



**As we continue this journey of listening and discernment we are inviting the whole parish to be involved. Below are the readings, reflections and questions for weeks 3 & 4 and we would urge you to read, reflect and answer and then pass on your thoughts to one of the facilitators (anonymously if you wish), if you are unable to attend one of the meetings.**

**Feedback can also be sent to [synodfeedback@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto:synodfeedback@prcdtr.org.uk) or by post to Synod Feedback**

**Diocese of Plymouth**

**St Boniface House**

**Ashburton**

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**TQ13 7JL**

## **ADVENT WEEK 3: CELEBRATE**

*“The Synod offers us the opportunity to become a listening Church, to break out of our routine and pause from our pastoral concerns in order to stop and listen.” Pope Francis*

### **Opening Prayer**

*Lord we pray,*

*May our synodal preparations inspire people to dream about the church we are called to be,*

*to make hopes flourish, stimulate trust,*

*to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships,*

*to learn from one another, to build bridges,*

*to enlighten minds and restore strength to our hands for our common mission.*

*We trust in your Spirit who journeys with us.*

### **Philippians 4: 4-7**

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone; the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

### **Psalm 119:105**

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

**Time for prayer and silent meditation (you may wish to light a candle)**

## Reflection

*“The Lord walks with us! How often we forget this fundamental truth of being a disciple. The Lord does not stand aloof. He is completely present to them. He is open to encounter. Nothing leaves Jesus indifferent; everything is of concern to him. Encountering faces, meeting eyes, sharing each person’s history. That is the closeness that Jesus embodies. He knows that someone’s life can be changed by a single encounter. Jesus did not hurry along or keep looking at his watch to get things over. He was always at the service of the person he was with, listening to what he or she had to say. We too are called to take time to encounter the Lord and one another.”* Bishop Mark O’Toole

## THEMES FOR REFLECTION

In exploring the themes below participants are invited to:

- Listen actively and without judgment to the Holy Spirit and to others
- Pay attention not only to the words, but also to the tone and feelings of the speaker
- Listen actively to yourself, mindful of your own thoughts and feelings as you speak

### **How do I celebrate the presence of God in His Word and in the Sacraments?**

How do the Word and the Sacraments inspire my most important decisions?

Does the liturgy of the Church inspire a deeper encounter with the risen Lord?

### **How does our parish celebrate the Word?**

How do prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and direct our parish “journeying together”?

How does our parish support a full Catholic life and Mission – evangelization, catechesis, formation, liturgy and social action?

### **How does the Church celebrate journeying together?**

How does the wider Church promote everyone’s active participation?

We are very aware that we need to hear the voices of those who no longer attend Mass and so we have a letter from the Diocese together with a feedback sheet available and we would be grateful if you could take these home to share with anyone you can. There is also a helpful sheet giving guidance on how to approach these sometimes tricky conversations.

This Synodal Walking Together is not a one-off exercise but part of a new way of listening to the Holy Spirit and to each other. You might wish to reflect on what you will do differently in your faith life and family relationships after going through this conversation.

Initial Parish response week 3

#### **Q1. How do I celebrate the presence of God in His Word and in the Sacraments?**

- The Office, the **Word** always speaks, the light for my steps
- By attending Mass. Liturgy does inspire. Way celebrated determines how liturgy is special to me. Liturgy sometimes speaks, depends on my disposition.- Sometimes inspires – other times hard to understand, e.g. Father seeing son, ran out to him, when he saw him far off.
- Experience of lay praying – my mother was ill in the home and asked a prayer group (not Catholic) to pray with my mother. They held hands around mum's bed and prayed the 'Our Father', this was followed by silence. I had a deep sense of Jesus being present
- By praying and asking for guidance
- The **Word** is part of the discipline of the religious life. It's especially important in the lead up to receiving the Blessed Sacrament. The word of God & Sacraments inspire me by being there for me.
- I try to listen to God through prayer. God is in every aspect of my life. I try to recognise the presence of God in the Sacraments.
- Sacraments give a pattern for life – a structure. Sacraments remind me very evidently of Jesus walking with me.

- Mass gives a sense of calm and makes one receptive. Life is so busy, so need a time to be receptive and feel the presence of God. The decision to come to Mass, to take time out is important.
- Listening to Christian music – a source of inspiration
- I feel God is with me all the time. Being part of a prayer group enables me to celebrate the presence of God and His **Word**

## Q2. How does our Parish celebrate the Word?

- Through gospel stories and the homilies - really important. The homily makes the gospel relevant to our lives.
- The bidding prayers are an opportunity to open up our minds to the needs locally and globally – enables us to look outwards and respond, **live** God's **Word**
- Liturgy – There are various ways the liturgy helps us to travel together – the gospel instructs us.
- What we are doing right now? – listening & sharing is celebrating the **Word**.
- The liturgy is really profound. It focuses us on the word of God and on Christ's coming.
- The Sacraments of baptism and marriage are really important chances for the parish to come together to celebrate.

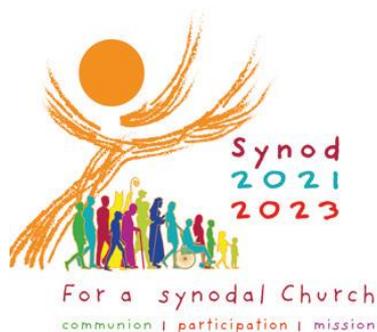
## How does our parish support a full Catholic life and Mission – evangelization, catechesis, etc

We wouldn't be here now if we hadn't been inspired. But how do we get others to come and join us? Share the **Word** without force. We need to sow the seed in our community – not doing big, obviously religious things, but just small, low- key social activities. Doesn't have to involve preaching. Social and sporting events, singing carols, little stepping stones for people outside the church.

- It is difficult to find truth in today's culture. Our society doesn't believe in God
- Weekly table tennis, parish hall, happening here, now, has grown from small beginnings. Has drawn outsiders in. It is a comfortable environment for people to mingle, bring friends.
- Volunteering is a great way for people to join in. Asking people to volunteer is a way to invite people further into the church. Personal invitation.
- Coming to Falmouth from London, people were more friendly here

## Q3. How does the Church celebrate journeying Together?

- Before Covid, during advent, distributing mince pies and oranges outside by the parish crib, talking about the nativity story, inviting people into church, was a way of journeying together reaching out to others.
- In my experience our parish does not interact with wider Church in social action. We don't have anything going on in the week.
- I don't know the people in my parish
- There needs to be a range of groups and activities in the Church that reflects the different gifts that people bring.
- Traditions – the big celebrations, Christmas, Live Nativity, Easter, Walk of Witness, etc.
- There are lots of great things happening but is everyone aware? It's important to raise awareness of what we do – showcase
- We need to get involved in the wider world. Getting involved in causes is a way to connect with people beyond our parish.
- **HOW?** How do we implement the things we are talking about? We need a way, a vehicle, a medium by which to act. Collective charitable action, can be a way.
- Life is very private here (compared to e.g. the Philippines), hard to involve yourself in positive action.



## ADVENT WEEK 4: LET US DREAM

### Reflection

*“Jesus in the power of His Spirit wants us to help one another along the road, to find our home in Him, and to find new ways, new models, new pathways which will help us to reach out, to invite others in our world to join us on the road. For the Lord desires so very deeply that they too find their home in Him. May the Holy Spirit help us to encounter one another, to listen deeply to one another, to show us the direction the Spirit wants us to travel, so that we can be more effective witnesses of Jesus to those who do not know Him.”* Bishop Mark O’Toole

## **THEMES FOR REFLECTION**

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### **What is God's dream for me?**

How am I called to serve?

How might I reach out to serve others and share the Faith?

### **What is God's dream for our Parish?**

How might our parish 'walk better together'?

How do we form people, especially those who hold roles of responsibility within the Christian community, to make them more capable of "journeying together," listening to one another and engaging in dialogue?

How might our pastoral provision look in the future?

### **What is God's dream for the church / world?**

What fruits can the wider church draw from this "journeying together"?

How can our global church foster a missionary spirit adapted to the constantly changing environment?

**Closing question** – In the light of the last 18 months living with Covid and your reflections on the four themes, what are you most looking for from the Church/Diocese moving forward?

**For the 2021-2023 Synod, the Holy Father is proposing that the entire People of God pray this simplified version of the Adsumus.**

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.

Please note we are now breaking for Christmas and the final sessions will be held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January and Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022.