

Parish & Community Synthesis Form

How to use this form

Thank you for your generosity in taking part in the Synodal Pathway in the Diocese of Westminster. Please use this form to tell us the story of the process in your parish or community. This will ensure we can include your experience within the diocesan synthesis that we'll prepare for our Pre-synod Diocesan Gathering on 19th February. We hope to be able to tell the story of the synodal pathway across the diocese, so that together we can discern what the Holy Spirit might be saying to the Church in Westminster. It will also help us make our formal submission to the Bishops' Conference, for the national and international stages of the synod process. Please note, we will not be identifying any particular parishes or communities. Reference to anything within your synthesis will be anonymised.

Including extra information:

- As well as completing this form, you are welcome to send any notable examples of the 'Group Session Record Form', 'Share your thoughts Form' or 'Simple one-to-one / group conversation form'. These can be included to emphasise particular experiences or insights which enriched your synodal pathway. However, please ensure that you also synthesise these experiences using this Synthesis Form.
- You are also welcome to include a small number of high resolution photographs of any walls of post-its / flip charts, which help illustrate your synthesis. Please ensure that the writing is 'in focus'.

Deadline: Please return by **21 January 2022** to Deacon Adrian: adriancullen@rcdow.org.uk
If you are able, we welcome your Synthesis to be returned earlier.

Name of Parish or Community Notre Dame de France London

Name(s) of who compiled the synthesis Sister Anne Lata /Gwenaelle Mallet / Anne-lise Gaillac

Email address anne.lata@ndfchurch.org

Date of Submission 21/01/2022

How many people took part in your synodal process (please estimate if necessary)

100

How do you think the participant(s) in your synodal pathway would describe themselves – tick all that apply:

1. Committed to Faith, Regular attendance at Mass and participates in community life e.g. Member of pastoral council/ attends prayer group/reader/volunteer
2. Committed to Faith, Regular attendance at Mass
3. Faith & Church have some relevance. E.g. Occasional Attendance at Mass
4. Culturally Catholic but Church has little relevance
5. From a different Christian tradition

6. From a different faith community
7. Person of no faith

There are five sections – please try to complete them all.

1) What was the story of your synodal pathway in your parish/community?

- What were the main steps you took?
- What was done to engage as participants and to reach out to the peripheries?
- Approximately what proportion of people in your active parish/Church community participated in one way or other?
- Were there any groups of people whose participation was especially noteworthy?
- Were there specific groups of people who did not participate for any reason?

Steps we took :

- 1 – sent out an electronic and a paper form “share your thoughts” for persons to fill
- 2 – organize group listening sessions, and one to one sessions
- 3 – organized group activities (chaplancy, staff teambuilding day, young adults, Fratelli tutti group)

To reach out to peripheries :

1. Organised “one to one sharing” with people with other denominations.
2. Shared intercultural celebrations such as Diwali and the awareness of the diversity of its richness in the society and our mission at NDF.
3. Opening our Church heritage such as the Tapestry (Dom Roberts) and inviting people from other denominations and cultures sharing its arts which speaks to all believers, non believers and seekers.
4. Organized “one to one sharing” with the Homeless people.
5. Organized “one to one sharing” with the Refugees.

Approx 100 persons (our parish community is estimated at 400-500 persons) so approx. 20%

Noteworthy participation :

1. Children from the French school (7-12years old).
2. Young adults of the Parish (Gaudete).
3. Homeless in our Society.
4. 40/50 years old parishioners.

Groups who didn't participate :

- 1 – teenagers (15-18 years old).

2) What experiences of 'journeying together' were shared?

- What experiences of 'journeying' during the pandemic were shared? What insights did this reveal?
 - What experiences were shared more generally of the Church 'journeying together'? What had brought joy? What had caused pain or sadness?
 - Who did people feel were missing from the Church community? Did participants share anything about the Church's experience of journeying with and including others beyond the visible Church community?
 - Was anything shared about how the parish/community works together or how co-responsibility is put into practice?
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- Many experiences were shared of using online media during the pandemic in a positive way. People participated in online masses, online prayer groups, and are now using apps which they discovered where they can read the Gospel, and more, and receive comments from priests, etc...
 - That was clearly a positive impact of the many lockdowns.
 - People testify to having found real support within our community, and also real support through prayer (individually or with a group).
 - People realised therefore the importance of belonging to a community.
 - The impossibility to receive communion during the first lockdown was described as very sad. People really missed the joy of being together, communicate.
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- More generally, people of our community share the feeling of belonging to the community when they come to mass. It is a very strong feeling, especially as we are a diversity of French speakers in London, with different backgrounds. When we come to mass, this gives us a special feeling of link to our French brothers and sisters.
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- A good point is that the pandemic allowed Masses to last an hour or less.
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- The geographical situation makes evangelization special with different people who don't necessary need religion support but more of a human support and contact. It is a great to be able to give a new spirit to people and help them bounce back.
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- NDF is the hidden gem of Leicester Square. The area is very diverse and it is difficult to bring people together.
 - There is a diversity of ecclesiologies: classical, traditional, whereas some are keen to see the church for changes it is quite a challenge.
 - We have different roles to play, share our ideas and opinions, our spiritual journey.
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- The Church has a great desire for openness to get in touch with people, and also to make the truth about problems, for example the problems of pedophilia.

3) What experiences were shared about the Church's priorities for mission?

- What did people wish to celebrate about how your parish/community lives its mission?
- How did people feel included in the way the parish/community decides priorities for mission?
- What areas of mission did people say were being neglected within the Church?
- In what ways did they see partnerships with people beyond the Church developing?

In general the persons who answered wanted to celebrate the diversity of our parish : many different nationalities, people who are from very different social and professional backgrounds who share the catholic faith.

- Suggestions for being more welcoming and inclusive : have a "welcoming " group[who would pay special attention to those arriving at mass, especially if they aren't regular parishioners. Need of a French leaflet for the new ones so they can participate. These persons are more likely to feel excluded and not want to come back if we don't have a specific attitude towards them. Appreciate to be welcomed by the priests. When people go to church (for funerals) a warm welcome is important because it is what people remember. Experience of Baptism of non practising families could be difficult if nobody is participating.
- Sometimes it is difficult to make people come and talk. We need a new form of evangelisation because of the diversity. And need the priests support to do it. There are so many ways to make people come.
- Some persons mentioned that they felt our church was not very good at having teenagers involved and feel welcome. Same feeling for students, they say they also need evangelisation. When they start their student life, far from their parents, how being able to know how to meet Christians at university? Chaplaincy is not always seen or made obvious. They think that the church should be more visible, on medias and in town, with doors wide open.
- Suggestions for more partnerships with people of other faiths would be welcomed, and also a Church with less hierarchy. More transparency inside the Church.
- Not to tie works of charity with trying to convert people especially with the vulnerable in the society the homeless and Refugees (In general).
- Works of charity should promote justice to governments so homeless voices could be heard by the government.
- People leaving the church because of sexual abuses, and priests who quit : it is sad for everyone.
- The church should help parents to raise children in peace and justice.

- 11 years old want a church more happy, with smiling people, and readings & homily they can understand. They think that it would be great to change the words which are the same every Sunday. Eucharistic prayers (different versions) or forgiveness (Kyrie) with easy words.
- Children find going to church is boring and like when it is joyful.

4) What was most significant about the whole experience?

- What did you notice about how people participated? What attitudes or feelings stood out?
- What was particularly significant, surprising or unexpected?
- What topics or issues gave rise to diverse points of view?
- Which stories or real-life experiences were especially moving and why? (Please anonymise – we only need a sense of the experiences shared.)
- Which experiences seemed to have strong resonance? Which experiences were mentioned less but are significant?

First of all :

- The synodal team found the time constraints a bit difficult to deal with, and this limited our activities within the parish (and the COVID was also important on our team and on our parishioners).
- The questions on the “share your thoughts form” were a bit difficult to answer too, not very clear for some of us.
- Noticeable : the replies to our “share your thoughts “ forms and even the listening events were mainly offered by people who are already very much involved in our community life. Others would feel they were wasting their time, not knowing if this was going to bring a change within the Church.
- A point to consider in the “one to one informal listening” in the description of the participants there would be some considered as “Seeker”. The questions were quite technical and a lot of time was used in grasping what it was asking, especially if they were non believers etc...
- The participations of the Homeless in our society to such activities gives a sense a importance of value and counted. A moving experience.
- A good point is that all class of ages wanted to share their thoughts. The persons who were involved in the listening experiences were very involved, and were happy to share.

5) Overall, what were the fruits that the Holy Spirit has brought about through this experience?

- What dreams, desires, and aspirations for the Church were expressed by participants?
 - Were there any particular issues that the people felt the Spirit was inviting the Church to pay more attention to?
 - In what ways did you sense the Holy Spirit inviting your parish/community to grow in synodality?
 - Based on what was shared, what steps might your parish/community feel called to take in their journeying together?
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- Dreams of a church filled with families, children who are happy to be there, and express their joy. More knowledge and understanding of the other religions.
 - Dreams that married men or women may access ordained ministries in the Catholic Church.

 - That all cultures and religion is searching for the same Divine and we are instruments only and we should not judge them for who they are.

 - A Happy Church is my dream, a church which does not judge but love. From the young generation, Church should be clearer of the loving message reg. lesbians and gay people, people who divorced or aborted.

 - Lighten the administrative approach to marriage.

 - Dreams of a Church open to all, and who communicate to people inside and outside the church, nourishing more vocations and conversions.

 - How to remove tension in groups? By praying together

 - Some people would like to have more times of silence during mass.

 - When I was young, I always loved when I was asked to help do the collection. Today it is normally adults who do it. I think it would be very good to give this task to children as they need to feel useful and part of the service.

 - People need to learn to move on from their past.

 - Dreams of our church are sometimes not recognised and we need to appreciate and celebrate eg building bridges between nationalities eg having mixed choirs, celebrating life, participating in activities to promote justice and peace for the less fortunate eg the legal walk for the refugees. Considering the volunteers who share our missions in solidarity,

opens a path to different religion/culture/beliefs, which allows us to appreciate each person as they are.

One essential fruit : is how we can better ourselves within our parish and use the work done with this synod for our own parish. That we may be people to dream about the church we are called to be, to make hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to warm hearts of our parish at Notre Dame de France.

Optional: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Main fear of the people who have participated in this journey is that, after every proposition/suggestion/shared dream is brought back to the hierarchy of the Church and the persons in charge of the decision, nothing changes.

Including extra information:

- You are welcome to send a few notable examples of the 'Group Session Record Form', 'Share your thoughts Form' or 'Simple one-to-one / group conversation form'.
- You are also welcome to include a small number of high resolution photographs of any walls of post-its / flip charts, which help illustrate your synthesis.