

# Holy Family Parish Leicester

Synod Day 30<sup>th</sup> May 2026

## Discussion Notes

On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May at St Joseph's Church, the Holy Family Parish Leicester held a Retreat/Synod Day to discern what our Mission Plan would look like. The day was attended by our clergy and parishioners. It was facilitated by Joe Hopkins, Adult Formation for the Diocese of Nottingham, and centered around the themes of; Encounter, Discipleship and Missionary Discipleship.

The notes below detail the discussions that took place.

### Encounter

#### How can our Parish better help others encounter / re-encounter God?

- Deepening our presence in the local community through social media – advertising what we do, i.e. Children's Liturgy and prayer groups.
- Get more people involved by identifying the ideal roles for specific age groups.
- More opportunities for adoration, perhaps before or after busy masses. Involve Extraordinary Ministers in this. X 2
- Opportunities for communal rosaries, first Saturday devotions and other traditional devotions.
- Be a welcoming Parish. x 3
  - Helpful
  - Loving
  - Taking time for conversations with others. There is a danger of not noticing people. We must always be welcoming.
  - Be inclusive – welcoming those with additional needs or disabilities
  - Be there for people in crisis
  - Have the courage to talk about our own faith and encourage people to come to church.
  - Always emphasise that God is love.
- Acts of service that show love which is a result of our faith.
- Being patient and humble – leading by example.
- Pilgrimages – encounter other people on pilgrimage – witness to our faith. X 2
- As practising Roman Catholics, we need to learn more and develop ourselves to share with others.

- Reflection on weekly readings and joining in worship.
- More social contact is needed after Masses.
- More Ecumenical links needed – redevelop churches together.
- Muslims/Hindus sometimes visit the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.
- A barrier to our encounter is the lack of functioning halls at Our Lady’s and Sacred Heart.
- Encountering Christ can come from involvement in the church, the more ministries we involve ourselves in, the more we grow closer to God.
- We can encounter Christ through travelling the world and seeing where and how the church has evolved and experience churches in different places.
- Understanding each other (within the Parish community) is important. Have a cultural exchange. Pray together and get to know each other better.
- Alpha Programme could help us to re-encounter God.
- More encounter for children and young people through Catechism.
- Learn from / encounter through the SVP group, for example 3 times per year.
- More retreats would be helpful in encountering God. A retreat for all age groups but also retreats for specific groups i.e. Married couples, youth, elderly, those struggling with faith.
- Support groups could help people to encounter God
  - Employment aid
  - Relationships aid
  - Support for lapsed Catholics
  - Social Justice – Being a Christian is not just going to Mass.
- More regular Masses would help us to encounter Christ. X 2
- There needs to be a space for doubt in faith. A safe place to talk about this and to grow in understanding and faith.
- We need to make more effort to evangelise.

## Discipleship

### What do I want to help me grow deeper in my Catholic Faith?

- Parish days for events with talks, prayers, testimonies, guided scripture readings and music to deepen our faith.
- Daily masses (considering limitations, using resources from elsewhere).
- Deepening our personal and community prayer life and understanding of the faith: x 4
  - Learning from theologians
  - Praying the rosary / meditation
  - Family prayer
  - What does the church teach and why?
  - Adult catechesis – not OCIA or RCIA
- Live a faithful life – not worrying too much about rules which could exclude people. X 2
- Strong, welcoming & inclusive community to support each other.
- More prayer groups/Divine Office. X 3
  - More informal ways to share our prayer life, i.e. socially at a pub.
  - Catholic support systems
  - Prayer groups for people of similar ages and intergenerational prayer groups.
- To be open and speak about problems facing the church today and the problems in today's world.
- Catechesis for all, not just the young.
- Reflection on readings/joining in worship. X 2
- More opportunities to bring all of our communities together, witnessing each other's customs.
- Youth Masses are great. We need to encourage more young people/young adults to get involved.
- Make our churches more attractive to look at to get people's attention, i.e. planting flowers around the church.
- Learn more about Catholic Doctrine in order to be confident about our faith and be able to defend the faith.
- Faith on a plate.
- Regular Novenas.
- Have support for young adults
- Develop culture – come together as one, take part in different groups' liturgies; “taste and see”.
- Finding your niche in the church / parish helps to develop relationship with Christ – playing our part helps us to grow.

- Active participation and coming together as a parish is important.
  - Holy Family Day
  - Holy Family Sports Day
  - Holy Family Picnic
- Monthly services of reconciliation.
- Our Parish needs to have a spirit of listening to others.
- Could we have a mental health rep for the Parish?

# Missionary Discipleship

## How can our Parish reach out to heal this area of Leicester?

- Community Activities:
  - Clean up days
  - Gardening days
  - Discos
  - Religious quizzes
  - Debates
  - Clubs for the youth
  - Extend the summer camp invitation to the wider community
- Visiting hospitals, care homes, children's homes, the homeless & prisons. X 2
- Improved relationships with hospitals.
- Involvement in homeless shelters.
- Be more aware of the vulnerable people in our area and find ways to support and care for them.
- Event to recognise the fantastic work of our clergy and religious.
- Show support for those facing issues in our country and city;
  - Immigrants
  - Muslims
  - The poor
- Bring back older traditions, such as processions, that show faith, hope, and charity outwardly. This is what younger people are looking for. It would be seen by our neighbours and strengthen faith and community.
- More interfaith dialogue and interfaith social events.
- More events for seniors.
- Invite people from other faiths to come along and experience what the Catholic faith looks like.
- Promote the Credit Union and its work.
- Have special Masses dedicated to specific groups;
  - Married Couples
  - Those preparing for marriage
  - Health Care workers (doctors, nurses, dentists, etc.)
- Familiarise ourselves with the services that are available across the city so that we can better support the people in our area who need help.
- More support for local food banks.
- The majority of people living around our churches are non-Christian. How can we be good neighbours to those who need our help?

- Healing is needed within our own churches and community. Important to remember that faith is a way to healing – put offences to one side. God comes first.
- Healing – We need to help those who need healing. Has the church done enough?
- We need to reach out to those Baptised/Confirmed who no longer attend. What can we do to understand and encourage them back?
- In the world that we live in, there is a thirst for the spiritual. How can we harness that?
- Children’s liturgy is wonderful. Profound responses from children on topics of faith.
- Take time to understand how Christ works.
- Be like a child – accept newness, look at changes and embrace them.
- A church needs to function with love first and foremost.
- Aspire to inspire before you expire!

We thank all who attended and contributed to the day.

All of the information above will be used to formulate our Mission Plan which will be shared with the Bishop and across our Parish.

