and see'. We need to build relationship with Jesus and be drawn into Trinity before we can reach out.

There is, in our society, a complete loss of any sense of sin, so I think the Church needs to renew the sense of a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints. Too often I get a sense that the Priest or others, are saying effectively "We're all a bunch of nice people here". Well then, it has stopped becoming a place for this: "But the **tax collector**, standing far off, would not even raise **his eyes** to heaven but kept striking **his chest** and saying, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner!' Luke 3:18.

### Authority & Governance

Authority & Governance are two different things. Authority derives from God – from our being in his image. We all have authority as baptised Christians. Some have specific authority over specific areas of governance. We sometimes see authority as hierarchical – who gives out the instructions – but it is really about having and exercising responsibility. "The buck stops here". Some decisions just have to be taken in a timely way – usually those connected with governance - which can make consultation difficult.

Authority should not be the same as "power" – but often it feels that it is – if you are not listened to you feel powerless.

While recognising that there does need to be authority, and for decisions to be made, many feel in the dark about the who and the what and the how of decisions. Some seem to be "consulted" or "in the know" while others are not. Often there are particular doctrinal reasons behind decisions or some canon law, but it would be good to hear more of the reasoning behind decisions on occasion.

We notice the four steps to decision set out in the question – listen, dialogue, pray and discern; then decide on behalf of the community. Sometimes it is not obvious that those steps have been taken. People feel "told" or "informed"- without noticing the listening or the dialogue. However, there is recognition that we are often happy for decisions we agree with to simply happen without consultation! One or two spoke about the Diocesan processes too – how do we know what is happening? How can we contribute more to discernment? The website was commended – a good source of information and news.

At various times in our listening, and not simply under this heading, people called for the pastoral council to be re-started; re-invigorated. There was a desire from some to be able to contribute via this forum to decision making. (Not everyone feels called to this, or wants to do it - some are happy to have others decide). There was a recognition that sometimes a PPC can be just a "talking shop" – with very little happening that is rooted in the conversation there. Also a recognition that some people seek out ways to make their voices heard – and that important conversations are sometimes informal rather than formal. We talked about the "gossip tree" and the "in-crowd" – recognising that sometimes those who are active (unintentionally) make others feel excluded. Some feel very angry as they feel they have an important contribution to make and are not being included. Some discussion about questions of governance – what things are within the "competence" of a pastoral council? Not all decisions would be on the agenda. Several contributors said they were pleased we don't have "democracy" in the sense of way the Anglicans for example conduct "Synods".

However, there are some things where it seems that the "consensus" of the faithful is in a different place from official teaching – then we are told "Not to talk about it" or "its not on the table". It was interesting last night to hear that students at St Bede's are also doing a similar exercise to put forward their thoughts to the Bishop. After all, they are the future of the Church and it was nice to compare notes. Apparently the young people have as their priority married

priests and I must say that almost all the Catholic people to whom I speak seem to share this wish no matter what age. Secondly, and I think this ties in very much with our two sessions, they want the Church to be more understanding towards same sex couples and divorced people whom the present rules seem to marginalise.

How can we listen to each other? How can we “hear” why these things are “not on table”? Do we need more “catechesis” so that we understand the “why” behind some things that the Church teaches that are radically different from societies view, or from insights from more up-to-date science? How can the laity express and explain their reasoning and thinking – there seems to be no forum for that. Is it possible that the laity, who may be faithfully praying, reading, thinking and seeking truth, are hearing from the Holy Spirit on things that the hierarchy won’t permit to be formally discussed?

### Teamwork & Co-responsibility

We are being led to re-balance the relationship between priesthood and laity in mutual respect and co-operation; responsibility is exercised by laity too. We must get out of clericalism – one side of this is expecting the priest to do everything; to decide everything; to be always available; the other side is the sense of priests being “other” as in superior to laity. To be a priest is a charism – a calling and a gifting to particular work. The Church needs to think very carefully about its priests. Lay people are often better qualified in leadership. Lay people’s ‘gifts and talents’ are not being recognised. People would like to set priests free to be priests – word and sacraments & pastoral care. There are many things that laity could take responsibility for and may be better equipped for. Can we extend the paid roles in the parish? A priest should not have to be a manager. Some things, such as day to day responsibility for property or finance are within lay competence. We would like to know more about whether the mission and work of the parish is being constrained by a lack of giving. For example, we are often told that we can’t use the parish rooms because they are hired out. How essential is this income? How much would we need to increase our giving to replace it? We don’t know. Lay people need to be encouraged in recognising their own sense of vocation – in small and big ways – within the parish and in the wider world. Some feel that there’s a new springtime in the church. It’s coming from the Holy Spirit. It’s being released time for the laity to bear the responsibilities to be missionary disciples. The Holy Spirit is calling us all out to be together. We have a role to play in the life of the parish, we need to act out of love.

Lots was said about the ministry of welcome and how it is exercised. Some good and less good practice observed. Some people are reluctant to “offer” or volunteer – they wait to be asked or invited. One person said about being a Eucharistic minister – they felt they couldn’t offer because they felt “a rubbish catholic” – one priest encouraged them by saying “that’s why I am asking you”.

We commented on those who have many demands on their lives and for whom the parish/mass simply “being there” is all they want or need. Some get fed by participating in internet based study or teaching. But for some the season of their life does mean they can offer more in terms of active service to the functioning of the parish; and do seek to participate more in different activities than just mass. Is it a problem if people see the Church as a “service” that provides Mass for them – they are “consumers” (no pun intended), rather than participants – hence some of the moans about times; styles of music etc. Consumers have preferences and vote with their feet – participants bring something to the table! We are all called to our own vocation – we all have to discern what we are being called to do. It may only be something seemingly insignificant but anything can make a difference.

Some people have felt shut out of various ministries – partly because of COVID restrictions – but it feels slow being asked to participate again. Some lay folk are willing to use their gifts and theological formation in teaching or facilitation of groups. Some would like there to be more opportunities for varied prayer/liturgy together – but we recognise that this is a needs a broad team to co-ordinate/steward. Some would like neighbourhood groups or house groups. As a parish, we need to consider how these might be organised and resourced, and kept fresh. Sometimes people have questions about faith or doctrine and would like a facilitated space to be able to ask them – in addition to delivered programmes.

## 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?

I think all our points that might be made here are already made above under question 3 and these are summarised below. Before that, I add this interesting reflection from one of our participants received by e-mail.

*I want to apologise for the way I brushed off the second set of questions, and have been trying to explore why I struggled with them. I think one reason is that I perceived them as breaking with the path set out by the previous three, which I enjoyed so much: they were about ethics, encounter, courage. The second set seemed to me to turn inwards, to power struggles in an institution, to vague notions of anonymous forces preventing unified masses of bodies to achieve aims which also remained unnamed. It just felt to me that this second set of questions was written in some secret code that I didn't have access to because I'm not part of any of the 'parties' involved. I may have gotten the wrong end of the stick, of course. And I do think the first three, on listening to people we wouldn't normally listen to, are so challenging and fundamental that they can keep me busy for the rest of my life.*

The lack of the pastoral council and forum was a running sore throughout the conversations. *"The people in the middle are not listened to let alone those on the peripheries".*

Our delegates spoke of the need to be listened to and feel involved in the decision making in some way. It was acknowledged that there has to be a decision maker and that not all decisions are going to be popular. Committees are not always a good way of running things. However not having a pastoral council was identified as unsettling.

Many commented on how priests can be imposed on a parish and institute change. We don't want our priest to be a CEO but a pastor. We want to help him. It needs to be collaborative.

*Pandemic is a poor excuse for lack of engagement – there were ways round that with technology. I worry that we will be looking for the next excuse; there must be ways to engage and stay connected whatever happens. We are a "brave" faith – lets be braver about our engagement with each other.*

## 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?

Many positive comments about the centrality of Mass. -- The mass is a centre of my existence, the heart of my life. Prayer is who I am I can't dissect my life into two. Sunday Mass is crucial for many. Lots of people want to come and nurture their soul but not participate beyond the Mass. They simply enjoy the sacred space. I find Mass helps me deal with the secular perplexing world. It connects spirituality with reality. Prayer/mass has a real impact on the decisions I make each day. It is very significant for me. Jesus invites me. Actual celebrations vary in inspiration – but we are all human. I have found different ways/degrees of participation at different times. How is it connected to decisions – really difficult to answer – but I know it is. I think there are seasons of life – Mass is more obviously central to me now I am retired. Each mass is the most beautiful Mass of our life. Mass is the most important thing in my life and has been since I was in my twenties. I don't understand how Mass can be boring – I can't even begin to go there. God is closer than our skin – but at the same time completely alien/other than us ... that is what it is always like. Discussions about mass can be quite low-level – most of it doesn't matter much. Can't imagine life without prayer/mass – it is in my DNA; all my life. I would not be me without it. Mass deepens my relationship with God. It is time aside – a place of refuge – a place to reflect – it is enriching – it extends my generosity & willingness to serve. My week would be incomplete without Mass – I see people I know – I feel part of it – it is the central act of worship for me. Sometimes we focus too much on the “mood” or the “How” – they are not central. Liturgy of the Mass is central to everything. And after lockdown it is wonderful to receive the Eucharist. Prayer/mass has a real impact on the decisions I make each day. It is very significant for me. Jesus invites me. Actual celebrations vary in inspiration – but we are all human. I have found different ways/degrees of participation at different times. The opportunity to come to be with my “family” of this community is hugely important to me. It doesn't matter whether it's good or bad in human terms mostly – it's the whole thing – it feeds me; it sends me; I go out restored.

Some reflections on “mass” online/returning.

Connecting across geographical areas has been good. “Seeing people” read across the miles; helpful for the housebound (but doesn't replace receiving communion? We still need to take communion to the sick and this needs to be celebrated with reciprocal prayers. That is please tell the person we are praying for them and ask them to pray for us. I have felt a bit like a Mass tourist – but on the positive side there have been no distractions – it has been intimate – I have been able to “go” every day, which I cannot do in person. Sometimes I switch off during the mass depending on the sermon. The sermons can inspire me but if I find I'm switching off I read material from Oscar Romero. I find I hardly ever go in person now. I would like prayers for worldly events through the whole mass and not just tacked on at the beginning or the end. I don't like the wording of the mass. I don't like the Confiteor. I find the language is exclusive and the words to the Gloria tedious. I find online streaming weird as there's no participation in communion. Different experiences online which were interesting and inspiring in a different way and fed my mind and soul. 1<sup>st</sup> time back at physical mass after lockdown – I came in – there was a hymn – I wanted to weep with the overwhelming emotion of being present. There will be difficulty encouraging people to return to the Mass in person. Streaming has been very inclusive for those with disabilities. Streaming has given opportunities to attend Mass from many locations across the world. Is renewed emphasis on “communion of desire” during COVID helpful pastorally?

### Comments about various elements of the practice at Mass.

Different masses connect more readily with different people – they have different landing places. We are lucky in the Cathedral that we have a variety of styles of Sunday liturgy. Quiet /family /solemn Mass.

Homilies – much praise – different styles appreciated; Stay with me all week. In the homilies the priests and deacons should lose no opportunity for catechesis about belief and understanding of the eucharist. Many commented on the excellence of Canon Bosco's homilies. We need to tell priests when their sermons are helpful for us. We need to be open with praise. This feels challenging – sometimes homily feels disconnected from ordinary life – from my ordinary life – tangential to readings – unstructured. I like to come; I enjoy coming – but homilies don't connect – or worse provoke anger – I go home wishing I hadn't come.

Families - We need this as families are welcome. We need to be family friendly, there is nothing for young people. We used to give out roles to families, that isn't happening anymore. The sermons need to be child friendly, especially at 9.30 mass. I would like to see more engagement with children and young people as part of the Mass – it seems they are “observers” rather than participants – we could encourage readers; offertory – going on to sanctuary for Lord's prayer ... etc.

### Music

The quality of our music/liturgy done so well inspire me. Religious music can be very uplifting but also quite divisive. Many enjoy singing along both in church and when attending from home. Many want the opportunity to sing and participate more in the music. Can be too much listening to the choir. People like to sing hymns – particularly if they are lyrical and tuneful. Sometimes the music doesn't seem to link to the Mass. The hymns need to be relevant to the liturgy and be appropriate in length – the liturgy can't be sandwiched between an overdose of hymns.

### Languages

Some reflection on “cultural dissonance”... Many of the words we use in the liturgy do not connect with people or at worst seem alien. We need to help people explore the language we use to understand it better and ask the questions they have. For example: I do not believe that God “leads me into temptation ” and many fellow Catholics agree .There is a need to modify the Lord's prayer. Have I always " greatly sinned " at the start of Mass? Is it always a most grievous fault? This expression tends to be repetitive and lacking in sincerity. There are preferable alternatives .

Do we help ethnic minorities such as the substantial French and Spanish communities to come and celebrate with us?

### Lack of reverence

On the other hand, we should be mindful of what Paul says about how we receive – and not eating/drinking judgement on ourselves – you are not free to receive if you don't believe.

I am inspired by the whole Mass. I particularly value veneration, of the bloodless sacrifice of our Lord on the altar. To venerate fully I would like the kneelers returned. It is irreverent to sit through the crucial parts of the Mass. It scandalises me. I also want to receive communion on the tongue – I am incensed that the Church tries to deny me this.

I feel let down by 11:15, the music is good and the homilies but there's never a full serving team, no sense of the other; the transcendence.

An obvious group who feel excluded seem to be those that love Latin Mass and there is no where for them to go other than SSPX in this diocese. (I am not personally drawn to Latin Mass, but am upset that I know this group feels excluded and it seems they have been treated harshly). One helpful conversation I had with a lover of the Old Rite, is where the fellow said he was not bothered about latin at all, but craved the reverence of the old rite, which he was not finding elsewhere. So, I think this is a call to renew reverence in Churches. I had not intended to reference this, but it is the first that comes to mind when asked about people who feel marginalised in our Church.

### Landing places

Helping those who come occasionally or for the first time - When people who are loosely connected do come for some reason – e.g. Guides; sometimes they are baptized Catholics, but we seem to ready to see all of “them” as “not one of us”... we don’t provide good landing places, or places to let people search; we judge what they don’t do (come regularly); rather than helping them in.

### Prayers of the faithful

The cathedral is good at reactive prayer and responds to world and local events. It's noticeable how we pray at the beginning or end of mass for particular world situation which has only just very recently occurred. We have good prayers for the faithful in the parish but we're missing the prayers for diocesan prayer links and local prayer links.

### Other kinds of gathering

There is so much good theology in the catholic church – the priests need to be encouraged to say something new and inspirational and theological. The people are hungry for catechesis and scripture. We need more variety in ways of prayer. The Catholic Church has lost the practice of communal prayer. A great loss. We need more opportunity to pray together. If we were able to pray the Liturgy of the Hours together which would engage us more fully in the scriptures. Desire, particularly for a Cathedral parish, of non-eucharistic prayer which doesn't need a priest as part of the weekly cycle of services. This builds the parish community; the Body of Christ. Whatever happened to benediction and exposition? I think it is urgent to teach people how to pray. French philosopher Blaise Pascal, "(All of humanity's ) problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone."

## Concluding remarks

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Einstein's definition of insanity is to do the same thing again and again and expect different results. First step is to acknowledge something needs to change.

The Holy Spirit is here due to the way we have been sharing. I'm grateful that you have taken on this role. We have great hope for the future.

We need to stay united. Good to hear the people want to come together and change. We must support each other, we must find unity. We need joyful faces.

Holy Spirit is speaking - need for gratitude and for this process. This is being replicated in 1.7 billion people in the world

There's a new springtime in the church. It's coming from the Holy Spirit. It's being released time for the laity to bear the responsibilities to be missionary disciples.

Worried about what happens next – if we simply aggregate and ignore the detail of what has been said the whole thing becomes rather bland and generic. There is a richness in the granularity of the responses.

in the future we will not have priests as in the past. We really want to take responsibility and we have to work together laity and clergy to work through this transition stage. There was a lot of life experience and wisdom in that group

I try to ask in all this: 'What is being asked of me?' We too often ask what can be provided by others but we need to discern what we can do? There are many opportunities. It needn't be anything grand but each of us can make a difference. What is my vocation – what am I being called to do?

Does this process have to end – it has been really beneficial.

Call for the structure of the laity to be more "organic" and knowing more about each other so it can quickly assist and help itself. Developing a phone network for people housebound or a way to engage with one another outside of the church during the week for prayers or bible study or charitable actions when people can. For example, being at mass and not knowing that there might be a plumber sitting next to me on Sunday while I am having issues with my pipe works at home shows the lack of genuine communication and encounter with each other.

#### Appendix - E-mails received not otherwise acknowledged directly in the text above

(A) Reflection on some previous "synodal processes" since Vatican II – hopes and fears for this process arising from that; the importance of pastoral councils in parishes, deaneries and dioceses. (Two contributors on this topic)

(B) Call to rescind the annulment process – marriage cannot be "annulled".

(C) Suggestion about the content of the Diocesan Directory.

(D) Seeking more acknowledgement of the personal cost (physical, emotional, financial, long-term) for those who attempt to obey the Churches' teaching on a range of issues – what opportunities could there be to share together with the "rule-makers" so that they understand more about this.

