Parish & Community Synthesis Form

Submitted to the Diocese

**Name of Parish or Community** Parish of Northfields, Ss. Peter and Paul

**Name(s) of who compiled the synthesis** Joseph Lo

**Date of Submission** 21/01/2022

**How many people took part in your synodal process (please estimate if necessary)**Around 125

**How do you think the participant(s) in your synodal pathway would describe themselves – tick all that apply:**

1. Committed to Faith, Regular attendance at Mass and participates in community life e.g. Member of pastoral council/ attends prayer group/reader/volunteer
2. Committed to Faith, Regular attendance at Mass
3. Faith & Church have some relevance. E.g. Occasional Attendance at Mass
4. Culturally Catholic but Church has little relevance
5. From a different Christian tradition
6. From a different faith community
7. Person of no faith

**1) What was the story of your synodal pathway in your parish/community?**

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| **What were the main steps you took?** |
| *Share Your Thoughts; Listening Wall; Listening Events (one in-person, one on Zoom); smaller targeted groups; parishioners’ own events* |

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| **What was done to engage as participants?** |
| *Newsletters, Sunday Mass announcements, listening events, parish reps* |

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| **What was done to reach out to the peripheries?** |
| *Relying on individual parishioners to connect with their contacts* |

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| **Approximately what proportion of people in your active parish/Church community participated in one way or other?** |
| *Difficult to estimate – around 25%* |

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| **Were there any groups of people whose participation was especially noteworthy?** |
| *Provided for different ways to participate to cater for different preferences* |

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| **Were there specific groups of people who did not participate for any reason?** |
| *Many did not participate, perhaps proportionally fewer young families, young people and men* |

**2) What experiences of ‘journeying together’ were shared?**

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| **What experiences of ‘journeying’ during the pandemic were shared?** |
| *Disconnection; diminishment of ministry; reliance on technology for connection; pro-actively connect with others; opportunities to connect with other Catholic groups; continued discomfort about coming back to church physically*  *Reflect and explore; volunteering opportunities; heightened sense of gratitude* |

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| **What insights did this reveal?** |
| *At point of reporting, we have not yet come together to discuss further insights – here are some tentative thoughts on the theme of connection mentioned by some participants.* |
| * Connection with the community is very important; technology had been a challenge to some * Livestreaming of Masses could be useful – if anything for futureproofing * Over-reliance on a small central team to keep in touch with the whole parish * A few parishioners reported actively getting in touch with others * A network of parishioners could be usefully formed for much better support and connectivity – in or out of lockdown: perhaps with an aim that each household / parishioner would not be more than three, say, degrees from the parish team; perhaps formation of “cell groups”; perhaps a system of callers to get in touch with those who are struggling * An effective GDPR-compliant database of parishioner contact details could be designed with recording of relevant permissions |

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| **What experiences were shared more generally of the Church ‘journeying together’? What had brought joy? What had caused pain or sadness?** |
| *Church promoting community; connections, valued, socials, links with parish school, part of global community, part of local community, mentors; sadness at passing away of fellow parishioners; loneliness; range of experience with parish welcoming / lack of welcoming; limitation of the parish’s reach to everyone; sub-communities around Sunday Mass times*  *Visiting the elderly; looking out to help those in need; being engaging and relevant*  *Rules too rigid and not up to date; role of women; inter-denominational couples at the Eucharist; gap between Church leadership and the rank-and-file; celibacy rules*  *Range of experience with liturgy and music* |

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| **Who did people feel were missing from the Church community?** |
| *Lost to other communities; feeling of inadequacy; unforgiving or off-putting positions held by the Church; wrong doings by the Church* |

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| **Did participants share anything about the Church’s experience of journeying with and including others beyond the visible Church community?** |
| *Relatively few and isolated comments* |

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| **Was anything shared about how the parish/community works together or how co-responsibility is put into practice?** |
| *Many offered their views but no clear consensus as to why volunteering levels are low, despite observations of the wish and will to volunteer, and diverse views as to how to increase level of participation*  *Concerns about reliance on a few individuals* |

**3) What experiences were shared about the Church’s priorities for mission?**

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| **What did people wish to celebrate about how your parish/community lives its mission?** |
| *Church’s unique combination of strengths and characteristics, mission of the individual parishioners; spreading the word of God; volunteers; sustainability* |

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| **How did people feel included in the way the parish/community decides priorities for mission?** |
| *NO COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS* |

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| **What areas of mission did people say were being neglected within the Church?** |
| *A lot on youth ministry with different ideas, urgency; young families; elderly, seriously ill, bereaved; silence; liturgy; participation in the local community* |

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| **In what ways did they see partnerships with people beyond the Church developing?** |
| *Out of necessity if not out of good principle* |

**4) What was most significant about the whole experience?**

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| **What did you notice about how people participated? What attitudes or feelings stood out?** |
| *Some recognition that this is the beginning of a journey; new experience of mutual listening; not enough time to further deepen listening or to start discernment*  *Open and honest; gratitude and excitement for this new bottom-up approach, seeing the role of the Holy Spirit; older parishioners happy to work with younger facilitators*  *Some embracing it much more than others; suspicion; raised hopes and risk of disappointments; anonymity helpful for some, informality for others*  *More about sharing of dreams for the Church than of dreams of one’s own participation; more about sadness from issues with journeying together than from properly journeying together* |

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| **What was particularly significant, surprising or unexpected?** |
| *Much sharing related to ministry to the young – here are a couple of points from the young people themselves. Also surprising was some conversations in listening events going straight to issues at the universal Church level.* |
| * A high-level survey of young teenagers indicated more had positive views of the Church than those with negative ones – it would be interesting to see how different this was from what we would see from adult parishioners * The young participants mentioned relatively little on issues to do with global justice topics such as climate change – perhaps from the perception that the Church is already engaging with this well; rather some felt very strongly about inclusion and rights – women rights, LGBT rights; this is not unlike sharing of adult participants: but it is surprising if one had a pre-conceived impression of what the young were interested in |

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| **What topics or issues gave rise to diverse points of view?** |
| *Several themes attracted diverse points of view – enumerated here.* |
| * Experience of the pandemic / lockdown * Experience of the Church journeying together * Experience of the liturgy * Experience of friendliness and welcome in the parish * Dreams and aspirations for the parish * Reasons for low levels of volunteering and solutions to improve participation level * Youth ministry is important – but different views of how to go about this * Tension between being true to our faith and being open to the outside world |

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| **Which stories or real-life experiences were especially moving and why?** |
| *We can imagine many moving experiences lie behind much of the sharing. Here are a few that were more explicitly moving.* |
| * A participant feeling disconnected from the parish community during lockdown took initiative and actively connected with their contacts and “spread hope” * Another described the kindness they received from bumping into another parishioner on the street – following up with messaging and sharing of photos afterwards * A previously active parishioner no longer able to offer services, not feeling valued |

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| **Which experiences seemed to have strong resonance?** |
| *Joy of being in a community had strong resonance; strong comments when community was not connected or inclusive* |

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| **Which experiences were mentioned less but are significant?** |
| *A few pointed to the community that has quiet and meditative dimensions, with implications for mission; journeying together could also involve sadness* |

**5) Overall, what were the fruits that the Holy Spirit has brought about through this experience?**

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| **What dreams, desires, and aspirations for the Church were expressed by participants?** |
| *Mission to whom?*  *Mission to the poor and those in need*  *Mission in everyday life*  *Preparing future for next generations*  *Inclusion and accompaniment, community, welcoming, safety; all age groups walk together*  *Structure to engage parishioners; recognition of ministries; development of parishioners; more space in liturgy for reflection*  *Effective collaboration with those outside the parish; ecumenism and other faiths; outreach to the community; humility; stronger voice in society to highlight positive areas of the Church* |

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| **Were there any particular issues that the people felt the Spirit was inviting the Church to pay more attention to? In what ways did you sense the Holy Spirit inviting your parish/community to grow in synodality?** |
| *We did not have enough time to further deepen our mutual listening and begin discernment collectively. The below comes from individual respondents of the Share Your Thoughts question on what steps they thought the Holy Spirit was inviting us to take.* |
| * We need prayer reflections to ascertain where the Holy Spirit wishes to lead us * Each to find ways to contribute to parish life – and from that one can listen to the Holy Spirit * Sharing of duties in the parish; noticing volunteers * More friendship building opportunities; community events appealing to a cross-section of community; letting people see people running such events are “normal” * More focus on children; activities for the young; more children and teenager involvement * More involved in other religious communities; have interdenominational gatherings and services; celebrate an outward facing faith; learning from other faiths while rooted in ours; focus on what unite * Reaching out to others more and show God’s love by action – including challenging Church leaders on treatment of women and those in LGBTQ+ community; local parish to become more involved in social justice practically – reaching out to asylum seekers, the unhoused, holding political leaders to account; more action against racism * Praying for the sick, and also for the dead |

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| **Based on what was shared, what steps might your parish/community feel called to take in their journeying together?** |
| *NONE CONCRETE YET – but sensing it to be important to explore soon how to continue the journey of discernment in the parish, especially on those items actionable at the parish level: we are getting momentum!* |

**Optional: Is there anything else you’d like to share?**

A photo of our Listening Wall. Located on one side of the church, it attracted many posts and conversations.

A picture containing text, indoor

Description automatically generated