

NOTES FROM THE SYNODAL ACTION GROUP MEETING AND PARISH CONSULTATION MARCH 23rd 2024

As always, the meeting began with prayer and a Scripture Reading (Isaiah 50:4,5)

Margaret welcomed everyone and outlined how she sees synodality in a Parish:

We are called as disciples to proclaim the Good News. Synodality involves walking together as a community and working together with Lay participation and responsibility in fulfilling our mission. Listening to each other and discernment are of utmost importance, as is looking outwards to the wider community.

Each person was then given three minutes to reflect, without interruption, on moving towards synodality in our own parish, with a moment of silence between each contribution, along the lines of "Conversation in the Spirit".

The following themes emerged:

Progress made:

- there was an acknowledgment of the effect the covid pandemic had on parish life
- Childrens' Liturgy re-introduced
- Inclusion of children by Fr. Miceal at 11.00am Mass, when children are invited forward for "a chat"
- Introduction of monthly Afternoon Teas
- Re-establishment of Visiting Team
- Re-establishment of Welcoming Ministry
- The on-going Faith in the Family Group
- Scripture Group
- the Nigerian Family Group is up and running. Those who come feel a sense of belonging

There were also comments about how people welcomed and appreciated the diversity we now have in the parish and also how the presence of the Poor Clare Sisters enriched us. The sisters present at the meeting felt that for them, being part of the synod group was useful in gaining understanding of parish life and was fruitful for them in terms of contact and friendship. Prayer and patience needed!

Moving forward:

- Hopes for a functioning Parish Council, with shared responsibilities.
- The forthcoming Moderated Parish should mean more cross-contact with other churches

Concerns:

Several people mentioned the age factor in relation to involvement in parish life. It is hoped to find a way of involving the "middle-aged" cohort of parishioners as well as younger people. We need a new emerging group willing to take on leadership roles. Leadership on climate change issues needed.

We then considered how well our parish fulfils its mission in terms of outreach. Although CAFOD is well established in our parish, as is the support for local Foodbank, it was felt this area needs further development and leadership. For example, on the issue of climate change, there are well-established programmes to become “Live Simply” Parishes, (and there are a considerable number in our diocese), but this needs effective leadership.

Margaret then summarised the responses received in the questionnaires which had been circulated at all weekend Parish Masses. Nineteen responses had been received so far. People appreciated the music and liturgy, the welcome, the diversity and the feeling of community. There were also appreciative comments for our Parish Priest. There were requests for Parish Council and for an evening Mass on Holy Days of Obligation and Ash Wednesday.

The meeting finished with prayer.

The next meeting will be on Saturday April 27th, 10.45 – 12 noon, Holy Redeemer Church Hall