

# Nottingham Diocesan Draft Synodal Response

## **Preface: How our journey began...**

On Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021 we distributed prayer cards, liturgy templates for parishes and chaplaincies in advance of a Pastoral Letter written by Bishop Patrick. World Mission Sunday marked the announcement of our first parish meetings over the next fortnight to consider what a Synod is, and how my parish/chaplaincy can contribute to the Synodal Process. Suggested questions for each parish to consider were:

- 1) What is my dream for the Church, for my parish/chaplaincy so that it can become more outward-looking, more missionary?
- 2) To achieve this dream, what do we need to stop doing? What are we doing that needs to be developed or done differently?

On Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November we then began our schools process of listening to pupils and as well as outreach through the NDCYS (Nottingham Diocesan Catholic Youth Service) for encounters with young people who are not in Catholic schools. The six parish questions were adapted to three questions. Our Clergy Deanery Meetings in November considered:

- What's been happening in parish meetings so far; what ideas are emerging?
- Planning for the January Special Deanery Meeting: who will lead the Deanery discussion?

The November Day of Prayer for the Poor spurred the announcement of the second parish meeting to consider:

- 3) As a parish / chaplaincy do we know who are the people who feel marginalised or separated from the parish / chaplaincy and society?
- 4) How best can our parish respond? Suggest at least two identifiable ways (an immediate action and a long-term change) in which, as a parish, we will reach out to, and listen to, the marginalised or separated.

Our World Youth Funday provided an opportunity for our school communities to celebrate their connectedness with schools and young people around the world, recognising that the Holy Spirit brings us all together in the Church as a single family of God. The First Sunday of Advent marked the announcement of third parish meeting to consider:

- 5) How do I hear and respond to the voice of God's Holy Spirit, in my life; what signs of the Spirit at work do I see in the life of my parish/chaplaincy?
- 6) What steps may the Holy Spirit be calling us to take, as a parish/chaplaincy, on our journey together into God's future?

On the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord we announced special deanery meetings open to delegates (lay, religious and clergy) from each of the deanery parishes to enable each parish / chaplaincy to share two actions it has decided upon; this will be followed by a time of prayerful discernment; then discussion and agreement on what as a deanery we can do better together, rather than separate, to enable more fruitful dialogue with the wider community (ecumenically, with other faiths, in charitable outreach and with civic bodies).

Each deanery then submitted a report which was collated and presented at the Cathedral on the Feast of Chair of Saint Peter in February to share our hopes, dreams and action plans.

**Key:**

[C]=Catholics not in parishes  
[Cu]=Curia  
[E]=Ethnic Communities  
[Ec]=Ecumenical Partners  
[L]=LGBTQ Community  
[NC]=Non-Catholics  
[P]=Parishioners  
[Pr]=Prisoners

[R]=Religious  
[S]=School Pupils  
[Sp]=Spanned  
[T]=Travellers  
[U]=University Students  
[W}=Women  
[Y]=Young Adults  
[7] Seven Steps Scripture.

**The first steps on our journey...**

**I) What is my dream for the Church, for my parish/chaplaincy so that it can become more outward-looking, more missionary?**

**Dreams about Greater Participation**

- The need for a greater role for women in the liturgy and leadership of the church. [P]
- To administer the sacraments, cherish each other and build a family in common fellowship of faith but do our church doors need to open wider to encourage people to become part of our faith but also to reach out to people who have no interest in being part of our family and effectively engage with them in some way? [Sp]
- Concern about the points women raise being 'discerned out' by the Bishops, but they are aware that this is a matter of concern and so will probably be careful not to do it [W]
- A greater emphasis on outreach to marginalised communities/groups; a reemphasis on the Common Good! [P]
- Keep up with the times and the issues affecting young people; be at one with their concerns, e.g., Climate Change, Bullying, Social Exclusion, child poverty, diverse family situations etc. Modern websites and develop its youth mission. [P] [YA] [S]
- Everyone should understand that the parish needs many other people and the Parish Priest to enable it to operate and flourish. inspiring peer to peer ministry [YA] [P]
- To see young families at Mass and becoming knowing that they have a vital contribution to make to the spiritual and community life of the parish. [P]
- Church's need to invest more time and effort in building a relationship/bond with its local parish community [P]
- Support of Local chaplaincies. Going out versus just opening the doors and hoping. [P]

**Dreams about Church Teaching**

- Confidence in herself – staying true to the magisterium of the Church [YA]
- A deep desire to see the opportunities of the Second Vatican Council to be realized.
- Move from a centralized, hierarchical structure that excludes or alienates people. [P]
- Re-examine church teaching: married clergy, women priests/deacons, divorce etc; a greater awareness of the changing needs of the people and their relationships with each other and diverse communities; [P] [YA] [C]
- Catholic education needs to "re-set" itself, with the Gospel and Christ at its heart. [P]

- Open senior leadership (reserved) positions in our schools to faith-filled Catholics from the LGBTQ community, those who are remarried and those in long-term partnerships. [S]
- The plethora of rules to become a Catholic is hard to navigate [P]

### **Dreams about working alongside other Christians and non-Christians**

- All willing to 'walk' together on the synodal journey, especially with other denominations – we need to take ecumenism seriously. [P]
- We need to work with the other churches to build fellowship for the youth, men, women, prayer groups, fellowship and support of local projects [P]
- Would like us to be an organisation that people turn to for help, no matter what their faith, ethnicity, background, circumstances. [C]
- The most painful issue that I feel personally regarding church unity, is that the beautiful Eucharistic meal that Jesus gave to all believers, remains one of our strongest points of separation (between me and my Catholic friends). [Ec]

### **Dreams to be more welcoming**

- The church might be a place where all feel welcome as part of a community and are loved and valued for their diverse gifts and experiences. [L]
- All people with any sort of disability be welcomed, included in whatever happens in our parishes, their needs be considered whenever decisions are made and recognised as the valuable members of the Church that they are. [Sp]
- That our own parishioners return to their church. We can't welcome other people by way of evangelisation if we are incapable of welcoming our own parishioners [P]
- Greater social action is required [U]
- Inclusive of different languages, BSL, disabled access, ministry of women [YA] [P]
- More dialogue – more opportunities like this, more accepting of lay roles [YA]
- Try and break the clique, rotating the parish council, back the catechists [YA]
- More school and parish dialogue with support of the clergy [YA]
- Everyone is treated with equal dignity and respect without distinction or preference, without title or hierarchical structure, but all of us working together as a family in the service of our Saviour. [Sp]
- Create a strong community of faith with consistency and accessibility [YA]

### **Dreams about our Liturgy**

- The Mass should be restored to its full form (pre Covid); our churches should be unlocked in between Masses so the faithful (and those seeking faith) are able to sit in quiet contemplation, rather than online Mass becoming the norm [YA][P]
- For all liturgies and catechesis to be relevant – to have beautiful liturgies [YA]
- Have faith woven into day to day experiences e.g. Football Mass with Adoration, Pub with a talk on theology [YA]
- Healthy participation rather than observing [YA]
- Vary Mass styles; retain online/virtual services; more inclusivity at celebrations; more emphasis on adult catechesis especially on difficult topics;[P] [YA]
- Widen availability of the Latin Mass and other rites [Eastern Churches] [YA] [U]

### **Dreams about growing in our faith**

- To be a true reflection of Christ as his bride. We should live like Christ in his humility, kindness, love for humanity, his boundless forgiveness, and his quest for lost souls. [E]
- More Catechesis to increase knowledge and understanding of the faith. [YA] [P]
- Evangelise and Form Mass-goers! [YA]
- That the word of God can be spread throughout the world and that families and individuals come together to pray and understand the scriptures. [P] [YA]
- People have good intentions, but many have not had the encounter experience including knowledgeable catechists who don't operate with the Holy Spirit. [P]
- Reinforce the commandments, 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and love your neighbour as yourself [P]
- Weekday Mass at times people who are working can attend, other opportunities outside the Mass for prayer and to connect with faith [YA]
- Priestly formation shouldn't be all at Seminary. Women need to be involved in the training too. [P]

### **Dreams about more fruitful communication**

- Pandemic made evident that parishes are not 'real' communities – no records, email addresses, etc., [W]
- The Church needs a greater culture of transparency so that everyone feels they have a stake in the business. Confidentiality sometimes seems to be used as a reason for not sharing information. [C] [P]
- Evolve our church from grey haired men making decisions in clandestine rooms [P]
- The Church should stop treating us like ignoramuses and use the skills of all [P]
- The church needs to question why Catholics in some other countries are drawn to worship, why is the Brians successful and transfer these values. [P]
- Stop talking about rebuilding and commit resources to rebuilding. [W]
- Often parishes splinter into small closed groups with no cross communication. [W]
- Giving witness to our faith and belief through our words and actions in conversation with friends and acquaintances who may not be Catholic or even church going. [P]

## **2) To achieve this dream, what do we need to stop doing? What are we doing that needs to be developed or done differently?**

### **Explore our use of buildings**

- Addressing the use and the number of buildings in our local area. [P]
- Improve Parish facilities– improve hall seating – good coffee machines [YA]
- Keeping churches open. Really important, even when there is no resident priest. [W]
- Use the space of the Church more creatively take out pews and make room for a toddler space, child friendly notice board. [P]

### **Explore our relevance**

- Encouraging younger members of the church and younger families to participate in the life of our church communities. [P]
- Being active in the community, beyond the church building. [P]
- Ongoing exploration and development of faith or communities become lukewarm. [P]

- Keep reminding and encouraging parishioners to help the Church, ask them to consider what they can give or do for the Church and to celebrate what the Church does [P]

### Exploring our prayer and worship

- Making the church community more than Sunday Mass. [P]
- Helping people find their way back to the church, refocusing on Jesus' teachings. [P]
- To pray every day especially for the Church, its community and Parish Priests
- Seek God in prayer, in the sacrament of reconciliation, retreats. [E]
- I would like more lively music at Mass. [T]
- More activities are needed for children at their level. [T]
- More formation in faith and lively celebrations e.g., healing services are needed to counteract the Born-Again Christian; Nightfever. Adoration [P] [T] [YA]
- Serious worship that draws us to the transcendent and is at the heart of our faith. [U]
- More encouragement for taking on more roles in the Mass [YA]
- While forming committees etc. it is equally important to pray, hear and discern what we are being called to do when we are being asked to 'dream'. [C]
- A strong emphasis on Sacraments, the Saints Pilgrimages and traditional devotions [U]

### Exploring education and catechesis

- Address the crisis of ongoing adult formation and the unfortunate exclusion of working persons from being able to attend daily Mass/word and communion. [P]
- Equip everyone, there are many courses available. We need each one of us to have that initial encounter experience then identify our calling. [P]
- Move from our corporate CMAT Leadership Model to a Wisdom Based Model. Appointments are made from those exemplary teachers nearing retirement who are invited to share their gifts for their love of their faith rather than a huge salary. [S]
- Orthodox teaching and preaching. Particularly moral teaching and aesthetics [U]
- The Church's stance on Artificial Intelligence and Metaverse and digital world [U]
- OFSTED for parishes and move away from a focus on buildings and anxieties. [YA] [P]
- Don't expect the parents and the schools to do it all [YA]
- Catholic Schools to teach the meaning of Latin words [YA]

### Exploring our inclusivity

- The parish (and the Church at large) should continue to promote and, where necessary seek to extend, an 'inclusive' environment in all aspects, recognising the importance of engaging with the diverse nature of the parish community. [P]
- The church needs to stop: Talking about LGBT people as other, using unfriendly terms such as homosexual (for example use gay), being swift to judge and slow to listen. Covering up and hiding behind a document about what constitutes a 'practicing Catholic' in school appointments. Bishops who are openly hostile to LGBT+ people in places like Poland, Nigeria and in some US dioceses. [L]
- Ask parishioners to be kind and caring to others, inviting them to join the parish [P]
- Eradicate clericalism and remove terms such as 'intrinsically disordered'. [L]
- Actively listen to the lived reality of LGBT+ people, accompany, care for and offer healing for the past damage done to some of these baptised Catholics.

- Stop being – exclusive; judgemental; negative; violent; precious; let go of hurts; hierarchical; we don't have all the answers; male dominated; legalistic; selfish; insincere; divisive; intolerant; male dominated; clergy dominated [R]
- Travellers now like to be more involved in parish life and would like to be more included as welcomers, readers, and other parish ministries. [T]

### Exploring our connection with others

- Missional communities – based on areas of interest – places to bring friends who aren't catholic to ease them into church [YA] [U]
- Making things more accessible – Lourdes is expensive [YA]
- Greater diocesan communications – the diocese is bigger than just Nottingham! [YA]
- 5-a-side football tournaments between parishes [YA]
- When all Wings are together there is a different atmosphere and there is a different atmosphere with Church on the "out". [Pr]

### Explore leadership

- Everyone has a part to play; tap the potential of our cultures; develop CARITAS; be more visible in the locality; penitential services with general absolution; live the Gospel; formation at every level and for everyone. [R]
- Lay people want to be respected as grown-ups – able to take responsibility, make decisions without clerical oversight; clergy have arbitrary powers, can make decisions without consulting, lack skills in teamwork and collaboration. [W]
- Many older people reflected that it is time for the next generation to step up [W]
- Rather than the parish council, have regular meetings for 'parish team' – with representatives of every group in the parish [W]
- Appoint salaried Parish Directors where priests are not available. [W]
- Formalise and honour lay ministries. Train lay people to officiate at baptisms, funerals, wordand communion services. Deacons could take on more leadership roles [W]
- The agreement here is that Catholic Students need to stand up and be counted. [U]

### Explore what we do well

- A place to gather and speak to, come close to and seek forgiveness from God [Pr]
- I experience healing, trust, compassion, kindness, and forgiveness. [T]
- The Mass and sacraments are important to me and my family. [T]
- At a time of difficulty, the Church is where I can go to be supported and listened to. [T]
- Wherever I travel to the first place I look for is the Church and always feel at home. [T]
- The Church understands my culture when I am celebrating the sacraments and that is important to me and when I am struggling the place I want to visit is the Church. [T]
- The reception of the sacraments is important to me and my family. [T]
- Parties and social events [U]

**3) As a parish / chaplaincy do we know who are the people who feel marginalised or separated from the parish / chaplaincy and society?**

### **Welcoming as key to mission**

- Inclusion needs to be a key driver of missionary activity – especially regarding those who feel marginalized and separated from the church e.g., divorced, LGBTQ [P]

### **Welcoming those not able to celebrate in church**

- The sick and housebound are important members of our parish family. [P]
- We do not know those who are marginalised [P]
- COVID has created a wish not to be physically present in some communities. [P]

### **Welcoming our growth in learning**

- The Church is not in the twenty-first century in its outlook and not accessible [S]
- Barriers must be broken down and opportunities for growing, learning, sharing must be encouraged, a community where everyone is valued. [S]
- Students felt that people were now scared to attend Mass and be labelled Catholic because of all the adverse publicity around abuse in the Catholic Church. [S]

### **Welcoming those who feel / are separated**

- More follow up for the children who disappear after First Communion and welcome those who are part of the LGGBT+ Community. [S] [P]
- Be less judgemental, stop stereotyping and be more supportive [S]
- Excluded communities; this may vary from the sick, the disenfranchised youth, those with undocumented immigration status, those battling financial challenges. African students struggling with studies, loneliness, paying school fees. [E]
- Map out the current church goers and invite them to 'seek and find the marginalised rather than make assumptions that the church is not interested or concerned. [R]
- The Church has much to learn from secular society; including people who 'don't fit'
- Church response to refugees, asylum seekers and human trafficking very positive. [W]
- Young people may be puzzled and shocked by Church teaching – sometimes incredulous; not impressed by perceived double standards. [W]

### **Welcoming difference**

- To be sensitive to cultural differences and preferences in styles or worship whilst maintaining the uniqueness, integrity and excellence of our traditional liturgies. [P]
- Diocese /Parishes need to be ready to pay for professional skills where these are needed – new technology, fund raising, training, music. [W]
- For too long they [People with disabilities and learning difficulties] had been seen as passive receivers of whatever the Church decided to allow them to be included in but had a distinctive contribution to make, as valuable as any other [Sp]

### **Welcoming the contributions of a non Faith based community**

- In terms of society, it is those who have lost their faith in Christ our Lord. They lack the means to mitigate their pains and difficulties because they do not know how to access unconditional love that God alone can give [P]

**4) How best can our parish respond? Suggest at least two identifiable ways (an immediate action and a long-term change) in which, as a parish, we will reach out to, and listen to, the marginalised or separated.**

**Immediate Action**

**Actioning a vision of unity**

- A quality census programme to allow an effective communication strategy [P]
- To implement a welcoming group and to find those Parishioners who are not on the Parish List to better Communicate. [P]
- The Diocese is Nottingham-centric with little understanding of the challenges and possibilities of the four counties within their remit. [P]

**Actioning sacramental growth**

- Sacramental life – sacramental preparation being more than a programme, but an evangelization of families; sacraments as a welcoming point to the church community, rather than a “hurdle” to be overcome. [P]

**Actioning outreach**

- Greater outreach towards the marginalised, through practical support and advice from a the parish community to anyone who needs it; support refugee and asylum seekers; be more welcoming to the stranger with more social opportunities [P]
- Produce a Welcome Card to be given to new parishioners and follow this up by offering a Welcome Pack to the respondents. Send out the parish newsletter along with their own newsletter every week [S] [P]

**Actioning stewardship**

- Plant trees; recycle; re-use and throw away less; be kinder and more considerate; call out bullying, homophobic attitudes and language, sexist and non-inclusive language; don't gossip and use the internet/phones for the wrong reasons – ie, to hurt, undermine or slander people; reach out to the local community especially the sick, elderly and housebound; work with the SVP to establish ‘Young Vinnies in schools; more prayer spaces and resources; school chapels, and school chaplains [S]

**Actioning more fruitful celebrations**

- To encourage families to church with music and a revitalised little church. Encourage some of the parents to volunteer. Try and make more of a celebration and coffee after mass. (This action is underway with meetings planned with volunteers) [P]
- To restore the social life of the parish to what it was prior to the Pandemic [P]
- Invite the parishioners to the liturgies in school which are led by the children. [S]
- A more active prayer life both within the church and in Catholic homes. [P]

**Actioning a learning culture**

- Catechesis of the parish: personal à mission à evangelisation. [P]
- A young person from the School to be invited onto the PCC for one year term. [P]
- Educate/ promote the sacraments more (Communion etc). [S]
- More school visits to church to understand the religious artwork and symbolism. [S]

## Long-Term Changes

### Changing from maintenance to mission

- Develop Personal Prayer opportunities and retreat days involve parents in these too [S]
- Appoint a 'welfare officer' in every parish, who would work with a team within the parish to keep regular contact with those in need [P]
- RE Department, Chaplaincy and Clergy to speak to students about the concerns and misconceptions students have on a range of moral issues [S]
- Develop greater unity between the Protestant and Roman Catholic church in this city – can we make it easier for Roman Catholics to bless our city in a meaningful way [Ec]
- Only put out good news –put out bright photos not just dark and gloomy ones [YA]
- Mission team that would work with the parish (not the role of NDCYS) [YA]
- Priests need to listen and be more welcoming of new people [YA]
- More charitable giving [YA]
- More advertisement videos for different events [YA]
- Doing more stuff for the environment e.g. more projectors and less printing [YA]
- Support hub for parishes at deanery level [C]

### Changing from being served to serving others

- Looking to become a “Hub” for services to the local community, [P]
- Improve communications and encourage more volunteers; [P]
- A church of community vs a church of strangers [P]
- Bereavement Group (this was requested repeatedly) [P]
- Ensure parishes have enough staff to achieve what is required of them [C]

### Changing from exclusivity to inclusivity

- All Masses should be advertised in all the deanery parishes; develop stronger links between the parishes; wider use of technology and more professional; offer on-line courses; be pro-active and positive about God's call to the priestly or religious life. [P]
- To run a café or a soup kitchen after mid-week Mass for people feeling isolated [P]
- Ask the parish council to take a more active role in the synod process. [P]
- International Mass at Pentecost led by communities from all over the world. [P]
- Visiting Catholics who are sick and going through difficulties. [E]
- Engage with members who no longer come to mass through social media. [E]
- Be welcoming when Travellers visit your parish and look at ways in which you can build relationships with them positively. [T]
- Carry on streaming to allow the housebound to connect to their parishes [P]
- Pastoral Team to ring the elderly/ housebound. [P] [Sp]
- Preserve and protect life from its beginning to its end. Particularly those born with or likely to be born with disabling conditions and support those families. [Sp]

### Changing from lone rangers to collaborators

- Greater collaboration between schools and parishes in key events [S] [P]
- Be an invitational Church, focus on welcome ministry/hospitality team [YA] [P]

- Support young people by appointing Youth Ministers to engage with them at parish and Deanery level and prepare them for a meaningful role in society [P]
- It is time for serious thinking, not just going back to that way it was. If we can see and understand the problems, it's up to us – the laity – to do something about them. [W]
- The importance of friendship, drawing people into groups and activities. [W]
- Setting up a Parish Council [P]

### **Changing from education to formation**

- The need to address the crisis of ongoing adult formation [P]
- Reform our parish into domestic church units that will facilitate formation and evangelisation. [P]
- We need many people in our church as catechists and training are imperative. [P]
- To develop a Parish Pastoral plan [P]
- First Holy Communion Children adopt an older parishioner as a prayer partner. [P]

### **Changing from reactive to proactive**

- Review notice boards, social events, and the liturgy to see if they could be more welcoming and inclusive. [P]
- Explore and implement a range of communication techniques to try to get input of thoughts and ideas from a wide range of people. [P]
- A 'What's On event to which groups will be invited to send a representative(s) to run explain to the community will be invited how they can be involved [P]
- Review previous consultations and assemblies that have taken place and ensure any outstanding action is progressed. [P]
- Carry out an evaluation of people's needs. [P]
- Reach out to new housing developments. [P]

## **5) How do I hear and respond to the voice of God's Holy Spirit, in my life; what signs of the Spirit at work do I see in the life of my parish / chaplaincy?**

### **Hearing through Prayer and Scripture**

- Coming together in prayer especially Exposition to rebuild relationships [P]
- Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi, means that prayer and belief are integral to each other and that liturgy is not distinct from theology but also builds on our relationship [P]
- Encourage Prayer groups and Bible Studies, perhaps in each other's homes [P] [E]
- Attending to the things of God and coming to Mass [E]
- Meditation and prayer based on scriptures and reflecting upon this in order to spread the Gospel, in the family and towards our neighbours [P]

### **Hearing through communication**

- Better communicate of ideas and things that are happening across the Diocese. [P]
- We can appear unfriendly whilst trying to respect newcomers' privacy. [P]
- To encourage more participation in activities rather than leave it to the few. [P]
- Much more communication which is open, honest and true. [P]

### Hearing through celebration

- Parish churches could organise together common feasts with neighbouring churches of other denominations, especially Anglo-Catholic churches. [P]
- Organise regular pilgrimages and support diocesan pilgrimages [S]

### Hearing through the community of faith

- By supporting the church through a stronger community, we would become more welcoming of marginalised people and more evangelising. [E] [P]
- Families and friendships that support each other in times of need. [P]
- Action in community eg, Refugees; fund raising for charities. [P]

## 6) What steps may the Holy Spirit be calling us to take, as a parish / chaplaincy, on our journey together into God's future?

### Growing in discernment

- That Scripture sharing groups based on the Seven Steps model should be established throughout the Diocese; these would be open to priests, religious and lay people; they could be lay led but would need, as a minimum, the support and encouragement of parish clergy. Such groups could have a significant role in the development of a more mission focused Church. [7]
- The signs of the Holy Spirit already at work: Volunteers, active laity [P]
- Whatever loaves and fishes we bring, God will multiply. [P]
- By encountering Christ and practising what we preach. [E] [P]

### Growing as evangelisers

- Adult formation "We need to evangelise ourselves to evangelise others" [P]
- By spreading the word of God to family members and friends. [E]
- To remember the commission given by the Lord to make disciples and evangelise. [P]

### Growing in hospitality

- Many members remain anonymous and cold. The community should imitate the life of the early Christians and the Apostles. [P]
- Inclusivity with no exceptions, we need to welcome all, even if personal circumstances mean we cannot always live the expected ideals of Church [P]

### Growing in humility

- The Church needs to give a public "genuine" apology, supported by publicised action, to those it has damaged/abused - this is the first step needed to regain the trust [P]
- The Church is declining in membership, not just the Catholic Church, across the board, we need to understand why the Church is no longer relevant to people [P]
- Removal of some masses and closure of parishes results in the eroding of parish communities and reinforces the message of "irrelevance". [P]

### Growing in communion

- Share good practice with neighbouring parishes e.g. Catechesis and outreach [P]

- Pray together on a regular basis (creating a rhythm of prayer), so that we can listen collectively to the Holy Spirit and what God is calling us to do. [C]

### **Growing as communicators**

- Really Engage with social media – Meet young people where they are. [P]
- To use the rich variety of resources available to evangelise- possible funding [P]
- Catholic community needs to reboot, refresh, re-educate, update. [P]
- Create a family outreach team in union with Catholic schools [P]

### **Growing in empowerment**

- Empower the laity by equipping them to be outspoken on social issues [P]
- The declining number of priests is an opportunity for the church to re-evaluate [P]
- Deanery Faith Co-ordinator to develop opportunities for faith discussion [P]
- A deanery co-ordinator (not a cleric) to get info from parishes and disseminate it [P]
- A lay Synodal deanery team [P]

## **The next steps on our journey...**

### **Epilogue**

#### **From Listening to Discerning**

Through Lent to Pentecost each parish, school and chaplaincy is asked to make use of this period to begin implementing the two actions it decided to take forward and each deanery is asked to do the same. Pentecost then offers a special time to celebrate the movement of God's Holy Spirit within our diocese over these past months, and to begin to discern afresh where the Holy Spirit is leading us, the People of God, in our Diocese of Nottingham.

#### **What the Synodal Process has taught us**

- There was a strong sense that the synodal process has not been fully thought through, and that there are many highly skilled and competent lay people in the Church with professional experience of qualitative research, project planning and project management, and research quality control, who could be invited to help improve the process. [We have five universities and a lot of advanced engineering businesses in the diocese and they all teach or practice these skills]. [W]
- Noted that deanery event [Leicester] seems to have been dominated by clergy. [W]
- Parishes are supposed to have two people leading synodal process, but who are they? Diocesan leads are Joe Hopkins and Fr David Cain. Good to have more diversity – women, people from the ethnic minority communities - to ensure that all voices are included in the Report. Would be helpful to have more people involved in drafting/editing the Report for the same reason – diversity of perspectives. [W]
- There will be no real outcome of next year's event and all the preparation that is going into it, unless each one of us dedicates ourselves once again to 'the mission' that Our Lord is giving to us. [Sp]



# Bishop Patrick's Initial Response

Thank you to everyone who has generously contributed to this draft diocesan Synod Report. You will see from the key to the contributors at the end of the Preface page that, in the short time we had, a genuine attempt was made to engage contributions to the diocesan Synod Process from as wide as possible. There is certainly much for me, and for all of us, to reflect upon and respond to in our parishes, chaplaincies, schools, Religious Houses, diocesan Curia and organisations. Points about doctrinal matters in this report, which cannot be acted upon at diocesan level, will also be sent directly to the Synod Office in Rome.

I would now encourage you to join me in further prayerful reflection upon this draft report, as we seek to be open to the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Please feel free to send any comments or further contributions to Joe Hopkins and Father David Cain (contact details below) by Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Guardian of the Church. The final diocesan report must then be sent by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April to the Synod Coordinating Team of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales who will then draw up the National Report from the 22 dioceses. Our own diocesan Synod Report will then be distributed widely across the diocese at this point. The National Synod Report once completed, will also be widely available.

Meanwhile, beginning this Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> February (see the dates below), I will be travelling to the deaneries to present the challenges facing our diocese and the reasons for the proposed re-organisation of the deanery grouping of parishes across our diocese. I will be accompanied by the two Vicars General, Canons Eddy Jarosz and Joe Wheat, the Chief Operating Officer, David Lawes, and the Episcopal Vicar with oversight for the work of our diocesan Curia, Canon Paul Chipchase. Each evening will also provide an opportunity to present the proposed plan of reorganisation to parish representatives and clergy, and to share the support that the diocesan Curia will be offering to parishes to support this reorganisation and help enable more missionary initiatives. The parish representatives and clergy will discuss the proposed reorganisation that evening, and will then bring the plan back to their parishes for further discussion of how to make it work. This proposed plan, some of which has already been implemented by parishes, seeks to help our parishes, schools and chaplaincies to be better supported in becoming more outward-looking and mission focussed, while also striving to respond creatively to the harsh reality of the declining numbers of parishioners and priests.

The diocesan Synod process and the necessary reorganisation of deaneries to help support mission are very much inter-connected. Together they will help shape our next steps as a diocese in genuine renewal and a stronger sense of missionary purpose. Please join me in asking the Holy Spirit to inspire, guide and bless all our diocesan initiatives as we strive to become the Church, here in the East Midlands, that God is calling us to be.

+ *Patrick*

Bishop of the Nottingham Diocese

## Diocesan Synod Leads

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Joe Hopkins              joe.hopkins@dioceseofnottingham.uk

## Deanery Roadshows

|                            |                                    |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sherwood                   | Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> February | Holy Trinity, Newark         |
| Lincoln                    | Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> February   | Our Lady of Lincoln, Lincoln |
| Nottingham                 | Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> March       | Cathedral, Nottingham        |
| Loughborough               | Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> March    | Sacred Heart, Loughborough   |
| Leicester                  | Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> March      | Saint Theresa, Birstall      |
| Grantham                   | Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> March      | Saint Joseph, Oakham         |
| Lindsey                    | Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> March    | Corpus Christi, Cleethorpes  |
| Fenland                    | Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> March    | Saint Mary, Boston           |
| Amber Valley and High Peak | Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> April       | Saint Joseph, Matlock        |
| Derby                      | Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> April     | English Martyrs, Derby       |