

THE FEEDBACK SHEET

WALKING TOGETHER: Two zoom meetings were arranged via parish announcements, with approximately 10 parishioners attending each of the meetings. Other groups within the parish met either via zoom or in person to reflect on some of the questions. The handbook was placed on the parish website to allow others to participate. Flyers were distributed via masses for people's opinions and parishioners were invited to take a flyer for others to complete. In all we had approximately 55 responses.

PARTICIPATION: Listening to the reflections and faith journeys of other parishioners was valuable and enlightening; to know others shared my point of view. It also opened my mind to things I had not considered before and gave me food for thought. Everyone was invited to share. I was happy to hear how well respected those in the religious life are, and the desire for more vocations to the religious life. Those who participated showed a great love for God, and a desire for others to share in faith and relationship with him.

ENRICHMENT: Being invited to take part and help the process was both interesting and a privilege. It gave me the chance to meet more people from the parish and find out more about the work other groups do. The Holy Spirit is working in the parish as I have seen in various groups and helped me do my best during this walking together. New realisation about how individuals pray and practice their faith. People shared honestly and from the heart. A variety of ways of praying were shared, both traditional and spontaneous.

DREAMS: My dreams are of a church full of young people, and people of all ages, sharing their faith with other faith groups. Sharing the Gospel both with those in spiritual and in physical need. To see more women given roles in the decision making of the church. To see more vocations to the priesthood and religious life. A deepening of faith, and respect for the Sacraments for those already attending Church. A spirit led, vibrant and expanding Church. A Church that reaches out especially to those on the peripheries. A Church which continues in the truths of the faith, and which communicates the joy of living in the truth.

RESPONSES: See following pages....

WALKING TOGETHER

COMMUNION: THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH, FORMATION.

QUESTION 1

In what ways does the Catholic Church enhance your life?

- The Catholic church enhances our relationship with God, and with one another
- Comforting and strengthening
- Provides hope and a moral compass for life
- Enables participation in Church ministry
- Essential for us
- Desire to share the faith
- Sacraments are nourishing and flow into a sense of belonging
- Prayers with others
- Sense of family
- Identity
- Church is a gift from God
- Gives meaning to life
- Not being alone even in difficulty
- Love for the Church, clergy and religious.
- The Church is always there.
- We rely on the Church, especially in times of difficulty or loss.
- The Church is the communion of the Baptised, united with God and with one another.

WALKING TOGETHER

COMMUNION: THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. FORMATION

QUESTION 2

Reflecting on 20 months of the pandemic, how has participation in your parish been affected? Were these issues and/or opportunities there before, and how can participation be strengthened moving forward into the future?

Positive

- Church online & links all over the world
- Housebound access to online mass
- Spiritual communion
- Zoom meetings
- Resourcefulness in overcoming challenges
- WhatsApp group for connecting people
- Opportunities for people to become involved

Issues

- Lost out sacramentally
- Housebound and Care homes not getting Communion
- Not being able to offer services: Tea/Coffee, children's liturgy
- Difficulty in reaching new people
- Zoom not as good as in person

Future

- Use of volunteers
- WhatsApp for communication
- Use of census for identifying needs/volunteers

WALKING TOGETHER

COMMUNION: THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. FORMATION

QUESTION 3

What are the means by which different voices can be heard in your parish (particularly those on the periphery of parish life)? Which groups and individuals are least included in your parish?

- Opportunities exist for joining various groups and to participate in parish life, but people must want to get involved.
- Parishes need to include and value everyone, as some groups such as divorced and gay people feel excluded.
- Tea and Coffee after Mass provides a great opportunity to meet, share and chat about events in the parish/church.
- Parish clergy meet and greet people after Mass which provides a chance to talk with them.
- Our schools are well supported by parish clergy who visit regularly. This provides an opportunity for church/school interconnection and communication, but some parents only get involved when it suits them.
- Voices only heard by those in various parish groups.
- It's hard to reach those on the peripheries of parish life; young people, new parishioners etc. Even when invitations are extended, people will only join if they want to.
- Church receives a lot of negative press which influences public opinion, and the opinion of young people.

WALKING TOGETHER

COMMUNION: LIFE OF THE CHURCH. FORMATION

QUESTION 4

How is the Church perceived by members of your family, your friends and work colleagues?

- Many young people don't see the need to come to Church and seem to have lost the connection.

Young people struggle:

- *If they see corruption in the Church, for example: while volunteering witnessed a priest in Africa who was living in a nice house with a beautiful Church, whilst the people lived in mud huts and poverty.*
- *Some are angry about the denial of abuse and don't want to be part of this Church.*
- *Some perceive the Church as old fashioned and out of touch i.e. re gay friends, living together before marriage and use of contraception. The Church isn't compatible with this lifestyle.*

Further comments from our young adults:

- *'The Catholic Church isn't relevant to me.'*
- *'It doesn't impact on my life.'*
- *'Other religions have things we respect and admire.'*
- *'During lockdown we felt closer to God, reflected more, prayed and thought about God more.'*
- *'As a young woman I can't belong to an organisation where women are not treated equally.'*
- An older member of our group commented: 'It's not women who are treated unequally, it is all members of the laity.'
- There are concerns regards Church abuse.
- People are happy to be prayed for, but don't want to commit or be pro-active.
- Sometimes people have commented at times of bereavement that they wish they had our faith.
- Some neighbours remark on the regularity of our practice of the faith.
- Friends and people in general are respectful and enquiring even if they don't have faith.

QUESTION 4 Contined:

- People, especially from other cultures can struggle with the lack of joy and vibrancy in our liturgy.
- Acquaintances of non-Christian faiths will often question Catholic beliefs and make comparisons or look for similarities in their own faith.
- Vatican 2 was a major step in improving involvement of the laity and there were big changes in attitudes and practice, but society has changed hugely in so many ways. The synod is welcomed.
- Most people are not worshippers.
- A friend who lapsed because of reports of Church abuse is still at ease with praying to Our Lady for family needs. Answered prayers did not bring about a return to Church.
- Gay friend wary of those with faith, but still needed prayers when partner was unwell.
- Habit of prayer seems to remain at times of need.
- Great need for spirituality even among atheists, but people are not sure where to look.
- Some people are wary of church formality and rigidity perhaps, according to their experience, yet are drawn to the softer way of a relationship with the Jesus we know.
- The church is necessary for people, the challenge is to encourage them back. The 'Night Fever' events brings surprisingly positive responses.
- People don't want to commit or take responsibility.
- Many people don't prioritise the need for Sunday Mass anymore.
- Families experience differences of view regards faith and attendance at Church.
- Friends and colleagues are mostly respectful of the faith as they see the charitable works that accompany it.
- Some young people admit their parents have given them good example but say: 'you brought us up to make up our own minds.'
- Peer pressure can put youngsters off attending church.
- Parents feel a sense of failure when their children stop practising the faith.

WALKING TOGETHER

COMMUNION: THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. FORMATION

QUESTION 6

‘Which of your concerns does the Church fail or struggle to respond to?’

- Continuing concerns over abuses within the Church and past cover-ups
- Sympathy for those outside of the Church – ways to reach them
- Understanding the modern world and ways to reach young people
- More action on Christian unity
- More leadership roles for women
- Family involvement in the Church – encouraging the young to continue with their faith
- To help Catholics to understand and follow God more completely
- Parishes and Church institutions – not as one
- Church leaders are out of reach of ordinary people
- Need to encourage the faithful to reach out to one another more
- Church needs to be more joyful and attractive, especially to the young

WALKING TOGETHER

PARTICIPATION: LITURGY AND WORSHIP, CO-RESPONSIBILITY

QUESTION 7

‘How do you believe your presence at Mass makes a difference?’

- Praise and thanksgiving to God for all His gifts
- Listening to what God is saying to us
- Universality of the Church, togetherness – the need to keep this going
- Enjoyment of being together for Mass
- Nourishment from the Word of God and the Holy Eucharist
- Reflection on the Word of God and the words of the Mass
- Offering of oneself to God
- Mass brings hope to life
- Being able to contribute to the Church community and beyond
- Prayer for oneself and others
- Example to others – gathering of the people of God in obedience to Him
- An encounter with God and others
- Energy and strength to go forward
- Welcome, and a desire to welcome others
- Desire to share faith with others
- God calls me to Church/to Mass for His purpose
- Coming together as the Body of Christ.
- Joy and strength to go out and share the Good News

WALKING TOGETHER

PARTICIPATION: LITURGY AND WORSHIP, CO-RESPONSIBILITY

QUESTION 9

‘WHAT PART DOES PRAYER PLAY IN YOUR LIFE AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD/THE CHURCH?’

- Essential part of life – draws us closer to God
- All good deeds and intentions can be offered as a prayer
- Prayer is just talking to God as we would to each other
- Structured/traditional and informal prayer are all important
- Sometimes easier to pray traditional prayers with others, especially discipline of rosary
- Blessing and specialness of prayer in Church before the Blessed Sacrament
- Prayer should be meaningful and from the heart
- Many different situations need our prayers
- Prayer brings hope and a sense of wellbeing
- Importance of daily rosary
- Prayer is conversation with God, whether formal or informal
- Prayer is a gift from God
- Prayer is the way we communicate with God, both as individuals and with others
- Prayer for and from others – also forgiveness
- Awe and wonder at God, especially encouraged by the beauty of nature, music etc
- Prayer of gratitude and discernment
- Many types of prayer we can pray with deep trust in God
- Asking for the prayers of others promotes sharing/community
- Praying together can be comfortable and shares burdens
- We teach our children to pray

WALKING TOGETHER

PARTICIPATION: LITURGY AND WORSHIP. CO-RESPONSIBILITY

QUESTION 12

How does your parish effectively identify and use the gifts of its people? How can we better enable full participation and co-responsibility in the life of the Church at parish and diocesan levels?

- We need the Holy Spirit to guide us and to help us to recognise our talents/gifts and to enable our generosity. Prayers needed for this.
- Our parish priest encourages us to participate, he supports us in what we do, and informs us of various parish needs.
- We focus on 'our welcome' of parishioners to Mass and parish activities. In this way we can get to know them, recognise their gifts, and encourage them to participate.
- Volunteer stewards have been asked to continue as Church Wardens/ 'Welcomers'
- Outside of the Pandemic we have tea and coffee after Mass, various social activities and pilgrimages which all encourage a sense of belonging/community and hopefully generosity and commitment.
- We try to reach out.
- We are hoping to re-form a parish youth group, but this is a struggle.
- We have held a parish census which may assist us in identifying talents
- Need to encourage inter-parish/inter-denominational activities, form friendships and share best practice, especially regards encouraging participation and co-responsibility.
- From March 2022, our deanery is joining with the north deanery. The intention being that a larger area will more clearly manifest need, encourage greater collaboration and better laity involvement.
- Maybe need more lay led outreach activities and talent identification.
- Maybe form a parish committee with perhaps a rota system to avoid ownership.

Question 12 Continued:

- Hopefully the Synodal Pathway journey will lead people through response to responsibility.
- Invitation from the pulpit is always helpful.
- Bishops need to encourage participation and co-responsibility as Pope Francis does.
- We need to encourage people to realise that it is a joy and a privilege to build up, support and to serve the Church.
- Change is not always easy – we need to bring people along with us.
- Participation in Church activities can be life giving.
- Structure of the Church needs to change. Authority and hierarchy are too intricate.
- Live stream Masses and zoom meetings enable those who are housebound and those without transport to participate more.
- It is our duty to support the Church, we need enthusiasm in this.
- Encouragement to realise that we are all called to be missionary disciples.
- A confident attitude of ‘what we are going to do?’ rather than ‘how are we going to do it?’
- A recognition of people’s talents already being used in the wider society, and how they could bring those talents to bear in the Church.
- Vision and enthusiasm needed. Lots of positive things going on already. We need to build on these.
- Everyone has a part to play. We need to journey together, even when others journey is going away from the Church. We need to continue accompanying them, and to pray for them.
- We need to discern and commit.
- Baptism is the beginning of our faith journey, we need to encourage families to realise that this journey is a continuing one, that the Sacraments form milestones in the journey, and that participation and co-responsibility in the Church are part of the journey also.
- Support needs to filter from diocesan level, through parishes, to families. Diocesan vision should help with this.

WALKING TOGETHER

MISSION: SOCIAL OUTREACH. EVANGELISATION. OUR DREAM

QUESTION 13

IF YOU COULD DESCRIBE YOUR LOCAL PARISH FULFILLING YOUR DREAMS AND CONCERNS FOR THE WHOLE WORLD AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE?

- A deepening of faith, and respect for the Sacraments for those already attending Church.
- More vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
- A parish full of young people, and people of all ages, sharing their faith with other faith groups.
- The parish would be, and would be seen to be, a loving, supportive and charitable family as I believe it is already.
- Sharing the Gospel both with those in spiritual and in physical need.
- Quality of worship – worship is at the heart of everything. We go out from worship to minister to others.
- Christian unity is so important. Breaking down barriers. Praying together for peace and to overcome poverty and injustice in our own communities and worldwide.
- A Spirit led, vibrant and expanding Church. A Church that reaches out especially to those on the peripheries.
- Church hierarchy need to look at investment in women. Women given roles in the decision making of the church.
- Do we need to think about women Deacons? Historically the church had women deacons.
- Religious sisters play an important role in the church worldwide, in schools and with other tasks. We need to encourage religious life.
- More people involved in parish life and greater communion with other parishes.
- We need to be better at passing on skills and forming new workers for the vineyard.
- Need to involve indigenous people
- We need to be encouraged by the good work already being done, and at the same time be open to change.
- A Church which continues in the truths of the faith, and which communicates the joy of living in the truth.

WALKING TOGETHER

MISSION: SOCIAL OUTREACH, EVANGELISATION, OUR DREAM

QUESTION 14

‘How does your experience of parish life allow you to reflect, develop, act on, and speak about your faith?’

- Opportunity for Mass and the Sacraments
- Can see the Holy Spirit at work in our parish, very welcoming, encouraging, and supportive.
- Holy Spirit enables us to grow, share and give good example – we need the Holy Spirit
- Prayer groups, Bible study, faith talks all enhance and deepen faith
- Participation in Parish life and work, fundraising and group activity
- Praying to the Holy Spirit for strength, guidance and help in our faith and to enable us to share our faith with others
- Our faith strengthens others
- Catholic schools very important, US survey saw rises in violence when schools closed.
- Gaining energy from the parish to help others in many ways
- Good example and charitable deeds by Church members manifest Christ’s face to others,
- Encouraging others to grow
- Reaching out, evangelising and being inclusive
- Harder to share faith with family members who have lapsed than with strangers.

Question 14 Continued:

- Pray to the Holy Spirit to give us confidence to share our faith and the joy of being part of the Church.
- Parish family is very important. A loving, supportive, and charitable parish family is good for us, and bound to be attractive to others.
- Confidence in sharing the Word of God/ the Good News with others
- Sense of not being alone in sharing faith, support of the Church
- Need to put efforts in to seeing the abundant graces of good work being done.
- Sacramental preparation provides a good opportunity to enable recognition that all people are God's children and are part of His family.
- Church institution can be seen to differ with parish life.
- Faith requires good deeds from us, and good deeds need to be accompanied by prayer
- Recognition by convert parishioner that the prayer life at our parish is powerful and helpful
- Experience of new parishioner whose family are far away, was one of friendship, prayer, support, and comfort.
- Baptism is the beginning of the triangle between the Baptised child and parents, Church, and School.
- Asking the Holy Spirit to work through us so that others will come to see God through what we say and do.
- By linking life in the parish to life outside and taking the word of God and the good news to others.

WALKING TOGETHER

MISSION: SOCIAL OUTREACH, EVANGELISATION, OUR DREAM

QUESTION 15

‘In what ways is the call of Jesus to serve the poor a priority in the Church and especially in our parishes?’

- Lots being done in the parish to help the poor, but more needs to be done
- CAFOD & SVP very active in our parish
- More people need to get involved
- Spiritual poverty exists alongside financial poverty – both need to be addressed
- Prayer is much needed – we can all pray
- How do we find those who need our help?
- We need the Holy Spirit to guide, and show us how to help others
- Marginalised need our help
- Need to work with community agencies effectively
- Poverty and injustice are a challenge – we have a duty to help

WALKING TOGETHER PARISH FLYER QUESTION

What is the Holy Spirit saying to our Church today?

13 Respondents

- Return to the traditions of the Church, value Sacraments, Mass, and the Eucharist.
- Promote the commandment of Love
- Importance of prayer
- Foster the faith

3 Respondents

- Reach out to young people

3 Respondents

- Become more tolerant

1 Respondent

- Do not be afraid, stay strong. Pray, trust, and keep going. Do your best and rely on God. Prayer first, then action. Truly believe you can do nothing without me, but that with me in you, through you, I can do everything. Trust, love me, support one another, and reach out. I will do the rest. Have faith! Believe! Be Joyful!