



Synod Newsletter No. 8

Friday 11th February 2022



Introduction

Having made our submission to the Diocese a week ago, the formal role for our parish in the current Synod has now ended. However, many suggestions were made in our Synod discussion groups which merit further consideration and, in many cases, could lead to productive action within the parish.

Everything that was said in the parish discussion groups has been captured in a large document. This document also includes the synthesis that was shared with the Diocese. Its final component is a large collection of suggestions about how we could develop our parish, either to build our community or to strengthen the ways we work with others.

This final edition of the Synod newsletter includes examples of these suggestions, grouped under the Synod headings. In total there are over one hundred such suggestions, so they are not all included here, though a representative sample is.

They are all written in the form of questions to indicate that they are intended for the parish to reflect upon. Hopefully, this will then lead to well-considered action. The process starts with Fr Bill, who now has the task of deciding the best way to take these suggestions forward.

As part of this process, we must all be ready to play our part. The parish cannot be a vibrant sign of God's love for the world unless we all use our unique gifts to contribute.

The formal Synod process now moves to a national level, with the Bishops Conference of England & Wales considering all the responses received from their dioceses. They must discern what to pass on the next stage, involving dioceses from across Europe.

Please continue to take an interest in the Synod and pray for its success. This Synod truly has the potential to transform the way the Church works and ensure that it is well placed to meet the needs of the world in the third millennium.

1) Journeying companions

How much do we know about those who no longer journey with us and why?

How can we provide more ways for children and young people to actively contribute to the Mass?

How do we help and encourage all new parishioners to quickly become active and involved members of the parish? Could we introduce a regular event for new parishioners, introducing them to the parish, letting them meet key people and learn more about a range of parish activities?

How can we further develop the ministry of welcome?

How can we make best use of our excellent parish facilities to serve the parish and our local community?

2) Listening

How can we offer more opportunities for parishioners to listen to each other?

Could we make use of the 'Divine Renovation' initiative (www.divinerenovation.org)?

3) Speaking out

How can we develop the parish newsletter as the primary communication method within the parish?

How do we make better use of electronic communication, including blogging, social media and a more interactive website?



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

4) Celebrating

How can the quality of liturgy at St Joseph's be further improved and enhanced? Are our liturgies sufficiently inclusive? Do they inspire us? How can we increase active participation in the liturgy, particularly for younger people? Should we offer a wider range of liturgies in addition to Masses?

Could we introduce Bible study groups and regular talks about scripture?

5) Co-responsibility in the Mission

How can we be better informed about our faith? Could events be organised by the deanery? Could we make use of 'Word on Fire' resources?

How can existing opportunities for formation be communicated better to maximise participation?

6) Dialogue in Church and Society

What formation do people need in order to better engage with wider society, especially on aspects of faith?

Do we sufficiently celebrate the positive contribution that Catholic education makes?

How can we get to know more people in our parish? Would the development of small groups help?

7) Other Christian denominations

Do we play a big enough part in Churches Together in Epsom? How could we get more involved?

How can we use the Sycamore programme (www.sycamore.fm), which gives people the

opportunity to meet other Christians to 'share ideas, explore your beliefs, and think about questions that really matter'?

8) Authority and participation

What tasks within the parish can only be undertaken by the clergy?

How could we broaden and strengthen leadership structures within the parish?

Should we employ further professional support to help achieve our aims?

9) Discerning and deciding

Could we hold regular consultation exercises, maybe through a parish forum every 3-4 months to discuss contemporary matters within the Church and seek guidance from the Holy Spirit?

How can we ensure that all people's skills and gifts are well used by the parish?

Would a parish council help the parish be more accountable and transparent in its decision making? How can we ensure such a body is genuinely representative of the parish and functions effectively?

10) Forming ourselves in Synodality

How can parish structures and groups be reconfigured (or created) to better align with what our parish is trying to achieve?

How can we develop a clear strategy to follow up the Synod discussion groups within our parish?

What structures do we need to strengthen our parish community and develop our outreach work?

