



## SAINT ALOYSIUS CHURCH, GARNETHILL SYNOD REPORT

In 2021 Pope Francis invited the Catholic Community world-wide, to enter into a 'synodal' process of listening, reflection and discernment around the themes of 'Participation, Communion and Mission'.

“the purpose of this Synod...is intended to inspire people to **dream** about the Church we are called to be, to make people's **hopes flourish**, to stimulate **trust, to bind up wounds**, to weave **new and deeper relationships**, to **learn from one another**, to **build bridges**, to **enlighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength** to our hands for our **common mission.**”

In response to this invitation from Pope Francis, members of St Aloysius attended the Jesuit Parishes Conference in Swanwick in October 2021 to explore with pastoral companions, how the 10 Jesuit Parishes in Britain would proceed. We prayed with scripture, reflected and practiced listening to one another in groups and explored what the fruits of our shared discernment together might mean for renewing our sense of mission.

Returning from Swanwick we issued invitations to members of our parish community to take part in further synodal meetings. There were nine listening sessions three in person and two on zoom for the parish and a further four in person sessions for members of the Catholic Deaf Community in Glasgow who meet in St Aloysius'. In addition conversations took place with members of other faith communities

We considered three questions:

1. From your own experiences... What do you value about how the Church community journeys together and shows love to the world?
2. From your own experiences... In what ways does the church community fail to journey together and show love
3. How could the Church (local and wider, laity and religious) build relationships,

dialogue, learn from and journey with others on these issues? What steps might the Holy Spirit be inviting the Church to take, to make our parishes and communities more welcoming, inclusive, and missionary?

Thank you to all those who took part in our listening sessions.

The following themes emerged in the course of our conversations: **Community and Welcome, Liturgy, Prayer and Sacraments, Pastoral Care, Evangelisation, Interfaith and Ecumenism, Marginalised, Clericalism, Sexual Abuse, Women in the Church, Young People and Children, Young Adults**

### **Community and Welcome**

- The friendliness of St Aloysius' Jesuit Church
- Particularly in St Aloysius' people are welcoming and there is a strong sense of belonging and identity.
- Coming together in kindness, faith, hope and love.
- Welcome and personal conversation an unexpected gift of the pandemic
- People thirst for a closer community especially after lockdown. Knowing each other's names. Time to talk.
- Continue and develop the Spirit of personal welcome and outreach experienced during the Pandemic.
- So grateful to have this Parish and the Jesuit approach to faith – share this more widely in a number of ways
- It is a human Church of sinful people where we are accepted
- Gratitude for people in the parish
- Regardless of where you are in the world there is a sense of belonging
- The reading from Acts showed communal experience. Charity, prayer, action.
- Rediscovering being together in prayer, socially, in causes flowing from faith.
- More opportunities for deep listening and sharing of experiences for lay people, clergy and people on the fringes of the Church.
- Opportunities to explore faith in a relaxed and welcoming way. Church leaders to journey with and support Catholics in faith life.
- Safe listening to thoughts, opinions, dreams without judgement.

### **Liturgy, Prayer and Sacraments**

- That we have been called and that the invitation is from Jesus in the altar
- We are able to pray and contribute
- We like coming to Mass – it takes worries away –
- we pray to God for help in dealing with a difficult world
- Yearning for Sacraments during Covid-19
- The connectedness in assisting in our church services that helps us with knowing that we are one people journeying together.
- The public sharing of baptisms. A gift to the Catholic community. Sacramental Journey. Shared like the reception of new Christians at Easter.
- Reverence

- Hunger for Confession – people travel from far afield to receive this sacrament of healing.
- Precious Ministry of reconciliation/confession
- House bound and sick precious part of our community
- Being nourished by good preaching. Improving how you live life and cope with challenges in life.
- Guidance in the midst of difficult lives.
- Clear communication
- Educating in the teaching of the Church.
- The Sacramental life should draw us towards mission with others/ help us to hear the voice of God. Work with prayer groups, The Homeless, Refugees.
- Opportunities for devotions and celebrations out with Mass times and formal liturgical year.
- Chances for Retreat and exploring prayer and spirituality.
- Guide and support people in prayer of Adoration.
- Promotion of music and beauty in places of worship. Reflected in beauty of authentic relationships rooted in core Gospel message.
- Ensure the great gift of Music at St Aloysius' continues.

### **Pastoral Care**

- Support of young families with children, age-appropriate experiences of encounter, faith, community gathering for fun.
- Care of separated and divorced Catholics.
- Care for the elderly, socially and valuing their wisdom
- Outreach to lapsed especially in wake of abuse crisis

### **Evangelisation**

- Openness to change and inspiration
- Sense of the importance of growing in the life of faith
- St Aloysius' events, talks such as Living Theology, education in the Faith. Social dimension of a shared life. Journeying together.
- Wider culture engaged with through Newsletters and outreach in Social Media during Lockdown.
- Graces and green shoots experienced in Lockdown – can these best strengthened and grown
- The institution and tradition unifies people and binds them together
- Every Catholic influence is built upon in our lives
- When you turn away from the influence of the Church you feel in the shadows
- Even as a child, conscious of all the influences and values that you build upon and grow.
- Adapting to challenges in the world to hand on faith.
- Embracing the “new” Contribution of diversity to faith
- Perhaps the need of a person to develop and co-ordinate these diverse threads
- Intentional Training, Support and Outreach
- Be a beacon of hope to the world.

- Better communication of the truth and message of the Gospel rather than polarization and division.
- Initiatives like Night Fever – outreach, availability, witness.
- witnessing to the harmony of lay people, clergy in parish and society.
- People of different opinions putting aside differences to work for the common good.
- The dream that every baptised person wants to come to Church to pray, listen, learn and encounter God and other people.
- Monthly meetings and classes on formation.
- Who will provide these? What resources would be necessary?
- Failure to evangelize community.
- Develop and attractive and accessible online outreach and invitation
- Healing of the wounds of Covid 19 Pandemic, spiritually, socially and mentally.
- How can we be available to people to people and provide opportunities for encounter?
- Reach out to people who have fallen away
- Unchurched young people
- Importance of listening – seek out marginalised

### **Interfaith and Ecumenism**

- Spirit of dialogue and openness to the good in the world. Less of a fortress mentality
- Greater collaboration with other Christian in shared mission.
- Links with Jewish and Muslim people faith.
- Support and empathy from the Muslim Community at the burning of St Simon's. Reality of journeying with people of other faiths and those in other or no Church.
- The good relations that now exists between the Jewish Community and the Catholic Church and the sense that more unites that separates our two communities.
- The good and growing relationship between Garnethill Synagogue and St Aloysius Church
- There was a recognition that both communities (Jewish and Catholic) are facing the same issues and challenges eg. declining numbers attending synagogues and churches.
- More dialogue at grassroot level, more neighbourhood dialogues and working together to weave ourselves into the wider community. Members of our faith should be aware of the faiths in their area.
- Appreciation for Pope Francis and his work for dialogue which builds bridges between people and allows communities to move forward in friendship. The signing of the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together by the Pope and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University was a significant step as will be the proposed visit to Lebanon in June this year. It was noted that the Pope showed a genuine love for the whole of humanity, not just his own Church.
- Annual letters from the Vatican and the Scottish Bishops to faith communities are valued as they show respect for and a knowledge of the other faith as well as relating that to Catholic belief and practice.
- More people involved in the local context
- If we want to influence outside communities we must witness to our faiths through action together.

- Living together in Scotland we must have open and honest dialogue.
- A Christmas card from the local church would be appreciated – so too carol singing at Christmas. Perhaps a card to recognize other festivals

### **Works of Mercy and Justice**

- Taking risks for justice and peace
- Generosity of heart, spirit of outreach
- Work for the common good
- Mary's meals, Jesuit Missions, standing with the poor, outsiders
- Voice for the voiceless
- ESOL classes
- Faith has to be interpreted in order to show love to the world beyond the immediate local Church.
- Individualistic response and empathy must go further. Mary's meals, Lourdes Foundation laudable.
- The communal commitment to social justice – in communities worldwide with myriad cultures – one faith
- People sharing goods in common, mutuality, aid, care
- Reaching out – not spectators but gifted and graced.
- Listening to others – hearing what is needed to help brothers and sisters
- Showing love to the world. Pope Francis' example. Persons in dialogue.
- Hiddenness of many people who responded to those in need.
- Links between the Ignatian Spirituality Centre Mission of deepening spirituality with works of mercy and justice?
- What would that look like?
- Links to St Aloysius' College? Opportunities to learn from the experience of the young?

### **Marginalised**

- Sometimes a difficulty with reaching out to the wider community. Wider love to people on the fringes/ working for the "common good".
- Not gathering people together in opportunities for prayer, listening, recollection. How do we develop opportunities? What gifts and graces should we pray for?
- Listening deeply to people's experience is not regular enough.
- Failure to speak to the lived experience of people – the lapsed, disillusioned, broken.
- Failure to interact with the challenges and trials of ordinary folk. Failure of sharing the Gospel.
- Failure to respond to the needs of marginalised – deaf and hard of hearing, lonely and lapsed.
- Perhaps we do not take enough risks – sharing conversations of faith with those outside or on the edge of faith.
- Disciplining people who are engaged in St Aloysius' – deepen faith and sense of mission

- Exclusivity and respectability – far from the inclusiveness of Jesus’ ministry
- Lack of love for people in our midst
- Need to be less judgemental of people’s struggles and failings
- The need to accept not just tolerate groups/people/as made in the image and likeness of God and worthy of respect.
- What co-ordination of existing resources or new approaches would strengthen our response to this?

### **Clericalism**

- Use of funds given to the wider Church. Issues of clericalism and lack of transparency.
- The temptation of self-preservation of the institution over service and humility-journeying together
- Church seen as Clerical/hierarchical with a lay audience
- Separating the Clergy and Pope from people. We are all Church and part of the mission. In *Word* but not always in *Reality*
- How can we awaken the ministry and gifts of the laity in partnership with the clergy?
- What will this look like in St Aloysius’ drawing on our Jesuit and Ignatian traditions
- Can we imagine different models and structures from those currently obvious?
- What ministries need to be encouraged to increase the health of the Body of Christ, the Church?
- Can we become a beacon of the possible in partnership between clergy, laity and attract others to our way of being?

### **Sexual Abuse**

The response to the sexual abuse crisis

- Blindness of bishops and clergy to wounds of the Body of Christ,
- The lack of consultation, openness to laity regarding humility and reparation.
- Need for healing, comfort, consolation
- The Holy Spirit will get us out of desolation
- The sexual abuse crisis
- Slowness in addressing the Child Abuse Crisis.
- Lack of consultation for the laity in finding solutions.
- Acknowledgement and humility to admit mistakes and hurts caused by the Church.
- Not being afraid to learn from mistakes in openness and humility.
- Reach out to those hurt and distanced from the Church.
- Action for change
- Healing the pain of sexual abuse from the clergy
- How can we establish listening ministries to those wounded by the Church?
- Does Pope Francis’ vision of a Field Hospital give some direction and focus to our empathy, listening and response to these wounds?

## **Women in the Church**

- Undervaluing of women – their contribution to care of communities; insights; approach to problems and Ministry
- Marginalisation and trivialising of women at local and global level
- Role for women in ministry/building up the community
- The lack of a role of women in the Church and decision-making
- More engagement of women in ministry. A variety of opinions on this.
- Trust the experience of women, their expertise and gifts in building up community
- Is it time to consider married clergy? Female deacons? Female Priests?
- How can we embody respect for the contribution and giftedness and mission of women in the life of the Church
- What would that look like in concrete terms? Day to day? Over the next 5 years?

## **Young People and Children**

- Neglect of young people and their right to care,
- Importance of interests and nurture of children and faith suited to stage and age of development.
- Indifference in schools. Lack of involvement of Laity  
Encouraging/creating opportunities for children

## **Young Adults**

- Efforts to support and guide Young Adults to discover the beauty and value of a life of Faith. Reimagining priorities in a manner that attracts and speaks to the lived realities and challenges of the young in our broken and uncertain world. What must change?
- Help young Catholics to meet other young Catholics with a focus of faith and prayer
- Give a shape and structure to the very real questions and seeking of young people.
- Dedicated ministry to young? Growing our future? A priority in word and deed rather than aspiration?
- Failure to evangelise community.

## **Polarisation in the Church**

- Factionalism especially attacks on Pope Francis
- Factions/Favoured Groups/Politics/Division
- Some friends do not wish to engage in Synodality as they do not want the local Church to be polarized, divisions, liturgically, outreach and spirituality. Traditional vs Modern
- Cliques

## **The Future: Synod-Journeying Together**

- Continue to Journey together
- Every voice matters
- Continue the conversation
- Don't be afraid of disappointment
- New ways of being church
- Journey with the Lord – let the Lord lead

### **SYNOD PRAYER**

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.

### **SUNG EVENING PRAYER FOR FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI**

There is to be a celebration of sung Evening Prayer on the solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ on 19th June at 7.30pm in St Andrew's Cathedral during which the Synodal Report of the Archdiocese will be formally presented to the Archbishop. All Welcome