

SUMMARY OF SYNOD SURVEY – ST SIMON STOCK PARISH, WALDESLADE

61 adults and 32 children returned their survey forms. Thank you to those who returned their survey forms and the Headteachers of both our primary schools, who enabled the children to do so. Not everyone put their age on the survey forms but, the majority of those who did, were in the 60+ age group.

The information in the rest of this document is a snapshot of what was found in the survey forms. You are being given it so you can reflect on what has been seen to be positive in our Parish and what it is hoped will be improved in the future. You will have a part to play in that. The comments suggesting further work is needed have been referred to the Parish Pastoral Council for consideration of future action. The full document, which has been sent to the Diocese, has the full comments from the survey; this can be viewed on the parish website.

Results of Adult Survey

When considering the ways in which our parish most successfully bring people together, we had the following answers:

- **42%** cited social activities/event/evenings;
- **36%** rosary/prayers;
- **34%** Liturgy/Mass/Sacraments
- **24%** 8-hour weekly Adoration/24-hour Adoration.

There was a huge list of other positive ways which included the great volume of volunteers; second collections which support various needs within and without the Church, right through to the after Mass get togethers and the wonderful community feel at Mass.

Comments suggesting further work in this area were all 2% and included:

- what is meant by success;
- the worry about young people receiving holy Communion at a young age who don't progress to receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation;
- how we can ensure those without internet access or mobile phones have access to spiritual and practical support in the event of a pandemic;
- the need to have outside causes to help, not just the Foodbank.

In answer to the question about Jesus being present as head united with us as His body in our parish and community and how that's reflected in our

parish/community life, as well as other reasons we gather together, we had the following answers:

- **16%** cited Mass;
- **10%** social events;
- **7%** we get together because of our faith and belief; good sense of community and WhatsApp groups.
- In the **5%** category, covid stopping us doing some of what we normally do was highlighted eg Prayer and Praise; faith discussion; general parish meetings and group meetings, such as Bereavement Group. The **5%** category also included that the priest represents Christ in the administration of the sacraments; education in the schools and our sacramental programmes; all answering the call to serve/stewardship (pre and post pandemic); we are there for each other, helping to spread love and support each other; weekly time at Adoration taking the opportunity to give time to the Lord in an atmosphere of peace.

The 2% category included:

- that Jesus is present.
- the Adoration group is lovely with extended time for working parents in the evening;
- an annual 24 hr Before the Lord with parishioners volunteering to lead in prayer/praise;
- Children's liturgy;
- Scouts; religious icons to support prayer.

Comments suggesting further work needed were all 2% and included:

- religious and sacramental instruction for our young people;
- provision for young people;
- possibility of accessing groups in other parishes for the young;
- the need to realise our interconnectedness with the world, and act on it.

On reflecting on the effect of the pandemic in our parish, the following reflections were given:

- **20%** stated that our prayer life grew through WhatsApp, Zoom and participating in Mass via You Tube etc;
- **13%** identified the sterling work by dedicated teams, many of them young people, who organised participation at Mass, safely and caringly;
- **11%** recognised Fr Bart's ability to communicate spiritually and socially via technology to connect us as a parish family;

- **7%** identified Livestreaming as an opportunity for those who are usually unable to attend Mass to be able to participate virtually.

In the 2% category the following were noted:

- pandemic showed some people how much they **do** need the church;
- a fund set up to help finance anyone in need; able parishioners shopped for those in lockdown;
- we adapted to a new normal; our choir recorded music which was blended together to be played at Mass;
- we hope and pray for increased numbers at Mass.

Comments suggesting further work needed included:

- **26%** stated that many members of the parish have not returned for a variety of reasons, such as health issues, anxiety or simple apathy;
- **10%** commented that people have left the church as they have lost the habit of attending/found they don't need Mass/churches;
- **5%** category included: many people left behind because of their lack of technology who had to rely on phone calls or home visits; need for livestreamed Mass on a Sunday so sick and housebound could still access Mass.
- The **3%** category included: loss felt by some parents when the 9 am Mass was moved from St Benedict's School;
- not able to contact everyone if they needed help. We need a system so that everyone is contactable in such a crisis;
- we must not return to 'business as usual' but need to find ways to show everyone that our Church is alive and filled with the Holy Spirit; during pandemic;
- there was a change of priest which would affect a parish at any time.

The 2% category included:

- sick and housebound were unable to receive Communion during the pandemic;
- people who used to do lots had to step back because of having to isolate;
- everyone needs to know what is on offer in the parish as not everyone can access the website;
- lack of involvement of teenagers after Confirmation. How can we address this?

The following comments were made about how we can encourage and support everyone to be fully involved and responsible in the life of the Church at the parish/diocesan level:

- **5%** stated the parish WhatsApp groups have helped all still be involved and supported; information in newsletter.
- **3%** commented on the induction of our new Parish Priest being a magical outdoor social time for most of us and reflected how we work together;
- parish website; school supports Catholic prayer.

The 2% category included:

- participation in prayer groups;
- retired members of the parish with more time, will always bear the brunt of the time needed to run the parish, and that is actually good and right;
- younger people stepped up as volunteers;
- Church development fund;
- Foodbank collections; personal invitation;
- support fund;
- Christmas tree presents for children;
- we do thank people who volunteer and that, in turn, leads to other people coming forward;
- being completely open about what is happening in our parish;
- ensuring sick and housebound have regular visiting from parish to make them feel included.

Comments suggesting further work needed included:

- **8%** more child/family approach needed;
- more diverse programmes to meet parish diversity and ensure **all** are reached.
- **3%** included: a system to contact all known Catholic parishioners to educate and inform them about the Catholic religion, in the hope they would see their faith as not just a weekend event;
- identify skills in the parish and share them to benefit all/groups;
- encourage children to attend Church services;
- invite more people to social events.

The 2% category included:

- Are we prepared for the adventure of this journey or are we fearful of the unknown, preferring to take refuge in the usual excuses of, ‘it’s useless’ or ‘we always do it this way?’ (Pope Francis);
- not everyone is supported by **Church** eg deliberately ostracised – divorced, remarried people, gay people. They are denied the most essential part of being a Catholic – The Blessed Sacrament; very difficult with the pressures of everyday life, for young families and working people to be more involved in parish life;
- things at diocesan level are held too far away and incur expenses;
- Catholic education in schools to invite speakers to talk about what their faith means to them; finding out what is **most** needed from parishioners.

Are we looking in, or are we looking out, as a parish community? Answers included:

- **30%** both – Foodbank, Holy Communion to the sick;
- **28%** mainly looking in;
- **8%** more in than out;
- **7%** we look out to spread the word. **3%** progress is being made; our duty is to look out.

In the 2% category, answers included:

- In, to Christ, then out to the community;
- outlook- previously engaging with Walderslade group of churches;
- liaise with other parishes;
- red Missio boxes and Catholic education;
- worked with Diocese on setting up weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament;
- active bereavement group;
- one parishioner is on an active Justice and Peace Group;
- UCM working to support the parish and other charities;
- volunteer coordinating donations to the Foodbank;
- financial support for projects worldwide;
- Glad to be Grey is an ecumenical group for older members of all the local churches. They organize social and spiritual events every year.

Comments suggesting further work was needed include:

- **7%** greater ties with our neighbouring Christian Churches could be forged;
- **3%** we need to continue to look in until we are stronger and more able to spread out more to other parish communities.

The 2% category included:

- maybe we need to look at better ways to communicate our mission statement;
- need a way to evaluate who is reaching out and how much;
- follow up new parishioner forms in order to offer support and encourage them in participation in the life of the community, instead of just being consumers;
- funds we have available to assist others outside of the parish, restricted by large amounts parish has to pay Diocese;
- need more people to step forward for groups such as Justice and Peace; contact with lapsed Catholics.

Does the life of the parish through catechesis, adult formation and liturgy help parishioners recognize their role as Christ's missionary disciples?

Answers were:

- **30%** yes;
- **5%** yes, because the parish is involved in all of the above;
- we have active FHC, Confirmation, Baptism & RCIA Catechesis plus children's liturgy.

The 3% category included:

- before covid we involved the parents in our preparation for First Reconciliation and Holy Communion and often had parents then joining the RCIA programme as a consequence and then entering the Church;
- catechists are enthusiastic and reliable, recognising their role as Christ's missionaries.

The 2 % category included:

- yes, teams of people who work tirelessly in many different ways, building up the life of the parish;
- Eucharistic Adoration gives us the time to pray for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to help us with this;
- Parish clergy and liturgy team work hard for the promotion of the liturgy and acts of public worship. They work alongside the choir to use music so that we can praise and thank God together;
- our liturgy ensures all share the joy of Christ irrespective of their age or culture. We work for full inclusion of our diverse parish members;
- adult formation and liturgy help parishioners to recognize their role as Christ's missionary disciples;

- First Reconciliation/Holy Communion currently ongoing, but under covid rules;
- Confirmation classes about to start.

Comments about further work needed included:

- **5%** more could be done; not something they would be aware of;
- **3%** quite a large number of people are not willing to commit to any more than attending Sunday Mass;
- more Gospel reflections or evenings as they were always well-received and helped to bring our faithful community together in Christ.

The 2% category included:

- covid led to a reduced number of catechists; no awareness/confidence to pass on their faith;
- generally, I do not think we are recognizing our missionary roles or being supported to do so;
- when we have followed the Church rules all of our lives, these very necessary teachings do not apply to us;
- need to change the perception of the church by young people, by finding ways to show them the joys and charism of the Holy Spirit;
- lack of provision for young people between Holy Communion and Confirmation with the result that we lose the vast majority, so we need to do something urgently.

Results of Children's Survey

In reply to the question: We like to think of our Parish as being one big family. What are the ways members of our parish family are brought together? We had the following responses:

25% gave at Church. **22%** gave Mass. **6%** gave Church events; School; Liturgy; regular update and activities; after Church when we can chat; prayers; love; seeing people at events; care for each other; prayer meetings; lessons for making the Sacraments. **3%** of the children gave the following answers: joining in Mass.

In reply to the question: Jesus is the head of our parish family. How can we know that from what's happening in our parish? What other times do we manage to get together as a parish family? We had the following responses:

25% gave Christmas. **19%** gave Easter. **9%** gave Mass. **6%** of the children gave the following answers: church wedding; morning prayers; watching Gospel programmes; praying; tea and cakes, coffee and biscuits; at school; when we say

the Sign of the Cross; notices at the end of Mass; website; in Church; Harvest; people can go to Church on Wednesdays and say ‘Hello’ to Jesus.

In reply to the question: The pandemic lasted 16 months. How did that affect our parish life? We had the following responses:

13% gave Church was shut; we couldn’t see others. **9%** gave it reduced us being in Church. **6%** of the children gave the following answers: we couldn’t meet; no Mass; very much; spent less time appreciating God for his protection and love; Church doesn’t feel the same; we didn’t get the chance to talk; we felt sad; we couldn’t go to Church; we weren’t able to attend the parish; no children’s liturgy; didn’t get tea and biscuits in the hall after Mass.

In reply to the question: What can we do to be more involved in parish life?

We had the following responses:

9% gave activities to bring everyone together. **6%** gave school events; talk; communicate; do clubs; improve communication; more events around the Church; have coffee mornings; host more school Masses; ask them to pray more; make Masses more frequent. **3%** of the children gave the following answer: activities.

In reply to the question: Jesus asked all of us to be kind and loving like He is. And to share his message with others. How can we do this?

We had the following responses:

13% gave be nice to friends; tell people about the bible. **6%** of children gave the following answers: help each other; by our actions; in assembly; maybe give away bibles; be kind; by sharing His love; watch short videos at school on YouTube about Jesus and His life; watch short videos at Church on YouTube about Jesus and His life; charity days; tell people about being kind; help people who have got hurt.

In reply to the question: What happens in our parish to share Jesus’ message?

We had the following responses:

28% gave Mass; **19%** gave prayer; **6%** not much; school Mass; we have more than just Priest and Deacon reading; we are taught the bible and we can spread that to more people therefore, we are spreading Jesus’ message; we all get together and the priest spreads the message from God; we talk to each other and say kind words; we go to Church. **3%** of children gave the following answer: Jesus’ message is shared at the Mass.