

FOR WE LIVE BY
faith
NOT BY
sight
2 CORINTHIANS 5:7



18th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR C

30th-31st JULY

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

FIRST READING

Wisdom 18:6-9

Just as you punished our adversaries, you glorified us whom you had summoned.

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

The night of the passover was known beforehand to our fathers,
that, with sure knowledge of the oaths in which they put their faith,
they might have courage.

Your people awaited the salvation of the just
and the destruction of their foes.

For when you punished our adversaries,
in this you glorified us whom you had summoned.

For in secret the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice
and putting into effect with one accord the divine institution.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 33:1, 12, 18-19, 20-22

℟. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

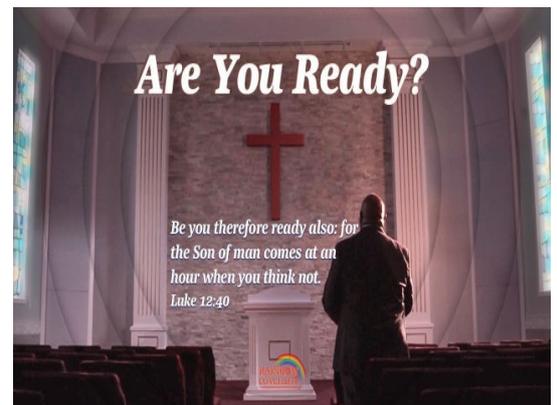
Exult, you just, in the LORD;
praise from the upright is fitting.

Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he has chosen for his own inheritance.

℟. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.

℟. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.



SECOND READING

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19 or 11:1-2, 8-12

Abraham looked forward to the city whose architect and maker is God.

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brothers and sisters:

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for
and evidence of things not seen.

Because of it the ancients were well attested.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place
that he was to receive as an inheritance;
he went out, not knowing where he was to go.

By faith he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country,
dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise;
for he was looking forward to the city with foundations,
whose architect and maker is God.

By faith he received power to generate,
even though he was past the normal age
—and Sarah herself was sterile—

for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy.

So it was that there came forth from one man,
himself as good as dead,
descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky
and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

All these died in faith.

They did not receive what had been promised
but saw it and greeted it from afar
and acknowledged themselves to be strangers and aliens on earth,
for those who speak thus show that they are seeking a homeland.

If they had been thinking of the land from which they had come,
they would have had opportunity to return.

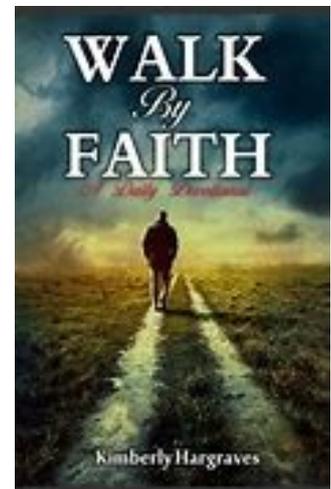
But now they desire a better homeland, a heavenly one.

Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God,
for he has prepared a city for them.

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac,
and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son,
of whom it was said,

“Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name.”

He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead,
and he received Isaac back as a symbol.



ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Matthew 24:42, 44

℟. Alleluia, alleluia.

Stay awake and be ready!

For you do not know on what day the Son of Man will come.

℟. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Luke 12:32-48

You also must be prepared.



A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Do not be afraid any longer, little flock,
for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.

Sell your belongings and give alms.

Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out,
an inexhaustible treasure in heaven

that no thief can reach nor moth destroy.

For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

“Gird your loins and light your lamps

and be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding,
ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks.

Blessed are those servants

whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.

Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself,

have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them.

And should he come in the second or third watch

and find them prepared in this way,

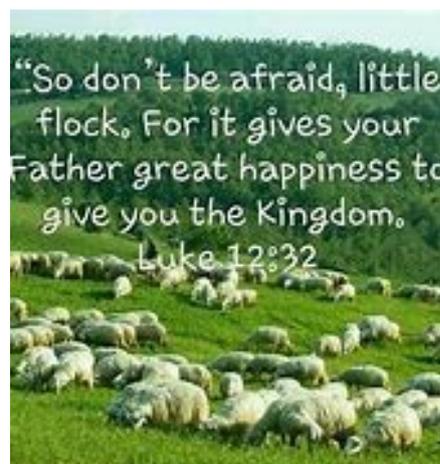
blessed are those servants.

Be sure of this:

if the master of the house had known the hour
when the thief was coming,

he would not have let his house be broken into.

You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect,
the Son of Man will come.”



Then Peter said,

“Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?”

And the Lord replied,

“Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward
whom the master will put in charge of his servants
to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?

Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so.

Truly, I say to you, the master will put the servant
in charge of all his property.

But if that servant says to himself,

‘My master is delayed in coming,’
and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants,
to eat and drink and get drunk,
then that servant’s master will come
on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour
and will punish the servant severely
and assign him a place with the unfaithful.

That servant who knew his master’s will

but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will
shall be beaten severely;
and the servant who was ignorant of his master’s will
but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating
shall be beaten only lightly.

Much will be required of the person entrusted with much,
and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.”

SOME NOTES ON THE GOSPEL

We pray weekly, if not daily, for the kingdom to come on earth. What are we praying for? What comes to mind when you think of or pray for the kingdom?

My guess is that most of us think of the kingdom as something to be possessed: a reward from God, a perfect life in which we have everything we want and everything goes our way, an ideal world. But what if it's not? What if the kingdom is not something to be possessed or had but a different way of being? And here's why I ask that. Right after Jesus says, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," he tells us to sell our possessions and give alms, and to make purses that do not wear out. He talks about thieves that do not come near and moths that do not destroy.

Jesus is offering another vision of life, a kingdom vision. He is calling into question a possessive way of life. The kingdom is not a different place, a reward, or a thing to be had. It is a different way of being, living, and relating. The kingdom is not a "where" or a "what" but a "how."

When I live a possessive life I am more focused on me than we, more passionate about my rights than my responsibilities, and more concerned about being right than doing what's right. I worry about the thief that steals and the moth that destroys. I fear not only not having enough but that I am not enough. I am always striving for more: more money, more stuff, more status, more success, more control, even more of God. Does any of that sound familiar? Resonate with your life?

We're at our best when we live non-possessive lives. We become more welcoming and hospitable. We forgive more freely. We're more generous with our time, money, and resources. We love more extravagantly. We see more clearly our deep interconnection with and need of others. A non-possessive life deepens our conversations and intimacy. It makes us better parents, spouses, and friends. We handle conflict and differences in better and more productive ways. We open our hearts and minds to other people and new possibilities. We're more creative and less judgmental of ourselves and others. Life is more full and we are more free to live. That's how I want to live, most of us probably do. We want to live in the kingdom of life.

Fear is probably the greatest impediment to a non-possessive life. Most of us live in fear, consciously or unconsciously, of losing what we have and not getting what we don't have. Maybe we should be more afraid of what we already have, of being owned by our possessions and desires. Maybe that's what Jesus is talking about when he says, "Do not be afraid." Do not be afraid of a non-possessive life.

Rev Mike Marsh



A POEM BY MALCOLM GUIE

Psalm 16

XVI Conserva me, Domine

Then help me, step by step, my guide and friend.

Preserve me O my God in whom I trust.

My other goods are nothing in the end,

How quickly they decay, how swiftly rust,

But through it all you stay and comfort me,

My one abiding joy, when all the rest

Have flown so suddenly. For now I see

My true inheritance, now I look up

And find you still beside me, showing me

The path of life. In your right hand the cup

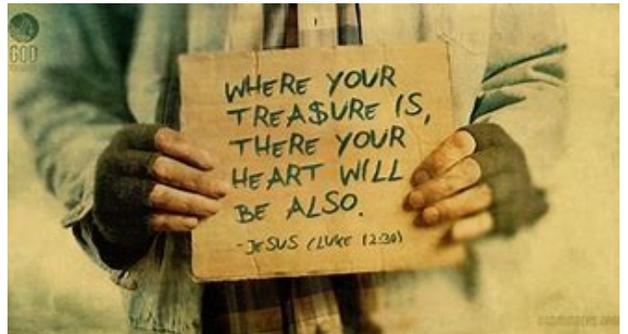
Of blessings full to overflowing, your

Left hand upholds me still, gives me hope.

I have a goodly heritage! You pour

On me your graces, undeserved, you raise

And comfort me until I fall no more.



LISTENING

I've often marvelled, that the first word of *The Rule of St. Benedict* isn't pray, worship, or even love. It's *listen*. This small, unobtrusive word speaks in a whisper. To anyone who studies Benedictine spirituality, the phrase *listen . . . with the ear of the heart* becomes so familiar we can easily lose sight of how revolutionary it is. Listening in the Benedictine sense is not a passive mission. Benedict [c. 480–547] tells us we must *attend* to listening. In some translations of *The Rule*, we are to actively *incline* ourselves toward it, and nurture it in our everyday activities. Listening is an act of will. . . .

Listening cracks open the door to another Benedictine concept from which most of us would rather run,—that of obedience. . . . Obedience comes from the Latin, *oboedire*, to give ear, to harken, to listen. The Benedictine writer Esther de Waal says that obedience moves us from our “contemporary obsession with the self,” and inclines us toward others. . . . [St. Benedict] moves beyond the common understanding of the word as solely an authoritarian, top-down dynamic. He stresses instead *mutual obedience*, a horizontal relationship where careful listening and consideration is due to each member of the community from each member, as brothers and sisters. *It is by this way of obedience*, he says, *that we go to God.* Judith Valente

Author Esther de Waal describes how in Benedictine spirituality there is an inherent connection between listening and responsive action:

To listen closely, with every fibre of our being, at every moment of the day, is one of the most difficult things in the world, and yet it is essential if we mean to find the God whom we are seeking. If we stop listening to what we find hard to take then, as the Abbot of St. Benoît-sur-Loire puts it in a striking phrase, ‘We’re likely to pass God by without even noticing Him.’ And now it is our obedience which proves that we have been paying close attention. . . . So to obey [in the Benedictine tradition] really means to hear and then act upon what we have heard, or, in other words, to see that the listening achieves its aim. We are not being truly attentive unless we are prepared to act on what we hear. If we hear and do nothing more about it, then the sounds have simply fallen on our ears and it is not apparent that we have actually heard them at all.

SOME REMINDERS FROM THE SYNODAL PROCESS OF WHO WE ARE

What defines the People of God?

It is a people that belongs to God.
This means that it goes beyond any
nation, continent, language, or race:



One is a member by baptism
and by living according to the
teachings of Jesus and his
Church.



Its identity is to be children
of God, which gives
freedom and grants equal
dignity to all.



Its law is the new
commandment of love.
"You shall love your
neighbour as yourself".



Its mission is to be the light
of the world by proclaiming
Jesus' Good News of love,
peace, and fraternity.



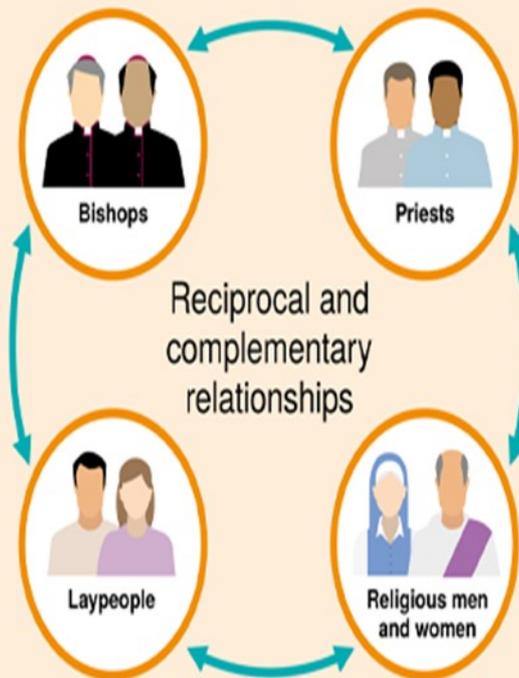
Its destiny is to live and
implement in their local context
a society of justice, joy, peace,
love, and mutual respect.

“

*Being People of God means being missionary disciples
who communicate to others the gifts they received.*

In the Church, we are all faithful

In the Church, all the faithful
constitute a single people of God:



They form a group in which there is equality of rights and duties. Each member is at the service of the others.

Pastors and the other faithful are bound to each other by mutual need and complementarity.



The Church understands itself as the People of God:
a community of people who lives among peoples and cultures.

The Church = People of God = Faithful or Baptized

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*

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

