



## Synod 2021-2023 Reflections

### St. Teresa's Morden

### "For a Synodal Church"

#### Executive Summary

Always invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Parish of St. Teresa's Morden has followed the Diocese's suggested 'Process of Listening' among the grass roots of Catholics during the period Sept'21-Jan'22, and reviewed approximately eighteen-hundred (1,800) responses from;

- our **Parishioners**, their families and friends
- our **School** (St. Teresa's) and surrounding Primary and Secondary schools in Merton Deanery; their students across all key-stages, parents, staff and Governors.
- our Parish groups including
  - o **SVP**
  - o **Legion of Mary**
  - o **Justice & Peace** and **CAFOD** representatives
  - o **Youth**

Two tranches of consultation were aligned with the three pillars of the process; Communion, Participation and Mission. We used traditional paper-based questionnaires and QR-code technology for anonymous feedback, and meetings with the parish Clergy and Parish Pastoral Council.

The feedback expressions were supportive, sensitive and compassionate, constructive, critiquing, innovative, challenging and sometimes very direct.

- The fundamental of what works in parish life is "**engagement**", **reaching out to "all"**
- Countering the rapid loss of **youth engagement** as they progress to early-teens, significantly affecting the Church's future Communion, **relies on role-models and their witness**
- Outreach in respect of local and global Mission could benefit from adopting a modern narrative (**technology and networking**)
- Increasing awareness of developing a **formal role for the laity**, inclusive of men and women

From this feedback, we are able to understand and live a continuous process from gathering, to worshipping together, to reaching out; and back again to communion, participation and mission. The Discernment inspired by the Holy Spirit then leads us directly back to Scriptures, of which a few citations below have helped our continuous reflections:

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:3)*

*"I have not come to call the virtuous, but sinners" (Luke 5:32)*

*"who has not sinned ... be the first to throw the stone" (John 8:7)*

With our sincerest thanks to all who have responded, assembled and contributed to this feedback,

Cn. Michael Scanlon,  
Fr. Robert Roshy,  
Dn. Con Diver,  
the Parish Representatives,  
St. Teresa's School,  
Parish Groups, PPC and Parish Administration.





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## St. Teresa's Morden "For a Synodal Church"

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Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission





# Synod 2021-2023 Reflections

## 1.0 Introduction

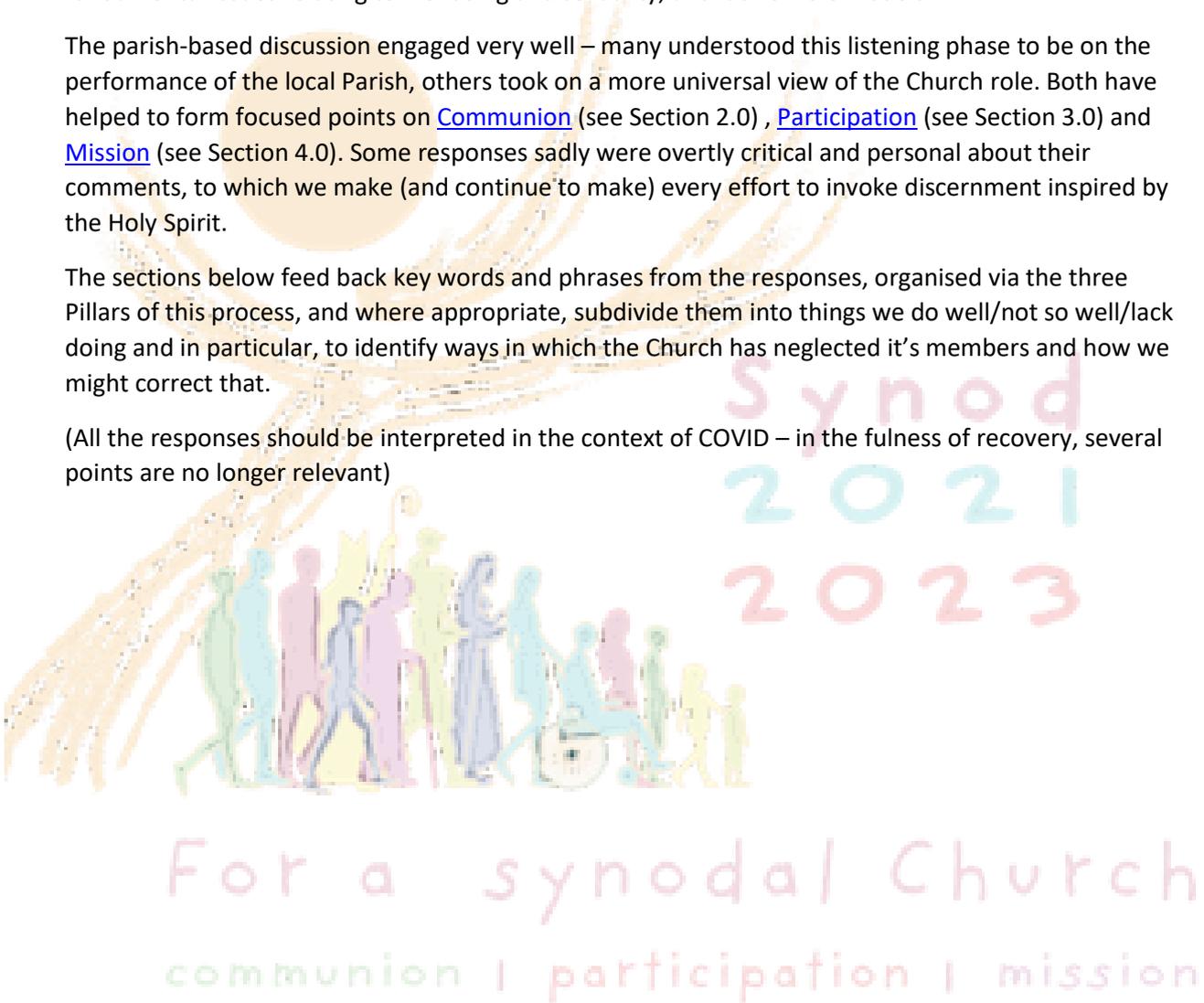
In a process of widespread listening, St. Teresa’s Parish has consulted with parishioners, parish groups and school groups to answer the Holy Father’s Synodal Call.

The largest response came from the Schools’ survey (students, teachers, parents and Governors) through the questionnaires shared across Merton Deanery (see [Appendix 3](#)). Herein, we see the fastest change in faith (underlying religiosity) and worship (participation at Mass), moving from “engaged” to “indifference” promoted by peer groups and lack of discussion/answers to fundamental issues relating to wellbeing and sexuality, and lack of role models.

The parish-based discussion engaged very well – many understood this listening phase to be on the performance of the local Parish, others took on a more universal view of the Church role. Both have helped to form focused points on [Communion](#) (see Section 2.0) , [Participation](#) (see Section 3.0) and [Mission](#) (see Section 4.0). Some responses sadly were overtly critical and personal about their comments, to which we make (and continue to make) every effort to invoke discernment inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The sections below feed back key words and phrases from the responses, organised via the three Pillars of this process, and where appropriate, subdivide them into things we do well/not so well/lack doing and in particular, to identify ways in which the Church has neglected it’s members and how we might correct that.

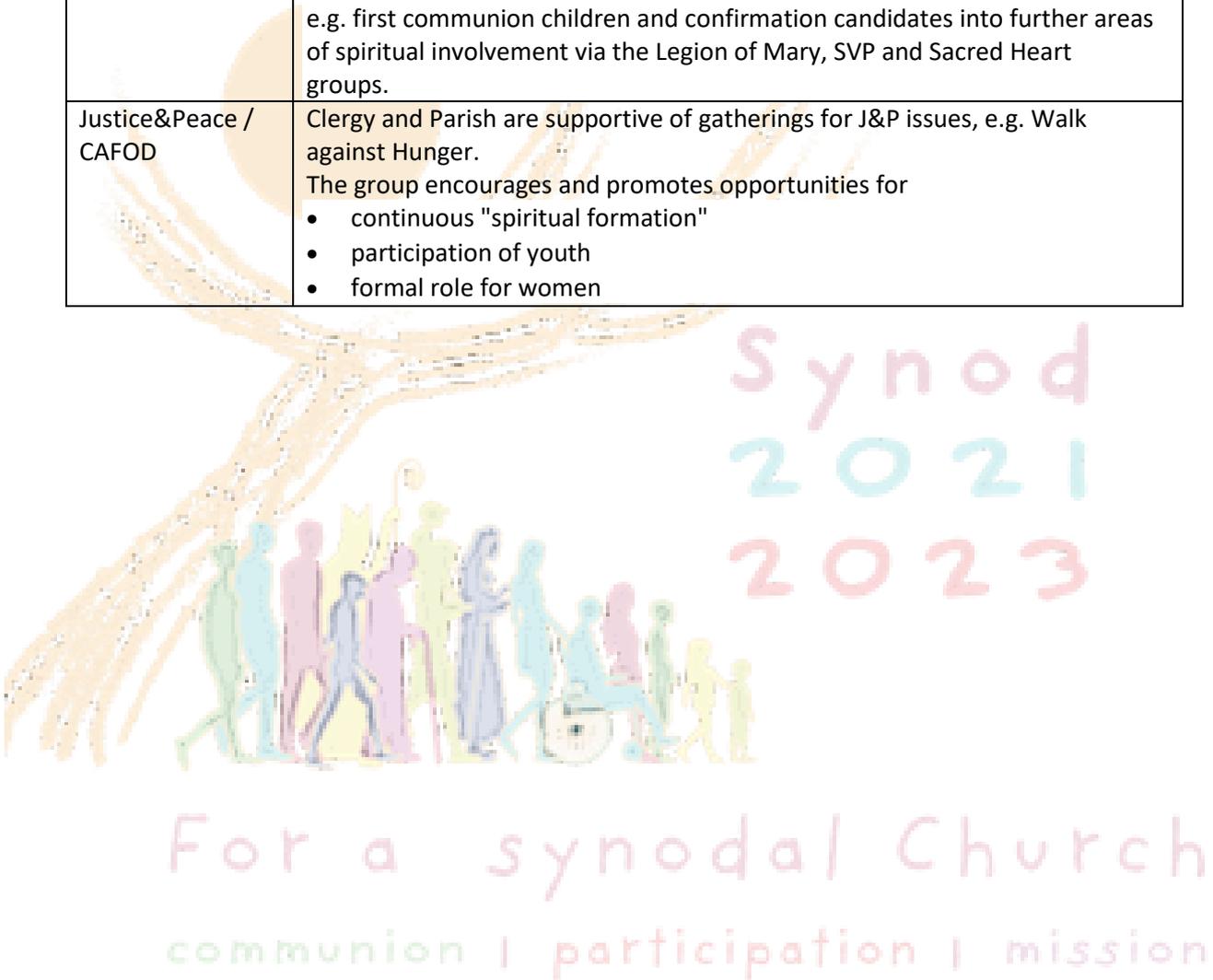
(All the responses should be interpreted in the context of COVID – in the fulness of recovery, several points are no longer relevant)





## 2.0 Communion

Group	Comment – Communion
Parishioners	<b>Good:</b> Welcoming groups, gathering parishioners’ talents, <b>Not so good:</b> no accommodation of those who have to work at weekends <b>Lacking:</b> a higher-level dialogue with Government, Children’s Masses, Church open outside Mass times, focus for Welcoming new people
School and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As children get older (KS2 to KS5), other interests fill their time and attention, making reconnection more difficult as they become older</li> <li>Fewer opportunities to gather with peers at Church, or opportunities as older teens to engage</li> </ul>
SVP	Call is always to be unbiased in terms of age/gender/creed
Legion of Mary	We would like the Church to ensuring the structure introduces young people, e.g. first communion children and confirmation candidates into further areas of spiritual involvement via the Legion of Mary, SVP and Sacred Heart groups.
Justice&Peace / CAFOD	Clergy and Parish are supportive of gatherings for J&P issues, e.g. Walk against Hunger. The group encourages and promotes opportunities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continuous "spiritual formation"</li> <li>participation of youth</li> <li>formal role for women</li> </ul>





### 3.0 Participation

Group	Comment – Participation
Parishioners	<p><b>Good:</b> Live streaming, healing masses, adoration, music/singing, visits to shrines, sacramental programmes, liturgies, welcoming, interactions with the School, involvement in catechesis, altar servers, children’s liturgy, bar on same-sex marriages in the Church</p> <p><b>Not so good:</b> dominance of longstanding individuals/families, services too long, over-decoration of the church and Mass, lack of congregation participation in mass (choir/singing), current Pope eroding Traditional values in the Church, lack of reverence/respect, closure of the hall, lack of urgency!</p> <p><b>Lacking:</b> Adult formation, social after Mass, open Repository, Youth activities, virtual candles for those who cannot attend Mass to light them, appreciation of long-serving parish members, more formal involvement for women’s in the Church</p>
School and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young persons’ participation in faith communities drops from over 95% to less than 35% between Key Stages 2 and 5</li> <li>• Where there is engagement, <i>Participation</i> is good, e.g. Altar Servers, 1<sup>st</sup> Communion and Confirmation catechism</li> <li>• Music/choir/singing could be better encouraged</li> </ul>
SVP	Working directly to homes
Legion of Mary	To fill the vacuum of loneliness experienced by some groups of people and create that sense of belonging e.g. young adults/older individuals without a family, promoting initiatives for every parishioner to join a 'day you were born' group. This group will become a small 'family unit' within the parish community that will meet regularly on church premises to socialise, support and learn from each other - young and old.
Justice&Peace / CAFOD	Good participation and awareness in the Parish and clergy on J&P and overseas aid issues.





#### 4.0 Mission

Group	Comment – Mission
Parishioners	<p><b>Good:</b> Eucharist to the housebound</p> <p><b>Not so good:</b> lack of diversity, newsletter too long, Pope has already made up his mind so this “listening” is irrelevant</p> <p><b>Lacking:</b> to youth, to lonely/bereaved, Scriptural teaching, missions/novenas, social events, youth participation, food banks, use of social media (e.g. YouTube), outreach to local community, beyond our Catholic community, restart Tuesday Club available to non-parishioners</p>
School and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current issues around religiosity, faith, mental health and sexuality are not addressed</li> <li>• Role-models, witness testimonies and focussed actions/activities could re-engage interest</li> </ul>
SVP	Referral basis only
Legion of Mary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachings/Explaining the Catholic faith outside mass to broaden the minds of both young and adults</li> <li>- saying the rosary</li> <li>- visiting the sick and elderly</li> <li>- offering listening support especial in terms of mental health and well being</li> <li>- organising social events to encourage sense of belonging and promoting the Catholic faith.</li> </ul>
Justice&Peace / CAFOD	<p>More effective awareness of political issues and Papal encyclicals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important that the Church reaches out to those on its margins – those estranged from church and society, the poor, the forgotten, the vulnerable – and walks the path with them.</li> <li>• A culture of encounter and inclusion needs to be created for All cultures to be valued.</li> </ul>





## Appendix 1: 1<sup>st</sup> Questionnaire



### Synodal Process - Listening



Our Archbishop, on behalf of the Holy Father Pope Francis, asks each of us to take full part in the first step of global Church Synodal Process before the end of January 2022.

We start with the Synod's *Local Listening Phase*. The whole Church Hierarchy wants to listen to each and every one of us in this Parish!

Please answer as openly and honestly as possible, the following.

1) What do we do well that we should to continue doing

2) What is missing that we should start doing

3) What are we doing not so well that we might pause doing

This Phase, listening to us, is part of the process of "Communion, Participation and Mission".

As individuals and families, men and women, younger and older, let us allow the Holy Spirit to come into our lives, to gift the spirit of participation and discernment, and to reach out to all who need the body of Christ.

Feedback on-line





## Appendix 2: 2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire



### DRAFT-Step2 Snodal Process - Listening



Thanks to each one of you for taking part so far through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We ask you to contribute to this final step before we report back to our Archbishop in the next level of consultation towards the Holy Father's listening.

Your responses so far are beautiful, and summarise what our church does well; welcoming, tending to spiritual, pastoral and practical needs under difficult restrictions in the past two years. We thank you for your openness and honesty! Your feedback shows wonderful examples of our collective PARTICIPATION.

Now we are challenged with COMMUNION and MISSION

"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:3)

"I have not come to call the virtuous, but sinners" (Luke 5:32)

"who has not sinned ... be the first to throw the stone" (John 8:7)

Here is what we ask of you – without condemnation and with the compassion and listening inspired by the Holy Spirit, please approach and ask members of your family and friends who feel neglected by the Church, who have turned away from the Church

Why do you feel outside/neglected?

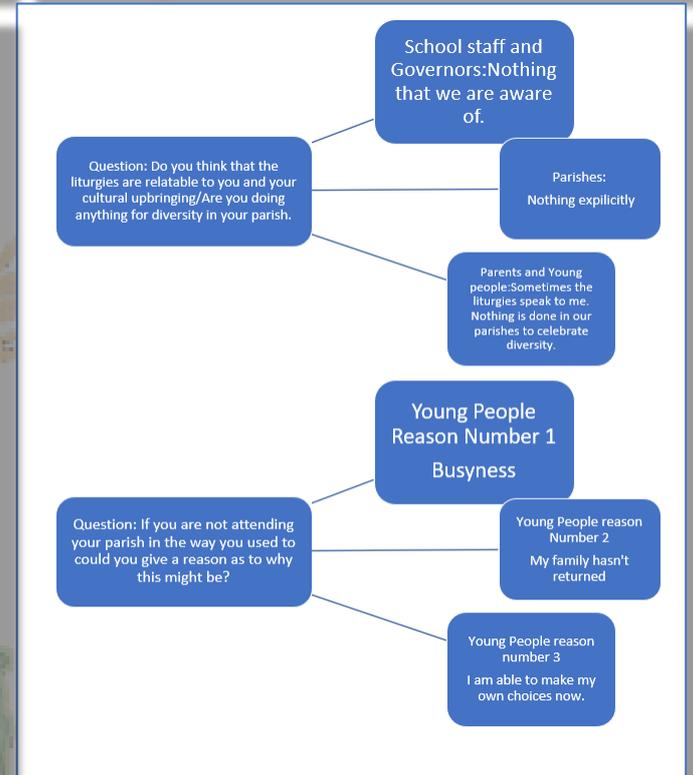
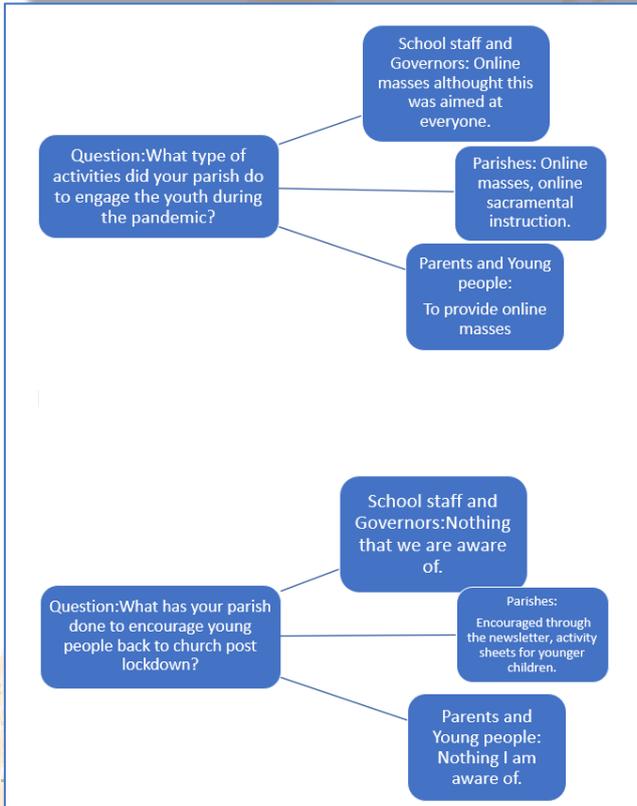
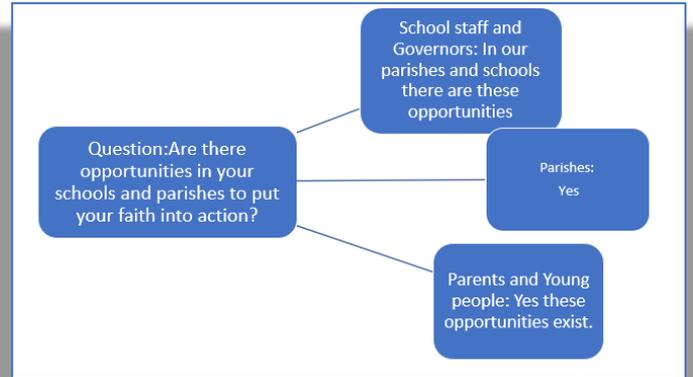
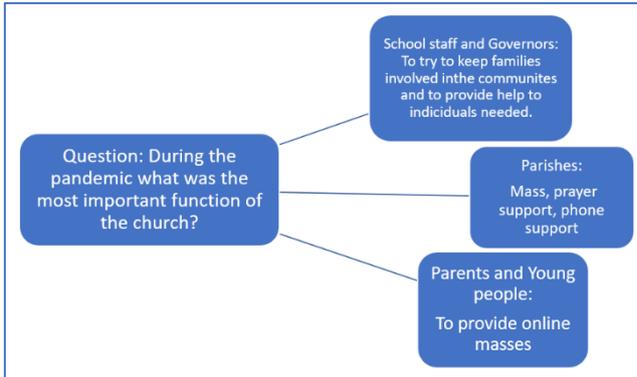
What can the Catholic Church do to reach out and welcome you/those who feel outside?

As individuals and families, men and women, younger and older, let us allow the Holy Spirit to come into our lives, to gift us the spirit of participation and discernment, and to reach out to all who need the body of Christ.





## Appendix 3: Schools Questionnaire



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