

**7th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY
TIME
YEAR C**

19th-20th February 2022

*A Parish of the Diocese
of Motherwell.
The Bishop;
Rt. Rev. Joseph A. Toal
www.rcdom.org.uk
Scottish Charity No
SC011041*

FIRST READING

1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

Though the Lord delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm you.

A reading from the first Book of Samuel

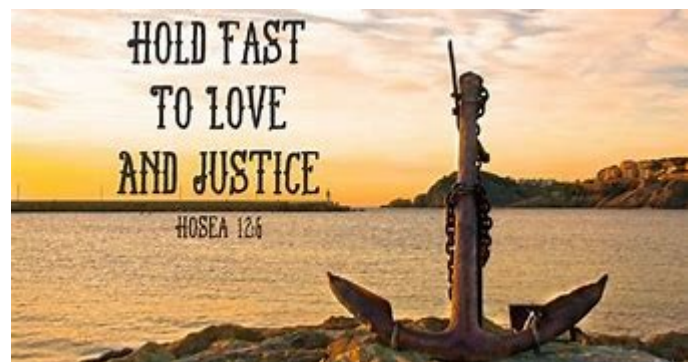
In those days, Saul went down to the desert of Ziph with three thousand picked men of Israel, to search for David in the desert of Ziph. So David and Abishai went among Saul's soldiers by night and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade, with his spear thrust into the ground at his head and Abner and his men sleeping around him.

Abishai whispered to David:

"God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day. Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I will not need a second thrust!"

But David said to Abishai, "Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the LORD'S anointed and remain unpunished?" So David took the spear and the water jug from their place at Saul's head, and they got away without anyone's seeing or knowing or awakening. All remained asleep, because the LORD had put them into a deep slumber.

Going across to an opposite slope, David stood on a remote hilltop at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner, and the troops. He said: "Here is the king's spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. The LORD will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness. Today, though the LORD delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the LORD'S anointed."



RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

He pardons all your iniquities,
heals all your ills.
He redeems your life from destruction,
crowns you with kindness and compassion.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

Merciful and gracious is the LORD,
slow to anger and abounding in kindness.
Not according to our sins does he deal with us,
nor does he requite us according to our crimes.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he put our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

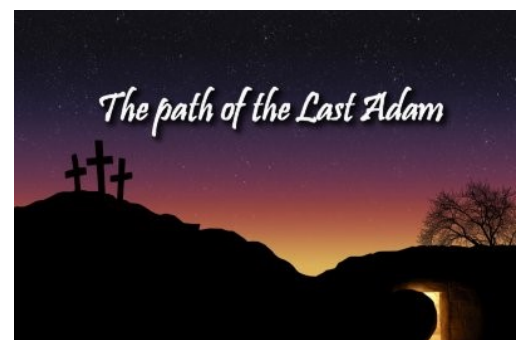
SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

It is written, *The first man, Adam, became a living being,*
the last Adam a life-giving spirit.
But the spiritual was not first;
rather the natural and then the spiritual.
The first man was from the earth, earthly;
the second man, from heaven.
As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly,
and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly.
Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one,
we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.



GOSPEL

Luke 6:27-38

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.



A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus said to his disciples:

“To you who hear I say,
love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.
To the person who strikes you on one cheek,
offer the other one as well,
and from the person who takes your cloak,
do not withhold even your tunic.
Give to everyone who asks of you,
and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back.
Do to others as you would have them do to you.
For if you love those who love you,
what credit is that to you?
Even sinners love those who love them.
And if you do good to those who do good to you,
what credit is that to you?
Even sinners do the same.
If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment,
what credit is that to you?
Even sinners lend to sinners,
and get back the same amount.
But rather, love your enemies and do good to them,
and lend expecting nothing back;
then your reward will be great
and you will be children of the Most High,
for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.
Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged.
Stop condemning and you will not be condemned.
Forgive and you will be forgiven.
Give, and gifts will be given to you;
a good measure, packed together, shaken down,
and overflowing,
will be poured into your lap.
For the measure with which you measure
will in return be measured out to you.”



REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

First Reading (1 Samuel 26:7-9, 12-13, 22-23). *The Lord put you in my power but I would not raise my hand.*

The Old Testament figure of David showed mercy towards his enemy, which explains the choice of this Old Testament reading to go with today's Gospel reading in which Jesus stresses the requirement of showing mercy in imitation of an all-merciful Father.

Second Reading (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). *We who have been modelled on the earthly man will be modelled on the heavenly man.*

In the present reading Paul illustrates this by the two prototypes of these, first (man) Adam and Jesus, the second Adam. Citing the Greek text of Genesis he recalls that the first Adam, formed from dust, became a living (but mortal) *psyche* "soul" (Genesis 2:7), while the second man, the Second Adam, whose origin in from heaven became a life-giving (and immortal) spirit. Our bodies bear are as perishable as Adam's ("We bear the image of the man of dust") but the future resurrection body will bear the image of Christ.

The Gospel (Luke 6:27-38). *Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate.*

Today's reading has a very impressive call by Jesus to his disciples to be compassionate beyond measure, to love their enemies, to do good to those who hate them, bless those who curse them, and pray for those who treat them badly, to give without expecting anything in return, in this way to be children of the Most High God, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Their behaviour in this regard is to go beyond that expected of others. The Sermon, as Luke presents it, gives us Jesus' concept of his mission which his disciples, in a life in obedience to his call, are expected to present to the world, the multitude. As one commentator (Eric Franklin) expresses himself at the end of his exposition of the Sermon: Luke pictures a community formed as a response to the grace of God revealed in Jesus and one which lives out the life of the kingdom which Jesus established and which the community's life itself anticipates. The sermon's demands are therefore radical. The disciples are to become like their master (verse 40): they are not to outdo his non-judgemental attitude. Their good fruit must reflect a "good treasure of the heart". The true disciple of the Lord hears his call and acts upon it (see Luke 8:15). *Martin McNamara MSC*

HOW JESUS TEACHES US TO BE DISCIPLES

IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

In Luke's Gospel some important key words and phrases emerge shortly after Jesus began his earthly ministry. **The first word is "Master"** in [Luke 5:5](#), and it is used by Peter when Jesus directs him and his fishing-crew to put out to sea again, after they had been working all night and caught nothing.

The second word is "Disciples" in [Luke 5:30](#). This word was first used by the scribes and Pharisees in Luke's gospel to describe three groups of people:

1. The people following them and their traditions,
2. The people following John the Baptist, and
3. The people who were following Jesus in the first days of His ministry.

By the time you get to [Luke 6:13](#) there are lots of "disciples" with Jesus, and it is from this larger group that Jesus is said to have chosen His "twelve Apostles" (see [Lk. 6:13-16](#)).

The third word is "Teacher," and it is used by Jesus with obvious reference to himself in [Luke 6:40](#) where he says,

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

In that verse, Jesus uses the word "disciple" and "teacher" together to build the framework for a particular kind of relationship between two people. There is a teacher, and there is a disciple who, according to Jesus, will become like his teacher when he is "fully trained."

The fourth and final word is "Follow," which seems to tie all the other words together. The first occurrence is [Luke 5:27-28](#) (as well as other places):

27 After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "**Follow** me." 28 And leaving everything, he rose and **followed** him."

In earlier verses, the entire fishing crew of Peter "left everything and **followed** him" (see [Lk. 5:11](#)).

Within the narrative flow of these texts, we can see a specific discipleship-process that Jesus is engaged in with people, that goes something like this:

1. Jesus is the Master-Teacher (Rabbi)
2. Jesus is calling people to follow Him, and to embrace the role of "disciples" and see Him as the Master and Teacher.
3. Some of them are listening to His call and leaving everything they know to follow Him.
4. While under His teaching, their responsibility is to become fully trained so that they can be like their teacher.
5. From out of this group of disciples, other groups are created for specific purposes prescribed by the Master-Teacher, Jesus.

If we use this process as a way of building a simple definition for "disciple," we might say that...

"In Luke's Gospel, *disciples* are people who are following Jesus together as their Master and Teacher so that they may all become just like Jesus."

This is discipleship in Luke. It is to follow Jesus, and to help others to do the same thing in the every-day stuff of life! A definition like this helps me to un-clutter my life from all of the busyness that often crowds my concept of Christianity.

This is simple.

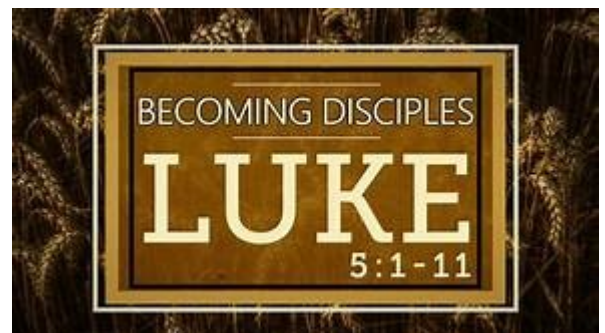
This is central.

This is the mission and the preoccupation for my own life and the life of the church of Jesus.

Follow Jesus as master and teacher.

Help others to do the same thing.

Period.



Forgive others,
not because they
deserve forgiveness,
but because you
deserve peace.



Opening to God: Ilia Delio

Prayer is the longing of the human heart for God. It is a yearning and desire for relationship with God, and it is God's attention to our desire: God-in-communion with us. The great spiritual writer Augustine of Hippo [354–430] captured the longing of the human heart in the beginning of his *Confessions*: “You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” [1] We long for God because we are created by God, and this longing is both the source of our hope in God and the very thing we resist. Prayer is an awakening to the fact that the fulfilment of my life lies in God.

God delights in creation and loves each of us with a personal love. Prayer, therefore, is God's desire to breathe in me, to be the spirit of my life, to draw me into the fullness of life. When I pray—when I breathe with God—I become part of the intimacy of God's life. The Franciscan theologian, Saint Bonaventure [c. 1217–1274], wrote in his *Soliloquy*, “[God] is the One who is closer to you than you are to yourself.” [2] Prayer is recognizing the intimate in-dwelling of God in our lives, the One who remains faithful in love even when the world around us may fall apart. . . .

To pray is to open up oneself to God who dwells within us. It means holding back nothing from God and sharing everything with God. . . . Only the grace of God can enable us to let go of our fears and allow God to be the God of our lives. True prayer is fundamental for life in God. It is that grace of conversion that opens up our hearts



to realize the humble presence of God in our lives. Prayer of the heart is unceasing prayer, where God breathes in us and our hearts are turned toward God. This deepening of our lives in the divine life is the path to self-discovery. In and through prayer we discover our true selves, the self that God has created each of us to be. . . .

Life in God should be a daring adventure of love but often we settle for mediocrity. We follow the daily practice of prayer but we are unwilling or, for various reasons, unable to give ourselves totally to God. To settle on the plain of mediocrity is to settle for something less than God, which leaves our hearts restless and unfulfilled. . . . Prayer is that dynamic, life-giving relationship with God by which we grow deep in God's Word, strong in God's grace, and free in God's love to dream with God the unimaginable.

ON MEDITATING

When we meditate, we enter the mind of Christ from the ground up. We settle into the mystery of the concrete immediacy of our breathing and our bodily being. We are quietly attentive to the thoughts and feelings that arise, endure, and pass away within us. Sitting in this way, we do not fly off into some eternal realm. Rather, we enter into the mind of Christ, which knows and is the divine generosity of the concrete immediacy of ourselves just as we are.

This is why we sit in meditation: so that we might settle into this ordinary mind; so that in becoming, at last, just ourselves, we might realize our eternal oneness with God.

There is no single way to meditate. However, there are certain components that facilitate the process:

Body Posture: Sit still. Sit straight. Place your hands in a comfortable or meaningful position in your lap. Close your eyes or lower them toward the ground. Breathe slowly and naturally

With respect to **your mind**, be present, open, and awake, neither clinging to nor rejecting anything. Take a stance of observing all your thoughts, feelings and reactions as they pass through you rather than responding unconsciously from them.

And with respect to **attitude**, maintain nonjudgmental compassion toward yourself- as you discover yourself clinging to and rejecting everything - and nonjudgmental compassion toward others in their powerlessness that is one with yours

In this stance of humble acceptance, simply re-instate the meditative stance of being present, open and awake each time you realise you've drifted off yet again into the clinging and rejecting of your wandering mind.

There are two methods to help stabilise meditative awareness. The first is to use your awareness of your breathing as an anchoring place in present moment awareness. Each time you realise you have once again drifted off into sleepiness, day-dreaming, or clinging to this or that sensation, thought or feeling, simply renew your awareness of your breathing as a way of re-grounding yourself in meditative awareness of the present moment. The silent, interior repetition of a word or phrase is another traditional method for sustaining present-moment attentiveness.

The ego self struggles in its efforts to sit present and awake, as a way of being open to God's presence, until the ego exhausts all its own means of overcoming its inability to realise oneness with God. Then, just as all seems lost, we look up to see God with us with open arms. Suddenly, we realise there is no place within us that is not encountered, embraced, and made whole in a love that does not even care to hear our litany of shortcomings and regrets. We are profoundly loved by God without any foundations for being loved, except divine love itself. *Anne Solomon*

On Wednesday, 12th January, His Holiness Pope Francis issued the Call to Prayer below and invited us to respond by praying and sharing the prayer as widely as possible:

" Eternal Father, You have made the whole world stop walking for a while.

You have forcibly silenced the noise that we have all created around us.

You have made us bend our knees and ask for miracles.

You closed Your Churches so that we realize how dark our world is without You in it.

You humiliated the proud and powerful. The economy is collapsing, businesses are closing.

We have been very proud to think that everything we have, everything we own, have been the result of our hard work.

We have forgotten that it was Your grace, Your mercy, that made us who we are and has given us everything we have.

We are going around in circles looking for some cure for this disease, when in fact we need to humble ourselves and ask for guidance and wisdom only from You.

We have been living our lives as if we are here on Earth forever, as if there is no Heaven, no Purgatory, no Hell.

Perhaps this virus is actually Your way of purifying and cleansing our souls, bringing us back to You.

Today, as these words travel the internet, may all who see them join their hearts and hands in prayer, asking for forgiveness, asking for healing and protection against this virus, but above all, asking that Your Holy and Divine Will be done and not ours.



GOD we beg You, deliver us from all evil on Earth if it is Your will!

Father, You have been patiently waiting for us to turn our faces to You, to repent of our sins. We are sorry to ignore Your voice! Selfishly, sometimes we have forgotten that You are GOD!! Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my house, but one word from you will be enough to heal me!

You Lord only need to say the Word and our souls will be healed.

We ask You for healing and deliverance in Jesus' name! By the infinite merits of his Most Sacred Heart and of the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary. Amen.

Pope Francis

SUMMARY REPORT OF OUR FIRST SYNODAL SESSION

COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

In our church, as individuals and a community we should welcome strangers and newcomers. Get a feel for being together with others. We can put barriers in our head which prevents us reaching out – that people will feel patronised, that they view things differently, that they are too difficult. A need to put ourselves in others shoes, to recognise that they can find themselves in quite different circumstances. Conversation is vital to community. Together we can accomplish so much more than by ourselves.

The daily, morning Mass gives a real sense of togetherness and community. This is what we want from the whole parish. This synodal experience is also what we want everyone to experience. Awareness of our spiritual journey together is growing.

A sense that we don't walk together – people are prepared to walk away for fickle reasons eg they don't like the singing or attend only because of the Sunday obligation. A feeling that people just do what they want. There is a reluctance among many practising Catholics to take more part in their parish. What exactly does walking together mean and what does it hope to achieve? Do we simply leave behind those we deem not "true" Catholics?

We must be as inclusive as possible in our parish life and find ways to reach out especially to young people. Are clubs and Masses for them the way forward? The obstacles to young people attending are great – mental health issues, peer pressure, social media. There is a generational change in people's attitude to the Church. The SVDP is a good example of inclusion and reaching out as are the Mini-Vinnies in the primary school.

There are perceived obstacles blocking certain people from attending: the divorced, the poor, the unemployed, gay people. Some even don't come because they can't afford to. How does the Church look from the outside: old, white, male-run, hetero-normative?

Covid has made people wary of reaching out. Once the emergency has passed we need to make more effort to let people know they are not alone and to identify those who are not coming back.

LISTENING

We need to slow down and give ourselves enough time to truly listen and pick up how people are feeling deep-down. Loneliness and poverty are barriers to being listened to. We might think some people are difficult to approach but we can be surprised by the welcome reaction. The parish is there for all of us in hard times. How can we best get this across to everyone especially if they feel the community is not very welcoming?

We can develop the art of listening through prayer when we hear both God and ourselves. This creates the peace within us which enables us to listen.

The voice of the world is very loud and can drown out the Church's voice. The Church's teaching should be explained more clearly and though this might mean some people don't accept it, a stronger church will emerge. Fear that the Church's message is being diluted and fear for the future of the Church.

Refreshing to hear other people express their fears and hopes and to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. Good, too, to listen and identify with the prayer experiences of others.

SOME WORDS USED DURING THE MEETING

Relaxed, comfortable, peace, quiet. Reassured at the presence of the Spirit. Hopeful. Experience the presence of Jesus – given an image. Confirmed. Feeling of being relieved at “getting prayer out”. Sense of yearning, awareness of something deeper, desire to be closer to the Lord. Self-knowledge – word from scripture focussed into a moment of self-knowledge. The Emmaus walk - disciples thought they knew and the Lord didn't – in fact the reverse. Security in the sense of Jesus walking with us – we all walk together with Jesus.

OTHER COMMENTS

It is so encouraging to be given chance to share - to be asked about views. Good to meet others and discuss things. Reassurance that we're not alone – sense of community. “We're not mad” – individuals independently all identifying similar themes - initially afraid to speak out in case they were thought to be 'mad'. Worried about the challenges ahead – how to reach young people. Sense of welcome in the group and from the parish – what about the 'lapsed'? the marginalised – need to reach out to them. We need to represent the 'voiceless'. How do we 'tap into' the “middle group”/young adults?

SUMMARY REPORT OF OUR SECOND SYNODAL SESSION

SPEAKING OUT

Some voices in the church speak more loudly than others and may not best represent the Church – Sancta Familia Media could be an example of this. Spokespeople for the Church must represent the different voices in the Church and not simply take one line. We need truly representative advocates formed in the spirit of the 2nd Vatican Council.

It can be difficult to discard old attitudes which discouraged speaking out. Perhaps this reflected an understanding of God as a God of fear. There is a cultural issue, too, where speaking out was discouraged. We must recognise that the “official” Church hasn’t always got things right and so it’s important that other voices be heard. We need to hear deeply Christ’s words “You foolish men!” More women’s voices!

The youth are “speaking” with their feet. Cajoling and threatening words no longer work. Ways should be found which encourages them to find their voice in the Church. They don’t expect adults not to talk about their faith or be embarrassed about going to church. We can be more direct with them in inviting them to come along.

Speaking and listening are first steps to a new way of being Church. The willingness to speak out to the larger world prevents the Church from becoming inward-looking. We need to recognise the authority the Church can have in speaking to the world and serving the common good of all especially the marginalised of today eg immigrants. Would a Christian political party help?

The Holy Spirit is with the community when it speaks in unity. The Spirit will also lead us to see what we have in common with other faiths and find ways to speak together.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION

There can be no room for a “holier-than-thou” attitude – this discourages and marginalises. A move from an individualised and privatised faith to an evangelising one will make us more confident in speaking about our faith. Also this prevents the Church from being seen as a “closed shop.” This requires a new mindset and a desire to leave our comfort zone.

People do want to be involved but are not sure how to go about it. In which ways do we address this? Is this our only opportunity? What is hindering deeper involvement?

DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

There are many issues which bring together Church and society – climate change, poverty, asylum seekers, food banks. There are good people outside the Church doing good things and they too are led by the Holy Spirit. Love is what there is in common and is what unites church goers and non-goers.

We need to remember the good things we are doing however small and the contribution they make to society. Actions speak louder than words.

What is the purpose of reaching out to society – is it simply to bring more people to church?

Dialogue with society will not always be about agreement. How do we handle different views?

There is a need to develop spaces and times for people to meet and reflect on issues in the Church and in society. Promoting fellowship within the parish will foster our understanding of how we can serve society. "Parish" rather than "Church" is a better way to refer to our faith community.

Parish – Fellowship – Community – Sharing – Dialogue: these are key words for the sort of community we desire.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MEETING

Totally relaxed – came in mind buzzing – time passed so quickly

Renewed

Sense of searching going on – sense of something going on

Anxious coming in to find the tables had been mixed up – now relaxed with newer people

Calm – was downcast from the reading until saw a vision of angels

Overawed – "the only one" – aware of the mysteries of faith. Sense of unity

"Getting myself out of the way" – feeling the Spirit beginning to speak through me

Anxious coming in – listening to the passage made me more relaxed and happier – sense of permission to say what I felt I should say

Confused – the Emmaus walkers 'are the church', but in spite of all they had heard

SOME SPECIFIC ISSUES

Do we need more opportunity for discussion beyond these 4 meetings?

Many issues – a new way of being church – need for more ongoing dialogue leading to concrete outcomes

Practical support to enable people to come to Mass eg creches

We are church- we have the responsibility to be church – need for more discussion leading to practical outcomes

Noted the commonality of the church- what is church? – we are church – there should be more emphasis on Parish and what that entails – people rather than bricks and mortar – fellowship and community

What if another parish priest comes along and dismantles everything?

Eucharistic ministers not being used: that pastoral activity needs to be re-instated
Is lunchtime on a Saturday a good time to meet?

SUMMARY REPORT OF OUR THIRD SYNODAL SESSION

CELEBRATION

Our Servers, Readers & Eucharistic ministers all encourage others to fuller participation in the Mass. Parishioners, in particular women, should be officially appointed to the ministries of Reader and Eucharist. Is there a place for more lay-led celebrations in which parishioners could come together to reflect, for instance, on the Sunday readings?

The Mass is a celebration with others alongside our celebration with the Lord. Gathering for Mass brings us together as a community. How do we encourage more active participation by families? Do the demands of work and family prevent this? How do we bring our celebration out of the church and into the world?

Lockdown did have some positive benefits – it helped us realise that we were missing something good when we couldn't attend Mass; it gave more time for us to reflect and pray; we became more aware of the beauty of this God-given world.

Mass gives us a clearer focus -- we can see the Lord more clearly in the Eucharist, in others and in ourselves. Our understanding of the Scriptures deepens. There is a sense of renewal and willingness to reach out to others.

ECUMENISM

Bigotry and sectarianism have sharply declined but, alongside that, religion is rarely a topic of conversation with non-Catholic friends and family.

There is ecumenical work in our town – Streetlevel, joint services, World Day of Prayer, Christian Aid, Scouts, CHOICES shop. Good progress has been made but it could be seen as superficial. Could more be done together especially in the work of evangelisation? Together we could have a stronger Christian voice – there is more that unites than divides. We must focus on what we agree on rather than where we differ. We can learn from other churches especially regarding synodality.

AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

Do we need a different model of being church especially in the light of child abuse? Governance is all top-down, and all by men. A priest coming newly into a parish can abolish the parish structures on his own authority. Everything is too priest-dependent. This needs to change. The role of women must be expanded.

Have we become a middle-class Church so that unintentionally others feel excluded? Everyone is involved in the work of encouraging and reaching out, ready to promote and explain our faith. Sometimes when help is offered the priest it is refused and this can cause lasting hurt.

The parish retreat was a good experience of participation but it wasn't followed through. What are the ways to involve the wider parish community?

All of us need to discern together the “signs of the times.” Often society moves more quickly than the Church with the result that the Church looks left behind on certain issues eg women, sexuality, injustice.

There is some division in the Church at present crystallised in pro- and anti- Pope Francis.

We know that change is needed but it is difficult to know where to start at parish level. But already in these weeks, people feel that they have been given a voice and have the confidence to speak. As we proceed, it will be important to have clear structures which invite the people to participate and to develop team-work. A clearer idea that all are the church, not just the clergy, will foster co-responsibility. From this will emerge that every individual has gifts which must be recognised and used. Succession planning is also needed as priest and parishioners move on. The role of the Parish Pastoral Council needs reviewing.

Partnership, co-responsibility, team-work, participation were all key-words which emerged.

SUMMARY REPORT OF OUR FOURTH SYNODAL SESSION

DISCERNING AND DECIDING

This depends on listening to the Holy Spirit and to be open to his guidance. It involves hearing as many voices as possible and establishing the platform for people’s voices to be heard with the view to establishing some consensus about the way forward. A love of the Scriptures and prayer together are also essential parts of this process. Listening also to other Christians and hearing their experience is required.

Part of this is discerning what belongs to the heart of the faith and what are human traditions which can be changed and developed eg celibacy, artificial contraception. This requires an openness on the part of all members of the Church and not a retreat into opposing factions. The time of top-down decision making is over.

The importance of developing and growing one’s spirituality was mentioned; becoming aware of the different types of spirituality within the Church eg Ignatian. This could be a way of engaging those whose faith is weak – showing the practical results of faith. Creativity in the practice of the faith should be encouraged. On-going renewal in faith is needed to future-proof the parish and build resilience – for instance, if the time comes when the parish no longer has a residential priest.

The scandals in the Church show how the present decision-making and discerning process is flawed.

Active participation by all should be the presumption in the life of the Church. This will strengthen the leadership roles of priest and bishop.

FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

The decision by the bishops to re-introduce the Sunday obligation is an example of a Church without synodality. Getting the thoughts of parishioners to the hierarchy is an uphill struggle.

Everyone has to be receptive to change and growth if synodality is to take root. How exactly will a synodal Church look like?

We must avoid creating the feeling that nothing will change. But change can happen immediately if and when we become a welcoming parish – saying hello to the newcomer, creating a supportive space for the single mother, the divorced, the widowed, the unemployed. Meeting socially after Mass for a cup of tea, spending some time talking to people are powerful ways to encourage belonging.

Mass, although the central act of our faith, cannot be the only place we meet. New ways of meeting and talking about our faith need to be found. We will understand more deeply what synodality is by doing it -- coming together. A stronger connection with our schools is required. Social media must be part of our synodal experience.

THE DAILY EXAMEN

A great way to pray is to look for God's presence in your life. More than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness by proposing what has been called the Daily Examen. The Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us. Try this version of St. Ignatius's prayer.

- 1. Become aware of God's presence.** Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.
- 2. Review the day with gratitude.** Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.
- 3. Pay attention to your emotions.** One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.

- 4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.** Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

- 5. Look toward tomorrow.** Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Our Father.

UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

Many of the restrictions we have grown used to in the past year and more have now been lifted.

However, we are still required to sanitise our hands on entering and leaving the church, wear face-coverings and practise respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

If you attend the same daily, Vigil or Sunday Mass each week, there is no need to book or sign in. If you come to a Mass which you don't usually attend, you are asked to leave your name. There will be a sheet at the entrance for this purpose.

The distribution of Holy Communion will revert to its previous place in the Mass. Please wait until the usher invites you to come forward. You are still asked to receive the Sacrament in the hand. At present, the Sign of Peace is still prohibited

The Collection during Mass and the Procession of the Gifts are now re-instated.

The use of hymn books and Bulletin sheets is permitted.

The longer version of the Bulletin will still be published on-line.

May I thank all of you for your support and dedication during these months of lock-down. In particular, thanks to our ushers and sanitizers. And thanks to all those who quietly helped their neighbours and took steps to make that need known or found them support.

The church is now fully open for private visits. The Sanctuary area is roped off and alarmed so it is not possible to light votive candles.

Remember there are many resources to foster your prayer and spiritual life. Please continue to check our parish website and Facebook page for new materials. Each week I post a video with a little reflection on the Sunday Gospel. Also check out our Links page on the website and you will be directed to other useful sites. Remember our twitter account too—[@saintaths](#). Some beautiful prayers and reflections can be accessed there.

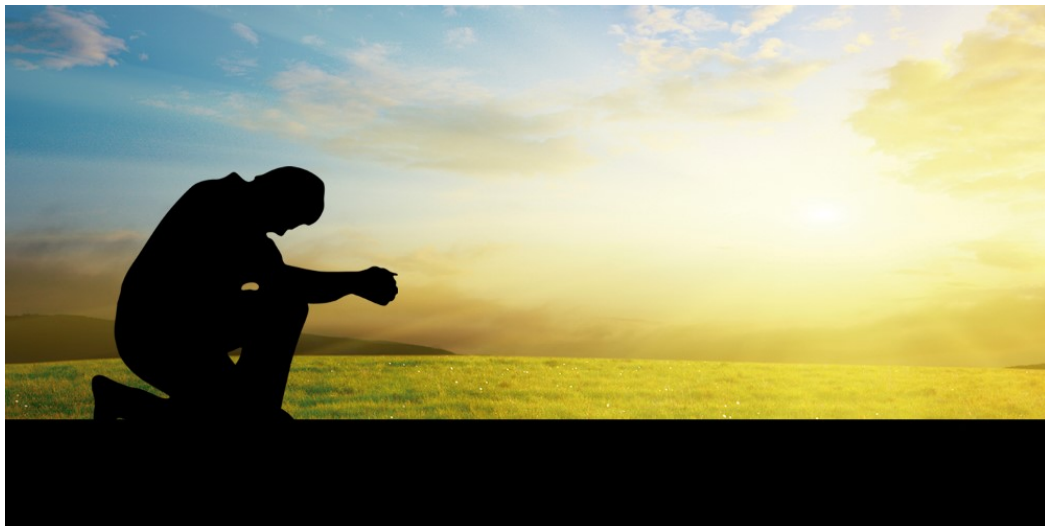
Our diocesan website also has online prayer resources—go to <https://www.rcdom.org.uk>

There is also a closed Facebook group you might wish to join—Contemplative Theology. All you have to do is ask to join. There are also Twitter accounts you may find helpful: [@LectioMotherwel](#), [@rcmotherwell](#) and [@motherwellRE](#) Recently a new Facebook page has been opened: Motherwell Diocese Adult Formation. You'll find material there aimed at deepening our understanding of the faith.

The Liturgy of the Hours, the prayers and readings of the Mass and much more can be found at www.ibreviary.com

Beautiful reflections for all seasons and times can be found at www.thesacredbraid.com

Another good resource is <http://www.catholicireland.net> Reflections on the readings of the Mass, suggestions for children's faith formation and lots more.



LIVE STREAMING

WE USE LIVE STREAMING TO ENABLE:

1. HOUSEBOUND PARISHIONERS TO ENGAGE WITH MASS FROM HOME RELATIVES/FRIENDS WHO CANNOT ATTEND A BAPTISM / WEDDING / FUNERAL TO VIEW IT
2. EVANGELISATION: ENABLING THOSE WHO CANNOT OR DO NOT ATTEND CHURCH TO ENGAGE WITH ACTS OF WORSHIP.

THESE REASONS ARE NECESSARY IN THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE CHURCH. THE IMAGES ARE MADE AVAILABLE LIVE ONLINE AND CAN BE ACCESSED BY ANYONE. LIVE STREAMING IS CARRIED OUT CONTINUOUSLY FROM OUR CHURCH. YOU MAY LOG ON AT ANY TIME TO PAY A VIRTUAL VISIT.

THE CAMERA FOCUSES ONLY ON THE SANCTUARY AREA AND THE AREA IMMEDIATELY IN FRONT OF IT. IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO HAVE YOUR IMAGE LIVE STREAMED PLEASE BEAR THIS IN MIND.

About Us This Parish is part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of MOTHERWELL, registered charity number SC011041. If you have questions about this notice, please contact frmagill@rcdom.org.uk

