



## ARCHDIOCESE OF CARDIFF

SYNOD 2021-23

### PARISH REPORT

The Parish of St Brigids and St Pauls's in Llanishen and Cyncoed, in the City of Cardiff.

To be submitted no later than **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

## **Introduction**

Parishes are invited to submit a Report based on discussions. The maximum size for the Report is 10 pages. You may be able to record your views in much less space.

Please use the structure suggested within this Template so that the Diocesan Synod Team [ DST] are best-able to synthesise Reports from across the archdiocese.

This Report will contribute to the Diocesan Report that + George Stack will submit on behalf of the diocese.

**Introduction:** In this part of the Report, you might wish to record some of the special characteristics of your parish – urban or rural, special features [ hospital/ school /prison /care homes in your parish boundaries]. Some reflection on the demographics of your parish. You might want to include details of any special ministry /service/project.

**Methodology:** In this section give a brief overview of the different ways in which you have engaged with parish members and those beyond the worshipping community. It might be useful to present this as a Timeline with a short comment for each month between the Training of Parish Representatives to the finalising of the Parish Report. Some reflection on the numbers of people attending / contributing to discussion would be helpful. Comments on special circumstances [ e.g., telephone conversations with the housebound/ meetings with distinct groups / outreach activity] would be valuable.

**Key Issues Raised:** This will be the main part of your Report. You will be presenting a summary of the issues raised and the points made in your discussions/ interviews / submissions. We will be reporting across the three headings of Communion, Participation and Mission and suggest you might do likewise. Some issues may be recorded under more than one heading. There may be material to record that does not fit into these categories and space is provided for that. You may choose to summarise these in bullet points or in a few paragraphs. It is important that your summary reflects not only the responses of the majority but also some minority views.

**Example:** “**Most respondents were of the opinion that XYZ. A minority, however, felt that ABC was more important “**

**Sign Off:** The Report needs to be signed by the Parish Priest and the lead Parish Representative. Any Report submitted should have been made available to the community parish as a draft and should be formally considered by the Parish Advisory Council prior to submission.

## **Introduction – Special Characteristics of the Parish**

This report is the product of a series of meetings carried out over a period of four Months and is a huge collaboration of Parishioners of the 3 Churches in North Cardiff.

I have not included comments from the Catholic Schools and Catholic College in the North Cardiff area as I have been informed these were being dealt with and covered separately.

I should point out a separate report has been produced by the Christ the King Church Synod representative, some of the gathered information will be included in each report.

I have put this report together in a true and honest fashion, trying to accurately reflect everyone who has contributed.

## Methodology

<u>Nov 2021</u>  16 <sup>th</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<u>Action</u>  Parish Training	<u>Comment</u> Following an exchange of Emails I was appointed Synod Representative.
<u>Dec 2021</u> 5 <sup>th</sup>  14 <sup>th</sup>	<u>Action</u> Introduction of Synod Representatives at all Sunday Masses Synod Reps. meeting.	<u>Comment</u> A number of parishioners were very interested and appeared keen to be able to share their views. 6 attendees Extensive discussion and decisions made on how and when we would facilitate the Parishioners meetings
<u>Jan 2022</u> 10 <sup>th</sup> 12 <sup>th</sup> 24 <sup>th</sup> 25 <sup>th</sup> 31 <sup>st</sup>	<u>Action</u> Bereavement support Group Synod Reps. Meeting Readers /Eucharistic Ministers Parish Training Parish Council Meeting	<u>Comment</u> 50 attendees 7 attendees 30 attendees Another Synod Rep. passed on the comments gained
<u>Feb 2022</u> 7 <sup>th</sup> 9 <sup>th</sup> 14 <sup>th</sup> 21 <sup>st</sup> 28 <sup>th</sup>	<u>Action</u> Bereavement, Proclaim, Liturgy Synod Reps. Meeting Catechist Leaders Open meetings X 2 Bereavement, Proclaim, Liturgy	<u>Comment</u> 30 attendees 6 attendees 15 attendees Drop in Clinic type meeting 15 attendees in afternoon, just 1 in the evening
<u>March 2022</u>	<u>Action</u> Production of Report	<u>Comment</u>
<u>April 2022</u> 5 <sup>th</sup>	<u>Action</u> Synod Reps. meeting	<u>Comment</u>

During the Consultation period – since becoming a Synodal representative I have made myself available after each of the Sunday Masses I attended so that Parishioners could pass on verbally anything they felt they would like to.

The other Parish reps. did likewise.

This was an invaluable source of information gathering and in the main gathering comments from those who did not attend any of the arranged Synod meetings.

I was very aware that most people would comment if they felt strongly enough and these comments would be mostly negative.

This was most definitely the case, although I have received positive comments too.

A display, advertising the Synod has been produced and has been on view in each of the three churches, throughout the process of gathering information. During the months of February and March a comments box was available for anyone to place anonymous comments should they wish.

This was an attempt to encourage those who would not attend a meeting to comment and I can confirm this was a success.

I have, along with the other Parish reps. where possible tried to gather the opinions of people who do not attend Church, these opinions have been limited.

## **Communion- How does our Church function in our local area?**

This was a subject strongly and extensively discussed.

Attendees at a number of meetings thought we could do more, although the Food Market which was set up during the lockdown period to help those in need and the Bereavement Support Group were highly commended for the good work they carry out.

Once again it was thought that so much more is needed for the Children, Youth and Young people of our Parish in particular but also in the diocese.

Lots of suggestions were made

- Employed, Diocesan Youth worker
- Family Mass every half term to particularly feature the Children who do not attend a Catholic School
- More upbeat hymns at these services
- Clergy to reassure Parents of Young Children they are welcome
- Volunteer hours to be recognized as part of a recognized scheme (Welsh Baccalaureate or Duke of Edinburgh)

Parents of young families would like more – to feel welcome and not an inconvenience, this could be achieved with Family services with children taking part where ever possible.

Child participation at all times where practical – this once again seems only possible where there are a number of volunteers to supervise.

## **Participation – How do we work with others in supporting our local area?**

There are a huge number of people who work with others to support their Church, Parishioners, Neighbors and Friends.

There are also a number of people who attend Mass on Sunday and appear to do no more. It was thought these people need to be encouraged to participate in some way to enable us to grow as a Church community.

All agreed we should be trying to build a community encouraging each other, leading by example to grow.

Mass online – generally thought a good thing for those who cannot attend, for instance the sick and housebound, however a minority thought this discouraged people attending.

Communication needs to be improved and this is a weakness within the Parish.

Communication also needs to be improved within the diocese

We need to do more for our Young People – these are our future.

The newsletter has to be improved along with the Website, these are vital to advertise and inform. Especially so in these times of technology.

Extensively discussed, the subject of Leadership was brought up at every level. This was a topic brought up at every meeting by almost every attendee, regardless of the topic being discussed.

Most were of the opinion that Leadership comes from the top and most would like to see and feel the presence of the Archbishop. Some Parishioners have never had the opportunity to meet him.

The job description of the Arch Bishop was talked about – some felt this should be publicized as this would help with their understanding of his role and in turn would help with the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all Priests.

All aspects of Church life from the top, down need to be transparent.

It was most definitely felt by most that generally though not all Clergy can be very inward looking and appear disconnected.

Young Mums would like Clergy to be more hands on – proactive not reactive.

**Mission: How do we take the Gospel message out from our parish community?**

The general feeling of the Mission of the Church was to provide comfort and understanding while building a community and to spread the Word of God.

At present it was felt the Church is not engaged enough in the wider community and there should be more organized faith liaison.

All attendees at the meetings I took part in thought “we have a way to go”. This opinion had been highlighted throughout the Period of Covid.

It was felt, we failed during Covid – Leadership and outreach were particularly lacking apart from the Liturgy Group and Food Market which most definitely succeeded and continues to do so.

Almost all thought the Clergy and we as Parishioners should have done so much more to stay in contact with each other. This may have helped to retain some of the Parishioners now lapsed. Also zoom meetings, telephone calls, Whats app groups, visits in person or remotely, to the sick /housebound/elderly would have helped.

This seems to be the overriding opinion, however when delving into the reason for this opinion, most found positives as well as negatives.

On line prayer groups seemed to be a success.

It seems there is lack of understanding, training and leadership of our Mission, within the Parish and Diocese. This was a particular concern of those leading groups, for example

Children’s Liturgy, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Communion and Confirmation

It was suggested all Parishes should be following a designated program with training given for those delivering. This would then provide consistency and would be helpful if moves to different parishes took place for both Clergy and Laity.

It was agreed by almost all attendees that Canon Matthew has a particular talent when preaching from the Altar, interpreting the Gospel and relating this to day to day life in the Homily. Some said “he seems to speak to me “A suggestion was made that this talent be shared with other Clergy in the diocese. A type of Master Class was suggested.



This sharing of knowledge can only be a good thing. Likewise other Clergy must have knowledge and talents that could be shared.

This knowledge and sharing would promote a sense of belonging to a common community.

At the moment it appears every Priest is on his own with no support network- this has to be improved.

Suggestions involved improving all aspects of Church life for Children, making it more fun. All suggestions noted for the way forward. Many are beginning to be implemented but all rely on an army of volunteers which at the moment we do not have.

## **Any other matters that do not fit under the three thematic headings of Communion, Participation & Mission**

A number of people although not everyone has brought up the topic of historic Child Abuse and the Stigma this comes with. Those people feel the topic has not been dealt with, in an honest and open fashion.

The subject of divorced Catholic people has been extensively talked about, listed below are the points raised

- Each case should be dealt with individually
- Many feel one rule should fit all
- There should be one person dealing with divorce within the diocese
- Time delay dealing with this topic is unacceptable
- Receiving or not receiving Holy Communion – there should be clear guidance

Homosexuality – Doesn't everyone deserve to be loved?

This was a sentence forwarded to be in an anonymous letter. The letter summed up a number of other comments made to me on the topic of Homosexuality

“I am who God made me to be – a homosexual.....knowing I'm loved by God and that I don't ever want to turn from His love has kept me in the Church,.... this judgment by the Church makes no sense”.

This person stated we need to be the Church the Holy Spirit is calling us to be.

On the same theme same sex marriage within the Catholic Church was talked of with the desire for a Blessing to take place if a Marriage was not yet permitted.

A concern raised was that of taking Communion if you are Gay - should one or not?

The topic of transgender was then raised – it was concluded clear guidance on the stance of the Church is required for the person in transition and the extended family and friends (Laity) also for the Clergy. We must remember, this subject affects children and adults.

Once again we must remember- everyone deserves to be loved.

We must address the feeling some people have of the culture creeping into this Country of Anti Christianity. We are very encouraging and accommodating of other Faith's – we must look after our own.

**Sign Off**

This Report is submitted to the Diocesan Synodal Team on behalf of the Parish community of:

3 Churches Cardiff – in particular St Brigid’s and St Paul’s Roman Catholic Churches

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It is an honest reflection of the work undertaken over the last six months and has been endorsed by the Parish Advisory Council

Signed...*Canon Matthew Jones* ..... Parish Priest

Signed *Ann Reid* Parish Representative

Once complete please forward to:

[madeleine.walters@rcadc.org](mailto:madeleine.walters@rcadc.org)

**The Diocesan Synodal Team wishes to convey its appreciation for all the work undertaken in the preparation of this Report**