



St Edward & St Mark
Catholic Windsor

You Will Be My Witnesses Ten Year Mission Plan

Consultation Responses

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YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

Parish Consultation

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts

1:8

1. Reflecting on the information we have shared, are there any priorities you feel we have missed from our Ten-Year Mission Plan?

A. ENGAGEMENT was a key theme of this area. Parishioners would like to see more information and detail around how the Ten-Year Plan would be increasing the involvement and engagement of:

1. YOUNG PEOPLE:

Within the family:

- Leading by example
- Praying as a family. Encourage all families to say grace.

Mass/parish/diocese:

- varied Mass times and formats
- Is there a young people's newsletter?
- Finding different ways of communicating and making church engaging
- Involving youngsters at Mass to read, play instruments and sing. To have special Masses at least once a month focused on the children involving them in prayers, reading and singing
- Mini vinnies (youth SVP) in the parish
- Dynamic people on the altar
- Youth Coordinator in the parish
- 'Get togethers' with the young so that we can explore together what they need, what they want
- Prayer/Rosary groups for the young
- By being a caring parish

Schools:

- integrating better with schools - Do they pray every day in Catholic schools? Some people perceive that the time and money that goes into Catholic schools does not produce Catholic adults. How does the Cathedral/diocese get the message out to young people? (apps, TikTok etc).
- Ask the schools in our parishes to also say grace.
- Catholic schools are an important part of our outreach to young people
- Youth group developed from within the school; encourage families from baptism; have a post-confirmation group and build a youth choir
- How to reach into non-Catholic schools?

Social media:

- Social media is sharing a lot of popular culture information on the faith which is incorrect or unreliable. The trouble is that young people hear lots of things e.g. on TikTok – maybe saying that the Gospels are not reliable – hard to counter that. We need to have a plan for how to combat this. Invest our time with our children to fight untruth and encourage them to be critical thinkers so they don't fall for misleading information which they see on social media. Outside influences are appalling – e.g. jokes against Christianity

2. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Are services accessible e.g. dementia-friendly services, large print hymn books and do we facilitate/enable them to participate in doing things themselves e.g. reading, welcoming, collecting, church cleaning, choir, flowers, hospitality, other roles...?

3. ACROSS GROUPS

- Bringing back Catholics who were practising members of the parish before the pandemic
- Explore other areas that would help develop closer working relationships among the different age groups
- Use of technology; more creative
- what matters to the ageing population is ‘where can I go to Mass?’
- Proactive programmes
- varying times of groups/meetings so people at work can attend
- Transport (to and from Church – minibus or car sharing? also need to consider parking – or other needs such as shopping, hospital visits)
- Are we evangelical enough? Perhaps we don’t speak enough about our religion.
- Engaging more with our local community
- Elimination of scandals, greater safeguarding
- Repurpose any churches that do not continue to hold Masses to be put to some other use in the parish, e.g. as nurseries, training centres or community hubs.

C. CULTURE:

- Countering false information in the media
- Leave the church building and go to the youth; bring more modern music and incorporate social activities to encourage them

D. FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP:

- Transparent accounting: e.g. volunteer committees to look strategically at development and investment
- Multi-way feedback between Diocese and Parish and laity (publish all the information that is being gleaned from these groups; question/suggestion box in the parish)

E. ROLES OF PRIEST AND LAITY:

- Fewer priests into the future; burden imposed on fewer priests; ensure priests are spread evenly across the Diocese – can priests be sourced from elsewhere? married priests?
- Forming lay people: systematic training of lay catechists/Lay Leaders; non-Eucharistic liturgies; Ministers of communion
- Women’s place and role; women priests?
- There are many organisations in the parishes doing a lot.

Little detail in the plan on how the personnel will be made up and, apart from priests and deacons, how the missionary community will be made up and how chaplaincy will be developed.

2a. What else beyond what is set out in the plan, do we need to do to realise this plan as a Diocese, as parishes, as individuals?

Christ at the Centre			
	As a Diocese	As a Parish	As Individuals
Mass & The Eucharist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer at the centre. • Diocesan Centre as the heartbeat for spirituality and prayer which would create teams of people to go to parishes to build up their spirituality • Needs to be relevant to today. • Mass in other languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refocus on the central message – the presence of Christ in the Eucharist to encourage members back to church. Many Catholics have lost the central message and feel it is acceptable to watch mass online. • Reintroduce weekday masses at St Marks Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater engagement with the sacraments across all age groups. • More access to mass – i.e., more masses • Greater involvement with the Parish ministries • More volunteers to spread the load

People of God: Clergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take some of the roles of the clergy and allocate them to the lay community • Introduce more diversity • Introduce married priests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move some responsibilities from the Parish Priest to the laity to free up time and offer more services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we doing enough for those who are sick in the parish and the needy, reaching out to others in the community
Christ at the Centre			
	As a Diocese	As a Parish	As Individuals
People of God: Lay Faithful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For personal spiritual development: 6 holy habits (reminder every month, in the newsletter, to reinforce these) • New initiatives will rely on funding (e.g., one suggestion was instead of the money and resources going into Catholic Schools, can we support the dying or a centre for Refugees? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education of scriptures • More support for Catholic couples/families after marriage, e.g., promoting Teams of Our Lady at marriage preparation, more pot luck/ harvest suppers and bring and share picnics/barbecues after Mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic evangelisation through missions/retreats • Welcome others, make people feel accepted. • One suggestion is that each adult member of the parish has a spiritual companion, a prayer partner whom they meet regularly so that will enhance their spiritual life.
People of God: The Young Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we engage young people in charity work through the parish? e.g. develop projects or groupings from the year before confirmation so that they can continue beyond and utilise the schools to support this. • Use of social media – podcasts – more outreach – Engaging young people – on their phones – send out notifications: “thought for the day” for young people (or everybody) – with links to Bible or further readings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children of the parish who are approaching the time of transition from school to university or to work environment will need support and guidance as they are bound to face criticism and challenges from non-believers. • Mass with music of interest to young people • Involve younger people more in the running / decisions of the parish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday school; involve children and families more in parish life • Put prayer more in the centre • Make people feel accepted. Young people and Confirmation candidates involved in welcoming • Invite people to come forward and volunteer

2b. What else beyond what is set out in the plan, do we need to do to realise this plan as a Diocese, as parishes, as individuals?

Missionary Communities			
	As a Diocese	As a Parish	As Individuals
Church Beyond Walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities to embrace other faiths • Outreach to groups who would not come into a church • Take to the church to other areas eg Mum's groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we share church buildings/resources/events (e.g. joint Bible study, liturgies, Holy days, prayer, Laudato Si study sessions; works of charity e.g. Homeless Projects)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play our part in supporting those less fortunate eg foodbanks
Responding To Laudato Si	No responses	No responses	No responses
Christian Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look further than our own faith to build a stronger Christian voice • Provide retreats in the parish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have greater awareness of other faiths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our understanding and involvement of the sacraments • Introduce spirituality sessions
Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater accountability and visibility of the activities of Rome and the Diocese. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the pool of people who support the Parish to spread the load • Succession planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we doing enough as individuals to encourage new people to contribute to the life of the parish?
Pastoral Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession planning of priests • Look to the lay community more • Increase the role of women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate sharing of resources, reduce duplication, retain strengths. • Maintain identity and individuality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase our faith and belief in prayer for a successful joining of the two parishes.

3. Is there anything further we should take into account when considering the shape of parish groupings?

When working as a new pastoral area:

- The most effective support for any plan is prayer and if people aren't active in prayer, then nothing will be achieved. Some people may not be able to help in other ways, but they can pray.
- Joint discussions across all the stakeholders in all of the areas
- Times of Mass must be coordinated and varied (e.g. have a Sunday evening Mass) between the Church groupings.
- Facilitate transport for disabled and vulnerable, e.g. shuttle service between Churches to transport worshippers, car sharing by neighbours.
- Succession/contingency planning need to be in place.
- Alternative ways for meeting to accommodate more people
- More of a focus on how we promote groups and spread the message
- More deacons to support the extended parish.
- Need to do things jointly, exchanges, talks, Masses etc. across the new area. Invite Ascot parish to join Windsor at Masses and other events. Encourage attendance at various study groups and other activities to create a spirit of friendship and better understand the Word of God.
- Updating the communication channels, eg Parish handbooks, websites, newsletters
- Do churches need to close? (e.g. practical advantages to keeping St Mark's – availability of parking and the closeness to a wide group of housing especially with new houses being built in the area)
- How does the plan 'fit into' the Synod consultations?

4. Is there any more feedback your parish would like to add?

CHALLENGES

- The plan needs to be contextualized to reflect/ adapt to the current very challenging set of social and economic circumstances society faces
- The next 10 years will be more challenging for our parishioners, and there will be less community services as we face austerity and public funding cuts. What role can we play in supporting people in the community (not just our parishioners)
- We need to balance immediate need and longer-term planning
- Our main worry is that we won't have enough priests.
- Lack of group activities for parishioners aged between 25 and 50. If they are not married or have no family it will be easier for them to walk away and find other areas of interests outside the Church

LINK BETWEEN THE PARISH AND THE BISHOP

- The participants felt that they were in the dark and were unaware of the ongoings between the Diocese and Rome. Therefore, they did not know what was expected and if their comments will be taken into consideration.
- Openness and more visibility from the Diocese are necessary for parishioners to speak up as a body.
- Disappointment was expressed about the Bishop not visiting our Parish at least once a year, not even to confirm the children in our Parish.

COMMENTS ON THE BISHOP'S 6 HOLY HABITS

- Six holy habits – good ideas BUT is going to confession once a month realistic? Is not this giving more 'work' to priests (who are growing older and fewer!) Can we have more Reconciliation Services in the parish where we have general absolution? When we had these services in the past, there were many people attending; 'going into the box' can be intimidating and frightening. Emphasise that confession is a safe and non-judgmental space. Healing services; service of anointing; understanding of absolution through the sacrament of the sick.
- Making the effort to spend half an hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament – may be easier for retired people whereas praying in the car on the way to work may suit working people.
- Lots of small groups that meet for a course (Alpha, Called & Gifted, Love Languages), but lack continuity; more small groups for adults that run continuously throughout the year when full-time workers can attend.
- Pilgrimages for long weekends e.g. Lourdes (not only 1 week ones).

JUSTICE AND ECOLOGY

- Create opportunities for learning about charity, justice, and ecology in our schools
- Set goals to combat climate change. Other areas to evaluate would be to reduce emission of CO2 etc.
- Litter picking – everyone to clean from their home to the church?
- Reduce our consumerist attitude; save the plastic.
- Help reduce emission by sharing transport and or adopting simple ways of living
- Commitment to recycling, donations to charity, volunteering with charities.
- Voice of the church needs to be heard in relation to social issues: Lack of affordable housing, poor wages, social equality. Is it right that we use nuclear arms? Where is the voice of the church in relation to 'cost of living crisis?'

If you would like further support or have any questions please contact the team:

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