

Voices

As always throughout our synodal journey we are called to listen patiently to the voices of others:

Voice 1: As someone who has been divorced, I feel that the Church excludes and discriminates against me, without knowing my circumstances. My husband was abusive. When I became pregnant, his comment was “The baby or the marriage” He refused to help and eventually I decided that the life of my baby was paramount. The marriage failed about 18 months later. But I was left unable to take communion or remarry in the Church according to its rules. I actually have been to confession in my previous parish and do attend communion but I haven’t told my current parish.

Voice 2: If you go to a friend’s house or dinner, there is no way you or they would expect you to share a glass or cutlery. While there is traditional symbolism in sharing a Communion Cup, is it really wise? Apart from the obvious COVID problem, there are many other infectious illnesses which, with the best will in the world, will not simply wipe off. Is intincturing really so bad?

I do not believe contraception is wrong. Having children is a special responsibility and should be carefully considered. Husband and wives have a difficult job rearing children and providing them with a loving home. Couples need the consolation of physical love and choice, especially in difficult times, without the constant fear of pregnancy.

In many third world countries, there are droughts, crop failures and wars. It is so sad to see children with swollen bellies. Their mothers often have swollen bellies too

Some parents brought up in strict Catholic homes are made to feel guilty for trying to prevent pregnancy. Perhaps more should be said and done on their behalf, by those who truly understand their plight.

Voices 3: Living in the Western world we must acknowledge that many (the bulk?) of folk see no need for God. They feel that mankind can solve its own problems as they arise and see no limit to its achievements and aspirations.

All the Church can do in my view is to stick to its core principles that:

- Every life is God’s and to be held in respect. We are all brothers (and sisters) in God’s sight. Only God decides when it should cease.
- Marriage is a sacrament not to be undertaken lightly but definitely to be encouraged between a man and a woman, and made easier and cheaper to access. This secure union must be the best environment for any child to be reared. Secure family life fosters regard for others, appreciation and loyalty.

The Church’s role:

- To declare the Gospel of Christ and to proclaim it loudly.
- LOVE must be the banner and the inspiration of our message. The Commandments were commonplace to the Jews which should I believe be reinstated so that we are all aware of where we fall short of God’s ideal follower.
- So we need courage, faith and HOPE in vast quantities.
- William Booth (Salvation Army founder) said:
“God loves with great love the man whose heart is bursting with a passion for the impossible”

Joy must be our hallmark.

As Noted

Here are some views expressed on post-it notes on the boards towards the back of the church:

- Excellent Priest
- Father Nick Rocks
- 50% of priests in the Cardiff Archdiocese will retire in the next 10 years.
- Lack of priests: Where are the vocations?
- A Time of Reckoning
- Shame of Abuse in the Church. Church protecting clergy and not the victims.
A rotten cover up.
- Time for Change – Women Priests – Divorcees – Morality Update
- I want to hear much more from the Church in the public arena. e.g. An official spokesperson to challenge each Government Department (a sort of Church shadow cabinet).
- Need visible Catholic “spokesperson” to speak out sensitively but with authority on issues in the UK. Backfoot all the time.
- “Less passive more outward going”. What does that mean exactly? Dancing in the church, bingo etc when we move the pews to chairs?
God is in the tabernacle and should be worshipped.
- Respond to the challenge to do more, to be less passive, more outward looking.
- I want to spend less time worrying about buildings/roofs/liturgy or other (hierarchical) structures.
- Sense of Community
- Church is people not a building – it is Mission.
“Comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable” – 1 John 3:18
- The Church should listen to itself more. Collection box at the back of church for ideas for sermons. Broader topics more relevant for the congregation.
- Over reliance on things that were done by certain parishioners rather than what it means to be Catholic in our community.
- The Church on earth is not just a building. It is the community of Christ on earth. Be open to different ways of worshipping such as Zoom prayers etc.
- More prayer – more contemplation – more desert father and Celtic influence.
- More Adult Formation
- Ban the expression “Lapsed Catholic”. Let’s recognise the Church so often failed our people and apologise for this, and then figure out how to welcome them back.

Please accept my thanks for the time and trouble you took to respond to the invitation of the Holy Father to have your say. While it was not possible in the time and space available to reflect everyone’s point of view in this weekly series of communications to the parish, I was still amazed, even humbled at times, but always thankful that you spoke out so openly about your views and wishes for the Church. - Sean Dunne

