



Kilmacud Parish - St Laurence O'Toole

Meeting people where they're at and leading them
to where God calls them to be



Summary of Kilmacud Parish Synod Feedback Report sent to Archbishops House on 18th April 2022

Pope Francis 9th October 2021

Dear brothers and sisters, may this Synod be a true season of the Spirit! For we need the Spirit, the ever new breath of God, who sets us free from every form of self-absorption, revives what is moribund, loosens shackles and spreads joy. The Holy Spirit guides us where God wants us to be, not to where our own ideas and personal tastes would lead us. Father Congar, of blessed memory, once said: "There is no need to create another Church, but to create a different Church" That is the challenge. For a "different Church", a Church open to the newness that God wants to suggest, let us with greater fervour and frequency invoke the Holy Spirit and humbly listen to him, journeying together as he, the source of communion and mission, desires: with docility and courage

PRAYER FOR THE SYNOD: Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

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.

KILMACUD PARISH

Over recent months, there has been much talk of the synod process and we convened two gatherings on the 23rd and 30th March which were very well attended. The synod gatherings focussed on four questions as follows: When you think of your experience of Church, what brings (1) joy, (2) sorrow, (3) hope & (4) fear. We were very pleased with the level of rich and sincere feedback and engagement at the gatherings and a detailed report was submitted to Archbishops House on 18th April last. The consolidated report tries to fairly and honestly represent the views and perspectives provided at the gatherings. As required, the Parish Synod group also subsequently met to consider the emerging themes as well as reflect on what the Holy Spirit might be indicating.

The main purpose of this report is to provide a detailed summary of the report submitted as well as provide additional background information on the synodal process. In addition to this report, the full fourteen page report submitted can be accessed on our parish website.

The Diocesan Committee has commenced the process of collating all the Feedback from all the parishes and focus groups in order to produce the overall Report which will be sent from Dublin Diocese to the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. This report will also be shared with us when it is completed in May. Hopefully the synod process might be the start of a conversation in the parish about what the Holy Spirit may be suggesting for your parish.

This report first outlines the emerging themes and suggests what the Holy Spirit might be indicating as well as detailed feedback from the questions on joy, sorrow, hopes and fears.

What themes are emerging from the gatherings

Community

The importance and criticality of sustaining, supporting and nurturing the Parish community and neighbourliness, opportunities for celebration, assembly and gathering for sacraments, prayer and mutual support, harnessing the energy and talents.

Role of Women in the Church

The necessity, value and importance of formally, officially and visibly recognising the role of women in the Church, including as priests, deacons and within other key roles. Lack of vocations and aging priest profile requires urgent revision of role of women.

Laity

More concerted effort on formation and training at various levels as well as greater levels of engagement and involvement



Inclusivity

Demonstrating and evidencing greater levels of inclusiveness and welcome to all people and groups within society as proof of a compassionate, caring and loving church

Commitment and dedication

Acclaim and recognise the stellar work of our priests, volunteers and many others who provide local leadership and example every day

Young people

How to stimulate and foster their practice of the faith, mass attendance and participation

Pope Francis

A beacon of hope, an authentic leader committed to change and renewal of the Church

Need for Change

A church that meets the needs of our time and the changing society and demographics, a faithful that recognises that change is necessary but a Curia that may not listen or share this view.

Personal Faith

The importance of individual and personal faith and following Jesus's way in daily life.

The Synod

The Synodal process is giving a lot of hope to the lay faithful who feel they are being asked for their views in a meaningful way and a hope that the views will be listened to

Current leadership deficits

Inaction, tardiness in responding to issues and general reticence to change within the senior church leadership

Teachings and liturgy

Return to basics, simple messages that are meaningful and relevant to today

Wider perspective of church

Recognise the many who practice our faith through their good works, behaviour and conduct and may not be regular mass goers for whatever reason. How help these people who have affinity to come back to sacraments.

What might the Holy Spirit be indicating in this?

- Cherish our faith and remain loyal to our relationship with God, even in times of great challenge and adversity
- Serious reflection on role of women in the Church
- Harness, tap into and energise the available resources (women and laity) and agree roles for them
- Need to be a more inclusive, welcoming, loving, caring and compassionate church
- Joyfulness, happiness and celebration should be at the core of how we practice our faith individually and collectively within the community
- Redefinition of Church, messages and teachings centred on people and their conduct and behaviour and the example they set and less on buildings or infrastructure. Focus on faith, hope, love, compassion and caring for all people and their own circumstances.

- Now is the time for the Curia to listen to the voices of the people and be open to change.
- Leadership and Courage to change and trust in the Spirit to deliver the necessary change

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings joy?

Most consistent, prevalent or converging experiences named

Our Community: The community, as a people of God, coming together, praying together, participating and giving a comforting sense of belonging and involvement and forming and sustaining relationships, everyone connected, genuine sense of purpose, a safe place

Music: Music, singing and choirs enriching the sacraments, the celebratory quality of music

Liturgy: Gospels offering enlightenment and truth and also good liturgy and short, relevant and meaningful sermons and homilies

Our people; Generous, sharing, caring, good neighbourly people of faith in our community with concern for others

Our mass, the sacraments and the eucharist

Own personal faith and belief in God, in Jesus and in the resurrection

Pope Francis, his books and encyclicals including on human fraternity

The commitment and dedication of our priests, staff and volunteers

Our open, welcoming and inclusive church and peaceful atmosphere

Use of technology and capacity to adapt to streaming etc, using screens to get better engagement and involvement

Simplicity and relevance of prayers our children use in school and how this relates to everyday life

Presence of God and my relationship with him and the joy of feeling and experiencing his love, forgiveness and compassion

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings sorrow

Most consistent, prevalent or converging experiences named

Role of Women; Lack of female leadership roles, involvement of women and status of women not officially recognised in church but contributing a lot and can do more, no or limited involvement in decision-making, no female priests

Handling of Abuse cases; Church handling of abuse cases, cover up and legacy of shame resulting in priests being less visible and impactful

Lack of love, compassion and inclusiveness: In a compassionate and loving church, lack of welcome for and exclusion of people in a range of circumstances, new relationships, same sex unions, personal and relationship issues, LGBTQ+, marginalised etc.. inequality and inequity existing, people excluded from sacraments.. falling short of a loving and compassionate church that reaches out

Younger generations: Absence of and/or incapacity or capability to attract and involve younger generations and young people, lost generations and as a result empty churches except for OAPs

Lack of training/support/formation for catechists, lay people, parents, priests

Mass not attractive or celebratory, lack of joy in liturgy and falling attendances and age profile not representative of community

Slow pace of change

Too Hierarchical. Male dominated and excessive central control, legalistic and unattractive, overemphasis on law
Lack of Input and involvement of lay people at all levels

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings hope?

Most consistent, prevalent or converging experiences named

Pope Francis: Francis is Hope. Our present Pope is a beacon of hope for young people. The way Pope Francis promotes a different way. Pope Francis's humility, reaching out to the poor and forgotten people trying to bring all into the church. I find great hope with the courage and leadership of Pope Francis. Hope that the changes recently approved by Pope Francis will be implemented without delay by local dioceses, so that any member of the faithful can preside over senior local church positions to invigorate the faith of local congregations.

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit was given to guide us and bring us to fulfil the Church. Faith in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit working in us, in the people rejuvenating the Church.

The Synodal Process: Processes like the Synod give me hope that this synodal path meeting will be constructive in generating solutions to address all the challenges facing the church in the 21st century. The Synod. Ready to LISTEN and HEAR and RESPOND in a POSITIVE way to what we are looking for – MEANING. This is listening to the voice of the people.

Young people: The Youth..Young People will find a way. The Young People Today – more compassionate and questioning. Young people are reacting to the scandals and hypocrisy.

Community of Faith. The experience of meeting very good people who are church people gives me hope. Faith of others gives Hope. The passing of faith from generation to generation. Elders have a lot to pass on. The witness of the elderly parishioners to their faith

Longevity of the Church: The church has survived for over 2000 years despite disasters, corruption and hopefully will learn from its mistakes. Continuation of Church. God hasn't changed and the Church is still around (going) so that gives me hope. Great traditions and teachings. There remains solid foundations on which we can build.

Charity: Response to war in Ukraine as an example. The generosity of Irish people towards others – Christian in spirit even if not regular attendees at church services. In spite of all its hardships, the church continues to help the faithful. There is concern for and awareness of people in need.

Hope is hard to find. The Church has a long way to go before we are back to where it was as we knew it. Then we come to Hope. I find it hard to have hope but believe that the church will find a way forward as it has in the past. Very difficult to have hope – Hope for change that must come. Hope is hard to find. I have hope when I think of the early church. If we return to the message of LOVE we can have hope for the future

Inclusiveness. Today our churches are less judgemental and accept people of all persuasions and none. A more welcoming, compassionate and inclusive church. Our moves towards being a more inclusive and welcoming church give me hope. The new church will be more compassionate and welcoming. The church needs to be more accepting of difference and humanity. Hope that our Catholic Church becomes inclusive of all people with a special welcome for all marginalised groups (women, married men, divorced, remarried, LGBT, Transgender and non-practicing Catholics).

Covid19 Response: Reaching out to other denominations and coming together when troubles arise. Prompt action when faced with the Covid challenge. Streaming and how quickly the church adapted to the use of multimedia during Covid19 gives me hope. Multidenominational services and masses during lockdown. The use of digital technologies to broaden the reach of the church.

Faith: The greatest source of hope is salvation through our faith in Jesus, in knowing that God loves us and his Divine Mercy is available to everybody. Realising that we / I am loved by God. I believe that God is always with us

Eucharist: Even at low moment, Eucharist is central to my life. I have hope because I believe Jesus is present Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Sacrament. Eucharist and prayers.

Gospels & Scripture: Essential message of gospel and scriptures give me hope. The Church and its scriptures is full of care and compassion which traits are essential to encourage young people back into church.

Sacramental Preparation: Parents continuing to avail of sacraments for their children. Seeing young people receiving sacraments (First Communion, Confirmation). Hope lies in the fact that children are being baptised. Communions and confirmation give me hope.

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings fear?

Most consistent, prevalent or converging experiences named

Unwillingness to Change and Listen: Church leaders slow to respond to change, Lack of will to implement change. Fear that nothing will change after the Synod. That the Church will not listen to the Synod and those who had hope will lose heart. That the church will be afraid to change in response to changes in society. Old attitudes are preventing progress. That the Holy Spirit will be ignored and the Church won't change. That we are blocking God's change for the Church. Fear that changes might just be superficial and not considered deeply. There is no change without suffering. The Church to survive and prosper must embrace change – that change must be fundamental and not cosmetic. Eg married priests, women priests, (even deacons) etc. People are not listened to. Must listen to congregation in the future. Anxious that we are doing the same continuously and expecting different results. I am fearful that the Church as we know it today is coming to an end; (because it is NOT listening to what WE – inspired by the Holy Spirit – are saying).

I am anxious (angry!) that one cannot engage with the Church organisation (the Hierarchy) in suggesting how the many challenges facing the Church today might be addressed

Vocations: Lack of vocations to priesthood/religious life. Age of church leaders – priests & bishops. Lack of priests. How the faith community will be sustained when churches close due to lack of priests for mass and sacraments, Because we won't allow others to become priests our church will die.

Female Priests and the broader role of Women: 50% of the population are women. Left out of high offices. Need an inclusive church. Openness to women priests. Allow women to be part of church administration. The Role of Women. Need more significant roles for women in the church, I would like to see the development of ordaining women to the priesthood.

Inclusivity: That we won't continue to strive to be a more inclusive church. A greater effort is needed to include LGBTQ+ people in particular. Too many people are excluded, left out, shamed. There will be no meaningful church membership in Ireland unless we move into the reality of the 21st Century – genuine involvement of the laity, married clergy, etc.

Youth: If we don't do something about participation of younger people in Church activities we will lose them all. That younger people won't be given a larger part in their liturgies. Reach out to young people is vital. Fear of how we get the next generation involved in parish life. Fear is that my catholic faith, a faith that believes that God's unfailing love sustains me in all my life's circumstances, may not be easily communicated to future Irish generation

Faith: Faith not being passed on by parents/indifference/passive attitude to faith/lack of faith in the home/faith being taken for granted. Faith disappearing.

Church: Image of Church is too narrow. It is equated with Mass. To be Church isn't only to go to mass. Need other

types of nourishment. Church is all those who are trying to live gospel values. The Church needs to change in the way it witnesses the gospel. Hope for the future because people are intrinsically kind towards others – Christianity in practice. Fear of being redundant.

No Fears: I have no fears, my trust is in the Lord who said 'Be Not Afraid'. We must not be negative and we must not fear – Our God Reigns. God said on numerous occasions, Fear Not and that is good enough for me. The experience is not fear or anxiety not to fear! Very little of my current experience of Church gives me fear or anxiety. God said 'Do Not Be Afraid' and I stand on his word. I am not afraid.

Power: The powerful forces in the Vatican and Curia holding on to power and preventing much needed change. The Curia needs to lose control. Control by laity and clergy. Too much power but Jesus's word's 'Be Not Afraid' compensate. Ambition rather than dependence on Holy Spirit. Looking for success, possessions, power, social status. We need creative fidelity

Diminishing congregations. Covid has withdrawn people from church and they may not return. Loss of young people. Church is declining because it is losing touch with reality – faith has to be linked with reality in people's lives. Elderly population.

Community: Need a sense of community and belonging. Build friendship and community with coffee after mass.

Married Priests: Potential for priests (in some orders) to marry. Fearful of the lack of priests and the lack of openness to married priests. Married priests would be better integrated in secular.

Doubts: Fear that all that I believed growing up as to what was a sin or not will prove to be wrong. Eg How confession is no longer an absolute (before death). Also causing anxiety is the view that only the Catholic Church is the one true church. I am afraid and anxious sometimes when I think of eternal punishment. I tell myself God loves me.

The amount of people who are continuously mocking our faith. Extreme criticism by certain groups that don't build up church. Internal divisions and a lack of unity in the church's diversity – this could give a counter witness to the hope and spirit of communion that the Holy Spirit inspires. Living in a secular world and alien environment.

Conclusion

The full report from the parish and this report can be accessed on the parish website if you want to find out further information.

When the Diocesan summary is available we will also bring this your attention.

A final word of sincere thanks to all who participated and supported the process in the Parish and we pray, like Pope Francis, that the Holy Spirit will guide all of us in the months and years ahead.

Parish Synod Group
23rd April 2022