**INTRODUCTION**

There were 6 people in attendance in addition to PPC members. The 6 parishioners were a mix of men and women and young and older people.

The following are a record of the views that were expressed against the 10 questions the Synod asks of all Catholics across the world.

**VIEWS EXPRESSED**

* The volume of people in attendance (6 at this event) shows a general lack of interest in the church.
* One of the main issues facing the church was a lack of courage in speaking the Gospel, claiming faith in Jesus. There is no grass roots curriculum, little faith formation and a lack of understanding and knowledge for lay people.
* The recent history of Magdalena laundries, paedophile priests and the cover up of these has turned people against the Church.
* The dispensation for Covid of the requirement of attending Mass has meant so few coming back now that Covid restrictions are being lifted.
* While the webcam was a good idea, a ‘falling out of habit’ has taken over.
* People are now afraid to admit that they do practice.
* There is a feeling of cynicism and lack of trust. Parents are afraid to allow their children to become altar servers.

WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THIS SITUATION?

* The situation is very hopeless. None of my 8 children are now Catholic.
* The non-use of the Bulletin during Covid was a poor decision.
* The biggest issue is a lack of understanding of the Mass. It is the central part of theology; it brings us into communication with God.
* People do not understand the various stages in Mass. They do not understand the Mass comes from, its roots.
* There should be a sermon on these aspects of Mass say once a year.
* The Mass is not just about the last supper or a re-configured old testament. It is about communion with God.
* Everyone knows about the obligation to attend. That was there to get people to go to Mass. However a deeper understanding of every single aspect of the Mass is critical to coming to Mass voluntarily.
* A US survey suggested that 2/3 of Catholics did not believe in the real presence of Jesus. Being there is not enough. There needs to be a real relationship.
* The recent Knights of Columbanus leaflets and videos were popular and successful.
* I do not know how people have been pushed to the margins. The Church welcomes everyone.
* The Catholic hierarchy are not listening, people feel left out. A lot of the Catholic hierarchy in the US supported Trump.
* The church should speak out against wrong, Hitler and abortion.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN.

* There has been greater involvement in the last few years particularly in this Parish.
* The previous welcome group worked well with signs in different languages. It was useful for those new to the Parish.
* We could learn from other Christians. The Baptists or evangelicals for example work more in small groups. We could try one based on age or those with children for example. They would be about building connection, providing support and people to call on.
* We as a Church could have a fundamental review. Looking at the role of priests, deacons. We could look at foundations, culture and the times we are in. It looks like women can be Cardinals. We could start with deacons.
* It is theologically impossible for women to be priests. Jesus was a man and said this is my body. Priest has to be a man.
* Society is changing, the church is always evolving and with it the reason why we have priests.
* We are here to be disciples. We need to be sure. While some women are angry that they cannot be priests they do have other gifts.
* Deacons are a good thing and there may have been women deacons elsewhere.
* The laity generally can have a bigger role and we can ask what other roles women can take and what other gifts do they bring. The Pope is already giving bigger roles to women.
* Men can change as well. They may need to for their mental health.
* It would be useful to know what percentage of people, is it 1% or 90%, would like women priests. It would be good to get a figure for those that would want to see married priests as well.
* The church is not about voting, it is not a democracy. The Catholic theological catechism is God given and is not changeable. We need to go back to teaching what can and cannot change.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THOSE WOMEN WHO FEEL EXCLUDED?

* Teach about the life of Jesus. When Jesus said ‘this is my body’ it meant that only a man could say those words. At the point of the Mass where the priest says those words he is Jesus.
* Men and women were treated equally, Adam and Eve were partners. The whole point is to get out there and do something. A recent example; a young person who had been bereaved received no help.
* I am not interested in theology. I do have an opinion. There is a lot of talk about excluding women from the priesthood. We should conduct a survey and go with the majority.
* Does that mean that the hierarchy are too distant and that we need more accountability?
* It is about finding out what support there is for different positions.
* We can look at the (age) profile of our congregation and wonder about a place for young people.
* There was mention of the Chaplaincy and what they do. They ask young people. If you ask you will be told. There is an *‘Alpha’* course and a female version *‘Blest’*. These are challenging.
* Is it worth looking at holy communicants and those receiving confirmation and how we keep those in the Church.
* The *‘Gift’* programme for young people was enjoyable and a lot was got from it.
* There is a question about whether young people are heard? Some thought they were at times especially where there voice is supported in those groups mentioned above.

THE ROLE OF THE LAYITY

* This was in the context of aging priests and what could happen over the next 20-30 years.
* There are already steps being taken to visit the sick and bereaved to take pressure of priests.
* There is a need for more deacons. There is the PCC who put in a lot of time.
* There is a need for formation and where people do not just take up leading.
* The PPC could hold a young people’s focus group. Young people could be encouraged to bring a friend particularly those who have fallen away. Sometimes people have a very good reason for falling away. If we do not hear those reasons we lose out.
* How do we get those in the wider church to give it a go again?
* We need to find out why they left. It is not that they are less holy. There are people who are divorced or same sex couples.
* There is not a hierarchy of the laity and Pope Francis needs to know what is happening at ground level.
* Young people, we all were idealistic. They want to see people treated the way that they should be.
* The church we grew up in was privileged.
* An experience in London where people being less in a local culture really had to want to practice.
* There was a family Mass where the homily was given at the level of the child. The story of St Patrick was also told as would make sense to a child. This is one way to way to encourage people back.
* We need to create a sense of community, build a spirit of community. It looks like involvement with groups has fallen off through the pandemic. Harder to feel community.
* Saying welcome and hello are important. Been in other groups where people did not even say hello. There was a case in England where the police picked up a ‘suspicious’ Irishman because he was looking people in the eye and saying hello.
* The earlier church emphasis on martyrdom, self-sacrifice and dying for the cause was a suicide mission.

SUMMARISING COMMENTS

* A theme of creating a sense of community.
* Look at lessons from non-Catholic practice. Sunday is all day worship. That could be overwhelming for most of us, if we began something like that, particularly at the start.
* Thinking about pre and post Covid. What can we do better together?
* More use of website and Face Book.
* Invite and create opportunities for people to provide ongoing comment.

(**NOTE**)

A view was expressed that those (from the PPC) who left the listening exercise earlier signalled a negative move. It was explained that this was not the intention. The purpose had been not to outnumber the parishioners attending and to give more scope to hear their views.

Finally it was explained that the results from this evening will be collated, published by the Parish and forwarded to both the diocese and the Vatican.