

**CATHOLIC PARISH OF OUR LADY AND ST EDMUND HUNSTANTON, WITH ST CECILIA
DERSINGHAM**

**SUBMISSION TO THE CONSULTATION WITH THE LAITY ON THE SACRAMENTAL AND PASTORAL
PROVISION IN THE DIOCESE OF EAST ANGLIA**

Dear Bishop Peter,

Thank you for the opportunity for our parish to reflect upon and feed this back to you on the pastoral and sacramental future in our Diocese. We hope this is found to be useful.

INTRODUCTION

The Parish of Hunstanton has welcomed the opportunity to reflect on how things have changed over the last decades and how they might change further in the next ten years.

The three consultation questions prompted 32 responses, from individuals or families, and three focus groups (one face to face and two hybrid meetings). The process was undertaken over two months between November and January. Many parishioners needed nurturing encouragement to prepare and submit a response. To give some context to this:

- People found the questions difficult.
- Some people found the process unfamiliar—the idea of being asked, and of putting their views alongside others.
- There were/are fears about what the prospect of change means for our future and our faith.
- The process exposed our vulnerabilities as well as our aspirations.
- For some, it was difficult to process and reconcile others' views.
- There are hopes that although the process is difficult it could bring us to a positive outcome.

We have anchored our prayer, reflection, and response in the three pillars of synodality, so have approached each question in the light of these.

From these responses and meetings certain themes have emerged. The document below captures those themes, first in summary and then in more detail, summarised from the responses. The document is more a collection of views, not always in agreement, than a conclusive synthesis. At the same time, we have approached this in a spirit of encounter, not expecting to always agree on the way forward, but knowing that, following the practice of the recent Synod on Synodality, we can listen to each other and learn what is the will of the Holy Spirit for us as the local Church community and as part of the larger particular Diocesan Church.

The range of responses has demonstrated the vast range of experiences of being Catholic that come together to form our community, as well as the range of knowledge, understanding and spirituality to be found in our parish.

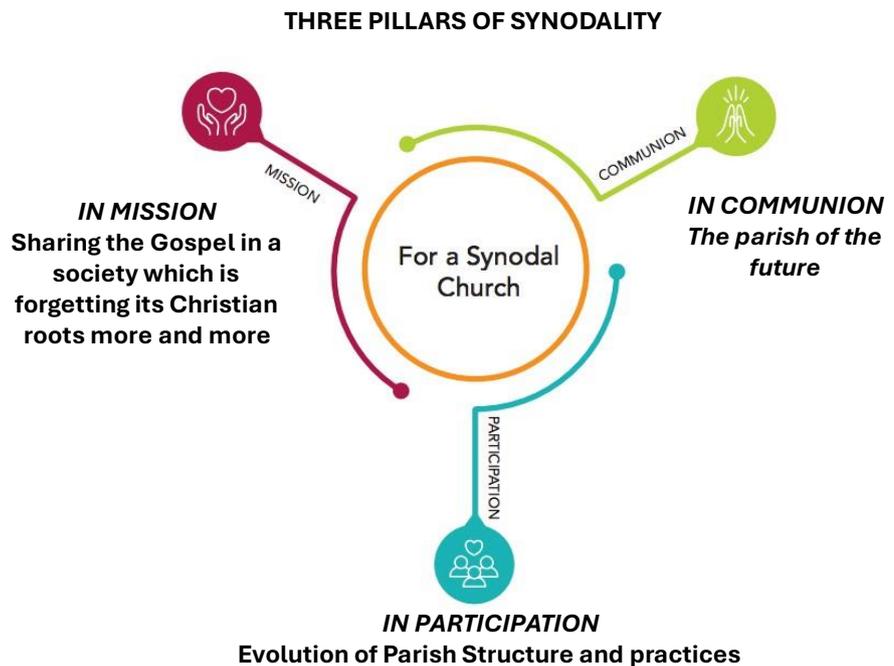
Many of the thoughts, concerns and ideas shared in the responses provoked questions: some demonstrating lack of knowledge of what is possible / permitted, others relating to how to fulfil a desire for learning and catechesis; yet others related to a desire for imaginative and less obvious options to address the challenges facing us.

Each theme presented therefore includes some questions that emerged from our efforts to respond prayerfully and critically to the consultation exercise.

We hope this document reflects the depth of reflection that has gone into producing it, and we thank you for the opportunity and impetus that this consultation has generated within our parish community.

QUESTION 1: How do you think Parish Structure and practices need to evolve to best serve the mission of the church, that is, sharing the Gospel in a society which is forgetting its Christian roots more and more? You will need to reflect on how both your parish community has changed over the past 25 years and what it realistically might look like in 10 years' time, with the help of the document sent with these questions?

[Let your imagination free to roam where there is no constraint, dream a response to this question]



THEMES THAT HAVE EMERGED – OUR PARISH IN TEN YEARS:

A confident, faith-filled, spiritual COMMUNITY

- A community of active members, ready for and resilient in change
- A community united not uniform

A model of good LEADERSHIP in Christ

- Good governance through complementary ordained and lay leadership
- Good admin and management practice applied to the mission, communion and participation of the Church

CO-RESPONSIBILITY across the parish and beyond

- All action serves the mission, communion and participation of Church
- Insight sought and offered
- “diversity of ministry.... Unity of mission”

A royal priesthood of ORDAINED and NON-ORDAINED MINISTRY

- Partnership of priest and people– mutual esteem and opportunity
- Looking beyond borders

PROVISION serving today’s believer and searcher

- Safeguard provision and participation through imaginative use of ICT
- Importance of service to visitors in mission

A community of local and global SOCIAL ACTION in – but not of – the world

- Social activity– gathering, events, community building
- Social action – witness and mission to those in need

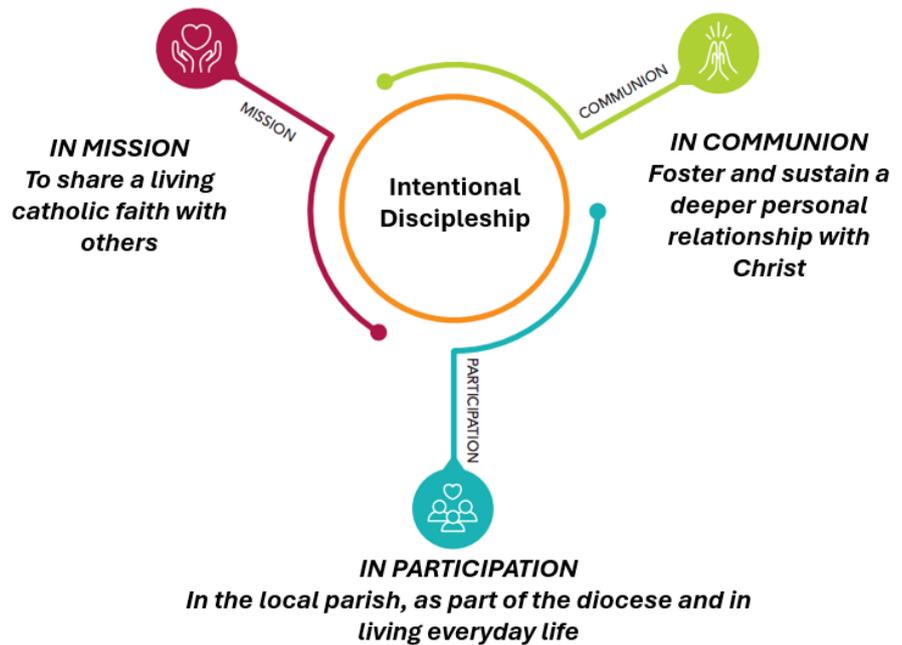
The parish as a living EVANGELISATION

- Field hospital for the soul
- Open church, open community

QUESTION 2: How can we foster and sustain a deeper personal relationship with Christ within the communion of the church, both in your local parish and as part of the diocese? What can be done to ensure that young and old alike can better live their everyday lives as intentional disciples that is, followers of Jesus Christ who embrace his teaching and become capable of sharing a living catholic faith with others?

[What development in faith knowledge, practice and experience is needed to foster and sustain the deeper relationship with Christ?]

THREE PILLARS OF SYNODALITY



THEMES THAT HAVE EMERGED:

Widen the scope and reach of PRAYER

- Contrasting forms of prayer;
- formal / informal prayer availability
- Use of ICT – eg online prayer

What is our VOCATION individually and as a parish?

- parishioners: what is our vocation?
- deacons: distinction from laity in practice?
- scope for priests to be freed from duties not confined to priests

Expand opportunity for ENLIGHTENMENT

- continuous and ongoing catechesis – beyond sacraments of initiation
- content – sacraments; structure and meaning of Eucharist;
- methods and mechanisms: variety of resources and media; celebrating the wisdom of the elders

A LITURGY that reads the signs of the times

- simplify / increase flexibility of Sunday obligation;
- Increase use of available scope for options in Mass eg Eucharistic Prayers

Harness SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES for community and witness

- social events / links as vehicle to spiritual growth and communion
- social activity as catalyst to outreach, witness, mission

Build confidence and capacity to EVANGELISE

- church as hub of community providing witness to appeal of Christian way of life
- outreach by being willing to talk about Christian life

Build on a good foundation for local ECUMENISM

- grow ecumenical links through welcome, participation

Focus on YOUTH AND CHILDREN – the future of Church

- traditional and non-traditional roles for youth, children
- build links across generations

Match FACILITIES to the needs of Mission, Participation, Communion

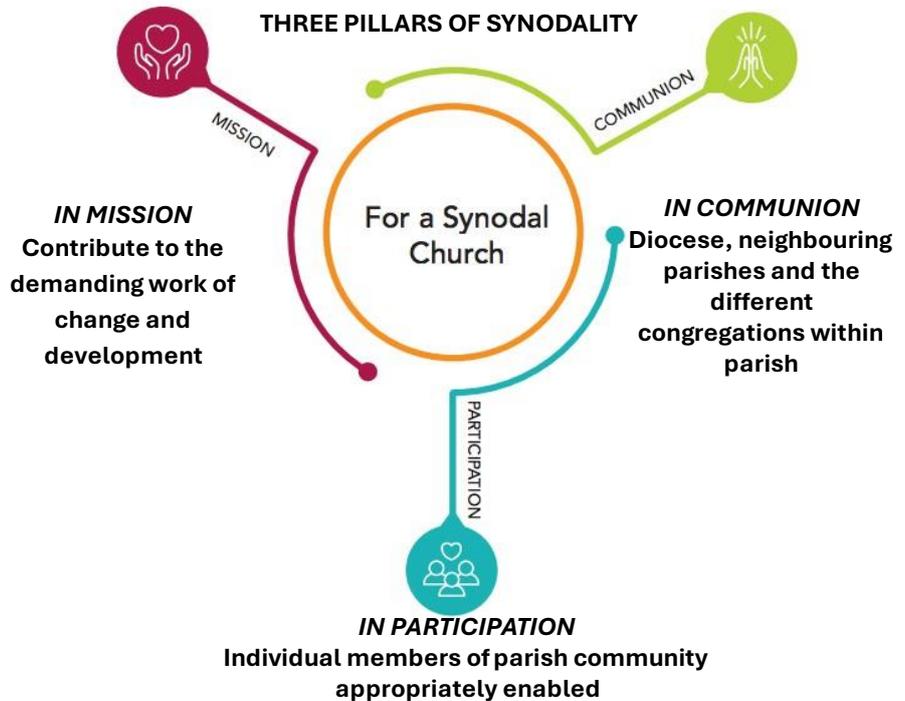
- how to address reduced facilities
- How to grow facilities in face of reduced capacities
- Fewer priests should not mean fewer facilities but increased scope for community gathering, activity

QUESTION 3:

Being realistic about resources both human and financial, what concrete steps do you think should be taken in your parish to address present and future needs? You would think about; how **the diocese, your neighbouring parishes and the different congregations** within your parish (those who attend different masses that are celebrated) can help you overcome challenges and create opportunities

How **individual members of your parish community can be appropriately enabled to contribute to the demanding work of change and development**

(this is asking for practical steps AND it is essential that we consider what assumptions lie beneath those ideas and unpick what changes in culture, attitude, mindset and behaviour on the part of clergy and all the baptised Christians will be required)



THEMES THAT HAVE EMERGED:

Widen Sunday Obligation to the day the community can celebrate mass - not necessarily Sunday

Covid made necessary creative opportunities for mass via the internet

Reduce the number of masses in the parish

Alternate mass between OLSE & St Cecilia's
Work with the bus company to make a stop at OLSE in time for Sunday mass

We need a rural strategy

Rural, holiday destination, aging demographic
What is the current Diocesan strategy? Transport to other centres e.g. Walsingham

Alternative sources for Priests: Think outside the box for priests – retired, from abroad priests, religious orders,

Open priestly ministry to married men & to women

Numerous people thought this necessary and desirable

A new approach to Leadership – widening, distributed leadership, greater collaboration

The old model of priest as 'King' in the parish does not serve the new situation but where and how do we have a conversation about clear boundaries of responsibility?

Increasing participation in volunteering and parish service

How can we support the priest better?

Develop the faithful

in theology, liturgy, scripture, spirituality, parish service, catechesis, leadership

Becoming a more active parish, open & offering more

St Cecilia's to be a resource centre for community and spiritual activities

CONCLUSION

As a parish community and as individuals, we have noticed that this consultation process has generated a welcome energy; and we notice a determination to ensure that this energy is maintained and continues to grow, beyond just this exercise. Despite doubts and concerns that continue to emerge, we express confidence and hope that we will be enabled as a community to continue to come together to celebrate our faith; and to be continually better equipped to participate in building up the body of Christ by professing our faith and by fraternal living.