

RESPONSE TO SYNODAL QUESTIONS – 26th February 2024

A: How do we witness as a Parish and proclaim our faith to: those who have never heard of Christ; those who have ceased walking with Christ; those with whom we worship Christ (those who come to church)?

B: How should we organise ourselves as a Parish to do this more effectively?

C: What concrete steps/formation opportunities would help us begin to witness and proclaim our faith more effectively?

D: What structures may need to change? How might we need to develop the way we are organised currently?

Response 1:

A: Do we have many new parishioners? Are they asked to “register”? Could this lead to a social gathering (eg a coffee morning).

The welcomers, greeting people and distributing mass and hymn books at the entrance to the Church are a very good idea.

B: Encourage parents to come to the front with young children – to see and participate

Introduce family offertory procession

Live-stream mass to Parish Centre (when possible) – not to have people standing outside the Church. How are they able to participate?

Introduce more Youth Readers

Have hymns that the congregation (knows and) can sing and join in.

Emphasise Jubilee Year – maybe all say the Jubilee Prayer together at the end of Mass. (2025 Pilgrims of Hope)

Have a new stock of children’s picture books

Participate in a Parish Pilgrimage to a “local” shrine, not abroad

C: Reinstate Youth activities for the young people of the Parish

Silence during Holy Communion, allowing time for prayer and reflection, without distractions, after receiving our Blessed Lord.

The Good Friday walk with the Way of the Cross is a wonderful witness to the people of Feltham.

D: Comments/Suggestions/Feedback box?

A “Guidance” for parents (common sense)

No food or sticky lollies

No noisy toys, coins, games on mobile phones, keys, colouring books and crayons.

No running around the Church

No pulling out books from shelves

No talking during Consecration (as much as possible)

Prepare the children to listen for the bells and to be silent.

Response 2:

A: The geographical position of our church near the High Street works in our favour. People see crowds of parishioners attending weekend Masses/everyday Masses/Stations etc. When people ask what is going on, that gives EVERYONE a chance to share their faith/witness to Christ.

B: In general, people who are not RC, have a limited, even false understanding, of what goes on inside a Catholic church. What about having open days/weeks. Come and see when parishioners can be available to explain to visitors how we pray and what Roman Catholics believe?

C: What are the concrete steps/formation opportunities available at present in our church? Is there a Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in our parish? Who runs it? Are parishioners involved in the running of it?

Are there other programmes running to support parishioners in witnessing/proclaiming their faith more effectively? (I don't mean the usual programmes for children)

D: What structures are currently in place? Is there a Parish Council? If not, how are parishioners currently involved in decision making? (I don't mean through occasional questionnaires)

Response 3:

Our main areas of concern are a lack of equality and inclusivity as you will see in our points for consideration.

A: We have to question why Catholic people of all ages have stopped coming to church and _ some have changed to another church ie: Church of England.

We believe it is a mixture of Covid, the change in our world eg. Technology and the lack of equality and inclusivity within our church.

B: We believe that it is not a question of organisation but a question of a change of attitude within the church towards society as it is now. More flexibility is needed in many areas – in particular women priests and an interest towards gay marriage.

D: We have been talking about a lack of priests since we were children and we are now in our seventies. We need to consider having single women as priests. We are ignoring 50% of our population. That word equality again. In our view, we need to consider gay marriage. Society has changed and we cannot see a reason not to include this as an option. We say “we are open to all” but our points suggest we are not. This attitude is very dangerous to the church.

In conclusion, institutions need to evolve and this involves change in some areas.

We are not saying change for change sake but we, as a church, need to keep up with modern day society. It is falling behind and continues to lose parishioners which we find very sad, looking around at the drop-out rate of friends and family.

Thank you for our chance to reply – with our words of – Equality and Inclusion needed.

Response from Parish Meeting held 25th February:

There was an interest to hear feedback from the Synod held in Rome October 2023 following the start of the journey in 2021.

What, if anything, came back to the Parish?

General feeling of we need to be united.

We were asked to look at the distribution of Holy Communion at Masses. Is it currently effective?

Remind people that if they take a newsletter it has the contact information for the Pastoral Team.

Evangelical – sing hymns several times a year in the Centre, Feltham.

Give an explanation of what Pope Francis said regarding Blessings of gay marriages etc

Cultural background plays a part and can affect people stepping up as they are shy to come forward

People feel they cannot approach the clergy as hold them as higher than themselves

Reiterate/reinforce what the questions are and their importance

Caritas? Events during school holidays for the youth of the parish

International mass – 4 times a year

Put in the notices that we will be handing out newsletters in the High Street on particular days

Skills & talents list of parishioners

Mobility bus? We can use Hounslow Community Transport once a month (Senior's mass?)

Prayer groups – such as Rosary during October

Youth Formation

Meeting of the ministries

Volunteers meeting

Coordinator's meeting (of different ministries)

Parish Council

Catechetics of the parents – ask Brian Hamill, Colin Macken, Diocese for assistance

May Procession, Corpus Christi, Walk of Witness