

'BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER'

Summary report on the
synodal journey
in Hallam Diocese
April 2022



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

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"A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, journeys together. How is this journeying together happening today in your church?"

"What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?" (PD26)

In October 2021 Pope Francis called for a 'Synod on Synodality', asking that the first phase be a process of encounter, listening and discerning with all people of good will, responding to the questions above.

Here in Hallam we used 4 ways of getting people involved. Every parish was invited to nominate two representatives plus anyone else from any other group. Meetings were held to share ideas and learn about listening and discernment and parishes determined their own ways of synodal journeying in their parish or group.

There were open meetings for those whose parishes weren't offering opportunities. There was a survey of relevant questions available online or in church. And there were individual postcards to be sent to Pope Francis. Responses from all of these were gathered together and analysed by a group of volunteers under the guidance of an independent researcher.

The fruits of this part of the synodal journey are summarised in the themes below.

MAIN THEMES

that emerged from the responses
of the people

OUTREACH, COMMUNITY AND MISSION

- "Catholicism should be accessible to all, not just in Church, nurturing the community".
- There was a strong desire to be an outward looking, inclusive community, welcoming others and helping those in need at home and abroad and evangelising.
- Suggestions included more social events with extra effort to reach e.g. lonely, mothers and babies, single people, young, and recognising the gift's and needs of the elderly.

INCLUSIVITY

- Women's role in the Church.
- Reclaiming the model of early Church with any role open to all including ordination, according to the discernment of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- "A Church that welcomes everyone and gives equal respect to all children of God; women, people with disabilities, LGBTQA+, children, divorced and remarried."
- The pain and sadness caused by Church teaching and behaviour which doesn't afford equality.
- Opportunities for collaborative ministry with priests.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

YOUNG PEOPLE

- Hear the voices of the young people, asking for a more encouraging and inviting inclusive Church.
- e.g. Deanery youth workers, sessions for young people, thinking about how young people can be called back to the Church.

COMMUNICATION

Needs to improve in all ways

- Inclusive language of the liturgy,
- Communication between laity, clergy, parish and diocese.
- Talking to each other about faith
- Formation opportunities
- Ecumenism

ABUSE, INTOLERANCE, AND RECONCILIATION

- Pain, shame, sadness and anger from sexual, emotional, spiritual, physical abuses of the Church.
- Need for ongoing collective truth-seeking, to confront all aspects of the trauma, (including intergenerational), with time given for listening and understanding and for public reconciliation and atonement, in order for healing to take place.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- "My faith is the centre of my life". Many described a call to holiness.
- "I feel the Holy Spirit is asking me to develop a much greater love, knowledge and understanding of scripture".
- Sharing the Sacraments with others is a joy.
- Sadness from some about reduced opportunity to attend the pre-Vatican II liturgy in Latin.
- People can appreciate liturgy in different ways, there is room for different ways of praying together.

CLERGY, POWER AND HIERARCHY

- Appreciation for charisms, pastoral work, commitment and hard work of the parish priest.
- Concern about the wellbeing of elderly, overworked, isolated priests.
- Tensions between laity and priests with differing expectations of the priest as 'servant leader' not always shared and damage caused by this.
- Married clergy, optional celibacy, women priests and deacons, widely supported .
- Regular reviews of clergy training, good practice, accountability and development needs.

GOOD WORKS

- Rebuild an understanding that integral to being a Catholic is to follow Catholic teaching on social justice - feed the hungry, care for the sick and the prisoner, provide comfort and shelter for the refugee and care for our common home.
- More pastoral visits.

CHANGE AND MODERNISATION

- "A simpler Church more firmly grounded in the the essence of the Gospel message"
- A spectrum of views:
 - Changes to Canon Law, attitudes to sexuality, women, role of laity, role of social media
 - priestly formation and celibacy.
 - "No change".

POPE FRANCIS

Love, appreciation and gratitude for Pope Francis and his invitation to the synodal pathway.



SYNODAL JOURNEY

FINDINGS ON THE PROCESS

- Many responses spoke about enjoying the Synodal process; having an opportunity to speak and feedback about their experience of the Church, and feeling their voice was being heard
- There is a desire to understand the next steps, and for this listening exercise not to be the end of the process. Highly engaged respondents spoke about the importance of the Church continuing to listen to the laity into the future.

NEXT STEPS

- There is an opportunity to change, grow and thrive with continued engagement building on the Synodal process.
- **Discernment** needs time and it has become one of the strands to take forward into the next phase of the synodal process.
- People valued the opportunity to share their faith and continuing with such opportunities was one of the requests to the diocese going forward in the synodal journey.

A Diocesan Synod Review Meeting is scheduled for March 2023 to encourage continuing involvement





SUMMARY & TAKEAWAYS

"The members of this engaged Catholic community want to see the Church (local and global) thrive into the future. There is concern that the Church faces existential problems. Concerted collaboration and new ways of working together are needed for the synodal Church of the 21st Century."

- The same key themes emerged across the diocese from most groups.
- The strength and depth of feelings, positive and negative, were conveyed very strongly and movingly in the responses to surveys and listening encounters. Synodality was clearly seen as a Spirit-led process for moving onward as Church, and prayers for this were asked for and continue.

There is belief and trust that this is an opportunity to change, grow and thrive as we continue to follow the synodal pathway.

As the synodal process continues in parishes and in the diocese over the next 12 months, parishes and groups may wish to discern, from the challenges and opportunities which arise from listening to the concerns and ideas raised, about what their local steps might be.





MOVING FORWARD



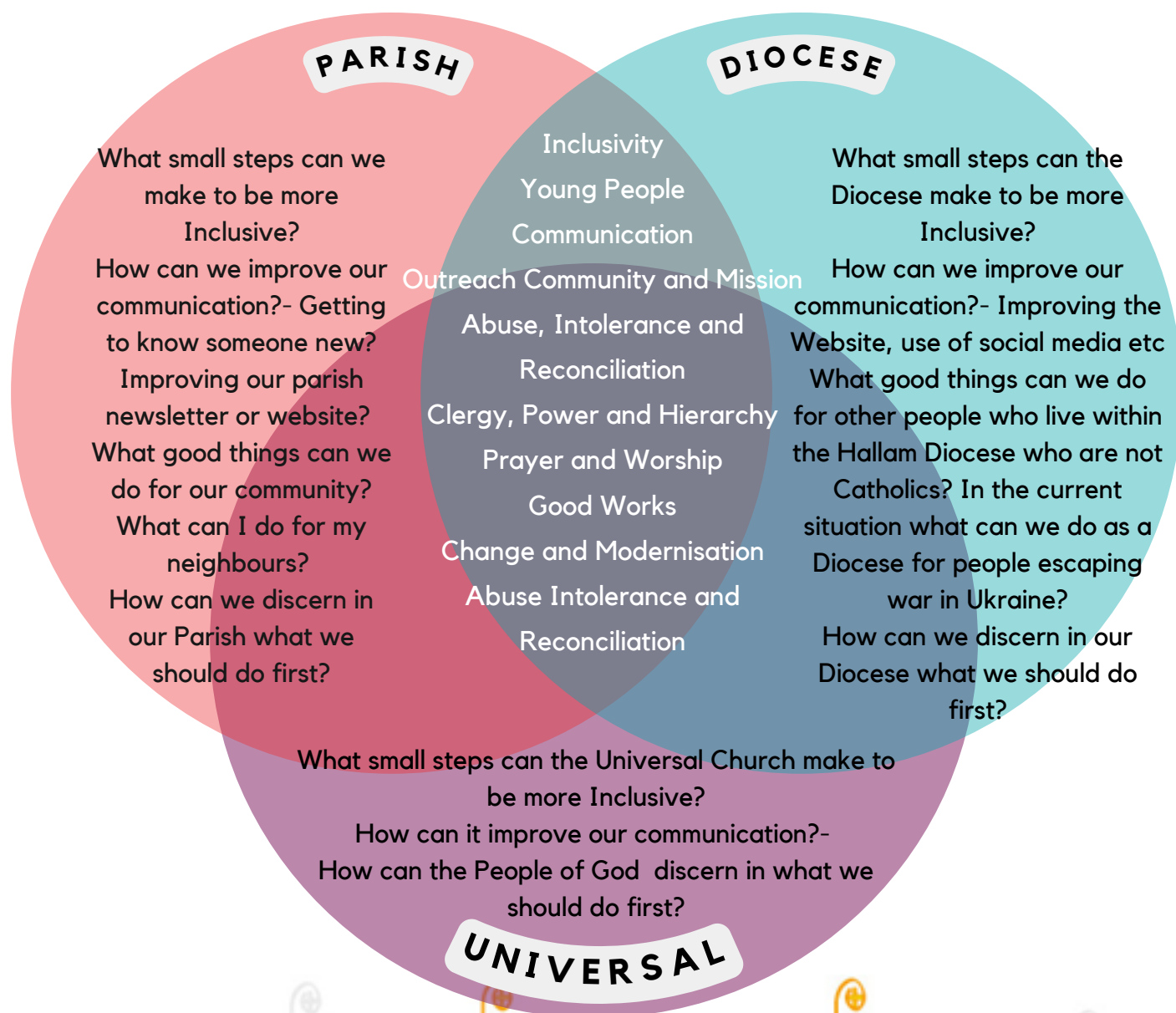
What are our next steps on the synodal journey in Hallam Diocese?

Some concerns are for Pope Francis to think about, and we have ensured that he receives those.

Some things are for the Diocese to attend to.

And some things you need to discern within your parish or group.

Here are some questions and ideas to help:





Synod
2021
2023

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