



Synod
2021
2023

Synod Pathway
in
St Aloysius Church,
Garnethill
through the eyes
of
Members of the
Deaf Community
in
Glasgow





Members of the Catholic Deaf Community and their Hearing Friends in Glasgow met on three occasions in St Aloysius, Garnethill to take part in the synodal process.

On Friday 18th March an explanation of the synodal process was given at a Signed Mass and an invitation given to take part in two Listening Sessions.

We are thinking particularly about the Catholic Church, and especially how the local Church and members of the Deaf Community journey together, proclaiming the Gospel, and showing love to the world.

We were invited to think and pray over three questions in preparation for the Listening Sessions:

- 1. What do you value about how the Church community journeys together and shows love to the world?***
- 2. In what ways does the Church community fail to journey together and show love?***
- 3. What particular issues in the Church and society does the Church need to pay more attention to? How could the Church build relationship, dialogue, learn from and journey with others on these issues?***



The First Synod Meeting for Deaf took place after Signed Mass for the Feast of the Annunciation on Friday 25th March 2022

Below is a record of our proceedings:

Introduction:

Pope Francis has introduced the Synod to allow us to think about the church and our life.

We simplified the questions to be considered:

- 1. What makes us happy - in church, in life?***
- 2. What makes us sad - in church, in life?***
- 3. In a dream world what would we like to see for the deaf community within the church?***



The next step was to read a section from Scripture from the Acts of the Apostles and each of us were asked to think about a word or phrase in the reading that we liked and how it made us feel or think.

We held a stone in our hand, and this gave us permission to talk and no one else could interrupt.

Then we read the passage again and then each of us said what we thought when we had the stone in our hand. We said:

- treat each other as equals. Not better nor worse than anyone else.
- word 'believe' from passage meant that we in the church were of one heart
- importance of a 'smile' to each other and from each other
- 'boldness': need this to defend the church at awkward moments
- 'boldness': not being timid but courageous. Holy Spirit overcame their timidity to allow bold things to be done.
- 'distributed to each': church has a practical role to play in helping everyone fairly
- 'one heart and one soul': deaf community are part of church heart and soul and hearing people in church and world need to come together
- 'grace': will help us fight devil



We then considered the following question:

What do we value about the church? Where is it in our lives? Is the church part of the good things of our lives?

- church provides a caring listening place that is alive to the community
- we are a caring church
- church provides a structure and a voice for the poor
- church is a private thing for me (sacraments/weddings); if no church, have nothing
- church important to me but needs changing in order to support deaf.
- church has provided many close friends; a loving community; love of Jesus; gathering together and sharing joys and sorrows; warmth affection and love
- church creates a community who remember each other from birth to death
- good life memories of church, sitting together as a family in same row; sense of belonging to family and church; young people today not getting this experience
- remember signing mass for mother since priest could not sign; good memories of priest coming to school Bible History and getting medal!
- school should teach sign language then priests would know how to sign for mass; that helps church as would more talk of God in school



Synod Deaf Day 2, 1st April 2022

The Second Synod Meeting for Deaf and Hearing Friends took place after Signed Mass on Friday 1st April 2022

We began by reflecting prayerfully on our previous meeting and listening session.

All were happy with the comments made at the previous session and with the spirit of the meeting.



We then moved on to consider the question:

'How has church failed to journey together and show love....?'

- too big a gap between deaf and church; many deaf feel unwelcome, mass not understood, signing priests a step forward
- church readings present problem of understanding for deaf and hearing.
- sacrament of confession long been a problem for deaf as priests sometimes misunderstand needs of deaf when they appear for confession.
- church education for me not good as deaf person; what do prayers mean? no understanding of what is being said, can leave deaf person 'empty'; more signing needed in church to allow deaf to know God better.
- should church not stress mass important every day not just Sundays?



- church remains important even if it has failings - 'eucharist' offered by church and that is most important.
- church has not provided priests that can sign.
- Rendu group wrote letter to all parish priests re St Mary's deaf mass and to let any deaf in their parish know of this. No replies.
- BSL interpreter's not keen on liturgical signing because they don't understand it.
- congregation should be encouraged to learn sign language.

'How should the church build relationships, dialogue, learn from others?'

'What steps might Holy Spirit want the church to take to make it more inclusive and missionary?'

- need to be humble and ready to learn but deaf education for school children not good.
- need to get more of bible explained to deaf as many things we don't understand but pictures help.
- readings at mass can be too fast for signer and so what is being 'read' is sometimes not understood as a result.
- need priests with BSL skills to let them explain bible and readings and theology more.



- seminarians to learn BSL
- being deaf cannot be changed so church needs to 'change' to accommodate this
- get SVP to notify parishes of deaf mass at St Mary's; get more signers from people of congregation to allow deaf more involvement at masses
- deaf need to play role to make church more missionary
- meet bishop
- deaf teach sign language to hearing congregation
- liturgy to be simplified
- deaf need interpreter at weddings funerals etc
- need theology of mass and prayers explained
- Advertise in church for people to come forward to learn BSL and one or two deaf people would be willing to teach
- We need a chaplaincy to the Deaf
- Use Facebook or YouTube to attract attention of young deaf.



More questions:

What are deaf going to do if a priest is not available?

How many liturgical signers are there in Glasgow just now?

How many would we hope to have in five years time?

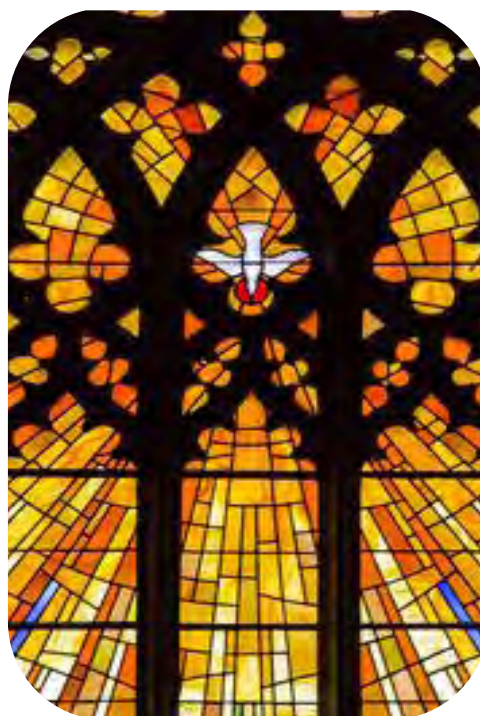
Need to tell the archbishop how many signers are needed e.g., 20?

What about young deaf?

Where are they?

What about a mission to young deaf Catholics?

What about a Chaplain to the Deaf?





Let us Dream:

From Members of the Catholic Deaf Community in Glasgow

We would very much look forward to a meeting with Archbishop Nolan to share our experience and hopes and dreams

We wish to:

Raise consciousness concerning Deaf and Hard of Hearing people's position within the Catholic Church.

Increase awareness of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people by recognizing their language, culture, and experience.

Advocate between the deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing communities

Encourage persons, who are deaf or hard of hearing, to live a life fully included in the life of the Church.

Encourage Deaf people themselves to assume leadership roles and responsibility.

We dream of :

A Pastoral Ministry that offers Deaf Catholics services and support that fosters spiritual development in their own language.

A Pastoral Ministry that offers Deaf and Hard of Hearing Catholics access to the Church's pastoral care.



We highlight the need to:

Provide resources for ministry to the deaf.

Respond to issues of social justice concerning the deaf community.

Ensure the training and availability of priests skilled in signing the Mass, hearing confessions and celebrating the sacraments.

Ensure that seminarians receive deaf culture classes and in the course of their formation achieve at least level 1 in BSL (British Sign Language) and by the time of ordination are able to sign the Mass and sacraments.

Recruit and train volunteer signers in the community for Sunday liturgies and special liturgical celebrations and other gatherings of the community.





We represent the urgent need to:

Provide for the Sacramental care of deaf persons in the diocese through making available signed/interpreted Masses, celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and other Sacramental/liturgical services.

Provide spiritual/pastoral counselling, spiritual direction, and retreat experiences for members of the Deaf Community.

Organize religious education, including Bible study, for deaf individuals throughout the diocese.

- Provide Sacramental preparation for each Sacrament.
- Recruit and train catechists to work with deaf individuals.
- Recruit and train volunteers, especially deaf persons, to assist in pastoral ministry.

Assist Catholic parents with Deaf children, especially those who cannot access religious education and services for their children.

Develop a ministry to deaf children, young people and young adults.

Establish a resource library with appropriate and up-to-date materials

Provide Specially adapted resource materials in Sign language or open/closed captioning that make a Catholic Spiritual life accessible to Catholic children and adults.

Maintain communication with the deaf community through Facebook and social media