

Parish Consultation – March 2025

Themes Summary Document

Baptism

Baptism is the foundation of our faith journey, connecting us to Christ and one another. It's also a call to participation, communion, and shared mission. Through baptism we each receive our vocation in life from God. In baptism, we are united in the Spirit, forming a community that supports each member in their faith journey.

Catechesis

Catechesis should integrate faith formation with a deeper understanding of liturgical and spiritual experiences, enabling believers to connect their faith with their daily lives. The language and imagery used must ensure that it is inclusive and resonate with various groups within the Church. Catechesis should be closely tied to the liturgical life of the Church, ensuring that preaching and liturgical celebrations offer opportunities for faith formation. Its role in nurturing the faith of children is essential.

Education

Catholic schools play a vital role in shaping young people. They teach values, build character, and often serve as the first connection that many have with the Church. They're also spaces for dialogue between different cultures and religions. Teachers must be well-prepared to guide students both intellectually and spiritually. Catholic education strives to balance modern needs with faith and holistic development.

Faith Formation

Faith formation is about more than knowledge – it is about building skills for mission, dialogue, collaboration, and connection. It's a shared journey where laypeople, clergy, and consecrated individuals grow and learn together. The focus should be on creating welcoming spaces that foster faith, address today's challenges, and encourage responsible digital engagement to broaden the reach of evangelisation.

Youth

Young people are essential to the Church's future. Their energy and values – like care for the environment, justice, and inclusivity – can help create a more vibrant, welcoming Church. The Church must walk alongside them, offering guidance through education, prayer, and service. Proposals from the 2018 "Synod on Young People" should be revisited to encourage their active involvement and strengthen their role in the Church's mission.

Liturgy

The Sunday Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life. It's where the community gathers, unites, and lives out its mission. This sacred celebration embraces diversity while maintaining unity, bringing together different traditions and roles. Liturgy and the synodal journey are deeply connected, both centred on Christ and guided by the Spirit. As a church we must explore ways to make liturgical celebrations even more engaging and inclusive.

Women

Women and men have equal dignity in the Church, and historically women have played crucial roles in the transmission of the faith, and they continue to do so today in families, communities, and theology. The Church could offer women more leadership opportunities and promote more vigorously the formal ministerial roles such as lector, acolyte and catechist to deepen the role of women in the liturgical and administrative life of the faith community. Using inclusive language and recognising women's contributions will enrich the Church and its mission.

Clergy

Priests and bishops have a special role in building a collaborative Church. They are called to stay connected to their communities, listen actively, and work together in a spirit of unity. Supporting clergy is essential, especially during

challenges. Priests from diverse backgrounds bring richness to the Church, promoting inclusivity and unity. Bishops, too, must be accessible, fostering trust and collaboration in their leadership.

Lay Ministry

Lay ministries – ministerial roles for non-ordained people – are growing to meet the Church’s needs. Whether it’s leading prayers, assisting with sacraments, or serving the community, lay ministers play an important role. The Synod encourages greater lay involvement in leadership and decision-making. These roles bring creativity and courage to the Church’s mission.

Co-Responsibility

Co-responsibility means everyone in the Church shares in its mission. Each person – whether lay, ordained, or consecrated – has unique gifts to offer. The Church must foster collaboration by including more voices in decision-making while respecting Church authority. This approach creates a more open, transparent, and mission-focused Church.

Abuse

Addressing abuse in all its forms is vital for healing and trust. The Church must listen compassionately to survivors and commit to transparency and accountability. Preventing abuse requires systemic change, including tackling clericalism. Justice, respect, and protection must guide all Church practices moving forward.

Sexuality and LGBTQ+ Issues

The Church is called to approach issues of sexuality with empathy and respect. It must welcome all people, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, and ensure they feel valued and included while staying true to its teaching and values. Listening, dialogue, and compassion are essential to creating a supportive Church community. This reflects the Church’s commitment to inclusion and pastoral care.

Culture

The Church celebrates cultural diversity, seeing it as a source of enrichment. Every culture offers unique perspectives that contribute to the Church’s shared mission. Evangelisation respects and incorporates these differences, promoting friendship, peace, and shared values through cultural dialogue.

Belonging

Many people in today’s world feel isolated, especially in urban areas, so the Church must work to rebuild a sense of community. Digital spaces offer opportunities for connection, but they also bring risks like loneliness, and anxiety. The Church can foster belonging by creating meaningful connections both online and in person.

Family

Families are the “domestic Church,” where values like love, trust, and forgiveness are learned. They play a key role in shaping future generations of faith and creating a strong Church community. They are central to the Church’s mission and its life.

Ecumenism

Baptism connects us to other Christians, fostering unity across denominations. Ecumenism – the effort to promote Christian unity – calls for dialogue, healing, and shared purpose. This journey isn’t just about doctrine but about relationships and mutual understanding, strengthening bonds between traditions and faiths.

Covid-19

The final report from the Synod acknowledges Covid-19 as a factor that has impacted people and communities, adding layers of difficulty to social, economic, and emotional aspects of life. The experience of Covid-19 serves as a reminder of shared vulnerability and the need for compassion, underscoring a collective journey toward healing and unity within the Church and the global community.