



Synod 2021-2023

Communion Participation Mission



ARCHDIOCESE *of*
SOUTHWARK



We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. AMEN.



That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.' And he said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is towards evening and the day is now far spent.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?' And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Luke 24:13-35

Introduction



- 137 parish submissions (**P1-P137**)
- 134 online individual submissions via the diocesan and Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis websites (**O1-O134**)
- 12 group submissions, e.g. diocesan commissions, schools, retirement homes, disability groups and prisons (**G1-G12**)
- 68 postal or email individual submissions (**I1-I68**)
- Notes and video recordings from the Delegate Area Meetings (**AM-SE, AM-SW, AM-KENT**)
- As well as works of art and music created by both children and adults.



Introduction



'By the conclusion of the meeting everyone had had something to say, even those who came with the expressed intention of not saying anything. There was a real sense of achievement, almost excitement that we had actually worked together and shared our deep-seated concerns at a number of levels and matters. There was a feeling that we were listening to the Holy Spirit in the person of our fellow parishioners' (P45).



Introduction



'The process of listening opened up deep reflection, longing and for some, a range of complex emotions, from anger to hurt. There was palpable cynicism around the process and a feeling that 'it won't really change anything'. It cannot be underestimated the cultural shift from a 'telling' church that many people have experienced from their formative years to a 'listening' church where each voice and experience really matters. For many, travelling in hope, a move to a truly listening church is evidence of the action of the Holy Spirit.' (P32, echoed in P106)



Communion



- Eucharist at the heart of Communion and Community
- The Role of the Parish (Relationship with the Parish)
- The Role of the Priest (Relationship with the Priest)
- Relationship with Jesus and the Church
- Language



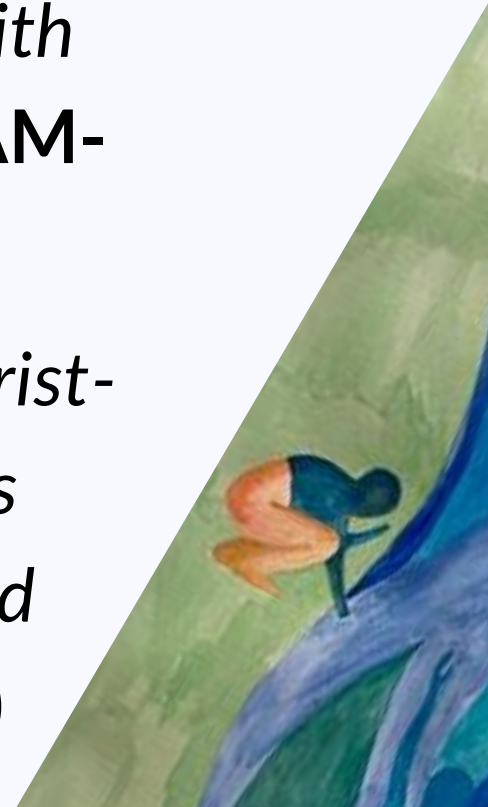
Communion



Eucharist at the heart of Communion and Community

'Where there is communion with the Lord and communion with the community there is participation and signs of mission.' (**AM-KENT**)

'A successful parish isn't just the numbers – it is a vibrant Christ-centred, love-filled, supportive community of fellow-travellers reaching out to others, whatever their story and affirming and celebrating their calling as God's daughters and sons.' (**P115**)



Communion



The Role of the Parish (Relationship with the Parish)

'Under Covid it seems that the Holy Spirit has created opportunities for us to work together, more than before the pandemic, in new ways that we may not have imagined before, to take on new roles, and to open up new skills as well as becoming a more friendly, caring, tighter knit (not physically) community.' (P35)

'Many people no longer look for a Church in the geographical area in which they live but for a Church which suits their own personal wishes and style of worship.' (P10)



Communion



The Role of the Priest (Relationship with the Priest)

'We need good leadership to foster a sense of unity.' (P75)

'The ethos from the Parish Priest instils reverence in church, but also encourages community spirit.' (P9)



Communion



Relationship with Jesus and the Church

'Some baptised Catholics feel disconnected. They want to belong to Christ and the Church but find it difficult, see the Church even as a barrier.' (P15)

'People lose connection with Jesus by losing connection with the Church. We have to help people to reconnect and re-trust the Church.' (P101)



Communion



Language

'Complexity of language of the Church can get in the way of clear messages.' (P29)



Participation



- Covid-19 and the Pandemic
- Creating and Sustaining Community
- Distance between the Bishop and the People
- Diversity in Southwark
- Role of Women
- A Place for All



Participation



- Using and Identifying the Skills and Gifts of Parishioners
- Schools, Families and Young People
- Youth and Young People
- Governance and Co-operation
- Understanding the Lay Vocation
- Vehicles for Collaboration



Participation



Covid-19 and the Pandemic

'There is an emptiness in our hearts and Churches, and a fear that many will not return to gathering in Church to celebrate Mass together' (P37).

'The pandemic has stripped spiritual practices and opportunities for growth both communally and personally. Parishioners are feeling detached. We need to find ways to support one another to feel confident and once again feel we all belong to the parish' (P90).



Participation



Creating and Sustaining Community

'Diverse, spiritual, cultural and linguistic parish with many nationalities, bringing with it a rich tapestry of experience from across the seven continents' (P60).

These groups 'make a huge contribution to the life of the parish and embody the universal church' (P131).



Participation



Distance between the Bishop and the People

The people want to '*see the bishop more often*' (**P70**).



Participation



Diversity in Southwark

Parishes have many different active groups which make for a *'diverse, spiritual, cultural and linguistic parish with many nationalities, bringing with it a rich tapestry of experience from across the seven continents'* (P60). These groups *'make a huge contribution to the life of the parish and embody the universal church'* (P131).



Participation



The Role of Women

'The role of women in the church was raised – many women make up our congregations and yet their role is still restricted within the Church.' (AM-SW)

'Women are the 'other' in the church; many feel alienated and therefore this is a matter of concern. Women are called by the Holy Spirit to a variety of ministries but this call is not fulfilled in the institutional Church.' (G6)



Participation



A Place for All

'How do we relate to people who drift away? There may be tensions between the teachings of the gospel and people who have drifted away; for example, with divorcees who may no longer feel they can receive communion attend church. There is also a tension between current social ideas (such as abortion and sexuality) and the gospel, which people may struggle with. The same tension that exists in our practice/belief as Catholic and our day to day lives as members of society. How can we emphasise the message of Love and empathy of the Church?' (P36).



Participation



Using and Identifying the Skills of Gifts of Parishioners

'As lay people, we cannot 'lie back' in the belief that it is for our parish priest to 'do everything'. Equally, if the laity are to be encouraged to participate more fully, to be more missionary and to foster communion, our priests and bishops need to be more open to our views and encourage participation on a more equal footing.' (P23)

'Using your gifts is fulfilling and leads to personal growth and satisfaction.'
(P6)



Participation

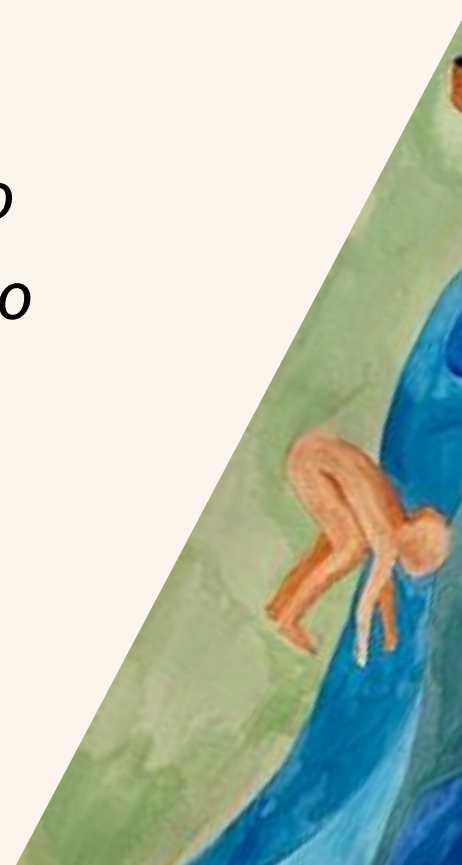


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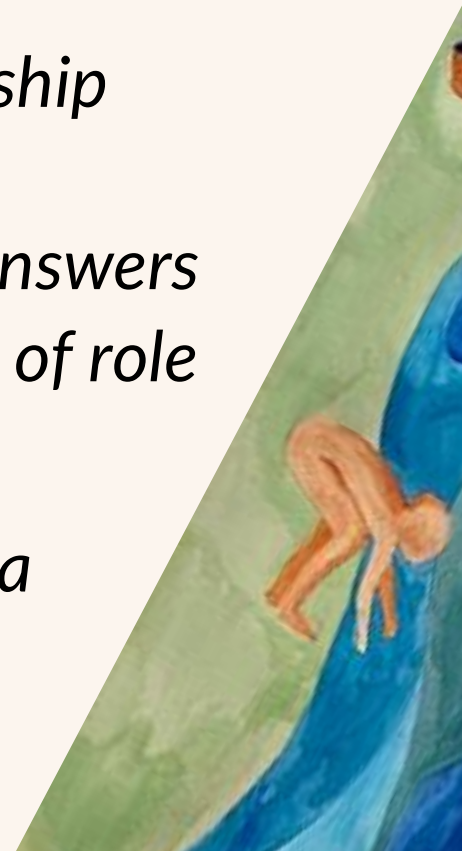
Participation



Schools, Families and Young People

'We see the fastest change in faith (underlying religiosity) and worship (participation at Mass) in our schools. Moving from "engaged" to "indifference" promoted by peer groups and lack of discussion or answers to fundamental issues relating to wellbeing and sexuality, and lack of role models.' (P48)

'focus on the family ... helping children to learn the faith and have a supernatural outlook' (I46)



Participation

Youth and Young People

Young people are '*a welcome witness with their visible participation. They are built up to be leaders in various ways*'. (P64)

'*Young people need their own parents to be committed to their faith, if they are they become engaged themselves.*' (P112)

'*Parents felt that their parishes were not reaching out to their young people in terms of their faith journey and spiritual direction... If the adults had better formation, they could help the children and if lay-led, people would feel freer to speak and have open faith discussions.*' (G12)



Participation



Governance and Co-operation

'It appears that the Parish Priests has autonomy in their own parishes, and run them according to their own precepts. It means that many people 'shop' around for the parish that suits their views and attitudes. Thus, there is not really a sense of a shared mission.' (O10)



Participation



Understanding the Lay Vocation

How do clergy and laity relate to each other? What is 'priestly' about the Lay Vocation? How is it concretely expressed? What is the specific call of the laity? (I57)

'The Community – the Church – is ALL the people of God thus the hierarchy, clergy, religious and the lay people who should work together. Hierarchy continues to govern the Church with little input or involvement of the rest of God's people.' (O24)



Participation



Vehicles for Collaboration

'In the parish there are two structures which have a synodal character,' reminded one submission, *'the parish pastoral council and the financial council'* (O80)



Mission



- To Learn and to Love: Formation and Charitable Action
- The Missional Community
- Formation for Mission
- Barriers to Mission: Confidence, Abuse, Pandemic, Motivation
- Working with other Churches and Ecclesial Movements: Apostolates, Cooperation, Ecumenism



Mission



To Learn and to Love: Formation and Charitable Action

'We need a consistent emphasis on welcoming people into Christ's vision and getting them to think about what it means for their whole lives.' (I15)

We need to each *'hear the liberating news that the public square is not a place to be frightened of but a market place where [the social thought of the Church] will outsell the other ideas.'* (I56)



Mission



The Missional Community

'If we build community the mission will be easier for people to contribute to effectively.' (P54)

'Many feel that they are seen as parts of a devoted but passive congregation. They would really like to be involved in the mission of the Church, but do not always feel welcomed, valued or encouraged to do so.' (P20)



Mission



Formation for Mission

'If catechesis, adult formation and liturgy is delivered with love and care and competently, then this will aid parishioners as missionary disciples. It does help to understand the faith and apply it in our daily life.' (P66)

'My priest encouraged me to read the Bible on a daily basis and has given me confidence to share the word of God with others outside the parish.' (P132).



Mission



Barriers to Mission: Confidence, Abuse, Pandemic, Motivation

'Scandals occur in the shadows where the light of openness and scrutiny is not allowed to penetrate.' (P106)

'A strong theme was the sense that everyone feels the lack of the sense of community and mission, but no one knows how to fix it and are nervous about trying things.' (P54)



Mission



Working with other Churches and Ecclesial Movements:
Apostolates, Cooperation, Ecumenism

'To the average parishioner, the diocese has little relevance.' (I59)

The work of ecumenism *'was felt by all to be central to our witness of faith and love, in our charitable work and outreach.'* (P33)





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Next Steps



Diocese

- 17 March - Delegates and parishes to receive the draft synthesis
- 25 March (3pm) - Deadline for receipt of comments on the draft via the online form
- 8 April - Diocesan Synthesis submitted to the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and published on the diocesan website

National

- 2-6 May - Bishops Plenary to explore emerging themes
- 29 June - Celebration of the Synod Process
- 31 July - National Synthesis submitted to Synod Office in Rome

