

DIOCESE OF GALLOWAY
SYNOD ON SYNODALITY
DIOCESAN PHASE SYNTHESIS
JUNE 2022

Diocese of Galloway Facts and Statistics



Official Web Site: <https://www.gallowaydiocese.org.uk>

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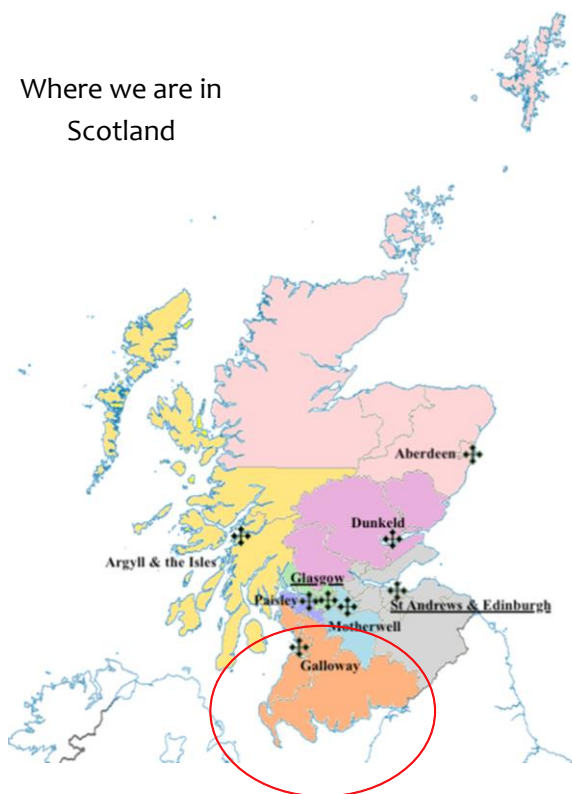
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Bishop Nolan was nominated as Bishop of Galloway on 22nd November 2014 by Pope Francis, and ordained Bishop of Galloway on 14th February 2015. He was appointed by Pope Francis as the Archbishop of Glasgow on February 4th 2022, and installed as Archbishop of Glasgow on 26th February 2022.

Fr. William McFadden has been elected by the College of Consultors as the Diocesan Administrator of the Diocese of Galloway until a new Bishop is appointed by Rome

Synod email: synod@gallowaydiocese.org.uk.

Where we are in
Scotland



Statistics for Galloway Diocese

Area: 9,803 kilometers² (3,785 miles²)

Number of Parishes: 36

Number of Catholics: 41,353 (% of total: 7.9%)

Number of Diocesan Priests: 27

Number of Religious Priests: 3

Number of Permanent Deacons: 6

2019

Total population: 520,260

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FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together”. How is this “journeying together” happening today in your particular Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?

INTRODUCTION

In September 2021, a Diocesan Synodal Team was formed, consisting of three lay women, one lay man, and one diocesan priest whose primary role was to provide spiritual direction to the lay team. A period of intense preparation followed as the format of synodal encounters was prayerfully decided on and developed, facilitators for these encounters were identified and trained, and the ten thematic nuclei provided by the Vatican were circulated with short reflective videos to encourage participation across the diocese.

The emergence of the Omicron variant of Coronavirus unfortunately halted “in person” encounters, which effectively meant two months’ worth of consultation and outreach to the margins were lost between December 2021 and February 2022. This resulted in a necessary refinement of plans, with the result that the overall number of contributors to the synod process was somewhat lower than had originally been hoped and intended; however, it should be borne in mind that the diocesan phase of the Synod is the beginning of an ongoing journey. During the period of lockdown associated with Omicron, an online questionnaire was available; in addition, offers of virtual encounters held via video platforms were offered, with no uptake.

In February 2022, the Diocese of Galloway’s Bishop was installed as Archbishop of Glasgow. Bishop Nolan’s support and encouragement of the Synodal Team were a great loss, however the Diocesan Administrator continued to promote the Synod across the diocese and so there were no changes to the diocesan synodal journey.

It is difficult to put a number on the individual people who participated in the first phase of the diocesan Synod. The methodology of the parish encounters meant individual post-it notes were collected per question; not everyone answered every question and not every parish attempted every question. In addition, numerous people followed up attendance at an encounter with emailed further thoughts. As a conservative estimate, between five and six hundred people have actively participated, perhaps more. Remarkably, there was a considerable amount of agreement over the issues we, as a Church, face today; an attempt has been made to incorporate into this document those circumstances where there are mixed feelings or conflicting opinions.

Following the initial encounters and consideration of the responses received, a brief second round of encounters was held in an attempt to glean further information on certain issues. Importantly, feedback received from this second round of encounters was that rural communities and parishes felt the questions reflected the needs of urban parishes more than their own. This distinction was further developed at the Pre-Synodal Diocesan Meeting, which took place at the end of May 2022 and was attended by approximately 50 people.

The Pre-Synodal Diocesan Meeting allowed participants to hear directly from the Synodal Team about the journey so far, and to read and have a further synodal encounter on the contents of the draft synthesis, the responses to which have been taken into account for this final draft. The Pre-Synodal Diocesan Meeting culminated with a Liturgy of Thanksgiving. Remarkably, it was discovered that the Pre-Synodal Diocesan Meeting was the first time in 18 years that the diocese had come together for prayerful discussion.

As indicated above, the most significant development emerging from the Pre-Diocesan Synodal Meeting was that ideally, given the geographic nature of the Diocese of Galloway, there would be two distinct pathways forward—one for the rural parts of the diocese, and one for the urban. Feedback received from the draft synthesis frequently suggested that the information reported in this synthesis, and “mini parish synodal encounters” should be used as a basis for parishes to move forward on their synodal journeys. This is likely to give rise to highly tailored pathways which will meet the idiosyncratic needs of the different geographical demographics.

Overwhelmingly, the opportunity to participate in the Synod was seen as positive. A sense emerged that people were largely grateful for the opportunity, hopeful for the future, and eager for more such encounters to build and renew parish and diocese. When responses addressed potential future collaborative work, the encounter model was repeatedly felt to provide a good model for disciplined, respectful, well-planned and un-intimidating meetings. Clear guidance on what the objective is and rooting the encounter in an invitation to the Holy Spirit to take the lead were also considered benefits of the encounter model. It should be noted, however, that some concerns were raised about the synodal model as potentially destroying dogma, and leading to a loss of authority and consistency within the Church.

The format of the encounters was to use open questions and encourage personal reflection, in keeping with the specified purpose of the Synod “to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands” (PD §32). It was therefore considered important to retain a narrative style synthesis which uses the terminology written by participants, rather than attempt a formulaic, statistical report which could potentially limit the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the remainder of this document, an attempt has been made to categorise responses to the ten thematic nuclei under the three dimensions, or “pillars”, of a Synodal Church - namely, Communion, Participation, and Mission. Inevitably, there are areas of overlap. Feedback received from the Pre-Synodal Diocesan Meeting repeatedly emphasised that all attempts to promote these dimensions of the Church must be underpinned by prayer and personal conversion. While the following parts of the synthesis were considered to reflect where we currently are as a diocese, as reported by the people who attended synod encounters, it must be borne in mind at all times that “the Church is not a corporation but a communion of the Spirit”.

COMMUNION

The importance of the clergy was acknowledged by almost everyone who participated. The need to provide them with better support and encouragement was frequently stated. Some parishes clearly communicated deep satisfaction with the work of their parish priest, with specific responses praising inspirational leadership, a good homilist, and well run and organised ministries. Gratitude was repeatedly expressed for the work of all our diocesan clergy.

Overall, it was acknowledged that there are simply not enough priests to reach out to those who are unable to attend Mass. Church leadership was therefore encouraged to “think outside the box” to ensure the future of our parishes. In practical terms, three specific suggestions were repeated frequently: allowing priests to marry; ordaining women to the priesthood and/or permanent diaconate; and increasing lay responsibility in parishes to free up priests’ time from the day-to-day management, thereby enabling “priests to be priests”. It was widely noted that laity are well placed to take on particular aspects of parish management by using gifts and experiences they possess, which at times clergy may not possess. This approach was cited as being adopted in other countries, making effective models easily available.

The impact of Covid-19 on worship has been enormous. Many people reported a renewed sense of appreciation for the Mass when gathering together was not permitted. Communal prayer was discovered to create a sense of belonging, to create a closeness to God, and to provide peace and inspiration. People who have returned to Mass spoke of the joy and comfort this created. Others who have not felt confident about returning describe live streaming as “a God send”, although they miss receiving Holy Communion. Gratitude was expressed to those parishes who bring Communion to the housebound.

In terms of the actual celebration of the Mass, experiences and opinions varied enormously. A small number of parishes consistently reported that Mass was felt to be an obligation rather than a celebration, with limited participation and a lack of “freshness”. Some felt the Eucharist is weaponised against “sinners”, which was considered to be deeply inappropriate (c.f. Mark 2:17 “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”) Many people reported they do not understand restrictions on receiving the Eucharist, whether for Catholics in certain circumstances, or for people of other denominations. A desire for formation to understand the Mass and the Eucharist better, and to increase appreciation of both, was expressed repeatedly.

The range of personal preferences for Mass varied widely, and highlighted an appetite for variation in the Masses available, which was also considered to be a means of engaging with different generations. Some preferences stated include: youth Masses; folk Masses; Latin Masses; Masses with more music; Masses with no music; special celebrations for the purpose of uplifting the community; joint services with other faiths; timing and length of Masses.

There was a substantial call for increased “mixing” of parishes, such as deanery-level services/Masses, especially when these are accompanied by a social event. It was suggested many times that Sycamore could be held at deanery, rather than—or as well as—at parish level. Invitations

to inspirational speakers to address joint congregations, perhaps from other denominations, was also proposed several times. While recognising the diversity of each parish's needs, sharing resources between parishes was considered to be a good way of forging inter-parish links.

Much emphasis was placed on social occasions after (or even before) Mass, to provide opportunities to gather as a community. This takes place in many parishes in the form of tea/coffee, however people report they are put off going if they are left to sit alone, if they are not welcomed by volunteers, or if they feel otherwise ignored or "in the way". Large parishes in particular face the challenge of being authentically welcoming, and not letting people get lost in the crowd.

Very many participants highlighted the need to reach and connect with young people. Those young people who participated were largely consistent with their feedback. The Church is seen as admirable in its core messages of love, charity and community, but young people's understanding of Church teachings, and their experiences of parish life, have created the impression for some young people that the Church is "judgemental" and "hypocritical".

Many young people stated that they find Mass, and Scripture, "boring". These statements were qualified by adding that boredom is due to a poor understanding of Mass and Scripture, e.g. "I don't understand the readings and some of the prayers so it's hard to listen for a whole Mass"; "we should make the words easier". Additionally, they state that their understanding of Church teaching mostly comes from their peers who can place real pressure on them not to attend Mass or engage with the Church, e.g. "Mass (for young people) is seen as dumb and stupid. So being a young person who goes to Mass regularly, it's embarrassing and I won't talk in front of my friends about things even when I know they've said something about the Church that I don't think is really what the Church is about".

A number of adult participants expressed a wish for the voices of younger people to be heard, and some suggestions to facilitate this included apologetics-based quizzes in a social format, youth debates on contemporary societal issues versus bible teaching, and ensuring the most appropriate people are engaged in youth ministries. Retreats and pilgrimages catering for young people through fun activities, meaningful discussions and multi-media presentations were also proposed.

Almost unanimously, those young people who do engage with the Church called for parishes to be more welcoming towards them. Resoundingly, attendance at Mass was reported to be "not cool" and a source of embarrassment with their peers. One young person noted that he no longer altar serves because the Mass is live streamed, which may mean he would be seen online by his peers and therefore teased. Those who do attend Mass called for a greater variety of music, contemporary hymns, youth Masses that they could participate in, and invitations to younger and "more relevant" speakers. Retreats in schools were considered to be a safe way to explore their developing faith, particularly where these are run by young people who are confident in answering the types of questions facing today's youth.

Where young people were positive about their experience of the Church, was in relation to outreach and charitable initiatives. This led to a number of young people reflecting that "Catholicism" at its best takes place outwith church buildings, and indeed many other people felt

the notion of “church as building(s)” should be at least partially left behind. We need to go out and reach people where they are, bringing the gospel message to the highways and byways and interacting with those who need us to reach out to them. This was considered to be especially important in a post-pandemic society and in the midst of our current cost of living crisis.

Many parishes report their outreach to the poor is an area of particular strength; even so, while we cater well for those in our immediate vicinity, it was felt that we could extend into the wider community - perhaps by pooling resources with other churches.

The majority of participants expressed a desire to walk together with other churches, despite our differences. Other churches were noted to provide outstanding support to, and great practical examples of, family inclusion and activities. It was widely considered that we can learn much from other churches, and that the potential to pool resources and expertise has been untapped. Combined youth groups, social events and charitable activities were all cited as promising potential initiatives. It was felt that further dialogue is required with other denominations to allow these projects to develop, although many examples of good relationships with members of other Christian traditions were cited, including World Day of Prayer, Churches Together, Salvation Army open days, social activities, fellowship groups and joint community projects. Some parishes felt that this is well done; others, less so. It was pointed out that even schools are separated, with council cluster meetings being held separately for Catholic and non-denominational schools.

While there was a wide call for more gatherings with, and walking alongside, other denominations, it was acknowledged that we cannot compromise our faith and that there are difficulties with evangelical work, most notably: the Eucharist; Reconciliation; prejudices on all sides; lack of willingness to change; sectarianism; and the perception that Catholics are very “rigid” (homosexuality, contraception, celibate male clergy all being cited as examples). These difficulties were not generally considered to be insurmountable given common gospel values of love, mercy and sharing with others, however it was thought to be critical that a forum be developed for planning and organising ecumenical work.

Ultimately, people felt that our “goal” is to bring people to God, and that this can be done irrespective of “material” issues such as buildings and numbers in the pews. The need for a clear set of achievable aims for the local church was highlighted in various different ways, many of which related to ministries.

PARTICIPATION

The concept of **listening** as a precursor to evangelisation and mission received considerable attention from participants. Considered to be a vitally important skill - and a learned one - many comments were received on this topic. Overall, listening well was felt to be critical to the future of our communities. Widely acknowledged that every voice has value and is deserving of respect, it was nonetheless admitted that where opposing views are held, it is an enormously difficult skill to master. Individual perceptions can create barriers when people listen without really hearing what is meant. It was considered, then, that anybody in a role which requires listening must be

prayerfully and carefully chosen, be able to listen with empathy, and be able to listen to voices outwith our immediate diocesan context.

A significant number of responses, mostly stating that they were expressing their opinions as women, highlighted the fact that the language of the Synod singles women out as a “minority voice”, in spite of comprising approximately 50% of the Church. This was considered by those who highlighted it to be a clear indication of the undervaluing of women. It was noted that “until women can occupy important roles in the Church we are unlikely to encourage young women to participate so their voices can be heard” - thereby depriving the Church of a significant percentage of the available skills and gifts of the laity.

Special arrangements were considered to be possible, as well as necessary, for engaging with people with disabilities. Planned encounters with people with disabilities, and their families and carers, were unable to go ahead due to a variety of circumstances; however there is a committed ministry in the diocese who will be able to provide future synod encounters.

An overwhelming need was identified for listening to result in (and to be seen to result in) tangible action. This extended to the need for physical environments to be spaces where people could feel safe to speak out without fear of judgement, which they felt would enable them to speak out more confidently and courageously.

Obstacles to speaking out were numerous, but highly consistent, and included: fear of judgement or ridicule; the shame and fear of speaking against church teachings; lack of trust; personal prejudices; lack of understanding of what the issues are; shyness and lack of confidence; and time commitments - many people reflected that with modern day busy lives, it is difficult to commit to something which is likely to be long term.

Having addressed the potential obstacles, participants nonetheless sensed a responsibility to speak out, and desired training and formation in the Catholic faith to enable more confident and empowered dialogue. The need for discernment, and for seeking wisdom from the Holy Spirit, were widely acknowledged as important aspects of speaking out. Calls for better formation of adults were widespread and varied, including a desire for: book clubs for spiritual texts to provide a forum for informed, faith-based conversation; film nights for the viewing of Christian films and documentaries; inviting existing ministries and organisations—the Knights of St Columba being cited a number of times—to help develop knowledge among the laity; prayer cards being more widely available in parishes; scripture studies catering for all ages. The need for language and terminology to be easily understood was emphasised.

Public speaking received considerable attention, especially via the media. At present there is little knowledge about who speaks to the media on our behalf, or whether the laity have any choice in who addresses the media or wider public on our behalf. It was felt that many members of the laity could easily use their gifts and professional experience to fill a gap in public relations. One response stated: “I personally have a talent for public speaking and theological education/training, so I have previously been invited to speak to other denominations and give talks but because I’m a lay woman I’ve never had the opportunity to give this gift to the Catholic Church”. Many responses

emphasised the importance of recognising women's baptismal authority as being equal to that of men.

On a cultural note, the older generation felt that they have been conditioned to be silent, partly due to having been raised not to speak out, and partly due to cultural sectarianism which has created a "keep your head down" mentality among Catholics. Conversely, the younger generation are being taught to speak out and they are well versed in modern, secular living. It was also particularly notable that young people demonstrated great ability to see **the person**, rather than the issue they presented or the label they possessed. A sense permeated responses that merging older tradition and experience with the vitality of younger people could be developed in such a way that the gifts each bring could be celebrated and utilised by the Church. Pope Francis is considered to be a good role model for speaking out boldly and responsibly, and promoting diverse groups walking together for the good of all. Mentorship programs were proposed, where senior parishioners could help those with a less developed appreciation of their faith.

Considerable discussions also took place about "gifts". Many people did not understand what "supernatural gifts" are, or that every baptised person has them. Those who did understand this felt that regular reminders to sustain these gifts through the Sacraments, prayer and the Holy Spirit would be appropriate. Almost all felt that the power of the Holy Spirit in our midst is underestimated.

Many people are not aware they possess any gifts that could be used for the benefit of their parish or the wider Church. Reminders were received that the Church is built up by ordinary people going about their everyday life outside of the church buildings, as well as through active ministry in parishes. Better use of the gifts of the laity was called for almost unanimously, although a small number felt they are unable to actively participate in parish life due to age or ill health; however, almost all of these pointed out they can support the parish/Church through prayer and by offering up their suffering for the good of the Church.

Active ministry in our parishes received remarkably consistent feedback. Strong, repeated calls for better organisation permeated the vast majority of responses. Ministries which are well organised and appropriately led were reported to be inclusive, relevant, welcoming, inviting, and created a sense of connection with the parish/diocese. Conversely, ministries which are insular - i.e. carried out by a minority "the way it has always been done" - are off-putting for new volunteers, who feel judged, restricted, unwanted, and unsupported.

Several good existing leadership models, which have proven effective in building teamwork in ministries, were reported, including SSVP, Youth for Lourdes, SPRED, Ababa project, New Dawn, the diocesan Safeguarding and Synod teams, and individual music and youth teams. People with experience of these reported feeling closer to our Church, the joy of using God's gifts when working together, and a deep sense of fulfillment through giving life to the Church. Secular training on equity, diversity and inclusion were considered to be potentially beneficial for building teams within ministries.

A clear sense emerged that there is an opportunity, post-Covid, to reconsider how parish ministries and outreach are approached. There is currently often no clear direction, and no leadership to involve people. Once someone volunteers, “it becomes a heavy burden on a few forever”. There was a strong feeling that central organisation is required, perhaps via a dedicated diocesan team or teams, to properly support leaders in the task of inviting, training and recognising suitable gifts among parishioners. Most suggestions for improvement centred around training, communication and increased lay responsibility, with the caveat that lay leaders must be carefully, prayerfully, and transparently (s)elected. There was considerable opposition to the word “authority” being used as part of lay leadership; “responsibility” was preferred, while “authority” was felt to be entirely inappropriate.

The creation of “road maps” for all ministries was proposed in numerous ways. Suggestions included the creation of promotional materials for ministries, and holding open events in parishes to “showcase” ministries as a means for recruiting to them. There was a call for continuous development via annual retreat days, which was considered to be particularly beneficial for the formation of leaders. The benefits of having dedicated diocesan ministry teams to oversee such roadmaps included the possibility for structured feedback from volunteers to parish/ministry leaders.

Many comments were received regarding the improvement of communication between clergy and laity, perhaps via a dedicated communications team or officers. Some parishes reported their parish newsletter fulfilled this purpose well, and suggested improving this further by, for example, including phone numbers for helplines in weekly newsletters and highlighting positive stories from within the community. Several respondents warned against simply increasing use of social media to improve communication, and proposed finding alternative methods of communication as well.

MISSION

Almost unanimously, people appeared conscious of the missionary nature of the Church; however it was undisputed that large numbers of people have been left behind, and that we need to reach out to them. The dimension of mission poses unique challenges to our rural parishes, where the logistics and economic impact of supporting and connecting with the most isolated people in a disperse community are considerable. Outreach coordinators were suggested as a possibility for beginning to manage this difficulty. There was a strong sense that the synodal journey will be embraced by our most rural parishes, and there is already evidence of the fruits of this as individual synodal pathways emerge.

Almost every synodal response highlighted our need to better reach out to and support families, children and young people. Many people felt that we have the solution to this already at our disposal: “if the meaning of the Eucharist was understood by all, we would as the church, lack nothing”. Some practical suggestions were proposed and have already been cited.

Much attention was also given to the sick or housebound, bereaved, people with disabilities and those who have been excluded from Sacraments. The need to find ways to help and support all these groups was repeatedly put forward.

When discussing what particular issues and demographics the Church should be reaching out to, a large number of groups were identified; they are listed alphabetically in Appendix B. The challenge of reaching out to such a volume of diverse groups and needs was not considered to be insurmountable. It was felt that focus groups, or specific councils, could address individual issues, creating teams who would take practical steps to educate themselves and inform others about specific issues. These groups could be ecumenical.

There was a great call for one-off opportunities and these are seen to be more attractive, as they are without commitment for busy lifestyles. These could be prayerful, charitable and/or social; they could also be ecumenical.

The language of the “higher Church” is not easily understood by many people, and it is therefore off putting, and easily misinterpreted. This was felt to be detrimental to the mission of the Church in our diocesan context, and clearer communication was called for; young people in particular requested clarity of Church teaching via methods of communication that are relevant to them (“I’d like to enjoy mass and learning more about being Catholic, but sometimes I dread it because it isn’t the way I’m used to learning. It doesn’t always make sense for me”).

Simultaneously, there was a sense that we need to be more vocal and more visible in our local communities, but formation is lacking to enable us to do that effectively. Opportunities for personal faith formation, provided in easily digestible language, are therefore required; Sycamore was regularly mentioned as a good example of this, as were numerous existing evangelical programs including Word on Fire and Divine Restoration.

Social media and technology were frequently referred to as being potentially powerful tools for the mission of the Church that we can learn to make better use of. Beginning with the issues that people face in everyday life was repeatedly felt to be a sensible starting point.

One of the major obstacles to the mission of the Church was reported to be “gaps”. These gaps need to be bridged in particular between: economic divides; clergy and laity; and church versus non-church life (“it’s hard in the secular world - i.e. school and work - to be a practising Christian”). It was also felt to be imperative that the diocese develop a strategic plan to move forward with the ideas and responses given as part of the Synod process.

Another frequently identified obstacle to mission is the cultural expectation that work will be carried out for free, often by highly qualified and skilled laity. This is no longer the situation in most organisations, including the Catholic Church in other countries. The need to have paid roles for laity was highlighted regularly, which was considered to have the benefit of proper recruitment procedures to ensure the most appropriate people are in these roles. It was noted that when people see the benefits of a monetary appeal, they will donate generously.

Numerous practical suggestions have been put forward at each stage of the diocesan synodal journey; these are listed in Appendix C, as much feedback at the Pre-Synodal Diocesan Meeting

considered this synthesis to be a good starting point for parishes—“this synthesis is proving to be the path we need to follow”.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, much work needs done, and there are obstacles to be overcome. However, the collective input of the people across our diocese who have participated in the Synod so far is already beginning to shape the needs, the solutions, and the identification of resources required to carry out this work.

There appears to be a clear distinction between the challenges facing rural parishes, and those faced by more urban parishes; additionally, within those demographics some parishes report unique challenges. In the face of all these challenges, the Synod was frequently reported to be an important starting point and, overwhelmingly, the need to continue on the journey was expressed: “we want and need to continue on this journey”; “this is only the first step—keep walking!”

At a local level, there is a desire to undertake further encounters to prioritise our extensive list of needs, and to set achievable (“bite size”) goals over a period of time. Grounding each encounter and every step of the journey in prayer is considered to be paramount. As there has been a call for faith formation for all demographics, there may be scope for the development of retreat days incorporating further synod encounters.

Also at a local level, numerous planned encounters were unable to be carried out due to Omicron. These include, for example, with SSVP, SPRED, young families and divorced/remarried Catholics. It will be important to re-visit this outreach and to develop it in accordance with the outcome of those encounters.

More broadly, many respondents of all ages reported a lack of understanding of Church teaching beyond the concept of “rules to be followed”. Finding ways to clearly communicate the life-giving message of the Gospel for the 21st Century would seem to be critical.

The Diocesan Synodal Team would like to thank everyone who participated in the diocesan phase. We have been grateful for all of your prayers, input, support, advice, and constructive feedback as we have undertaken the task entrusted to us, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to bless the Diocese of Galloway as we progress on our synodal journey.

APPENDIX A: A small selection of responses

“This should not be our one chance to talk and give feedback.”

“Perhaps we think too much of the Church as a self-preservation society rather than an apostolic missionary body.”

“If more women were in a position of authority other groups would have a listening ear, and more understanding of their needs.”

“The Church is at a pivotal point in history where it must listen to women and young people.”

“Voices cry out to be heard - and we as church and society don’t listen. We must engage to be relevant in the world!”

“The local Church will thrive if we support and strengthen the family.”

“Too many rules which dissuade the young people particularly.”

“Too many people in Church - lay and clergy - are quick to condemn. We must become inclusive. God judges, not us!”

“There are lots of activities going on, but it is very much isolated activities with no coordination between them. More coordination is required...as are formal and informal opportunities for dialogue.”

“This model is good, disciplined, respectful, well planned, not scary. Please build on this.”

“There is a feeling that when we are consulted for decision making that the decisions have already been made and consultation is a tick box exercise. There needs to be more transparency.”

“More money and resources for youth retreat centres and youth workers in the Catholic Church are needed.”

“This is a very brave undertaking, but also a very dangerous one. The Church must be seen to listen.”

“Let the world see what we’re doing and improve our reputation.”

“I like the core values of love. Pope Francis seems to be great in terms of working towards being more inclusive. I wish going to church was more normalised for young people but I rarely see people my own age attending.”

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS IDENTIFIED FOR OUTREACH

Abortion
Addiction
Arms trade/nuclear weapons
Assisted dying
Bereavement
Black Lives Matter
Churches Together
Contraception
“Courage” (Apostolate for same-sex attraction)
Deafness/other disabilities
Discrimination
Ecumenism
Environmental issues
Explanation of teaching on same-sex adoptions
Families
Homelessness
Housebound/sick
Leadership
LGBTQ+
Loneliness
Migrants
Minorities
Music
Political guidance
Socio-economic deprivation
Suicidal
Unemployed/underemployed
Vocations
Women’s vulnerability/men and boys’ respect for women
Youth issues

APPENDIX C: PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DIOCESE OF GALLOWAY

1. Transport for the disabled, especially post-Covid;
2. Groups to visit care homes and the housebound;
3. Mass (perhaps jointly celebrated with other denominations) in hospital settings;
4. More active prayer, including praise songs, chants, sign language, readings in foreign languages if present in parishes;
5. Actively reach out to different cultures present in the parish;
6. Anonymous ways to express views (e.g. comments boxes in churches);
7. Prayer ministries after Mass for those most in need, run by trained laity;
8. “Champions for minority groups” - an identified vehicle/people to represent each minority or disadvantaged group, with a well organised and researched system for them to have their voices heard;
9. Directory of ministries - what are the jobs that need done, what skills are needed for each, how to “apply”;
10. Diocesan or deanery level teams for all ministries;
11. Work together with other churches to create a common plan for a particular area;
12. Spend money on lay professionals;
13. Training, training, training!;
14. Be careful with language, which can be a barrier when certain words are off-putting or gender biased;
15. There is a cultural tendency to give money but not time (c.f. Ukrainian appeal). Can this be harnessed to pay for training/paid roles for laity?
16. More social interaction would help get to know the gifts we share, and also what the needs of a community are;
17. Create a “catalogue of talents” for the Church;
18. Involve the laity in meetings they would not normally be involved in, especially when decisions are being made;
19. Significant call for more meetings for lay ministries (between parishes, at diocesan level, for training);
20. Welcome packs for new parishioners/visits to new parishioners’ homes/cards posted through letterboxes of new build estates;
21. Keep listening!