



St Margaret's and Our Holy Redeemer's Parishes, Clydebank

This is the response of St Margaret's and Our Holy Redeemer's parishes to the invitation to hear what people are saying about the themes of communion, participation and mission in preparation for Synod 23. There were 2 evenings of reflection on 21 and 28 March 2022. Youth from the parishes provided their own response and 10 parishioners submitted individual responses.

You will see a selection of the responses to the questions asked on the following pages. Here are some reflections on what we heard.

We heard:

- **A variety of views:** people expressed lots of different thoughts and comments in response to the questions and in reflecting on what they saw in our parishes and our church today. Sometimes these views are contradictory. Some of the views are negative and some point to problems. Some of the views are positive and some are hopeful.
- **Confusion:** people talked about not being sure, not having answers to give to questions that are asked of them about their faith, for instance in their families. Some people were looking for better understanding about what they believe and why. The confusion that people feel makes them uncomfortable, it is not experienced as being something that is good. The confusion that people feel is a cause of suffering.
- **Seeking:** people expressed some thoughts about wanting the church to be better at speaking to the issues that our families, friends, people of today are facing. People want to be more able to ask questions, be heard and have some dialogue about the things that concern them in their faith. People really want to belong to a community that nurtures them. People are hungry for having God in their lives.
- **Complexity:** people spoke directly about the fact that now they face more complexity in their lives and in living out their faith. Some looked fondly to a time when they felt there was more certainty but, recognised that those times have gone.
- **About relationships:** people recognised that relationships are at the heart of living out our faith together. People want there to be better relationships in our parishes. People were clear that people will stay connected to our parishes or come to our parishes only if they see us having strong and loving relationships. People want the relationships we have to be the sort of relationships where we can share our faith and the things that are going on in our lives and where we will be supported, encouraged and nurtured.

What happens next?

The listening that we have done as part of the Synod process now needs to turn into action. Canon Tartaglia, Deacon Frank, Tamara and the Pastoral Council invite each of you as parishioners to pray and reflect on what we have heard. The Pastoral Council is planning in the autumn to discuss with all parishioners what we might do in the parishes to respond to what we have heard so that we can take forward new actions to build communion, participation and mission in the parishes.

Communion – Being a faith community

What in this parish community helps you in your faith? In what ways are you supported in your faith?

Do you feel like we are all journeying together? Do you feel welcomed and included in this parish community?

"I've had difficult times in my personal life and the church has been a great help in guiding me and encouraging me."

"I am supported by the mass and sacraments of Holy Communion and Confession being available. We need our priests, and having a deacon is a bonus for our parishes."

"I don't know if everyone is helping each other. Some just come to services and go home."

"We are very blessed with our parish priests, deacon, Tamara."

"Some people feel they can't take part in mass."

"I do not feel we are journeying together, some don't come to church, so we are not on the road together. When we had You Belong – We Belong it brought people back, lots of people came together with real energy."

"Kids see that they 'need to be good' to go to church, so they say, 'It's not for me.'"

"Would love to have the opportunity to learn more about my faith through an 'RCIA' type programme but, for catholics who want to know more and be able to ask 'daft' questions in a safe space."

Participation – Belonging actively

Who are we not supporting, not reaching? Who can you see getting left out?

How do I feel about living out my faith visibly at home, at work, with my family, with my friends?
What is stopping me from doing this?

“Let’s not concentrate on rules, on holding people to account. First, let’s love them and encourage them so they actually experience what belonging to Christ actually means.”

“If people are feeling marginalised and not feeling welcomed, then we need to reach out to them.”

“The church does not support divorced faithful the way it should.”

“I don’t think that the church is in a very good place.”

“Need to support more vulnerable people, help people to feel they belong to the parish. We are all the same; never judge – you don’t know what people are going through.”

“Some people have got lazy after COVID.”

“The participants expressed sadness about the low number of young people involved with the church. Many [of the young people] expressed feeling isolated within the church.”

“I see the poor and those at the margins getting left out.”

“The church’s attitude to homosexuals needs to change.”

“I think supporting young families by putting them in contact with those who have gone through all the struggles of family life before them to advise them and support them would be good.”

“People in same sex relationships is a live issue for me, they don’t come because they don’t feel welcomed and loved.”

“Sometimes sexual teaching means people don’t want to come back. Don’t start with teaching on sex.”

“We are not reaching young adults, not investing in older parishioners, married couples, single people, etc. in the way we do with time, money, support for the youth.”

“There is not the same degree of certainty about faith – the idea of heaven or hell, count up good and bad deeds – which was reflective of the world we lived in. What is being said now is more reflective of the world we live in, lot’s of grey areas now.”

“I think some people are afraid of what is involved in being part of a community. I was because I felt that everyone would see I was not perfect. But nobody is bothered.”

Mission – Bringing the gospel to life

By our baptism we are to participate fully in the Church – what do you think ‘participate fully’ means?

How can this parish reach out to the people in this area, share what we believe about Jesus, share our faith?

“By always being there for people, by reaching out to people, always being there when people need us, being kind, not judging.”

“Go fishing [for people].”

“I think that we need to focus on building a loving, welcoming community within our church. Let’s not get caught up with numbers at mass because people only go to mass if they see the love of Christ in us in our daily lives.”

“Open the hall and have community events.”

“First we need to encourage the parents to bring the children.”

“I think in the near future there may be a need to open a food bank and even a soup kitchen if things get as bad as predicted.”

“Share network opportunities for people to assist in leading or participating in shared activities... including with other groups, parishes.”

“Some people look at the abuse and, therefore, don’t go to church.”

“Removing false conceptions about God’s love.”

“Christmas / Easter card to all houses brought some back.”

“We need to portray the experience [of coming back to church] as a freeing experience, of God as ‘father’.”

“It’s an old message: ‘we are all made in God’s image and likeness, you are loved, you will be disappointed if you run after fame or money or... but, you will be loved and fulfilled here.’”

“Look and see what people’s needs are – food, emotional support, ... - what should it be if it’s not actually helping people?”

“Relationship with others is the reason why people come or don’t come. You won’t come to somewhere if you don’t feel you belong.”

“If what the church stands for is real, then everyone on the planet is missing out. But the church is not making it real and, therefore, it just looks like it’s rubbish and a waste of time.”

“To fully participate – that means to suffer.”

“Plan targeted outreach events”

“Give to others a trust in God – to do that you have to connect, you have to have a relationship. Nothing beats having that relational connection.”

“The motive of reaching out has to be love and not trying to get a convert.”

“Keep asking, ‘come along and be with us’ – it’s important that this is a personal ask, not a general ask.”

“Need to reach out to sick, poor, bereaved.”

“There are opportunities for missionary activity using mobile phones.”

“Part of the work of the shepherd is to look for the sheep.”

“Some people cannot come back to the church because of the rules.”