

Our Lady Help of Christians, Luton

For a Synodal Church

Parishioners at three separate tables (J, K, M) were asked, following a discussion, to discern three answers for each question:

Q.1 What does it mean to you to be Catholic?

- J God's blueprint on how we should live our lives.
- J The Mass, the Eucharist - Jesus is the bread of life. The Catholic Church is like a tanker that gracefully sails a straight path, remaining faithful to the teachings of Jesus and of the Church and not being seduced by the fads of the world.
- J Catholic should mean that we are evangelisers – spreaders of the good news of Jesus, but we aren't very good at it.
- K Our Church, our faith is as established and willed by Jesus. Catholics have the perfect form of worship of God. Our strength and security follow from these.
- K Catholics are the hands, feet, eyes, ears and body of Jesus working and striving towards holiness.
- K Catholics are called to mission at the end of Mass - to evangelise.
- M Community – part of the Catholic Church – be there for each other in good times and bad.
- M Community – everything – to bring people together on Sundays and at other events. This Communion helps us to grow in holiness.
- M Faith – being guided by the holy spirit.

Q.2 What are some of your experiences of the Church doing something well?

- J The Mass being celebrated every second of the day throughout the world. God being continuously glorified. Also, the Sacraments and Eucharistic Adoration.
- J The Rosary – Mary mother of God, mother of our church. Catholics obeying the fourth commandment by honouring Mary.
- J Catholic Charitable works, outreach. A huge blessing to the world, but sadly rarely recognised.
- K The Mass in different forms is a blessing and helps to reach out to more people. The *Novus Ordo Missae* works for many, but the traditional Latin Mass seems to help deepen the faith of others and fits in with a long tradition within our Church.
- K Catholics taking education, healthcare and knowledge to the world.
- K The Magisterium keeping our Church faithful and leaving no room for misinterpretation as in the excellent Catechism.
- M The Mass – the central part of our faith.
- M The Sacraments and prayer in our church
- M The Mass, worship and events bringing everyone together.

Q.3 What are some of your experiences of when things have not gone so well?

- J Catholics don't always seem to exhibit joy and happiness. More prayer is needed to the Holy Spirit to open hearts and minds to the hope within us.

- J Catholic education doesn't result in keeping youngsters active in our church. What are we doing wrong? Also, for adults' depth of knowledge about our faith seems low. Catholic leaders should be approaching every activity on the assumption of little knowledge and explaining everything as if from the beginning.
- J Catholics are not vocal enough in defending persecuted Christians around the world.
- K Catholic children soon stop coming to church. In many cases they get baptised and receive Holy Communion and then disappear. Surely this must mean poor catechising. Poor material available for Catechism.
- K Our Priests are overburdened. They should only be dealing with the Sacraments. They need a team behind them to deal with other matters.
- K The failure of the Church hierarchy to stop heresies and scandals. For instance, the Synod in Germany needs to be told that what they are doing is wrong. The fact that the Catholic Church tolerates it to be easier for a Muslim to get in to a Catholic school than it is for a Catholic who has to jump through hoops such as providing a baptism certificate and other documents.
- M Poor communication – needs a lot of work – with parents of children being catechised, between groups, between parishes. A welcome pack for new parishioners. If people don't feel involved and valued, they won't volunteer.
- M Catholics not being involved with evangelisation but expecting our Priests to do it all. Everyone can evangelise in different ways for instance at work a Catholic could ask colleagues for the names of their deceased families and friends to pray for in November.
- M Failing to reach out to youngsters and keep them involved. Failing to facilitate sacraments to those that work such as Confession on a Saturday.

Q.4 What are our dreams for the Church?

- J We live in an anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Church, won't listen culture. Our church to find ways to get the secular world to grasp all the good we do and hence sow seed to draw people into the church.
- J Our Church hierarchy to speak out with more confidence and pride of being Catholic.
- J To build up our church with succession planning and charity work
- K We need a vocal church speaking up for persecuted Christians throughout the world. For instance, in India the persecution of Christians by Hindus is a disgrace. Our Pope has a powerful voice and he should use it.
- K We need more tolerance and Unity in our Church for example the different rites in our church should all be valued. Masses in Latin should be allowed.
- K To set the world on fire with love and truth.
- M To provide proper welfare to our Priests – to look after and support them. Priests time to be on Pastoral needs only
- M Church administrators to deal with all non-pastoral matters
- M To harness the skills – use the talents – of parishioners.