



## **St Philip Neri Catholic Church Consultation Feedback**

## WALKING TOGETHER

The synod process involved a wide selection of the parish. We had a core group of parishioners (14) involved in face-to-face meetings. These meetings were held three times. Feedback to the wider congregation was sought through the use of technology (online surveys) using WhatsApp. Participants who were unable to attend had opportunities to contribute to the discussions which was summarised and shared.

## PARTICIPATION

What was your experience of listening and discerning? How did this feel? Did you have a feeling of participation in this journey?

This was a very powerful experience done in solidarity and inclusion. The process made us connected in a common purpose in sharing a deep and often personal insight into faith, family and mission of the church in our own lives and those of our community. We need to continue to engage with more groups within our parish and community in these discussions to help further shape our church and parish.

## ENRICHMENT

How did it feel to be a part of this process? What were the joys? What did you find enriching? Explain how you felt the Holy Spirit was at work in your parish during this time. What was particularly significant, surprising, or unexpected about this process? What new perspectives emerged from the process?

The process was enlightening in the way it gave structure to very important questions that affects the church and the parish. It was done centered on personal experience in Christ and the discussions were significant. What was surprising was the desire to continue the conversations into actions, to support the parish and community as a whole and continue to put 'faith into action' specifically for those who are not directly involved and the marginalised in our parish and wider community.

## RESPONSES

In the box below outline which of the questions your parish discussed/dialogued about, the responses made, and issues raised.

We discussed all the questions. Below is a summary and some of the central messages or themes.

### **Our Reflection**

**At the heart of all we do is Jesus Christ.**

**Bringing Jesus more into our parish families and sharing this with the wider community.**

**Making our church a body of believers in Christ that worship, edify and evangelise within our community.**

**Nurturing, building up or helping all believers to mature in Christ through community, in His Word, in the Eucharist and in prayer.**

**Using our personal experience with Jesus to further transform our parish, our community and support the most vulnerable and marginalised.**

### **Prayer**

- **Serves to give my life routine and purpose.** 'I feel like my day is not complete if this is not done.'
- **Prayer keeps me connected** to people and my community.
- **If there's a drop the intensity of prayer**, the focus of my life also diminishes.
- **Everyone day when we awake, we practice the resurrection.** We must therefore use prayer to gain guidance and its right to say 'thank you' for the day.in prayer. **If you stop praying, spiritual life dies.**
- **We need to engage in simple prayer** then moments of silence and reflection. It's important to have silent petition and listening to God.

### **Participation**

- **Many young people's participation in church life** have been negatively impacted by them going to university, taking up employment with unsociable hours that prohibit church attendance.
- **Families are key teachers** in the home. It is through them that we get more participation.
- **Having avenues for all groups** within the church and wider community to engage in the mission of the church.
- **Encouraging and further marketing the mission of the church** to the entire community including the wider work shared by Christ of helping the 'poor.'
- **Ensuring that the liturgy applies to modern day societal issues** to create a connection between the written word and what it means in our lives today.
- **Being inclusive and courageous in the messages** shared by the church on challenges we face today.

### **Challenges**

- **Financially:** there needs to be a clear plan that takes account of church repairs. Parish is falling into disrepair and there is the fear that local parishes may become derelict if there isn't a clear strategy of estate maintenance
- **Charismatic renewal:** there needs to be more active groups like these within the parish as many people do enjoy these.
- **Health inequalities:** There needs to be a conversation on the teachings of the catholic church and real-life impact on parishioners, especially those living in poverty. How does the church deal with the impact of decisions on e.g., contraception on expanding family number/ childhood poverty/ poor women's' health/ reduced social mobility? No topic should be 'off limits' for discussion.
- **Social issues:** the catholic church needs to address issues like 'black lives matter'. The church needs to discuss and address every day issues that affect parishioners. There needs to be a platform within the church for all to give their views. The consequence of being silent are worse than being vocal. The Catholic church can become more engaged with social issues through education within its schools.
- **Education:** There needs to be universal support across the church to support schools to develop a socially rich, fit for purpose curriculum that address social issues e.g., energy prices and its impact on family life
- **Development of more Pious societies.** There needs to be more engagement with parishioners explaining the benefits of these societies driven by a national and global focus.
- **Lack of social events.** There needs to be regular sessions throughout the year like 'a discussion Café' based on current currents or issues relevant to the parish

## DREAMS

We addressed this answer with through the focus on **Mission**

- **Make the church a facility for the community.**
- **The church should become a home,** a place where there can be meals, children supported with homework/ after and before school clubs/ prayer and pious groups can meet/ the community can meet together.
- **The church should not be an empty space** during the week only populated at mass. The church should be an active, vibrant environment, filled with activity every day of the week as a mission for Jesus specifically for our local community.
- **The church should witness to Christian and non-Christians alike.**
- **The church should be a refuge to disadvantaged groups** e.g., those living in poverty, affected by substance (drugs and alcohol) misuse issues.
- The church has become too insular. We have become Catholics for Catholics. Pope Francis has asked us to accept our local community. The church to become the center of the community.
- **More inclusive, accepting, vibrant, hopeful for and supportive of the future of the challenges that we all face today in modern society,**
- A place of refuge.
- **A place for teaching e.g., lectio Divina**
- **An international parish.**
- **A lovely caring, less isolated Christian community that** relates to each other. A place that encourages good relationships with each other. Reaching out to both Christians and non-Christians.

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**Concrete actions for Saint Philip's:**

- Create a befriending service – For all parishioners especially those who do not attend church
- Networking with people both within our parish and in the local community.
- **Seek out the help of community organisations** for partnerships to better utilise resources or gain access to governmental funds specifically for those who need it most.
- **Challenging parishioners to look outwards** and see the church as being part of the local community.
- **Recognise those among us whom may be in need** and direct them to the appropriate resources.

*were encouraged to ponder on 'if we cannot do great things, we can do small things with great love.'*

