

1. COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY: In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road. In our local Church, who are those who “walk together”? Who are those who seem further apart? How are we called to grow as companions? What groups or individuals are left on the margins?

Parishioners focused on the forthcoming Saint Mary's Caritas Centre as a hub for the parish to support migrants and refugees (8). The parish has a strong mission to the homeless via two groups: Looking After The Homeless and the SVP, but they need more volunteers. Can we do more to provide communication to attract people to these roles (6)

Concerns were raised over the way the church ministers and fails to minister to those who find issues around annulment and LGBTQi a painful and confusing time in their family and friends lives. (7)

A solution is to provide a safe-welcome in the new Caritas Centre. Make it – like our parish church and presbytery – a place where ample resources are provided for those who require pastoral care. Our work with the homeless must be advertised more (3)

Many groups and individuals raised the need to seriously address the vocation of all the baptised (7). They welcome the way Pope Francis has renewed the need to implement Vatican II fully (5) There were many comments around the ordination of married men and the ministry of women in the Church.

We could provide ministries during the weekdays for the many people who call into the church when they are visiting (3)

As a parish we need to ensure that our message is that **All** are welcome. Many celebrated the many ethnic groups that make up our parish community.

“Our church community is at a good place and we are looking forward to the new Saint Mary's Caritas Centre.”

“There is a need to bring more of us together, reaching across age and international divides. The International Day makes a good event.”

2. LISTENING: Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore? How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people? What facilitates or inhibits our listening? How well do we listen to those on the peripheries? How is the contribution of consecrated men and women integrated? What are some limitations in our ability to listen, especially to those who have different views than our own? What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?

Much training and opportunities for development were once offered by the diocese throughout the year in the past. (2) Good facilitators being made known to us would benefit parish and Local Missionary Area training.

We are blessed with exceptional forums for our children and young people and now we will have a better space for them to come together in the new Saint Mary's Caritas Centre. (5) But

we need to allow them to have a voice and become true leaders in the parish. We have two excellent schools (5). A good point was raised several times: When will we seriously ask young people and adults why they have chosen to leave the church/ regular attendance of church activities? (7)

There needs to be more time for prayer and prayerful listening in the parish (5). There were various suggestions for a Parish Mission to follow on from the Synod (4). We also need to hear what parish communities around the world have given in response to the Synod questions. There is a need to move from an insular to a global parish (5) We have a strong group of parishes in the Local Missionary Area, and we work well together. There is a desire for more LMA days of formation (2)

Provide Healing Services for those who are seeking a way to return to the Church (4)

We have many members whose first language is not English. There may be opportunities to embrace them more by providing various messages in our newsletters etc in various languages (1)

3. SPEAKING OUT: All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity. What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and in society? When and how do we manage to say what is important to us? How does the relationship with the local media work (not only Catholic media)? Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?

- Continue to ask parishioners to air their views via suggestion leaflets and the parish website.
- The Parish Pastoral Team could introduce themselves to parishioners at Masses throughout the year and host social functions which will advertise the many opportunities to gather in the parish.
- Do not be afraid to request anonymous opinion. Some are reluctant to speak their concerns and fears because of certain attitudes in the Church.
- Address the areas that the Church refuses to change her teaching on: divorced/remarried.

4. CELEBRATION: “Walking together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist. How do prayer and liturgical celebrations actually inspire and guide our common life and mission in our community? How do they inspire the most important decisions? How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy? What space is given to participating in the ministries of lector and acolyte?

These are some of the response to how people felt about the celebration of Mass and other liturgies in the parish:

- I am always greeted by people walking from the car park. I value the three official welcomers in the porch who say good morning to me and ask me how I am.
- Saint Mary's is a calm friendliness filled church. People are always kind setting up for Mass or exchanging news with friends.

- When I visited another parish, I wondered how to make their parish community a little bit more like St Mary's.
- I love the way we pray the parish mission prayer at the end of a period of silence following holy communion. Praying it is quite moving, as it expresses a community who try to care for each other.

Mass is a very different experience for the Saturday 5:30pm, Sunday 9am and 11am communities that gather (8). Each Mass should have a different tone to enable people to feel able to pray and worship to the best. A lot of people expressed the need for more times of silence in the church (5). We could find times for quiet contemplation between the readings and the homily (4) But this needs a careful and purposeful introduction if its aims are to be achieved. The welcome by members of the parish at the start of Mass is much valued (8) Praying the parish mission prayer is a moving experience during Mass (3)

“As a woman I am patiently waiting for inclusive language in the liturgy.”

We never talk about noisy children because we love our children and provide many resources to help them during Mass (5). There is a need to ask children and parents what more can we provide to allow the experience of Mass to be a prayerful and less stressful occasion for them (6). Focus our attention on the Real Presence in the Eucharist and in our lives (1)

“We need to use social media more to reach out to parishioners and those who feel alienated from the Church.”

We need to explain parts of the Mass for those who do not really know what is happening during the celebration.

“Retreat days (Advent and Lent) at Wistaston Hall steer our faith and provides opportunity for forgiveness and reconciliation. With prayer, support and human effort more of us can build a stronger church together.”

“We would like to say that Lockdown forced us to look at streaming services and once we had encountered churchservices.tv we started then to watch Mass every day and once you start to do that you really get to understand the readings better and listening to different priests preaching and indeed different bishops also proved very inspiring.

Once we had the habit of watching the Mass every day when the lockdown restrictions eased, we started to go to Mass every day when it was available.

I would encourage the church to beef up its operations on the internet and improve its communication skills to encourage people to participate on line and then also to attend Mass more regularly.

There is a shortage of priests in the West generally so the more parishes can work together the less pressure on individual priests.

Mass times for all local areas should be printed and available on line and online services highlighted and promoted.

Apps like Pray as You Go and the Rosary App Holy Rosary should be promoted relentlessly.

The Church lost the battle on television when it arrived; it must try harder on the battle on social media and the internet...”

5. SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION: Synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all members are called to participate. Since we are all missionary disciples, how is every baptised person called to participate in the mission of the Church? What hinders the baptised from being active in mission? What areas of mission are we neglecting? How does the community support its members who serve society in various ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, education, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, caring for the environment, etc.)? How does the Church help these members to live out their service to society in a missionary way? How is discernment about missionary choices made and by whom?

What hinders the baptised from being active in mission? One member commented on the difficulty faced when the parish priest says yes to families, but another priest from another community says no to their needs (1) But we are now blessed with two priests who are open to the needs of all (4)

While we have many active volunteers there are member of the parish who have many talents but can't commit due to work, family life, and illness (3) Those involved in the formation of our children, young people, and adults appreciate the way the parish makes the Sacraments accessible to all, even when our hands are tied by the rules of the Church (5) We have members who work actively in the parish and still feel alienated by Church teaching on marriage and divorce (2) Many new members have joined the parish during the time of Covid and are keen to be part of the parish. With over 90 First Holy Communions last year and the same for 2022 we must be doing something right.

“Consider appointing an officer responsible to parish welfare – a ministry once operated when we had religious sisters in the parish.”

6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY: Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding. To what extent do diverse peoples in our community come together for dialogue? What are the places and means of dialogue within our local Church? How do we promote collaboration with neighbouring dioceses, religious communities in the area, lay associations and movements, etc.? How are divergences of vision, or conflicts and difficulties addressed? What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to? What experiences of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other religions and with those who have no religious affiliation? How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society: the spheres of politics, economics, culture, civil society, and people who live in poverty?

Encourage the close relationship between the parish and Wistaston Hall (2) There are many countries represented by our parishioners and we need to give individuals from these communities a place on the Parish Pastoral Team (4) It was noted that we have tried this in the past and while some committed, they could not keep to their role. How can we better achieve this goal? We have groups of more traditional Catholics who have expressed a desire for more devotions (2) Why is the Church deaf to our desire for priests to be allowed to marry? (8) Focus on Pentecost and continue to have our International Masses and more social gatherings to encourage dialogue between the various cultural communities (7) The majority of volunteers in the parish are women. When will there be a credible discussion and movement on the female diaconate? (9)

“There was talk of a Diocesan Pastoral Council many years ago. What happened to this? It would be a move forward to greater dialogue if such a body existed and was made up of lay people from all the parishes of the diocese.”

We have been unable to have a parish open meeting for nearly two years. It has always been a good forum to share our concerns and our vision (2) The parish has operated caringly during the pandemic and allowed new people to take on roles that need nurturing (5) There will be a need for careful planning to help the parish move out of the pandemic and the various guidelines (8)

Possibly do more to keep our faith lives less insular (2) Ours is a large parish, but that should not deter us from caring for the needs of its diverse membership (5)

7. ECUMENISM: The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey. What relationships does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions and denominations? What do we share and how do we journey together? What fruits have we drawn from walking together? What are the difficulties? How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?

Saint Mary's continues to be a hub from ecumenical meetings in Crewe (4)

There is a welcome offered to our fellow Christians at Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals (2)

While full communion seems the dream, nurturing fraternal communion is the reality.

We must try to find common ground amidst the threats that we all face so that we can care for one another (1)

Need to encourage parishioners to participate in times of prayer (3)

There is a need to share our faith so as to break down barriers and misunderstanding (6)

Visit other faith communities in the town (2)

I do not know many people from other denominations in my town (1)

“Our shared mission with Churches Together in Crewe and the street pastors is very encouraging. This brought other local people from Christian churches together.”

8. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION: A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church. How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to reach them, and the steps to be taken? How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church? How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? How are evaluations conducted and by whom? How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted? Have we had fruitful experiences of synodality on a local level? How do synodal bodies function at the level of the local Church (Pastoral Councils in parishes and dioceses, Presbyteral Council, etc.)? How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?

Seek to identify the strengths of parishioners via a new census (7)

Encourage individuals to commit to roles and support them in these roles (2)

Formation for Ministers is vital and should be ongoing (5)

While we have done our best to respond to the questions it may have been better to have held the process during Easter 2022 and not during the uncertain months of the pandemic (4)

Many supported the need for a Diocesan Pastoral Council and a return to the beneficial meetings of LMA (formerly LPA) members for days of formation and reflection (5). The diocese would benefit from allowing members to meet and get to know one another, and “walk together”.

Develop study groups on Vatican II (2) We miss the many training days we have pre-Covid (3)

9. **DISCERNING AND DECIDING:** In a synodal style we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community. What methods and processes do we use in decision-making? How can they be improved? How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchical structures? Do our decision-making methods help us to listen to the whole People of God? What is the relationship between consultation and decision making, and how do we put these into practice? What tools and procedures do we use to promote transparency and accountability? How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?

The parish suggestion box is there, but we also need an electronic system, and welcome anonymous suggestions (1)

There are many interesting talks and workshops facilitated by Wistaston Hall and the LMA which we need to advertise more (3)

10. **FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY:** Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and on-going learning. How does our church community form people to be more capable of “walking together,” listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue? What formation is offered to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a synodal way?

We should not rely on clergy to identify our charisms in the parish (5). This needs to be collective among the lay faithful. There should be training for those who are involved in decision making in the parish and there should be a three year plan for mission, property, and faith development at all levels (3)

While we have an excellent RCIA/RCiC group, there is a need for an ALPHA course once the new St Mary's Caritas Centre is open (4) Ensure the Parish Pastoral Council and LMA receive new members with the appropriate skill on a regular basis (1)

1. **Communion:** how has our life together been strengthened or weakened by the last two years?

As a parish we kept in close contact with one another and those who needed our care via social media and telephone at the start of the pandemic. Great numbers came forward to act as stewards when the church reopened, and we are thankful for the joy felt by those who initially returned for private prayer and Holy Mass. Our numbers have grown at Sunday Mass, and so too Baptisms and First Sacraments.

2. **Participation:** what have these months taught us about our involvement in the life of the church?

The Eucharist is at the heart of who we are and what we do. The deprivation of active participation in the Mass was felt by all. Many who relied on participating in Mass online have said that they would still prefer to be present in Saint Mary's Church.

3. **Mission:** what have these months taught us about outreach and mission?

We were not an insular throughout the pandemic, but rather sought good practice from local and national parishes. This will be key to our future mission and planning. The parish has a strong group of volunteers of all ages, abilities, and this adds to our ability to deliver services for those in any kind of need. Much of our mission is now deeply linked to the opening of Saint Mary's Caritas Centre. The parish has been left without adequate spaces to meet for many years. Parish groups – now able to meet again – are already working with CARITAS to focus on outreach and mission. We also intend to bring the parish together to look again at all these Synod questions once the diocesan synod report is made available to us. It would be of great value to have some form of post-synod resources to help us to pray, learn, and discern the Holy Spirit's direction for us all.