

Third Gathering: Mission

LEADER

*Welcome participants back to the third session. Ensure any new members are particularly acknowledged and made to feel a part of the group. Invite everyone to share something about how their perspectives or awareness of others may have changed since the process began. Explain that in this session the focus is on **Mission**.*

(5-10 minutes)

ADSUMUS PRAYER

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;

Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.

**Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.**

**Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together
to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.**

**All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.**

Invite someone to proclaim the following passage of scripture

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

2:42-47

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Reflect for a moment in silence

Questions for Discussion

VIII. Authority and Participation

How might we develop teamwork and a sense of co-responsibility in our local Church?

How is authority exercised in our communities? How do we preach the Gospel? How does our parish community bring people closer to Christ? What groups or courses are available, what initiatives are in place? What are the fruits of this collaboration, and what are the obstacles and challenges?

(15 minutes)

We develop teamwork through volunteering for various groups in our Parish that organise Parish activities. We try to develop a family community spirit and thus encourage people closer to Christ as part of his family. Groups include Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, Church cleaners, finance group, Parish Social Centre Management Committee, Parish Social Group, RCIA. Parish groups have been presented to the Parish where the role and need for volunteers was discussed. This last happened before the Covid 19 Pandemic so we plan to do this again later in 2022 although the information (slides) has remained on the Parish noticeboard. Perhaps potential to consider other groups such as Liturgy and Youth but as always, the main challenge is finding people to get involved and run these as the culture of the Church and life has changed. People have busy work lives and other things to do on a Sunday. Any courses that have been run such as for Confirmation have been facilitated by the same people.

Discussion moved on to the challenge of reaching out to people, particularly online. The Parish has a website but not all parishioners are necessarily able to access this. The Church has a small entrance with noticeboards that should be reviewed and regularly refreshed. The priest does brief Parish notices at end of mass when required. The weekly newsletter is another way the Parish communicates both in paper and electronic form; we have a mixed view on how much this is read. Suggestions to 'liven up' its design to be considered through the Parish Pastoral Council. Initiative discussed of using a 'Whats App' group to share information although not all are comfortable with this technology.

Based on your discussions do you agree/disagree with this statement?

'We have some responsibilities in our parish' (Please tick one box)

Very Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

IX. Discerning and Deciding

How might we improve the process of decision-making in our local Church, so that we truly listen and recognise that the Holy Spirit can speak through each one of us?

How do we discern together the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading us? Is there freedom to exercise our particular gifts in the Church, and participate in this common work of discernment and decision making? Is our parish community accountable and transparent in decision making? What can help improve this? Do we support the Bishops and the Priests in arriving at their decisions?

(15 minutes)

Discernment of direction and decision making through collaborative discussion with the Parish Priest at regular Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) meetings. Although PPC minutes are placed in folder at back of church and advertised in newsletter, there was a feeling that not many Parishioners know of role, and who is in, PPC and how issues might be brought to its attention. Suggestion to place note in newsletter of PPC names and summary of meeting (which already happens to some extent). Consider placing PPC minutes on Parish website to increase visibility and transparency of decisions. Consideration also to be given to an annual Parish meeting as mentioned in previous response to give opportunity for "AGM" type discussion. Also discussed idea of Parish Group to maintain momentum on some of ideas raised at local level after these Synod discussions, an initiative to be considered by the PPC. There was a strong desire to keep things moving after this 'final' discussion, perhaps every 2 to 3 months.

Group felt that we had opportunity to exercise our gifts of which there are many in the Parish and broader community. It was also understood that initiatives were being considered at Diocese level to regenerate Deanery Pastoral Councils to assist the Bishop in arriving at decisions.

Based on your discussions do you agree/disagree with this statement?

'Our local parish makes decisions after listening and prayer.'

(Please tick one box)

Very Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>		

X. Staying together on the same path

What training, habits and awareness are necessary with the local Church if we are to become better at listening to one another and sharing our insights with one another?

What additional formation do we need to be missionary disciples? Is the local community effective in catechising and passing on the faith? What tools are necessary for the Church to be truly synodal, listening and journeying together? How do we continue the listening and dialogue beyond this process so that the Church has a “lived synodality” as the Holy Father asks?

(15 minutes)

Closely related to last discussion point was a strong desire for a Parish forum at local level to listen to each other after these synod discussions finish. “Actions speak louder than words” while everyone agreed the importance of listening and continuing to do so.

Once more passing on the faith in the local community centred on leading by example and loving our neighbours. This led to a discussion of helping the poor locally by having a food bank that continued into a journeying together opportunity with a local church that already has a food bank in place. We can show our love and care by supporting this through donations and people’s time.

To continue its “lived synodality” it is essential that the Church listens and acts at all levels, (there is still some residue disappointment at the handling of child abuse issue). Feedback to local Parishes is essential from the Diocese level showing what has been sent onwards towards the Bishops in Rome otherwise people will feel disengaged from the whole process. The best tool for listening and journeying together is for the Church to be seen out in the community at all levels – e.g. annual Bishop visits to Churches or group of Churches with chance to discuss matters.

Based on your discussions do you agree/disagree with this statement?

‘We are willing to listen to people even if they have different opinions to us’
(Please tick one box)

Very Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

LEADER

Thank everyone very much for all their contributions and invite them to a short time of intercessory prayer. You may use the following wording: 'We have a few moments to bring everything we have discussed to God. We give thanks for all the good that our parish has done and continues to do, but we also pray for the strength and guidance that will allow us to grow as a community. I invite you now, either out loud or in the silence of your heart, to offer a prayer for any of the topics that we have discussed today.' Allow people to offer prayers

We gather all our prayers, both spoken and unspoken, and offer them to God our Father, using the words our saviour gave us...

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name..... Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen

END