



ARCHDIOCESE OF CARDIFF

SYNOD 2021-23

PARISH REPORT

The Parish of All Hallows, Miskin, Llantrisant

March 2022

Introduction – Special Characteristics of the Parish

All Hallows is a rural parish situated in Miskin just off Junction 34 of the M4. The parish serves Llantrisant and the surrounding communities out towards Pencoed, the Rhondda Valley and Church Village. Before the lockdown, the average number of attendees at Sunday mass was about 150 people. When lockdown was lifted the numbers were about 50 gradually increasing to 100 in early March. The location of the church is not convenient for people who do not have their own transport as the public bus service to the church is limited.

The feeder catholic schools for our parish are at least 7 miles away from All Hallows Church. They are St. Michaels Primary School, Treforest, Cardinal Newman Comprehensive School, Rhydyfelin and St. Gabriel & St. Raphael School in Tonypany.

The local hospital is the Royal Glamorgan Hospital and there are several residential care homes within the parish boundary. Before the pandemic, there was an established link with the spiritual care team in Royal Glamorgan Hospital which facilitated Ministers of Holy Communion taking communion to the Catholic patients in hospital. There was an active Visiting Group who visited the sick and the housebound.

All Hallows church is supported by several parish groups and ministries. At present there is no Parish Priest at All Hallows.

Methodology

<p>The period up to Christmas</p>	<p>Action Synod Prayer in the weekly newsletter. Parish representatives identified. Meeting with St Dyfrig's Parish Reps. Communicated via phone calls, meetings in person and emails</p> <p>Commenced 'listening' of views.</p>	<p>Comment Copies given out before mass, distributed to housebound and sent via email.</p> <p>Discuss plan. Synod leaflets with specific questions given out at masses.</p>
<p>January 2022</p>	<p>Action Synod training for parish reps. Share Your Thoughts forms given out and emailed.</p>	<p>Comment Via zoom with teams from other parishes.</p> <p>Recordings of views sent via whatsapp. 1:1 sharing, emails and completed forms. Respondents were mainly people of the parish, non-Catholic family members, Catholics who have left the faith, people of other Christian denominations, university students and the housebound.</p>
<p>Feb 2022</p>	<p>Action Group listening meetings in church hall after Sunday mass.</p> <p>'Listening table' started and placed in foyer of church.</p>	<p>Comment On average 2 to 7 people per Sunday with the help of note taker – 3 Sunday meetings. From children 8years to senior citizens.</p> <p>Key questions as headings on large sheet. Pens and markers left for people to write their views.</p>
<p>March 2022</p>	<p>Action Group meetings completed. 'Listening table' comments collected.</p> <p>Preparing Report</p>	<p>Comment Summarising feedback.</p> <p>Summarising feedback.</p> <p>Submit by 21st March '22</p>

Communion:

Spiritual Journey as a community

- We journey together through private prayer individually, or with other family members, friends and during the celebration of the mass.
- During the lockdown, church friends kept in touch supporting each through the isolation. Networks were set up to check on each other and to give emotional support especially during bereavement.
- There were prayer networks during the lockdown and knowing that people were praying for their sick family and friends gave them comfort and strength. The online masses, prayers and homilies on social media were incredible resources during the lockdown. These networks have continued because of their shared Catholic faith and fellowship.

Individual Spiritual Journey

- The spiritual journey of Catholics who responded, revealed that there was a need for a deeper understanding of the loving nature of God especially among the cradle Catholics. The practice of one's Catholic faith tended to be out of habit, the fear of sin or the hope of eternal life.
- Some Catholics have deviated away from their Catholic faith due to past negative encounters with church clergy and unwelcoming attitudes of other church attenders.
- Some are in a lifelong pursuit of answers in scripture, science and the practice of sacraments. "The practice of their faith in the traditional rites gives comfort and the reassurance of eternal life".
- Listening to each other's spiritual journeys during the synodal process made us aware that we were not alone in our viewpoints and sharing also highlighted the strengths of our Catholic faith and what the Church community should do to pass on this faith to others, especially to our families.

Celebration as a Community

- As a parish, we feel and act as one during the celebration of mass, congregational worship as well as livestream masses. One observation is that people returned to congregational worship and participation in the mass because the parish life of the church was an important part of their everyday life.
- There is a hunger for the sacramental life of the catholic church. We come together not only for the celebration of mass but also for the celebration of the sacraments, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, significant events in the lives of church members as well as priests. We are thankful for the dedication of priests without whom we will not have the sacraments.
- Church members have become Church family and we gain support from each other especially during times of illness and bereavement. One respondent described that there is always an 'unobtrusive welcome' at All Hallows whether new to the parish or as a regular member.

Communion in small groups within parish life and outside

- The lectio divina group made up of a few people from both parishes have weekly scripture reflections and since lockdown these are via zoom. A whatsapp rosary group pray every night. Fellowship in these groups has been a blessing during the lockdown.
- The spiritual journey of some of the respondents was not limited to the confines of the parish church. Some found their Christian faith strengthened through involvement with other faith communities, local social justice groups or just getting involved with the local vulnerable groups especially during the pandemic. This was on an individual basis.

Who feels left out?

- All baptised Catholics are part of our church. So too are non-Catholics who attend and share in our parish events. Those missing are Catholics who have lapsed or who no longer want to be Catholic. Divorced, single parents, people in same sex relationships and LGBTQ+, who are Catholics are missing or feel left out.
- We live in a secular society and families exist in this environment where the image of the Catholic church is viewed in a negative way. Catholic students are viewed with suspicion and as outsiders in universities. It was felt that the church needs to equip Catholics during their formative years with robust catechism, theology and an in-depth understanding of key catholic doctrines addressing everyday life issues such as divorce, single parents, parenting in same sex relationships, natural law, sanctity of life, abortion, etc.
- The current generation of practicing Catholics face the challenge of demonstrating that the Catholic faith is about an encounter with Jesus, individually and as a church family. Many Catholics feel inadequate to explain to their loved ones about God and their Catholic faith especially when faced with the issues pertinent to 'modern culture'.
- The sex abuse scandal in the Catholic church still has ramifications for the victims, the church community and the clergy. A lot of hurt still exists.

Participation:

Parish Activities

- We are a joint parish with St.Dyfrig's Church with a joint weekly newsletter. We participate in each other's celebrations and events. Events within the archdiocese is also announced in the newsletter.
- The Parish Advisory Council oversees the different ministries in the church. This was pre Covid and before the retirement of our parish priest. The groups, through which members of the church participate, are the Ministers of Communion, the Music Ministry, Readers, Housekeeping, UCM, Visiting Group, Administration and many others.
- Other than fund raising events for charities by individuals, UCM, red APF boxes and regular collections for charities, we recognise the need for parish involvement with local social justice groups. Getting involved with those in need around us gives us the opportunity to experience God's love with the people we meet.
- A couple of respondents shared that their motivation for being involved in the running of the church was "pragmatic rather than being inspired by the Holy Spirit".

Congregational worship

- Since the lockdown was lifted, there are fewer young families that have returned to mass.
- The lockdown lifted the obligation of Sunday mass. Confessions were suspended. One respondent shared that this was liberating as people came to mass 'unburdened'. There was joy felt among parishoners who celebrated mass together after the lockdown.

Faith Sharing Activities

- We get involved as a parish in interfaith events, ecumenical services, Lenten lunches, UCM at local and national levels. Sadly, the same people in the parish participate in the various groups and ministries.

The Young

- There is an absence of activities for the young in our church. One reason being that extracurricular activities happen at the weekend and parents are not free to organise and facilitate any church related activities. Similarly, often mentioned, were family activities and trips for the young of the parish. These would encourage more young families to participate in our parish life, starting with outside-mass activities. When families know each other as friends during these events, they are more likely to accept the invitation to attend mass with their friends.
- The church needs to be more Children/Baby friendly so that young families are made to feel part of the celebration of the mass. The common request voiced at the Synod listening events was for the return of Children's liturgy.
- A newly designed up-to-date parish website that is appealing to the young will encourage families to keep in touch with parish life.

Multicultural Church

- All Hallows church, with its links with the local hospital, is multicultural with many Filipino and Indian families. Some of the Indian families are of different Catholic rites such as Syro Malabar but attend mass at All Hallows. Recently joined Indian families are young, nuclear families without the support of their extended families. The lack of child care facilities and transport contribute to their absence at mass. One comment via the Listening Table, is to have church activities organized by the different ethnic groups of our church but inviting others in the parish to participate in these events.
- One simple act of welcome suggested by respondents was turning to the person next to you at the start of mass and saying 'hello'. One young mother shared that she returned to mass because a stranger welcomed her when she was sitting in quiet prayer in a church during her university years.

Listening

- The synodal process highlighted the need to create safe spaces within the parish for discussions and exchanging of views where love, respect and reconciliation can flourish.
- More could be done to establish a two-way communication channel between the clergy and members of the parish community.
- The church of the future should be a simpler church for the people; a church reflecting the diversities of our current culture, more inclusive through listening supported by a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith and the Gospels and keeping the core Christian identity.

Mission:

Having described their experiences, the respondents shared what changes they would like to see in the Catholic church of the future keeping in mind its mission.

Faith in Action

- They would like to see the local church expanding and becoming a central part of society allowing more people to get to know God.
- We need to develop strong links with the churches of other denominations in the area. One suggestion is having joint ecumenical services on certain festivals.
- Involvement in social justice activities as a parish or as part of the local community group.
- The Catholic church needs to take a stand especially with regards to legislation protecting the vulnerable in society and preventing abuse.

Evangelisation

- The church needs priestly leadership from the top and filtered down to the level of the local church to facilitate evangelisation. RCIA, conferences and retreats are bedrocks of evangelization.

Parish Forum

- We need to be a church of inclusivity through dialogue, catechism, transparency, forgiveness, integrity and a church where members openly declare their faith. In this parish, there is no protected, structured forum for discussion of issues of faith, where difficult conversations can occur in an atmosphere of openness, compassion and understanding. If we do not listen, we will not be aware of what we need and therefore will not seek guidance.

The Future Church

- The Catholic church should consider having women deacons and married priests.
- We should make more use of IT in the celebration of mass.
- The Church must address the diversities of society within the context of the Catholic faith and provide pastoral care and guidance to people who are affected.

Sign Off

This Report is submitted to the Diocesan Synodal Team on behalf of the Parish community of:

ALL HALLOWS RC CHURCH

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It is an honest reflection of the work undertaken over the last six months and has been endorsed by the Parish Advisory Council.

(No Parish Priest nor Parish Advisory Council at present.)

Signed..... Parish Priest

Signed**Marita Fernandez**Parish Representative

Once complete please forward to:

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The Diocesan Synodal Team wishes to convey its appreciation for all the work undertaken in the preparation of this Report