

Guide of Listening Phase Activities:

3 forms of meetings

2 in person

1 Virtual

Written responses

Questionnaires – online/paper

Reached out to local Primary and Secondary Catholic Schools by email requesting their responses and support to get the voices of the students heard.

How did we advertise?

St Bart's Website, Newsletter, Personal Invitation at the Pulpit by Priests and at the Lector by Parish Delegates

Summary Statistics:

Attendance for the Meetings in person or virtual:

35 people (About 20 less than those who signed up to meet)

The table below displays the number of responses per medium

	Online	Paper
7-11	8	150*
12-18	31	4
18+	14	9 (10)
Total	53	160

150* paper responses from St James the Great, Primary School. Note not all responses celebrate mass at St Barts.

Challenges Faced as Parish Delegates:

- Language used in the documentation provided to support the Synodal process was not accessible and led to an array of interpretation. Which would have led to muted responses. So, the questions posed within meetings were adapted and simplified to enable Parishioners to respond accordingly.
- Discussions around 'traditional truths' and the views/stance of the wider church in certain issues were considered when discussing the three core themes, and frequently came up in discussion, although guidance provided suggested these wider questions were not up for discussion.
- Timeline for the listening phase was a challenge as our Parish were behind in recruiting for the Parish Delegates as people didn't step forward.
- Captured audience did not reflect the demographic of the Parish fully, very limited responses from young adults 18-30, those participating are already active members of the parish community and could be argued came with their own agendas.
- Not having seen what one good listening phase meeting looks like we had no benchmark for success.

Scriptural reflection was limited in the meeting.

Questions posed:

1. Communion
 - a. Does the parish successfully bring people together?
 - b. Is the Holy Eucharist the main focal point for the parish?
 - c. How can the Parish encourage members of the Church who have drifted away from practice?
 - d. **Can the church improve its communication with you?
2. Participation
 - a. (Participation has been affected in the last 18 months). How can participation be strengthened moving forward, whilst being true to the Gospel and our core Christian identity?
 - b. Which groups and individuals are least included in our Parish?
 - c. How can we better enable full participation and co-responsibility in the life of the Church?
 - d. **Do you participate? What can we do to help everyone be more involved in parish life?
3. Mission
 - a. Are we looking in or out as a Parish Community? Do we do both effectively?
 - b. Where is the Holy Spirit calling you to mission and service today?
 - c. How does the Parish aid in the formation as parishioners as missionary disciples?

In all of these questions we were asking parishioners to consider what was going well, what should it continue and what would they like to see going forward.

For the 7-11 year olds they used the same children's questions as provided by one of the parishes.

**Written Responses online or otherwise only

General Findings

Communion

- The Parish is successful at bringing people together if we look at Mass as the only metric. When we take a wider view of the Parish there is a strong view that it hasn't been as successful in this area.
- A strong belief that the central focus of the Parish is the Mass. There is a wanting for social and spiritual events to gather together outside of Mass.
- 1/3 of 11-18 year olds who completed the questionnaire did not know how the Parish brought people together. Of those who did, referred to the choir, coffee mornings and bible study as ways it brought people together. 2/3 of 11-18 year olds who completed the questionnaire did not hear/read about what is happening in the Parish. Of those who did, heard it from their parents or the newsletter.
- There is appetite for children's participation within mass – offertory, reading, welcoming, singing in a choir. There is some appetite for a greater variety of music to keep the "young" engaged. The youngest (7-11) like the idea of story time during mass. They see the big calendar events (Easter, Christmas, Weddings, Baptisms etc.) as ways of the parish being brought together. To them Communion classes are a nice way of communing together. They see school as another part of their Parish family.
- The biggest sticking point that was returned to repeatedly was the Parish Hall and its current usage. There appears to be a misinformed view that the hall cannot be used at all! Additionally, a view that nothing is happening at all is present in those who responded. Communication appears to be an area that needs attention to ensure that parishioners know what is going on and what they can be involved with. Some groups are running but parishioners unaware of what the work is happening.

Opportunities under Communion

- A parish census would support those actively involved to be able to more effectively reach out to the Parish/Target audiences.
- There is a hope to build a sense of community within the Parish. Social/Spiritual events to generate 'community': Quizzes, Bible study, coffee mornings, local community events, Parish fund raising target, fete, fayres and Bazaars, Summer fun days/Picnics, Lenten/Advent Programmes.
- Make it very clear what the state of play is with the Parish hall. Tonnes of misconceptions and misinformation regarding group activities and Parish Hall.
- Parish Events Calendar very bare, can we build on this?
- PPC – Responsibilities, Sub committees – Use of website, Communication, Outreach
- Newsletter to be updated to not simply have prayers for the sick and small notices. For comparison St Andrew's, a message from the Parish Priest, This week's readings, Diary for the week, Notices thereafter.
- Email/Social media (Facebook, Twitter) to communicate to reach those who may not have made masses
- Silo masses, Latin or multicultural masses which represent the parish community.
- Priest visits to sick, those unable to come to mass. Better utilisation of the SVP perhaps?
- For the very young 7-11 years old there is a demand for a Children friendly newsletter/Notice board

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- Increased involvement with local Primary and Secondary Schools.
- How are new families welcomed and supported in the Parish community?
- At a diocese level – for the respective deaneries what can be done to bring different Parishes together? Have we asked what other Parishes do? Could we invite them for some collaboration?

Participation

- There is an awareness that attendance has been reduced at Church
- It was unclear how parishioners could get involved and who they could contact. There is a small feeling that there are many hurdles to overcome and the process is unclear.
- There appears to be a strong contingent that do support the Parish though this is not nearly numerate enough and as a result a number of people are spread too thinly and the same faces are doing things. There is a call to have different people to contribute further.
- There is a small voice within the parish that looks to strip back some of the traditional rituals.
- There is a sense that the youth are a great resource that we haven't been able to tap into well enough or at all. They are the future of the Church. They need to be engaged. This also came with a sense of how can those with children be supported to strengthen their own faith through an understanding of the Scripture.
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Opportunities under Participation

- Many of the opportunities within participation go hand in hand with those outlined above within Communion.
- There is a strong demand for improving our understanding of Scripture better. A Bible study. Could the Parish facilitate bible study groups? Do these always need to happen in a Church setting?
- Post confirmation programmes? Post communion to confirmation programmes? Trips to Holy sites, Christian events like Flame.
- Increased support of local charities – Continue to work with the foodbank.
- 7-18 year olds used vague terms such as be more relevant, modernise that church. Unfortunately this means we still have work to gather them together. Those who were more specific referred to music, events as the avenues they are interested in. A Children's Choir, Spiritual Art club.
- Could we be celebrating some silo masses? Latin/African Masses etc. Though we must be cautious that this could also alienate some parishioners
- A Church group event fair
- A central database of those who wish to participate can be organised, Group contact details on website.
- Advertising (utilising social media as a means of advertising activity within St Barts) and communication
- Youth Minister? Could this be a paid role if a volunteer cannot be found? Could this be shared amongst other Parishes? Is there a Youth Group in the pipeline that people need to be aware of?

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- At a diocese level – is there a post confirmation programme? (Catholic leader award? There is a Duke of Edinburgh award, could there be a Catholic leader award?)
- As a Church – consideration needs to be had on how particular facets of the community have felt excluded given their personal circumstances (e.g. sexuality, marital status etc.) Perhaps these individuals have the perception that they will not be welcomed and thus choose to keep a low profile and not participate within the wider parish and church community.

Mission

- There is a strength of the Church through its masses, readings, homilies that the word of Jesus is being spread. This is agreed on across all age groups.
- This was the most poorly answered question and further work needs to be driven to try and capture this more effectively across the Parish.
- There is an understanding that we do look inwards for the work needed to be done in the parish. A strong sense that we need to sort our own community out prior to considering our outreach. There is very little to no outreach that is evident.
- There is a sense that there is not a bridge between the Parish and local Catholic Schools.
- An appetite for more Christian unity is evident.
- A need for better understanding of the scripture was evident in the responses.
- There is an small understanding that there is the SVP who wish to do more but may not be able to. A need for anonymity for those who may need support. This poses some potential pitfalls in that those who may need support may well suffer in silence and keep it to themselves.
- There is a belief across submissions that when we build community the mission will be easier for people to contribute to this effectively. Small cross section belief that some leadership on this is needed.
- There is a misunderstanding that the clergy are solely responsible for this.
- People unsure of what formation can be provided between communion and confirmation.

Opportunities under Mission

- There is a belief that more work is needed to be done between Church and Schools. Could there be better communication between parish and Church. A better understanding at Parish/diocese level what is being taught in schools to support the formation of our young Catholics.
- There are some individuals who wish to do more and work with
- What can the groups who make use of the Parish facilities give back to St Barts?
- How can the communion and confirmation programmes facilitate this better?
- What other agencies can the Parish convene with? That may be inter faith or specifically local charities etc.

Other Sentiments:

- The Synod only about what the Parish can do? Shouldn't we have a wider discussion about the "Church" and its traditional beliefs? Church views on controversial issues including: Contraception, abortion, homosexuality, divorcees came up. Mention that

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the PM had a catholic wedding despite being a confirmed Anglican as well as divorcee and children out of wedlock. What is the Church's stand on this? Both sides liberal and conservative views on Church tradition were equally represented. A need for some level of modernising was a recurring theme.

- Should there be more prominent roles for women? Vocation and changes to Priesthood?
- There is still hope within the responses that want to generate a community and make it as fulfilling and far reaching as can be. It needs a spark and openness.
- Increased use of technology was thought of as a potential solution to allowing others to participate at home. There was also the view that someone couldn't fully participate if it were online and so there was an insistence of the importance of being physically present.