

## **St Francis Church : A selection of Parishioner's Responses to questions raised about the Church synod 2021-23**

As we know Pope Francis has asked the whole Catholic Church worldwide to engage in a process of discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Parish would like to thank all those who attended the meetings and sent their responses to the Questionnaire sent out last year. Many other parishioners have submitted their own independent responses online. The deadline for responses has just passed and here is a summary of some of the responses. All parishes were asked to focus on the areas of Communion, Participation and Mission.

An overall question was: How does 'journeying together' take place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel? And, what steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church? (PD 2);

There were many questions and the questionnaire and the meetings attempted to focus on fewer questions to help the process move forward while retaining the spirit of the Synod process.

Two key words emerged from this process and these were Communication and Cohesion. It is interesting to note that parishioners often had conflicting views depending on their own experiences. This is helpful for listening together and finding a way forward with the Guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is important to remember that some responses have, (of course,) been coloured by the recent experience of the pandemic.

### **Communion:**

Focus questions

#### **1. What are the ways in which your parish most successfully brings people together?**

Comments focused on the blessing of the parish to have the benefit of so many communities. The youth groups, the Fledgings and the Flame group are involved in very many activities which bring people together, as well as keeping links open during the pandemic. Pre-pandemic activities such as Light Fever and the good Friday walk were other examples. Visiting the sick and prisoned bring food and cleaning materials were also mentioned. Others said the church could be more welcoming and we should greet people in a more responsive way. Others suggested there should be more inclusive language in the parish.