



Submitted Synthesis from Deanery Meeting

Deanery: St David & St Cuthbert
(Borders, Midlothian & East Lothian)



Archdiocese
Of St Andrews
& Edinburgh

SYNODAL CONSULTATION MEETING

DEANERY OF THE BORDERS, MIDLOTHIAN AND EAST LOTHIAN

HELD AT ST. DAVID'S CHURCH, DALKEITH.

WEDNESDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2022. 7pm

PARISHES REPRESENTED

St. Anne & St. Luke, St. Joseph
Sacred Heart
St. David's Church
St. Mary and St. David
St. Gabriel's
St. Martin's
Our Lady of Loretto & St. Michael
St. Mathew's
Our Lady of Consolation
St. Margaret
St. Mary's
St. Joseph's
St. James
Our Lady & St. Andrew's

AREA

Penicuik
Dalkeith
Hawick
Prestonpans
Tranent
Musselburgh
Rosewell

Haddington
Peebles

Galashiels

14 Feedback sheets returned

CONSULTATION PROCESS.

WEDNESDAY 16th February, Holy Hour at 7.30-8.30pm in St. David's Parish Church, Dalkeith.

DISCUSSION MEETING. Meeting was held on Wednesday 23rd February at 7.00pm in the Parish Hall.

1 WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

Sr. Anna Marie McGuan, RSM and Fr. John Deighan welcomed the delegates and led us in prayer invoking the Holy Spirit for inspiration, guidance and discernment. Sister explained briefly the procedure of the meeting beginning with short talks by herself and then Fr. Deighan, followed by two sessions of listening, reflection and discussions.

2. INTRODUCTORY TALKS.

I. PRINCIPLES OF DIALOGUE

Sr. Anna Marie RSM spoke about the '**importance of dialogue**' based on the encyclical on ecumenism 'Ut Unum Sint' of St. John Paul II.

The synodal journey is one of dialogue:

- i) It is cognitive, engaging and reflective.
- ii) Has a thinking component based on prayer and the Eucharist and so we had the preparatory Holy Hour.

- iii) Everyone is engaging and given the benefit of the doubt.
- iv) Should have humility. We are gathered here desiring truth; no-one has monopoly of the truth only God so we should open ourselves to listen to each other.
- v) The vertical component pertains to God and we ask our Lord to bring us all into fruitful dialogue and greater understanding and awareness of God's truth.

II. SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION.

Fr. John Deighan spoke about the methodology of the synodal journey which is 'structured Spiritual Conversation' and proceeds in stages:

i) Round 1. (*Listen to the question*)

Listening is the key principle of spiritual conversation. As a listening Church we identify common and shared perspectives and open our hearts to each other. We listen attentively and allow others to articulate and respond to questions. We engage and as we do so we listen to the Holy Spirit in the vertical dimension of dialogue.

ii) Round 2.

Natural discussions and responses with awareness to invite each other.

Silence in between rounds of discussion gives us a chance to reflect on what others have said.

iii) Summarise what was discussed noting points of agreement and differences and bringing together the fruits of the conversations.

1. CONVERSATIONS OF THE REPRESENTATIVES.

The two questions for discussion of:

CONVERSATION/QUESTION 1: COMMUNION/PARTICIPATION.

JOURNEYING TOGETHER AS A CHURCH IMPLIES A VITAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, INDIVIDUALLY AND COMMUNALLY.

- (i) ***HOW CAN WE FOSTER AND DEEPEN EACH PERSON'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH CHRIST?***
- (ii) ***WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL THAT NEEDS TO BE MAINTAINED?***
- (iii) ***WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?***

- (i). ***HOW CAN WE FOSTER AND DEEPEN EACH PERSON'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH CHRIST?***

(a) : ***Deep Spirituality attained by Holy Mass/Eucharist, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and traditional devotions***

- Attending Holy Mass
- Awareness of centrality of the Eucharist and deeper reverence for the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith so others can see our devotion.
- We need to give people Christ. Have the Blessed Sacrament at centre stage—use Adoration to preach the word of God. Regular Adoration to set a habit for the mustard seed to grow.
- Getting out of 'Why am I a catholic?'
- Catechetics and developing the faith focussing on the duties and obligations of the faith.

- Knowing what the Church means to me helps me to answer other questions and filter out negativity.
- Deeper prayer and devotion to the Holy Spirit as we need help can't do it alone.
- Personal prayer learning the Church's traditional prayers and using these to change our lives and those of others by living our lives daily as a rhythm and Christ-centred life.
- Celebrating feast days emphasises that the Christian life is more than attending Mass, saying the rosary and other devotions.
- Regularity of Holy Hours/prayer groups and promoting *Lectio Divina* and the rosary in families and homes.
- Understanding how God sees us and how we see God. Important to know your faith well to filter information from the media and avoid cynicism.

(b). To Christ through family and community relationship.

- Attending Holy Mass and coming together as a community of the People of God. Involvement in the life of the Parish forms meaningful relationships with God and each other.
- Be enthusiastic and spread the faith through our love and joy in Christ.
- Being incredible witnesses and example. Living our faith with joy and peace in everyday life.
- Having small and community prayer groups.
- Raising awareness of fasting- important part of Catholic faith. Normalisation of fasting.
- Testimonies and opportunities for people to be open about their faith and share conversion stories is powerful witness.
- Use technology for personal and communal faith sharing.
- Develop personal relationship with God by giving adult formation and youth formation courses such as the Alpha course and Intentional Discipleship courses.
- Family conversations on the importance and values of our faith and sharing of it.
- Being a family Church and giving back something of ourselves.
- Be truthful about the expectations of parishioners.

(ii). *WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL THAT NEEDS TO BE MAINTAINED?*

- Parishes in general are welcoming, with people of diverse backgrounds/ethnicities etc.
- There is a variety of different groups in the parishes; spiritual and social which interconnect.
- A good sense in our Churches of a warmth that is difficult to define.

(iii). *WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?*

(a). Children and Youths

- Children's liturgy to make children listen to the word of God and encourage them to live it.
- Mass and liturgy pitched at the level of children, younger readers at Mass so that it is more relevant for children by getting them involved and participating more.

- Have catechesis for young children and have active Youth Ministry and Alpha courses for children in schools.
- Make the Church attractive to young people.
- We need to offer incentives to young people to explore the faith.
- Need to work with nearby parishes for example to help young people meet and share with other young people etc.
- Parents and grandparents to pass on the faith and not just ‘tick the boxes’ at sacrament time.

(b). *Living the Faith by learning, lay ministries and service/love of neighbour.*

- Have more opportunities for learning and discussion of the faith.
- The Church needs to identify with the desire for searching and questioning of truth.
- ‘Return’ to prayer and devotions.
- Don’t fix what is not broken. Encourage liturgy and develop liturgy.
- Need to take real care of the elderly and housebound and to involve young people in this.
- We need to make room for our sick and housebound parishioners feel included by live streaming Masses and visiting the sick.
- No-one should be excluded. Dialogue and discussions need to be regular.
- Work towards a plan in the diocese so there is a baseline of synodality to be extended to all.
- Wider distribution of parish newsletters to schools and on Facebook
- Have Deanery bulletin for distribution in Parishes
- Form Social Committees and organise a Summer Festival and involve everyone.
- Have tea/coffee groups
- Improve music ministry with uplifting music.
- A real desire to have Churches open during the day.

CONVERSATION/QUESTION 2: MISSION

JOURNEYING TOGETHER AS A CHURCH IMPLIES LOVING CONCERN FOR THOSE WHO NO LONGER WALK WITH US, OR WHO LAG BEHIND.

i) HOW CAN WE REACH OUT TO THE ‘LAPSED’, THE DISILLUSIONED, THE WOUNDED, THE ANGRY, THE APATHETIC?

ii) HOW CAN WE HELP THEM FEEL THEY STILL HAVE A HOME, AND A MISSION WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

- i. HOW CAN WE REACH OUT TO THE ‘LAPSED’, THE DISILLUSIONED, THE WOUNDED, THE ANGRY, THE APATHETIC?***

- Have cards at back of church with message “we miss you” to invite connection. Other parishioners can pick these up and drop in letterbox of absent members.
- Publish messages in Parish bulletin for the support groups in the Parish.
- Advertise messages in the local media and in buses.
- We should put notices on the main road and let people see that we are open and welcome.
- Have Parish database with contact details of Parishioners so that absent members can be contacted easily.
- Personal invitation, bring someone you know into the Church.

ii) HOW CAN WE HELP THEM FEEL THEY STILL HAVE A HOME, AND A MISSION WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

(a). Invite, make welcome, listen, dialogue and understand

- Make ‘lapsed’ people welcome, contact them and invite them back.
- Listen to others, what are their concerns? Let people express their concerns and questions freely.
- Encourage links and discussions with ‘angry people’. Show understanding and invite dialogue.
- Pray for the grace to encourage others. Continue to invite even when knocked back.
- Be welcoming when they come to Church no recriminations but treat with warmth and love. Nor be disappointed or despondent if effects are not seen immediately.
- Be a family of God in and across our world.
- Engage and have dialogue with those on the margins such as those who identify as LGBT, those in partnerships, divorced, single parents etc. Embrace sinners according to Pope Francis “The Catholic Church is a hospital for sinners and not a museum for saints.”
- Practising the attitude of synodality towards people by having more open meetings.
- Radical hospitality. Inviting lapsed back for chats. Not being shy about asking them to come back.
- Stepping out of our Catholic bubble to truly listening. We all have individual responsibility to bring people back
- As Pope Francis says to speak to people and learn from them what happened.
- Power of prayer to bring people back—nothing is impossible with God.
- Grace of forgiveness which releases and liberates people from suffering and resentment.
- Doing our best to love others and not being judgemental.
- Offer those groups that feel disfranchised and let them speak of their injuries and concerns.
- Never a full solution, many are uncomfortable speaking about it. Asking friends round speaking to people about cultural values, literature and film

and language.

- Living virtues of love-encouraging through actions not compulsion.
(b). Live the example
- Show Christ is our very life so they see the God that can be loved.
- Not shy away from our Catholic identity, not letting it disappear among the lapsed. Is this what the 1962 missal does well?
- Create a positive image of the Church
- Respecting and loving others - when people see a genuine faith they often respect it.
- Up to individual members of the Church to love and believe in God - people are drawn to that.

(c). The Clergy

- Make sure that your Church is open, welcoming and ready to embrace people from wherever they are or whatever their status.
- Priest formation needs to have greater emphasis on how to communicate effectively and manage human relationships, e.g., understand how different people need to be treated and spoken to differently.
- Needing conversations on the role of women and homosexuals in the Church.
- How included are those who identify LGBT?
- Hierarchy needs to address fully and finally the sexual abuse scandals.

Mary Agatha Kai-Kai. M.A.(Oxon), Ph.D.

(Soton) March 2022