

Walking Together

The Parish of Blessed Carlo Acutis - Feedback Sheet

Walking together

(Describe what happened in your parish, how you went about the Synodal process? Approximately how many people were involved in your parish, including those who have stopped coming to church or who never come)

The Parish Bulletin was used in the weeks leading up to Christmas to raise awareness of the Synodal Pathway, as it was first described, and to point parishioners to the resources on the Diocesan website. The prayer for the Synodal Path was included, and the prayer was said together at the end of each mass.

The Parish Council discussed the process early on and agreed a broad framework for listening events in all three churches across the Parish. A parishioner was identified to support the process and attended all the seminars provided by the Diocese . Five further volunteers were then recruited via the Bulletin to create a small team of enablers who met to plan the Parish response.

It was agreed that there would be three listening events, covering the themes of Communion, Participation and Mission, at each Church, so 9 sessions in total.

Members of the Team spoke at each Sunday mass the weekend before the start of the sessions, to share information about Walking Together, and hand out simple invitations with the dates, what to expect, and contact details for each of the leads .

Listening Events took place on 22nd January 5th February and 19th February.

An opportunity to participate via Zoom was also provided on 4th February.

An online form containing all the questions was added to the Parish website to coincide with the first face to face event, for people who wanted to respond via that route. Parents at one of the Parish primary schools were also sent a questionnaire. These responses have all been incorporated below.

The CathSoc group considered the questions during their regular meetings, and their responses have also been incorporated below.

Parish members who are also Foundation Governors and Directors of St Francis and St Clare MAC also had the opportunity to respond via that route .

Having multiple opportunities for parishioners to respond has enabled us to have contributions from a more diverse group of people in terms of age and ethnicity.

In total there were 141 responses from at least 77 individuals across the Parish , with some people contributing on more than one occasion.

Participation

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

People attending listening events were forthcoming in their responses to questions, and also respectful of others so there was real dialogue .

The Handbook provided a useful framework for the process, and the ground rules were helpful in setting the tone for the events.

Priests from the parish came at the beginning of the first session to thank people for coming and make explicit the link with parishes around the world on the same journey, which showed leadership and support for the process, and was welcomed.

The discussions as part of the listening events were stimulating and fruitful, contributing to a sense of community and walking together.

People who attended listening events shared the following reflections:-

- Nice for the laity to be asked
- It was good we shared opinions
- Experience of being part of something worldwide was very motivating
- Important for the church to move forward
- This worldwide consultation must lead to some change.

Enrichment

(How did it feel to be a part of this process? What were the joys? What did you find ? 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?)

People who attended listening events shared the following reflections:-

- This synod is a way to reflect and talk about our faith and our experiences.
- It was great to be in the room with others responding to the Pope's invitation
- It was a pleasure to meet new people
- Listening to others, about things we wouldn't normally discuss, was a joy
- Good to hear something different to what I think?
- It was good to be given this forum and to say whatever we wanted.
- Its joyful to be encouraged to speak out instead of told what to do
- The Holy Spirit has brought us here- sometimes you realise after the event that He was there
- We gained knowledge and guidance through the Holy Spirit
- We experienced a yearning that more had come to join in
- It's been prayerful
- It was a blessing to be able to speak with eloquence
- Significant for me was that most of what we discussed was about material ways of embodying our faith, little was said about changing Church teaching e.g. women priests.

- Also significant was that we seemed all the time to distinguish between Church and the Gospel
- There is a lot of strong feeling within the laity with regard to LGBTQ community and inclusivity, which was surprising and positive- we the Church will have an uphill struggle to convince the hierarchy re LGBTQ
- Surprised that not more came to these meetings and also that the age group wasn't more diverse – where are all the younger generation?
- Hopefully at the end of it someone will listen to our needs -we have to trust it will happen
- Interesting food for thought
- Thumbs up to the process

Responses

(Outline which of the questions your parish discussed/dialogued about, the responses made, and issues raised.)

The questions in the Diocesan Handbook were slightly adapted and published in the Parish Newsletter over several weeks to aid participation.

Communion: The Life of the Church. Formation.

1. In what ways does the Catholic Church enhance your life?

Sacraments

- The sacraments are important
- The ability to go to Mass and receive Holy Communion on a regular basis.
- Support in bereavement – sacraments
- Belief in the Eucharist is central, we are all one together in the same beliefs, it is a forgiving church
- Eucharist/liturgy/prayer – live or on Zoom
- Strong bond of attachment to the sacramental life of the Church. Important impact on my growth as a person in getting to know myself.
- It makes sense of trying to be as one with God, the Trinity and the Eucharist as much as possible.
- It reinforces my belief in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit by way of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Gospels, and homilies from the Priests.

Spiritual Meaning/Direction

- It is a way of life which governs all the decisions you make and the paths you take
- It gives your life a framework and discipline. Road map for life/home/community
- It feeds us with the Word of God through the Bible and other publications.
- It enhances our lives and provides a foundation to move forward in a positive way.
- It is my life; what I do in my life is closely linked to my spiritual life.
- By giving me a moral guidance, encouragement to reflect and be grateful and to be more selfless, to help others. It looks after my spiritual health and gives everything a deeper meaning.
- Gives me purpose, understanding of what it means to be human.

- As a convert, my whole life revolves around the Church, and it's in every social circle I'm part of.
- Church gives you a guideline/moral compass to live your life by.
- Brings out the best in me - helps bring out your vocation in life.

Social / Community support

- I feel joined in prayer with Pope Francis, Bishops, priests and parishioners.
- It puts you in touch with people who have the same ideas, locally and worldwide, you feel a spirit of community.
- We as a parish are united as a community and it enables us to socialise on a regular basis.
- The social element is important and feeling part of a group worshipping together.
- Community of like-minded wherever I go?
- As someone who hasn't been in the Church very long, it has changed my life from the moment I became a Catholic, and given me a sense of community.
- I see the Church as much more than simply a 'religious social club'.

Accompaniment on life's journey

- It is my motivation for being.
- It provides a structure we can follow from cradle to grave – Baptism, Confirmation and all the sacraments.
- It is at the heart of my family and everything we do.
- The Church is there for us in all circumstances – in the good times and sadly in the bad.
- Opens up horizons - without Church life would have been narrower.
- Anchor in my life.
- Got to travel because of my faith.
- Helps with mental health - comfort in faith.
- It is at the heart of who I am and strengthens me in times of struggle.
- Give us strength and hope

Service

- Part of being a Catholic/Christian is doing what is good.
- To use that belief in my life with others and to encourage and support, pass on this belief as a way of life.
- Structure for putting gospel into action e.g., CWL
- Prayer needs to go hand in hand with action.

Other points

- Difficult question to answer – what do we mean by Catholic Church – Home? Parish? Diocese? Pope?
- Not much these days. Feel very separated from it all. I follow mass from other countries and parishes online for a better understanding of what it all means.
- We need ways of talking/reaching out to others.
- Catholicism seems a lot more accepting - not restrictive in terms of who can and can't be friends with.

- Not being able to be open about sexuality.
- On issue of mental health = spiritualisation of real problems - jumping to spirituality instead of solving the problem. This approach is similar to the 'Gospel' churches where you know what they will say before you even ask.
- Saints and saintly clergy
- Catholic publications and organisations
- In what ways does the Catholic Church enhance the life of others?
- Not there to enhance our lives?

2. Which of your concerns does the Church fail or struggle to respond to?

Leadership Issues

- Not a strong lead on moral issues.
- Lack of visibility by the church hierarchy to respond to historic mistakes – changes are taking place – but what are we aware of?
- It has responded to the historic child abuses, but such a wound will take many decades to heal. It needs to continue to show much remorse over this issue and do this very openly.
- The way the Church has dealt with historic cases of child abuse by the clergy is a concern. Child abuse issues are not properly dealt with. If there is a process, what is it?
- The Church is far too top heavy. Obviously, the wisdom of the Pope, other Bishops etc. is hugely important but the Church needs to be driven from the youth...all youth.
- Lack of respect of the Pope at a high level, whilst at the lay-people level there is great respect.
- The Church needs to move forward, whereas there are those, clerics included, that are trying to go back to pre-Vatican 2 days.
- Poverty of communication from hierarchy, partly due to poor IT
- Representatives and their responsibilities within the church is unknown
- Marginalisation of women
- The Catholic Church fails to find out why 60% of cradle Catholics (England & Wales) virtually never attend Church.
- There is corruption at top level... financial corruption, fraud, greed especially from bishops upwards. Failure to practice what is preached, a blasphemy of their very rank and role.*

Role of the laity

- Lack of involvement of laity in decision making.
- Side-lining of groups in parishes e.g. older parishioners
- Role of laity undermined by clericalism

* Comment submitted via on-line form

Evangelisation

- Lack of involvement of the young .How is the Church engaging with young adults? Many had brought their children up in the observance of the catholic faith and yet at various stages and for various reasons these same young people had decided to stop coming to Church. We need to find a way to welcome them back. It was felt that for some in the core of their being there was still a belief.
- Is the Church able to reach out beyond Sunday Mass attendees?
- Failure in reaching hard to reach

Family Life and Relationships /Domestic Church

- Relationships do break down and there is a feeling of hurt and judgement when a person is excluded from Communion because they are divorced.
- To be gay is not a lifestyle choice, we are all born and made in the image of God, but the Church continues to disapprove and judge, so these people do not feel welcomed by the Church.
- A lot of friends are LGBT or are people from traumatic backgrounds. Message of the Church lost on these people. Historically LGBT members not accepted in the Church. As generations change, views change.
- Not had much clarity from the Church on this issue - how to treat LGBT people.
- Acceptance of non-heterosexual love as real ... certainly not to be condemned outright.
- I understand the Church's view about gay marriage, and the nature of the Sacrament, but it's hard to respond to questions from others.
- Family members are Trans, and it's not clear where the Church is on this, which can lead to challenges in the family.
- Life and relationships are changing fast but understanding in the Church of the complexities of life is not making progress.
- I found my faith struggle when I lost my only sibling. I was glad to talk to local priests who gave me comfort in knowing this is part of my journey with God.
- How does having one parent not being Catholic affect long-term commitment?
- Does the Church really attract those who are married to non-Catholics?
- Crushingly ineffective in not keeping up with modern life in a way that everyone, anyone can relate to... this betrays and undermines the very rearing of children, teenagers, young families struggling, those yet to hear His words, those considering RC conversion, and prevents them getting to heaven after a fulfilled life.*

Liturgy

- The church still struggles to balance traditional forms of worship with the needs of young people.
- Is the worship at Mass socially engaging compared to other denominations?
- Children are not encouraged enough to participate for example; reading, altar serving, animating some services or taking up the offering etc...

Other issues

* Comment submitted via on-line form

- The church helps me in all ways possible.
- Different cultural groups come together for Mass in this country, including people from other continents with a different style of worship which may lead to cultural misunderstandings.
- Church is not called to exclude people - "no more outsiders".
- Reduced numbers of children being confirmed year on year.
- Lack of communication. Lack of contact
- No longer feels like a caring community. No warmth. No inclusion
- Big generation gap
- Christian unity
- Criticism of Catholic faith.
- Dearth of Catholic institutions

3. How is the Church perceived by members of your family, your friends and work colleagues?

Positives

- The Catholic Church does not seem to change its approach just to be popular in the way the Church of England does, i.e. women priests
- Can be treated with respect for having faith and not following the crowd.
- For some members of our families, the Church is perceived in a very positive way. It is important.
- Those closest to me know how important my faith is and see the Church as part of that. At work I try my best to spread the Good News, sharing love and peace.
- Family/friends are largely supportive of the Church though not always in agreement.
- Friends: Catholic – same as us (second family), non-Catholic – mixed views but tend to come to us in times of need/troubles.
- They understand that it's not for everyone, but everyone has the own opinions and they value mine about the church.
- Good to have friends from people from other Abrahamic faiths - nice to have someone who understands.
- The quality of the priest is important in how the Church is perceived, and good communication skills are vital. We are lucky in this Parish.
- With high respect

Less Positive

- Not well! E.g., lack of female participation, attitudes towards homosexuality and marginalised people.
- The Church can come across as judgemental.
- They see the Church as very male dominated. Decisions made by men with no worldly experience. Women as second-class citizens
- People are scared about being open with me when I say I am Catholic. They think I may judge them for their sexuality or way of living.

- Young people's perception of the Church is it's an irrelevance in many respects. Boring. They lead busy lives and other priorities take over. The Church needs to find a way to keep young people as they get older.
- Faith is part of family life. However, friends not practicing or atheist etc. Having faith feels like a novelty = being asked a lot of questions "Do you hate me because of X".
- Distrust due to child abuse. Child abuse will always come up in conversation as will celibacy of priests.
- Perception that Catholics are distinct from Christians
- I'm sad to say apathetically at best. Aside from my children and husband , the majority of my family are atheists / members of the Humanist society.
- Family members mostly Christian. Some Catholic friends who only come to Church at Christmas or for baptisms. Work colleagues aren't really interested in faith.
- For other family members it has become irrelevant. Why?
- Mother is Catholic and the faith has been an anchor for the family. Majority of friends have been atheist. They do not feel welcome as they are Queer or Transgender. To them it makes sense to believe "in science' despite Church being open to it. Can't think of a time where a friend has been supportive of going to Church. Only time have had supportive friends are from CathSoc or Church.
- "Church is in the dark ages." It's out of touch with the modern world. Outdated, not relevant. Unable to relate to the real world. Stuck in a time warp.
- Attitude to birth control.
- Too rigid and too many rules. Church as a means of control.
- The negativity expanded on the Internet.
- Hostility from family members who have remained in the Jewish faith.
- My mother (CofE) would say to us children, " Be careful mixing with those Catholics; they're an odd lot.!
- Vocabulary used is not easy to understand unless catechism classes are offered
- It's not believable
- It's depressing
- It needs to be made more accessible
- It does not make any sense
- The songs are out of date and out of tune
- Why do we even have to go?
- The teachings of the church do not carry through in daily activities
- Evil in its inexcusable refusal to deal with sex crimes in this modern day... many hitherto devout people, leaving as so disillusioned and disgusted.*

4a. How does the Church Make Decisions?

- We don't really know!
- There was some discussion as to the meaning of this question, and whether the focus was at local level or at other levels through the hierarchy. Need clarity on what is the decision-making process, tell people what they are.

* Comment submitted via on-line form

- Slowly! The pandemic has made communication and action more difficult . Times are changing quickly, and the Church may not be keeping up, or too slow in its decision making.
- Synods > Magisterium. Bishop – King in his own diocese.
- Canon Law says every Parish should have a Pastoral Council, but many don't?
- Parish Council? Advisory to PP
- Decisions about faith are made by hierarchy. Pope down. From the top down
- Decisions about non-faith (practical) made by hierarchy and/or laity
- Too much red tape
- Diocesan structure doesn't feel like it's real for some people.
- What is the purpose/function of the deanery?
- Holy Spirit

4b. How might the Church improve its decision-making processes

- Need more communication and transparency in decisions at all levels.
- By continuing to listen to the concerns / needs of the communities they serve. This is a welcome shift.
- Honesty.
- By continued consultation.
- Be useful if the Church clarified what the decision-making processes are at local, national, and international. We don't know anything about it. Lack of transparency. I didn't know about the process of electing the Pope before I saw it on the news. Nobody knew about the Code of Canon Law in our group.
- Improve procedures to involve laity .It's a good thing to involve more lay people in the decision-making process, and especially women who bring a different perspective i.e., have experience of family life. It was noted that the Pope has appointed women to some key roles in the Vatican, which was welcomed.
- The structure of the Church needs to be more bottom up rather than top down. Too much top-down; more emphasis on bottom-up
- Women's rights and involvement. Women must be seen to be much more prominent at youth level and senior levels. Women are on the Board of Trustees for the Diocese – how many people know that?
- In some parishes priests may have too much power. It is good to see a consultation process being set up in more parishes i.e. Parish Councils.
- Missed opportunities to involve youth more – especially following the very promising synod for the young
- Apply the same laws for crimes of sex and financial corruption as the UK law which are the best in the world.
- Why do we still not have a Pastoral Council in the Archdiocese?
- Use suggestion box within Parish
- IT training for those responsible for communicating.
- Parishes to have skill-based parish data base for skills to be used in decision making and support where needed.
- More transparency – with confident conversations. Identify a way to be more open and transparent about what is happening in the Parish e.g. lighting and alterations.

- Hard to answer this one – so many different views to take into consideration (if consensus is sought)
- Make it more inviting
- Value each individual and what they can bring to our church community
Make it more inclusive(age, race, ethnicity)
- Reconnect with parishioners to understand their needs especially through difficult times
- Ask if one can fulfil certain roles within the parish or church and support them!
- Youth must be prominent in decision making.
- Be more involved with the clergy.
- Any new information of whatever kind coming from the Vatican or Archdiocese needs to be clear and succinct rather than leaving that job to the press. Several huge documents could be summarized in just a few lines.
- Various ways of disseminating information through IT are and will become increasingly important. The Church needs to be 'ahead of the game.'

5. The last two years have been challenging. In your experience how has your Faith been supported? How would you like your Faith to be supported in the future?

Mass online

- Our clergy had done an excellent job in the live streaming of Masses and other prayer events, which has been a lifeline for some.
- Online Masses from different sources. Lots of tech learning and creativity has come out of the pandemic with parishioners hearing the Mass and the rosary in far flung places.
- The pandemic has brought the Church up to date in terms of online services.
- The Church responded brilliantly to Covid 19 situation quickly and with consideration.
- The Lord works in many mysterious ways, in this case the dire and extreme restrictions combined to open new doors and chances to spread evangelisation and worship, renewed faith for lapsed Christians e.g. TV Mass on line, Adoration on line
- Finding a good online preacher
- Really good services and teaching thought. Always appropriate to the crisis.
- I loved having Mass “online”, keeping me connected and supported – thank you! .
- The introduction of online Masses was ground-breaking and made mass accessible at any time of day, in any situation when I couldn't attend Mass at church.
- Nice to go around the world for Mass!
- Digitally supported Masses to help elderly parishioners to attend. Utilising new technology, such as Virtual Reality (& 360 degree live-streaming cameras) and Artificial Intelligence.
- People have got together to support one another, particularly online. Church isn't a building.
- My faith ebbs and flows but I always return to it. Not participating in Mass due to Covid was tough. I appreciate what the Church tried to do re. online masses but they sadly were not for me.

Other online resources

- Grateful for the range of online prayer and Mass opportunities.
- Adapting to new ways of doing things. Using mobile phone to stream the Mass. In the future, digital age where things are more and more computer based. It is possible to do everything from the comfort of your home. One of the busiest generations ever, always being 'connected'.
- Many people have got into apps for daily prayer and meditation, which wouldn't have happened without the pandemic.
- Through the good fortune of access to various online 'talks' from Priests nationwide and the opportunity to attend Holy Mass online I found that my faith was actually strengthened. However, for others who may have had extremely difficult times it must have been a very testing time for their faith.
- For everyone online, their faith has been well supported.
- For those without internet, it has been very difficult although, there has been provision from individual initiatives.
- The Catholic Church seems to have done extremely well in its support to parishioners over the last two years and what was learnt so quickly then can still be put to good use in the future. e.g., Online Mass for those unable to attend. Phone calls to the housebound. Detailed online bulletin etc.
- Rosary online (CWL and prayer groups)
- Challenged by online adoration
- Pope's global blessing

Social Action projects

- Collection of food and outreach has been good.
- Life Charity shop – donations have carried on.
- Being able to do faith in action, food bank.

Stewards/Cleaners

- Work of whole team (stewards, cleaners etc) to facilitate come back to church for Mass.
- Reassurance that church was a clean and safe environment.
- Excellent stewardship.

Telephone Support

- There was an appreciation of the contact by phone to check on parishioners. 'I loved the calls home made by the team at St Michael's. It made us feel cared for and part of the parish'.
- Follow up if needed.

Other Points

- It was encouraging to hear Cardinal Vincent advocating for the re-opening of churches and providing strong leadership at a national level .
- Personal prayer. Just praying every day and hoping that God can sort the world out, he will support us.
- My faith has not been supported

As to the future....

- Continue online resources and services, especially to support those unable to return to church.
- Think about how we can expand what we did during the pandemic
- Putting on prayer groups, catechism classes, seminars we can attend, places to go to enhance our faith and prayer life, social outings and gathering
- We need to reach out to young people. Need to find a way to get younger people to commit. How can we re introduce the children's liturgy and the youth club?
- The pandemic has affected the children more, so we need to find ways to get them back in.
- Return of pre-pandemic practices, return of Exposition during the week.
- More community activities
- All age family-centred activities
- Being made welcome (though means different things to different people).

Participation: Liturgy and Worship. Co-Responsibility

6. How do you believe your presence at Mass makes a difference?

Positives

- Makes a difference to ME!
- There is a powerful feeling of being a part of a community participating together; helping create a sense of community. Shows unity
- Mass is part of what we are. It is part of a communal expression of belief and worship. The Mass is not a lifestyle choice or optional extra but part of a Christian way of life. A common purpose, it radiates outwards.
- Mass isn't something one can do on own's own.
- My presence is a communion with God .
- It is an example of commitment to the whole world.
- I feel welcomed at Mass, makes me feel part of a family. Joining in with the community, getting to know people.
- Coming to Mass/Church makes me feel safe - the safest place to go in Wolverhampton. Always feel welcome.
- Gives me the sense of wholeness and belonging. Being there makes a difference in encouraging others in their faith.
- Mass is participative but some like to feel they have a more active part to play and that it makes a difference.
- The Mass is a gathering and the fact that I am present helps to fulfil this definition. During the actual Mass I do not especially think of those who are present.
- Participating as an individual and by supporting other people, or helping with the Eucharistic service through choosing and singing the hymns and preparing the bidding prayers; reading the readings; singing the responsorial psalm and gospel

acclamation; reading the bidding prayers; serving at the altar; distributing communion; making special announcements etc.

- Another voice in prayer in Church family. Joining as one family.
- It's good to see other people with the same need to be there , showing that commitment. Enables us to keep up with others and look out for them
- Universality of the Mass is important
- Learning about your faith through the homilies, stimulating you to think more deeply or differently . (We need sermons that we can relate to which are short.)
- It's a witness to all that the Mass embodies and beyond.
- Attending Mass gives strength to other parts of our life. It is a vital part.
- For me it's spirituality and formation.
- It is what God wants as per 10 commandments - Honour the Sabbath.
- I hope that my presence at Mass makes a difference. I join in the prayers, responses and singing and make an effort to pay special attention to the important parts of the Mass. I also speak to people before and after Mass.
- It (my presence) makes the Body of Christ more fully present at this moment, in this time, here in this place.
- It makes a difference because it meets a need to come to Mass to pray to Our Lord, receive his blessing and most important receive the Body and Blood in the form of communion .
- The more people, the more the parish can take opportunities to grow overall by using groups and individuals' talents.
- It encourages others and ourselves as a community of believers, parish and own family.
- The family that prays together, stays together.
- 'Where two or more gather, I am there'
- Just getting one extra person closer to God is a victory.
- Everyone at Mass has a responsibility to support the congregation and the church e.g., by donating to charity, to the collection.

Less Positive

- It's a challenge.
- At the moment no difference. I've chosen not to attend for about 4 weeks now and it seems no one cares. I could be dead, and I don't believe anyone would know!
- Am I making up the numbers?

7. Explain what difference does it make in your life to receive the sacraments?

- Sacraments are extremely important to me.
- Pandemic brought it home how much we love and rely on the Sacraments and perhaps had taken access too much for granted before.
- Sacraments form the framework of our religion.
- Sacraments bring us closer to Jesus and enable us to take that relationship into the wider world and to live a better life.

- Eucharist – could be the most important, strength for the journey. Belief in trans-substantiation is important
- To come back to receiving the Eucharist, have really appreciated it, and this has reinvigorated a love of the Sacraments.
- To receive physically the sacrament at Holy Communion is enormously important. It is, as in the Last Supper, actually receiving Jesus in to my poor soul with the hope of giving it refreshment and strength.
- The Sacrament of the Church itself, the community, this is what the Eucharist is, and needs the people to be present .
- Eucharist rejuvenates spirit during the week.
- The process and the pledge ie the incorporation into the body of Christ here and now, and the promise of eternity.
- Receiving the sacraments is a joint act between God and me; I am nearer to God and feel a closeness to Him.
- Baptism - I was 10/11, felt like becoming part of a family. Sins washed away, felt like it made a huge difference to my life. Communion - Body and Blood of Christ, draws you closer to God. Reconciliation - each time you go, feel like a new person. Imagine that Marriage etc would add to this.
- Missed so much at the height of the pandemic in terms of Requiem Mass and solace of the sacraments in times of loss.
- Reconciliation – lifts a burden, a chance to be forgiven, we are lucky to have this sacrament. Reconciliation brings peace and healing for a state of grace.
- General absolutions?
- Sacrament of the sick – can make you feel uplifted, gives extra reassurance, a feeling that everything is going to be all right, whatever comes next.
- Regulates my relationship with God – don't just drift.
- Receiving the Sacraments has made a difference to my life. Over time, I have become more tolerant and have grown in understanding myself especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Baptism - I was 5, had a sense of coming into family. Reconciliation - a way of speaking with God more, God will forgive me and listen. Receiving the Sacraments reinforces my faith.
- Sacraments associated with peace, perspective, nourishment, connection, sharing, being in God's presence. Open door to the sacred.
- Reconciliation makes me feel very close to God. It helps my prayer life.
- Mass - liturgy of the Word & the majority of homilies help me interpret scripture and God's intention for me. Reconciliation makes me feel very close to God. It helps my prayer life.
- They guide our lives. Extremely important to me that my children attend ... Catholic Primary and receive these.
- It nourishes my faith and fuels me to be better than I am.
- I feel very blessed when I receive the Body and Blood of Christ.
- It brings me closer to Jesus.

Other Issues

- What can the Church do about the future? How do we get the young to go to the Mass/Sacraments and carry the Church forward?
- Why do some young people not see Mass attendance as central? What can the Church do about that? The communal aspects of the sacraments in secondary school appear to have been squeezed out?
- How good are we at communicating with young people about our and their personal beliefs?
- How relevant/essential are the sacraments? Should their relevance be more emphasised? Should they be reviewed?
- Too much concentration on Mass in relation to the other sacraments?
- I used to be extremely close to the Church and believed it to be the centre of my universe. I'm still close to God but he feels more present and alive in other churches. It makes me question what faith is really about?
- Special services (such as Easter Triduum)

8. What part does prayer play in your life and your relationship with God/The church?

- Prayer is very important. Plays a very important part in daily life.
- I pray at home and in church, I also pray to the saints.
- A key part in our lives.
- Prayer is when I mentally connect to God and can ask Him for help. It is a time when I can actively listen too.
- Prayer is way to connect with God, pray when wake up and go to sleep. Saying the Creed in unison at Mass helps. If something goes wrong, lean on God.
- Prayer is a conversation with a friend who will always listen and accept. Will get advice you need to hear.
- I pray daily but only at a basic level
- I only prayed when younger if something was going wrong. If depression was getting worse, during exams etc. As I have got older, can do it morning and evening.
- Like to do it when I have a private moment to myself, dialogue with God. Always someone to turn to and offload. It is a "constant".
- Easiest thing to do as a Catholic, so often overlooked.
- Prefer short prayers throughout the day rather than formal prayers
- Morning prayers are a good way to start the day and evening prayers a good way to finish the day / reflect on the day. Good to have prayer routine integrated into one's day. It sets the right priority for the day.
- Keep it simple by just thinking of one thing to be thankful for at the end of the day
- A continuous prayer is just saying the name Jesus at times during the day
- Many different types of prayer – thanksgiving; reading the scriptures; Lectio Divina; meditation/contemplation; imaginative prayer; talking and listening to God etc.

- There are many aids to prayer – mobile apps, using daily Mass reading, examen, prayer of the Church e.g. the Jesuits have an app called the 3 minute Retreat, which some find useful.
- Prayer is helpful when you feel helpless e.g. big world issues that we can't influence, at least we can pray.
- Prayers...daily setting thoughts and goals in order, listening to Gods will, listening to God's answers, food for each day, motivation and retreat and getting correct perspective.
- Helps when you can't get to sleep!
- We need prayer to keep us on track.
- Many ways of praying – it comes in all the time – not just on specified times or places.
- It is helpful to have set prayers, but also to come together with others in prayer.
- Prayer is a gift to communicate - can just be a conversation with God – integrated into one's life. A route to God and His route to us. Asking God for help and guidance.
- Perhaps we need to make more conscious effort to prayer – and not just on one's own.
- Church structures provide prayers for specific occasions/reasons.
- Good to have a conscious running conversation with God – helps one to focus on the importance of prayer.
- Importance of praying regularly and committing time, whether it is meaningful or not.
- Finding a quiet place without distractions is a wonderful opportunity to sit and listen to Jesus. He will understand my issues and help me to progress. I feel that during a public Mass prayer is not fully recognized and somewhat glanced over. It seems important to only participate in Mass when in the right frame of mind to do so.
- Since my middle age, Prayer has played a key part in my spiritual growth (together with the Sacraments). I pray am and pm the Prayer of the Church. I also practise Contemplative Meditation. I realise that it is important to have a relationship with Jesus.
- There is power in praying together -like communal prayers e.g. Rosary – would like to see more in parish. Praying with and for others. Praying as a community via Zoom.
- I pray most days but am aware that this is something I need to develop as I am easily distracted or unfocused due to so many external pressures. Only at Mass and occasionally at home can I find peace.
- Prayer gives me life and helps me be thankful for things and to pray for others to help them.
- It helps my faith to underline everything I do, it gives me an opportunity to reflect on my weaknesses, to ask for forgiveness, to help and support others. Prayer unites us and makes us stronger.
- Gives hope
- Can be challenging
- Can be fruitful
- Feeling that mask wearing has affected 'responses'

- Church failing to reach out to meet the spiritual needs in the community?

9. How do you currently participate, personally, in the life of the Church? How do families and young people participate in the life of the Church? How much responsibility do you have as an individual?

a. How do you currently participate , personally in the life of the Church

- Personally, by going to Mass.
- Weekly masses online
- Having a role in the life of the Church e.g., Membership of Church and parish groups ; parish/finance councils; Reader; Governor of Catholic school & MAC; Cleaner; Steward/Welcome ministry; Social events; Food bank; Supporting clergy and sisters; Visiting the sick and elderly parishioners ; help with flowers, sing in the Choir, Prayer Group member, Eucharistic Minister; Writing bidding prayers; Promoting support for Catholic organisations at the end of Mass; Parish records.
- Meet & Greet seems to be becoming more and more important. For someone returning to Church after a long break it can be a very daunting experience for them. But everyone needs to be made hugely welcome.
- Going to Catholic Society.
- Adoration
- Eucharistic Ministry to the house bound.
- Participating in life of the church through helping at EDGE Youth Group, serving, singing etc.
- Before the pandemic, CathSoc used to help at the soup kitchen. Also helped with evangelisation at 'nightfever'.
- Pre-pandemic - Children Liturgy.
- Pilgrimages.
- Silent prayer after Mass
- Charity work
- Caring / praying for others
- I refer to Catholic beliefs / principles at home although I allow my children to make their own path as I'm aware of the detrimental effect of 'forced' belief on my extended family. I try to practice what I preach and do so through my work. As a family we regularly focus on fundraising for charities such as the Good Shepherd, CAFOD, WWF...
- I donate to the food bank each week and support my daughter as an Altar Server. I collect up hymn books at the end of Mass and return them to the appropriate bookshelf.

b. How do families and young people participate in the life of the Church?

- Young people as readers; Opportunities at school; Taking up offertory (families); Attend Mass; Altar servers; Children's Liturgy group; Youth Group; CathSoc. ;Diocesan Youth group; School projects and Masses
- Families & young people may benefit from opportunities to understand and partake in Mass more.
- Families are the new Church being formed for the next generation.

- I educate my grandchildren re mass, prayer and religion.
- My children attend ... Catholic School. I teach at ... Catholic School. I see my faith as integral to all that I do.
- Those who volunteer at EDGE - have responsibility for the formation of younger children.
- Do young people and their families actually participate in Church life?
- Families / young people – we have school masses, but it stops there. Do we need more family masses in Church?
- What roles are there for young people?
- Some young people may feel they are being talked at rather than to -may be a barrier?
- Kenelm Trust have a positive role to play in youth activity
- Consider the 'home' church
- What can we learn from other churches e.g. the evangelical church have lots of young people? What are they doing ? The evangelical service lacks structure but young people seem to love it , including the social side
- Focus on small groups within the parish to build up/feed into the wider parish.

c. How much responsibility do you have as an individual?

- I feel I could do more but don't have the permission to fulfil my full potential.
- We each need to be co-responsible
- Responsibility isn't something that is spoken or thought about. Assumed that our role is 'taking part' instead of leading or having responsibility.
- We all have a responsibility to support one another. It goes beyond what we do at Mass.
- On the issue of taking responsibility, there is a general feeling that lay people often leave things to the priest. We don't think about sorting flowers, readers etc - expect it to be sorted out by someone else.
- As an individual, we are all responsible...like a magical forcefield or a net of love catching and keeping fish... if the net is broken or has a tear because I am not there, others can support and bear the weight of fish , mend the tear to an extent, but it isn't as effective, perfect as it should be e.g., losing fish through the hole. The vibrancy and magic are reduced by less flexibility and capacity.
- Outside of the Church, there is a feeling that have responsibility for evangelisation. This is about setting an example of the Christian life through the way we live.
- Try to identify your own talents/skills and see how these can be used.
- Lead by example. Being a role model
- Using opportunities to evangelise.
- By coming out as a Catholic, which gets easier as you get older
- It's our responsibility to open up to others and face up to issues / questions. Standing up for your faith.
- I've had a few instances of rejection over the years, of people being ungrateful and overprotective , believing that the Church is their belonging only. I don't feel supported by the church in my hour of need or in my faith, it no longer feels like a nice community. I have distanced myself a lot from participation

- Make a financial contribution

10. How can we better enable full participation and co-responsibility in the life of the Church at the parish and diocesan levels?

- There is a shortage of priests, so we need full participation of the people. We should be able to enable our clergy to be relieved of their extracurricular activities to develop and enhance our spiritual growth and welfare
- Better communication – all ways. What is the communication pathway? Is there a way to improve the access to this information?
- By contributing to the synodal pathway.
- By supporting the Diocesan Vision through the MAC (Multi Academy Company)
- Encouraging participation through school, church, and parents.
- It has been difficult over the last two years. The parish is up to date with technology, and I think this should be encouraged for greater participation.
- As much online church activity as possible.
- Full participation of children through restarting Diocesan youth ministry events and camps. Important to foster participation from an early age. Diocese should do more to encourage young families.
- Children & young people may feel the church and Mass is not for them. Some other denominations actively seek to include as many young people as possible.
- Not everyone knows or wants to access the diocesan website and information
- Openness – parish booklet illustrating groups that are active etc (if you don't tell people what you are doing how can they get involved? But have regard to security of personal info in this digital age (e.g. bulletin goes live on internet)
- Parish Family Group Movement as a means of developing community life of parish
- Question of cliques and enabling people to enter into these (permeable boundaries)
- Sharing the roles – some people are doing a lot – we know it's hard to find volunteers though. Revolving roles – making more roles available? Don't discourage people who want to help – find roles for them . Invitation to be involved. Keep us informed on ways of participating and who to approach both within the parish and other events around the country/world
- If we are joyful, attractive people in our faith practice, we will draw others. If we are happy, it radiates and attracts those people outside.
- Encourage/maintain full participation of the youth. Without them there will be no Church. Would suggest that at least 50% of Pastoral Council is made up of youth and 50% of the PC is female. Members of PC should be seen to participate in all aspects of Church life especially at Masses. members need to be people who are very easily approachable.
- It could be useful to survey as many as possible of the 60% of Cradle Catholics in England and Wales as to why they do not attend Church. If they are ignored the future seems very grim.
- Animate it more, bring in a sense of joy and not just of duty.

- Catechesis of parents so that it begins and ends at home. Sacramental preparation used to be done in the home and parents were left with activities to do with their children
- Support and encouragement, for parents and couples so they can continue to grow and walk in the path of God .Share experiences of how this can be best achieved
- Regular participation meetings/online questions. A more open approach.
- Better collecting of data, permissions etc for parish online emailing, texting, WhatsApp of parish activities, and bulletins as not everyone sees / remembers to visit our website... many have no internet, cannot see to read well, have limited mobility or no transport for much of what is going on.
- Participation led from parish up instead of diocesan down.
- This current Walking Together seems a useful initiative. But, a lot of questions are being asked with no actual problem being stated. The methodology seems confused. An added confusion is the Archdiocese of Birmingham coming out with a separate survey 'Unfolding God's Plan.' At Parish level all these questions will simply make folk fed up and not bother to respond to anything.
- Create a new culture...discard the being told for asking and listening.
- Maintain good communication between the church, parishioners, and the Catholic schools.
- Working with parents in Catholic schools to encourage them to attend church
- Attending and supporting social events
- Developing a parish lift-giving scheme
- To be more welcoming -need a friendlier atmosphere. Set up group to discuss ways of making this happen?
- Revisiting possibilities for access for the disabled
- Improving the Church acoustics and providing a loop system.
- Having women deacons
- Allowing married ex-priests to exercise their ministry again

Mission: Social Outreach. Evangelisation. Our Dream.

11. If you could describe your local parish fulfilling your dreams and concerns for the whole world and the local community, what would it be like?

Parish Life

- Parish to be lively, energetic, and well catechised.
- It would be an active, caring and welcoming Parish powered by the youth, confident to spread the message of Jesus and always work in line with the Gospel with a strong influence from women.
- It does very well already...but more can always be done.
- All welcome ie being an invitational parish. Articulating in the prayers an awareness and acceptance (ie not denying) of the wide variety of circumstances of our lives
- Well attended services.

- A forgiving community – non-judgmental
- A vibrant and diverse community of individuals who are willing to learn from each other.
- Where everyone's voice is heard
- Humble
- There for the weak
- Dialogue between the laity and the priest as a more natural process -get to know our priests better
- Priests working with the laity- part of a priest's training.
- A sense of family within the church
- Has all ages including beautiful , reverent, gentle unrecognised student presence and contribution.
- Resumption of pre-Covid outreach activities such as opening church to the community with candlelight.
- Parish fellowship aside from the Sunday Masses.
- More involvement of young people and young families in the life of the church
- Teenagers and children are next generation. Importance of fostering faith for them.
- For students, a strong fellowship. More student vibe. Not saying bring Pentecostal style into Church, however If you want to attract the youth it needs to be more centred around them.
- Youth groups more integrated into life of the parishes across the Diocese.
- Ways to encourage more young people and children to receive the sacraments regularly.
- Church events to celebrate birthdays, end of year events etc. As a child, something we looked forward to. Put on performances etc.
- Start by offering a helping hand to one another.
- Welcoming people who are different without fear of being judged. Teaching about our differences and how to embrace them
- Let's not forget the seniors in the parish with this concern for younger people!
- Singing together
- Social events.
- A parish register of skills which is put to use.
- Offer counselling services?
- Should recycle as much as possible e.g. after community gatherings and bear this in mind when planning e.g. don't use plastic cups and plates and cutlery etc where possible (not just to save work) or paper ones if reusable crockery and cutlery is available. Consider planning a route for left over food beforehand so that it can be used asap not thrown away.)
- For SSPP, when the road opens up, dream would be to have volunteers to open up each day with teas and coffees upstairs so that we can get back on the map.
- I'm not sure.

Social Outreach

- Helping the community in time of need
- Continuing to care for the poor and homeless in Wolverhampton area.
- Representation in local community groups such as Local Authority, Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary etc.
- Representation/support for national and international groups (Church Action on Poverty, CAFOD, Pax Christi, etc. etc)
- Opening buildings for community activities
- Establishing /strengthening links with inner city churches (and mosque?) to maximise use of buildings for community purposes
- Credit unions & food banks
- Sacrificial love of our neighbour – not just giving of our surplus
- Structures to facilitate all this – not dependent on good will of individuals
- Community that is open and welcoming, where its members do not wait for others to take action
- The Church could offer training for volunteering (eg for prison visitors)
- We should do together what we can and take opportunities to work together– ecumenism (e.g. an ecumenical prison visiting rota)
- The parish could be more involved in local services, looking outward to wider social needs
- The parish could be greener – energy efficient, not reliant on fossil fuels
- Use the church for more outreach (such as food collection), doing things that can be done better as a group for the environment (eg recycling)
- Support charities for the lonely
- More progression into practical integration and support for the poor of the city and newly arrived immigrants and refugees.
- The Church needs to be more open to initiatives and less concerned about “mess”.
- Need to be more committed to giving time.
- Homeless kitchen - once per month even. Parishioners would join together to cook / serve using parish facilities.
- More community projects addressing the needs of elderly ,young homeless, bereaved, mental health
- CathSoc to do more outreach in the student environment. In school in Africa, events to help with people who have difficulties in studies - organising study groups. Helping them to do stuff. Makes them feel at home. During exam period, priests organise exam success Masses.
- More cross generational work.ie Befriending club for older parishioners to knit hats for homeless and children in Afghanistan.

Liturgy/Catechesis/Evangelisation

- A program for those going through conversion to teaching and providing all sacraments.
- A thriving male discernment programme for religious life

- More substantial program for female discernment.
- Regular retreats/quiet days
- Lively Sunday - more charismatic and cheerful.
- Liturgy is inspiring and engaging whilst retaining an appropriate level of solemnity. They invite the younger generation to take the lead in reaching out to the people they believe to be most vulnerable.
- Networking to forge connections with group retreats and talks and prayer both here in the UK and in the wider world for a better understanding of how our environment affects our faith
- Follow-up of all foreign temporary parishioners e.g., students, repatriated, visiting clergy, those moved to other UK locations, so we increase our International and national parish... but without drama or publicity. A good example is the current communication with David and Toby from seminaries.

Wider World

- Political – campaigning on local issues that matter locally as well as on national and international issues such as climate change
- Recognising that we are empowered to do good & looking for opportunities to promote justice and peace
- A changed Church to reflect the way society has changed in the last 50 years
- Pope Francis really trying to speak out on moral issues, he is a good advocate.

12. How does your experience of parish life allow you to reflect, develop, act on, and speak about your faith?

Positives

- Walking Together group is a perfect example of coming together to develop.
- Being in Church at the Mass helps you grow, reflect, think more deeply, develop knowledge of your faith.
- Parish can be extended family
- Fundraising and social activities, baptisms, wedding, funerals
- Parish life as an inspiration to development & affirmation of faith
- Choice to belong , despite negatives
- Need to remind ourselves of the positives – we are the Church
- Experience of faith in non-church context – CAFOD, I/F, lay organisations such as LCSB
- Gives me a safe space to talk about my faith.
- We respect each other
- I have witnessed some of the action that has been taken to improve the lives of others. This makes me more confident about my faith.
- To serve community, meet other Catholics etc.
- Parish is an enabler of action, the channel through which I participate with the Church.

- Parish has inspired me to develop faith at home. Radio Maria, Bible in a Year podcast.
- Trip to Lourdes was a big thing
- There are plenty of online resources for reflection, planning action within the well formulated parish and diocese and even up to and including papal activities - excellently provided.
- There are formal platforms of committees, meetings etc. ... and more informal via contacting one to one conversations with the priests and nuns to speak about faith.
- The online masses help accessing specific sermons and adoration at any time, any place.... obviously, this is one way with no chance to speak about one's faith relating or ask questions:- The same could be said for leaflets given out and bulletin.
- Helps you to explain to others what you do and why you do it.
- You feel you have support from the parish
- Gives you confidence with other who may challenge you
- It's up to individuals what they get out of the experience
- It has and does help enormously. Has strengthened my faith and helped me to understand meaningful prayer and forgiveness. It is a joy to speak about this to Catholics, but others often come back with questions difficult to answer.
- Generally, I feel that the Parish tends to be turned in on itself (incurvatus in se), a bit like some sort of Religious Social Club, and could do much better in its efforts to evangelise.
- CWL are helping increase our awareness of poverty.
- Lenten study groups – we need more like this. Need to encourage more scripture groups to reflect
- Speaking – requires confidence, and openness to recognise opportunities of when to speak, and when not to
- Parish life sustains these efforts.
- Need a welcome pack, more individual welcoming, coffee after Mass
- Children's Mass packs, more support for those with children
- The children's liturgy is a good means of engagement.
- There are some things on offer within the parish to support our faith journey but we don't all participate
- Small sharing and prayer groups
- Homily very informative and helpful
- Scripture and preaching (at Mass) allow me to reflect
- Appeals from pulpit lead to action eg volunteering at homeless shelter – these appeals make explicit the need, and increase the invitational aspect
- I expect there to be opportunities for action in the parish
- Now we are 3 in one parish will there be times when we can share our ideas?

Less positive

- Not much, there isn't much continuity for those who are younger or with families.
- It is not greatly discussed or promoted.
- Support with discussing the faith or what it means in our lives is greatly lacking. It would be a great idea to have chat groups or local retreats to explore this more.

- Sharing my faith-journey with fellow Catholics/Christian eg within a small group, I find easier than sharing with people of seemingly little Faith or none. In the latter case, I am reluctant or fearful & feel I lack “the tools” needed.
- Currently I feel this is an area for improvement for me.
- I don't feel that I can develop or act or speak confidently about my faith.
- Too many parishes are spiritual deserts
- Parish life not always best place for inspiration/knowledge
- Maybe we need more study groups to learn more e.g. the Old Testament
- The church is open at varying times from often to very limited for personal prayer.... the church-sitting facility previously was very poorly to negligibly attended?
- Need a variety of liturgies – importance of liturgy of the word
- Need for more emphasis on providing good quality of sermons
- Need for more adult education – house groups, Bible study groups; few opportunities for these – other denominations do this better
- Activities are mostly aimed at the retired.
- Difficulty in answering awkward questions from non-Catholics – enforced celibacy of priests; sex abuse – need for more adult education
- Not sure there is enough to aid faith development beyond what we can accomplish alone as individuals
- RCIA/Alpha – but what comes next?
- Difficult to reflect if one is too busy doing
- Do we take enough time to reflect outside church?
- Can't always take in the Mass because of other duties.
- Need more volunteers.
- More widespread commitment would be good, not just the same old crowd.
- Need more recruitment – more open to outsiders
- Singing and organ has to support the theme of the Mass and enable participation.

13. In what ways is the call of Jesus to serve the poor a priority in the Church and especially in our parishes?

- In the global Church it is a priority. The church has a mission globally to serve the poor.
- The Beatitudes show us the way
- Parish does a lot of charitable work. Action through Good Shepherd Ministry, Cafod, Mission charities and donations to food banks and clothes etc for Life shop.
- Pope Francis is a powerful advocate for the poor both in word and deed e.g. cutting back on Papal trappings; speaking out for the poor.
- The pandemic has created greater need both locally and globally
- We do a great job on the food collection because there is a group of people who drive it

- This is, and should always be, the priority as it was for Jesus himself. Preferential treatment of the poor needs to be highlighted frequently. Inviting more outside speakers in to share their stories with parishioners would be beneficial.
- Generally, a feeling that the Church does serve the poor and we put our faith into action.
- It's not a political issue it's a moral / ethical issue so the Church could speak out more.
- The Church is seen by many as being globally wealthy and probably more is expected of it in helping the poor, not just with money. This may well be a matter of appropriate publicity as to what it actually does in this respect.
- There is a risk that funds in charities didn't reach the right people.
- More Catholic MPs are speaking out on the poor.
- We help the poorest in Sudan with our breakfast club charity
- Could we do more to supporting ex-prisoners?
- We need to have a data base of skills that we can draw on to help people in the parish. Maybe a way to start it would be to advertise a certain job e.g. weeding the garden ask for a volunteer and that would be the start of the data base. This could be a way to reconnect after the pandemic
- Maybe we need a team of people to help the Parish Priest in practical outreach?
- Finding a way to tell people what is already set up i.e. Red Mission Boxes, money collected at groups and donated i.e. Prayer Group
- I only have experience of one Parish, but it seems to be generous in its giving and numerous fund-raising activities. In terms of actions, other than writing cheques, it is noticeable that only a very small percentage (and usually the same ones) are actually proactive in practical fundraising. It would be nice if everyone could be involved, even in a small way.
- The Pastoral Council could probably be the first port of call in motivating the Parish more in serving the poor
- The Church is well-known for helping the poor, but charity begins at home and we should be doing more to identify the poor in our local community. The poor in our neighbourhood should be a priority.
- Wolverhampton almost an epicentre for the poor, marginalized, immigrants, asylum seekers, economic migrants, disabled and those displaced by family breakdown and abuse. Wolverhampton is a rundown, under resourced city compared to most before one even looks at the issue of its population's poverty.. Jesus would feel very at home here standing in Queen's Square!
- In the early Church, the Church was in the home and resources were pooled. Should we go back to this approach? In Nigeria, small groups are autonomous in small fund-raising efforts to enable them to help the needy with instant resources.
- Is helping the poor really a priority in the Parish? Does not appear to be a priority!
- In our parish we don't know who does what – issues with visibility. A lot of lip service. No concerted effort – not focussed .Can be a priority when a special need is called for i.e. SVP appeals. Need to find a way to inform people about what we are already supporting.

- Needs to be given priority by leadership of the church (parish and above).
- We have stickers with the national domestic violence helpline on the back of the toilet doors in the hall
- We could do more
- Not experienced it greatly

14. What more can we do in our parishes to address the needs of the poor (homeless, lonely, the bereaved, prisoner, the sick, people with addictions, refugees, people with disabilities, those suffer in developing countries)?

- Lots of homeless people in Wolverhampton. Could do more for them, speak and accompany. More awareness between us of the needs of others.
- Some of us did Mental Health First Aid course, could find a way of using this in the parish.
- Drop-in sessions for people who need to talk.
- CathSoc to look into taking up outreach/social issue.
- Possible outreach to students by exploring alternative location for meetings - moving back into Uni building.
- Develop community parish projects that address identified needs so that Christian support may be given in a positive helpful non-judgemental way .
- Be proactive...and try! Inspire others to join church projects and the Catholic faith.
- Skill set audit.
- I would like to suggest a link on the Parish website named something like 'Claiming Benefits'. The link would lead to the web addresses for 'Citizens Advice' and the 3 Benefit Calculators on 'Gov.uk'. This would help people access information about all the benefits they may be entitled to and gain practical help. A small paragraph in the weekly notice sheet could provide details of local Citizens Advice addresses and phone numbers for those without internet access.
- Discuss or create links through parishioners with connections to a developing or poorer country to see how this can be achieved. Missionary work could be supported. Organise small group visits to the places mentioned to see how we may best help them. Organise fund raising events. Small gesture like parcels, cards, penfriends, phone/video calls, home visits
- I only have experience of one Parish and it does to a large extent attempt successfully to address the needs of the poor. Furthermore, each Parishioner probably has their own particular need that they may wish to address. Despite this there seems to be some confusion in strategy. Quite a lot of activities going on to address the needs of the poor together with numerous Second Collections. There seems to be need for a clearer strategy. This could well be initiated by the Pastoral Council. Establishing priorities requires strategic planning with a clear focus for future action.
- In our church, we could help unemployed people find work by buying computers and inviting people to use them (Universal credit etc), in our meeting-room, with help from parishioners.
- What about tithing? Other churches do it.

- More emphasis on Catholic Social teaching in the homilies
- How do we balance the vast riches and treasures of the Church as in the Vatican and elsewhere with the needs of the poor – maintaining a rich cultural, spiritual and historical heritage whilst releasing more funds for the poor?
- That doesn't appear to exist at most levels at present.
- It may be helpful to regularly 'substitute' the Homily with a talk from someone with knowledge of a specific charity. This person would need to be a practised speaker using a microphone and speakers that work properly. (If the congregation can't hear what is being said at any time in the Church then there is not much point in being there!)
- The 'poor' themselves need to be encouraged to attend Mass etc.. in person whether they be Catholic or not. And, of course, physical access to the building needs to be adequate for all.
- Our parish does so much already within the boundaries of what can be done... needs more pairs of hands and possibly trained advocates appropriate and committed to the varying needs that present to the city;- networking with other parishes and agencies.
- I think every UK bishop, Cardinal, Archbishop, all Vatican staff whatever their role, should be made to work on a rota (allocated, not chosen, day and night time) over this year, hands on, for one whole week, in workers clothing, incognito, doing the everyday tasks that volunteers do within our churches and our charity run activities for an 8 hour day x 6... then see what happens.
- We have an amazing UK and Foreign student and multicultural presence in this parish. We are simply stunning!
- The parish does already so much and could improve further. It is already acting as a prism, radiating lovely rainbow lights, a light lit on a mountaintop for those returning to their various parts of the world - online resources, or regular texts, emails, as a network for support, for village and far away communities to use as a resource or for praying and adoration together in different languages by hiring an interpreter or required language speaking person for online occasional masses and sermons YouTube reflections, prayers, musical and even hymn singing 15-30 minute slots on our website in their own language
- Many countries do not allow free worship, or the IT is poor or not enough Roman Catholics to be able to generate the same brilliant level of sermonizing and reflective practice as from this parish.
- The website (with the intervention of Blessed Carlo Acutis) could offer advice as a resource for those divorced, lapsed for whatever reason, considering returning to the faith by glancing at our impartial advice and modern day more compassionate views with ways to return or reconnect with a local parish or priest or just a chance to "chat" online or ring someone e.g. priest or nun or qualified advocate.
- If we are talking about "spiritual poverty" using Sister Mother Teresa of Calcutta's own words... there are many;-lapsed Catholics; many searching who may otherwise be interested in the faith; agnostics and atheists - in the parish and city
- We need to establish clear priorities at the appropriate level as required by the principle of subsidiarity (what can be done at the lower level should be done at that

level) - individual → church sub-groups → church groups → Parish Pastoral Council → Deanery → Diocesan Pastoral Council → National Pastoral Council etc.

- You get multiple timing wasting meetings at every church level with similar/identical suggestions but not always the enthusiasm or vision or reality check of what is achievable unless you inspire and provide resources, new co-workers and new forward-thinking plans led by the Holy Spirit.
- Regular pertinent information about needs and the causes of need
- Who in our parish is “poor” and why don’t we ask them what we can do?
- Who in Wolverhampton can support us? (and how can we support them?) Not duplicating effort or reinventing the wheel. Better networking.
- How do current groups operate and how do we help them? Eg Good Shepherd
- Don’t assume people know what is happening and what can be done.
- Schools are on the frontline of younger families – how can we help them?
- And what about isolated elderly people?
- Education is a big part of this question
- Parish could look at a continuous giving process and widening out to other groups
- Bereavement contacts
- Don’t wait for others to take the initiative.
- We need to find ways to contact/identify the people in need
- More volunteers mean less onerous for individuals
- I recently attended an event where a man who had been saved by the work of the Good Shepherd spoke about his journey. It was hugely inspiring.
- Inviting these communities into parish life by means of clubs e.g. I recently read about how some churches were supporting elderly parishioners at risk of falls by doing stretching, strength conditioning classes - brilliant!
- Pray more, give more.
- The needs of numbers of people needing help are numerous but, even if individuals cannot respond to every call on their time/money, awareness of the plight of the suffering can be raised and prayer offered to implore God’s help for them.
- The Church has always been the hands and feet that have turned to their neighbours when they have been in need, and this action is paramount in the way we will always be able to help and must continue to do so. None of us are beyond help and in turning to one another we raise each other up.
- Have a ‘list’ of agencies & contacts who can help in different circumstances available in the parish so that anyone can help someone in some way eg difficult to help in specific cases like addiction if you don’t have the skills
- Should be coming from the diocese – maybe enough staff to help with maintain the links to agencies?
- Affects all parishes and could be helpful to look at ecumenically – some denominations do this better than others
- Should do more for disabilities eg marked disabled spaces at front or at back near fire doors and ensure these are open for services .
- Are our churches fully accessible for a range of abilities eg are there physical barriers preventing readers who may be wheelchair bound?
- Address the needs of those with specific disabilities ie hearing, mobility etc

- Possibility of a screen with hymns, responses etc (in addition to the readings on paper)
- Defibrillator

Dreams

(If you were asked to 'dare to dream' about how you see the Church in the Third Millennium, what might your dream be?)

- I would like our Parish to be a 'beacon of light', buzzing with joy and activity, attracting passers-by into wondering 'What is it that these Christians have got?'
- A more widespread movement of lay roles in the church, following the Pope's opening up of the roles of lector, acolyte and catechists to lay people, including women. This will help take the Church out to the people of the community, with the priest's focus on the sacraments. Catholics often rely too heavily on clergy to organise things whereas we can do it for ourselves.
- Church as a place where everybody wants to come, so welcoming, such a lot of love in it.
- Dream would be to open up more to younger generations, making it more exciting and welcome. If they don't see themselves being celebrated, then they will not engage.
- A Church that is not just a refrigerator, holding a small core inside that's doesn't change , all the time becoming less and less relevant.
- A Church that listens to the hopes and dreams of the people of God and acts on them
- Dream of embedding responsibilities into each stage of a young person's life - ownership of faith.
- That each parish priest is approachable and less stern or serious . We love it when priests sing and are personable in Mass, thank you to the wonderful priests that do this each week
- This is God's Church, given to us by God, we pray that God will guide his church to where he wants her to be, to be the Church for the whole people of God.