

Christ the King Parish, Bedford (Synod - various conversation groups)

Communion: *conversations lead to a new experience of Church*

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

- Belonging to a global Church family, in relationship with God / the Trinity
- Baptism gives us our belonging, members of the Body of Christ
- Stability and teaching the faith, scripture, tradition,
- Tempest tossed church, always with troubles, Jesus says, "Courage, it is I" MK.6.50
- Precious gifts of faith and love / God is love not fear
- Very difficult to pass on the faith in today's world, helped by example and witness of daily life
- Giving and receiving support, spiritual and practical, prayer, comfort in times of trouble
- Catholic faith is passed on through the family
- Faith is important regardless of religion or dogmas of faith
- General view, God is blamed in times of crisis
- Family / Values / Education. Gives sense of belonging through Baptism and peace.
- Proud to be Catholic

Participation: *the people of God talk and listen graciously to one another about questions that matter*

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

- Preparation for Mass and the Sacraments, welcoming all
- Getting people together- for Mass, and organisations
- Charitable work, Cafod etc, care for humanity in need – love of God and neighbour
- Friendship and love one another – outreach
- Liturgical seasons encourage prayer and growth in faith
- Adoration time, prayer and spirituality/ constant presence of the Sacraments
- Leadership – maintaining basic Christian truths, moral guidance, speaks out on world issues, opposing tyranny and honouring martyrs
- Catholic education system Faith keeps a person going, the Church supports individuals and families

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

- Interest in ecumenism is poor. Also, GREEN issues
- Collaboration with other churches (even Catholic!) is poor
- Need to embrace the gifts of young people
- Interest in spiritual formation is weak / passive – Vatican 11 opened up the Church not implemented, but led to vulnerability
- Compulsory celibacy for priests is not good/ also Clericalism
- Judgemental attitude re sex, gender and gay people not always welcomed
- Harsh rules on birth control, divorced and remarried people
- Very low profile in local community
- Never a sermon on GREEN issues
- We need to more out-going and inclusive/ can be closed to today's world re technology/social media
- Difficult to engage with other immigrant groups/ cultures
- Genuine fear of "split" in parish re Mass (Latin v English)
- Gaps of faith between parish, schools and families, need of strong links with schools /families etc
- Laity not trusted enough or involved according to gifts and talents eg. re could be empowered to help with funeral services/evangelization-encouraging lapsed Catholics
- When things could go wrong, if help is not sought, the Church is blamed
- Unchristian behaviour in churchgoers is not easy to understand or accept
- Sex abuse cover-up/ lack of female ordination/Anglican married priests, but not Catholic ones.

- Many people still feel that not all people are equally welcome eg. gay people, some of it is misconception.
- Too much emphasis on sin and young people switch off

Mission: Our thoughts are turned to those outside the church walls

Q.4 What are our dreams for the Church?

- As Christ's Body -to be One united, holy, apostolic and visible church community following the teachings of Vat 11.
- Emphasis on a prayerful church community, formation of the laity and sharing with those training for the priesthood to stay in touch with the real world.
- A welcoming church for all, as 'drop-in centre' - outreach to those on the margins/ lapsed Catholics/ divorced/those with disabilities/lonely. Work closely with and share with other denominations, other faiths and cultures and share resources / venues.
- Don't be afraid of making changes– growth of the Body of Christ, place of women in the Church, eg. deacons
- Reconciliation regarding the scandals in the church.
- Parishes and Diocese needs to go GREEN – Climate change, solar panels on church roofs, trees to be planted
- Welcome and promote outdoor social activities eg: carol singing/ 'mulled wine walk'/ park walks
- More social awareness, open church – offer 'drop in' times, for lonely, lapsed, ecumenism
- 'Field hospital' image of Pope Francis – cooperate with local medical centre/ local authority activities
- More forward thinking- encourage youth to take a lead- eg cadets of Our Lady- Suzi ..
- To be more open, ecumenical and inclusive
- Support vulnerable families and 'blended' families
- To progress in our faith
 - More openness, transparency more open to change in society
 - More priests, more people teaching
 - Follow Pope Francis and the Church will thrive