



**ARCHDIOCESE OF GLASGOW**  
**DEANERY CONSULTATION**

**SOUTH-EAST DEANERY – DEANERY SYNTHESIS**

**Submitted on behalf of the ten parishes of the South-East Deanery**

**MAY 2022**

## Introduction

The process of engaging in discussions about matters of significance in relation to the present and future nature of the Catholic Church through the synodal process is welcomed. During the consultation there has been expressions of appreciation for the work by the Church in parishes and in areas of action by the Church such as in schools, hospitals, and with the poor and marginalised. It is also recognised that this takes place at local, diocesan, national and international levels, and whatever the shortcomings of the Church may be, this commitment to the common good is a most valuable part of the mission of the Church.

While not every parish or group mentioned all these issues, the specific areas in which the Catholic population wishes to speak out include:

*The importance of increased lay participation in the life and work of the Church at all levels – parish, deanery and diocesan.*

*Avoiding the prospect of an impoverished Church which does not include adequately the involvement with young people, and all of its members including those who may not attend the Eucharist regularly.*

*Enriching the Church by involving women more effectively in the Church, including discussion on matters such as the possibilities of ordained ministries.*

*Having more local structures to encourage and facilitate communication within and across parishes, and with other faith groups, and in society more generally.*

*Hearing more clearly the voice of the Church (laity and clergy) on matters of local, national, and international significance.*

*Greater openness to and welcoming of people of non-traditional or alternative lifestyles.*

*Addressing with greater urgency some of the scandals and abuses that have been destructive of the lives of people.*

*The constructive use of social media and technology to communicate with all our “companions on the journey”, including those who may feel more distant from the Church.*

What follows is an elaboration of these in the format requested by the Archdiocese.

## Footnotes

- 1) The format of this response is to have taken the framework offered by the Archdiocese and The Holy See.
- 2) The comments made on each of these main themes are from the ten parishes that comprise the Deanery of the South-East of Glasgow. The Parishes of the Deanery are: St. Bartholomew, Castlemilk, St. Brigid, Toryglen, Christ the King, King's Park, St. Gabriel, Merrylee, St. Helen, Langside, Holy Cross, Crosshill, Holy Name, Mansewood, Blessed John Duns Scotus, Gorbals, St. Margaret Mary, Castlemilk, St. Mary Immaculate, Pollokshaws

## 1. Companions on the journey.

***“...there is none who are cast outside our love and care...”***

Our companions on the journey are all God’s children. Above all, Jesus is our constant faithful companion. Our companions are the believers and unbelievers, and there is none who are cast outside of our love and care.

Our companions are those living and those who have passed to a new life; and they are family; and people with gifts and virtues who collectively create our homes, our workplaces, and form our parishes and communities.

The companions who come with faith in their hearts are both Christian and people of other faiths. Our relationship with people of other faiths, while sometimes limited, is generally cordial and supportive. In certain parishes there is a significant presence of Moslems, Hindus and people of other faiths and while these previously were in geographically limited areas they now are distributed across many of our communities.

While some parishes feel they have created an environment of welcome, others feel that they must find ways of creating a culture of love and welcome - showing that companionship to those who feel on the margins, such as, those who feel unworthy, those who are isolated, those in prison, those in ill health, the homeless, refugees, the elderly and the young, those with mental health difficulties, and the vulnerable. In an increasingly dismissive society where people are often only valued for achievements and wealth the Church has a special duty to reach out to include all companions on our journey, especially the wounded and rejected; those without roots; and those far from home. The outstanding work with the poor in the parish of Duns Scotus (serving the Gorbals) is an inspiration for all.

We wish to welcome those who are divorced, those with alternative sexual orientations, those who lack the inner conviction of realising that they have faith; none is to be ignored. The empty hearts need special attention.

In acknowledging this wish to be inclusive of our companions there needs to be clearer structures that create communities of faith and worship. There can be frustrations in parishes, such as *“Our parish family doesn’t walk together with the poor.”* Parishes are encouraged to ensure that there are ways in which the voices of laity and clergy are heard, where decisions are taken in the common good, and where the values of companionship are clear – respect, love, and collegiality. The lay faithful ought to play a greater role in the Church in Scotland, but this does not mean taking on tasks associated with the ordained, but rather expressing their unique role in the Church, accompanying their brothers and sisters in the faith, and walking with those whose faith is in need of nourishment.

That urge for inclusivity requires the Catholic Church to acknowledge, respect and celebrate the place of women in the Church. By failing to include everyone we impoverish the Church and our listening is weakened. Our companions are those with whom we have positive relationships since it is in those relationships that often we meet God.

On the journey of life if one of our companions is forgotten all are forgotten.

## 2. Listening.

*“...it requires an open mind and heart...”*

There is a particular value in listening to the word of God. The importance of listening to the wisdom and the traditions of the Christian message cannot be over-emphasised. We also must recognise that these are to be interpreted through reading the signs of our times and not be stuck in world of the past. If the Church is to survive as the authentic word of God, we must listen as much to the future as to the past. It is not only a matter of listening, but of responding to what is heard.

The synodal process enables us to see the need for “dialogue” and “encounter” in the work and structures of the Church (key themes in the pontificate of Pope Francis). By implication there are other voices to be heard. When there are people or groups whose voices are not heard the Church is impoverished. The Church seems to listen, but rarely feeds back. An educated laity can readily engage in dialogue.

Listening may be the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. The importance is of not only listening, but “hearing the other”. This is the process of encounter – meeting the other with an open heart and open mind. This is a central requirement in which we are non-judgemental and open to the other. Of paramount importance in this is the willingness, the openness, to listen to the other without necessarily applying any judgement about their beliefs. This is not just about the sharing of knowledge but the sharing of beliefs; but more challenging, being prepared to alter our own beliefs so long as they are informed by the cleansing light of truth. That can be a very significant challenge because when we are open to change in ourselves, we have to have a view of our own beliefs and the capacity for and willingness to change.

This process of listening and hearing “the other” suggests that we have to pay attention to those companions... those on the margins and those who can rightly shape our thinking and our spirits. In doing so we need to be alert to “fake news” and the range of views that can distort our thinking. The essential place of Catholic social teaching must inform our conscience and our thoughts.

The listening process cannot stop at a merely physical level; it is listening so that we know God more deeply. A “spiritual listening” requires us to know the difference between “knowing God” and “knowing about God.” In the modern world there are many ways of *knowing about God* – including social media, journals, personal reading, etc. In the main people come to *know God* through relationships with others but opportunities for this at parish level for some are fairly limited.

Different generations listen in different ways, and we have to listen to all. Increasingly we have to pay attention to the social media as sources through which we listen. Different generations listen differently, and new generations listen to ever-widening sources of information and views. The Church must recognise this and play its own part – as indeed happens through new media centres, new platforms for listening. It is a global world of listening and media. There has to be change- even transformation – through dialogue or encounter – and not maintaining the status quo. By the very process of dialogue/encounter we should be transformed.

### 3 Speaking out.

*“...speaking out is so that there are voices of the whole Church....”*

All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity. This is an essential aspect of the dialogue which is to be encouraged. If the Church is to be a listening and welcoming Church, the people in communities need to be able to speak out – in truth and without fear.

This implies a dialogue of integrity and responsibility – speaking out on matters of significance with humility, passion, and respect for others. That speaking out should mainly be in dialogue and where appropriate with a prophetic voice. Speaking out on matters of importance should not be constrained other than by seeking truth, exploring matters of significance, and avoiding “cover-ups” within the Church. This is not the freedom to voice what is irresponsible or damaging to the Church or to anyone. Indeed, the opposite is the case where speaking out is undertaken to improve the spiritual health of the Church in serving the needs of all God’s children. Young people do not lack generosity or openness as some occasionally assert, but voices in society contradicting Church teaching are strong and ever present in social media.

This also requires openness by everyone and avoiding being secretive and demonstrating honesty regarding what is happening within the Church. More openness would be welcome. The clergy need to encourage the lay faithful. Many faithful fear openly expressing their faith, and feel abandoned by their pastors- as they are too often silent when the Church is attacked. *“The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.”* (Milton)

The specific areas in which the Catholic population wishes to speak out certainly includes:

- **The place of women in the Church; and the participation of men at the Eucharist and other church services; they normally form the minority.**
- **The crisis of global warming and the destruction of the environment.**
- **The striving for peace in all parts of the world.**
- **Eradicating poverty in a chaotic world of consumerism.**
- **Discussing the possibilities of further married clergy.**
- **The scandals of abuse.**
- **The scandal of accumulated wealth in the face of poverty in society.**

The importance of the laity speaking out is so that there are voices of “the whole Church” – avoiding the perception of clericalism and the voice of the Church being only that of the magisterium or ordained clergy. Of course, their voices are significant and need to be heard, but there are also many other voices that need to be heard and have a right to be heard. We are all the poorer where we do not hear the voices of women, of the teenagers, and of those “on the margins”. It is in the collective choir of humanity where the voice of God will be most clearly heard.

In general, it is thought that people feel comfortable discussing their faith within close groups of people to them but not in the wider community and feel that they would benefit from more encouraging and positive input from clergy. This can be a form of evangelisation. The Church is again urged to pay attention to the power and value of the social media. It has become imperative that the Church uses all appropriate means of communication to enable legitimate voices to speak out. There is an argument that there should be a greater acknowledgement of the changing values in society, speaking out about the nature of those changes and interpreting them within Gospel values.

#### 4. Celebration.

*“The increased participation of laity in liturgical practices is welcomed...”*

Celebration is an integral part of Catholic life and formation. The importance of community coming together to celebrate is rooted in the life of Jesus himself. Faith development largely comes from relationships with God and meeting God through other people. These meetings, and these encounters are to be celebrated, and so through these do we grow in faith and in community. Some 60 years after Vatican II much more has to be done to encourage the authentic active participation of the faithful. Some people still understand “active participation” too reductively (i.e. only in terms of exterior activity).

Attendance at Mass and the sacraments are vital influences on faith development at all stages of life. In parish life the centrality of the Mass and liturgy is a very clear focus for companionship of the community. Through these celebrations we are transformed, and this should be the wellspring of our lives. *“Walking together”* is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist. Yet attendance at Mass alone is not a sufficient mark of the Catholic; good works are also required.

During the period of the pandemic (from March 2020) there has been a burgeoning of attendance at online Masses and other celebrations. For some, during the pandemic, the rhythm of the liturgical year being interrupted brought about a deeper realisation and appreciation of the richness of the faith community’s celebration of the liturgical seasons.

We welcome any opportunity that encourages prayer and reflection and are grateful for the efforts made to allow people to participate in these celebrations – and in particular those who would find it difficult to attend in person, the sick, the elderly, the infirm, the vulnerable. However, we are a Church of community and in-person participation in the celebrations is a vital part of building community. Different generations can interpret “celebration” in different ways. There is a feeling that living faith journey is often undertaken in isolation regarding parish life, is not the same as family life. It may be that Catholics are more insular than other denominations of Christianity, where people seem closer to each other.

The increased participation of laity in liturgical practices is welcomed, although in some parishes finding willing volunteers in lay ministries is not easy. There is scope for expansion of certain ministries and in areas such as preparation for the sacraments, and at funerals, etc. There are different influences at different times of life and on human development. Families and schools often provide important contexts for confident relationships, and as such can be powerful influences on faith development in childhood. Some consideration needs to be given to the value of the Sacrament of Reconciliation – with a better understanding of its value to the individual and to society.

One area which is a regular source of debate and discussion about celebrations is the timing of when the sacraments should be received. Consideration of the perceived absence of a sacrament for late teenagers/early adults may merit some attention since this is often a time when people of that age are seeking to play a fuller part in society e.g., through employment.

## 5. Responsibility for our common mission.

*“...a mission of social justice, love, and of stewardship of the world...”*

Being a member of the community of God’s children should mean that there is general acceptance that through one’s baptism there is a commitment to live one’s faith in an overt way. By our baptism we are welcomed into the family of the Church, and this brings with it certain responsibilities. One of those is to share “our common mission” within which there is scope for difference in how the mission is carried through in day-to-day living. *Synodality* is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all members are called to participate.

This mission includes not only the care of others but care for the environment. It is a mission of social justice, love, and of stewardship of the world, its people, and its resources. To establish that common mission it is important to feel part of what that mission is. This means being prepared to bring our gifts, however humble, and personalities to our communities. Even those who feel disempowered bring to a community a unique presence – and none is to be ignored.

Within our communities a significant number of people feel “commissioned” to express their faith whether in family, through education, or in other ways. These ways are always unique to the person, but together they contribute to make the community more complete. This does not necessarily require proselytising, but it required a commitment to love one’s neighbour. Some feel that they are there to be led, not consulted or included meaningfully. We must lead by example and, as lay faithful, must nourish and deepen our personal holiness- especially through the frequent use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and frequent reception of the Eucharist.

The idea of ‘journeying with’ is a powerful metaphor for Christians. It can have a profound effect in relation to those who feel excluded from the Church or find themselves marginalised within it. This is potentially much richer and more challenging than simply viewing the Church as simply “welcoming home” those who no longer attend Mass but is an acknowledgement of the special place there is for ALL of God’s children within the Church.

The areas in which the parishes could be more active include:

- **Exploring the important place of women in the Church.**
- **Seeking ways of engaging the youth (such as having a Parish Youth Worker).**
- **Providing a more frequent and complete ministry to the sick, and those on the margins.**
- **Having more interaction with other religions, as well as other Christian churches, and being prepared to express with confidence what the Catholic church offers... socially and spiritually.**
- **Providing opportunities for laity to contribute their gifts to the communities of parishes.**
- **Greater welcome to those who have stopped church attendance.**

It was acknowledged that there are many activities which take place and are not well know across the parish. These include the care of pre-school children; supporting parents preparing for baptism of children; attending to the sick and housebound; the work of SVdP Society; etc in all of these areas more could, and possibly should be done.

## 6. Dialogue in church and society.

*“... the Catholic church is counter-cultural...”*

The Church should increasingly consider itself as a Church of dialogue, speaking out from the basis of the values of the Gospel. It seeks to be not just an agent of change, but a spirit of change in an often-hostile world.

The Church engages with the modern world, sometimes successfully, sometimes appearing superior, sometimes overly defensive. Characteristically it engages in dialogue in some of the most serious issues of our time. The dialogue which has been successful in the papacy of Pope Francis has included his urge to be greater fraternity (*“Fratelli Tutti”*), to be more respectful of the planet (*Laudato Si*); his pleas for peace (Easter 2022– *“Urbi et Orbe”* message); his concern for the homeless and those without a voice; the refugees; those in prison; etc. It is consistently concerned with the dignity of the human person.

The dialogue is consistently and constantly concerned with social justice, ethical morality in public life, and moral issues. This should be especially attractive to youth and young adults, but often the messages are clouded by a context in which the message is only given from church pulpits – and therefore not heard. The message is good; the means is too often ineffective. We must listen to others’ opinion not to be judgemental, pray about conflict, share views, and generally be more courageous in sharing our faith. Personal example is key.

The Church also engages in dialogue with certain specific groups. For example, it engages with nurses and other medical practitioners in ethical matters; with scientists who are working at the frontiers of our understanding; and with professional groups as they engage with the unknown. It is concerned with the intrinsic search for truth and what is right. This is not an “idle curiosity” but a disciplined and intense search for truth. These are important aspects of dialogue, and the Church is always prepared to offer a view that makes us understand God more deeply.

Dialogue also suggests that the conversation is not only about what the Catholic church wishes to say, but what it might hear. There is little doubt that the Catholic church is counter cultural. It offers values and ideas and engages in actions that challenge the norms of society. By its very nature it challenges a world of materialism and consumerism. Its role is to break down division and separation in society. Too frequently it is criticised for its hypocrisy on these matters. Too readily does it slide into a world of secularism and greed. Then dialogue with society seems easier but empty. Members of the Church could be more vocal in speaking out about such issues.

Dialogue is reflected in some aspects of the Church at local level, although there is not always a clear direct line of communication to parish level. That said, for those interested in certain aspects of social justice there are many opportunities to become involved. Again, access to the internet can facilitate this. Even so there might be developed structures and agencies, led by the laity, at diocesan and deanery level to engage laity in this kind of dialogue at local level.



## 7. Ecumenism.

***“the willingness to respect and celebrate the differences across all denominations.”***

Ecumenism has to be an integral part of Catholic social practice. The dialogue between Christians of different denominations, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey. Ecumenism is not just the search for what beliefs different denominations hold in common; but rather the willingness to respect and celebrate the differences across all denominations. It is essentially an attitude of mind that is welcoming of all who believe in Jesus Christ. It is part of the dialogue with our companions in faith and fraternity.

While it would be noble to believe that there is intrinsic interest in Christians wishing to explore the beliefs and practices of other denominations experience suggests that personalities and individuals play a significant role in most ecumenical advances. It must be clear also that with the diminishing numbers of “practising Christians”, i.e., those who attend churches on a regular basis, that there would be value in a greater amount of inter-denominational dialogue and activity. There are some good examples of this taking place (e.g., *Glasgow Churches Together*) but numbers actively involved are sadly very small. In some cases, the number of people engaged in parishes is such that the faith experience is fairly negative, and certainly not encouraging of participation by younger generations.

Too much is left to the priests and other individuals to motivate this spirit of ecumenism. It is an area in which the laity could and should be more actively engaged e.g., in having joint discussions and meetings on matters such as social justice and the dignity of the human person, would be beneficial in promoting a spirit of ecumenism. Christ asks for his church to be One. We all have a responsibility to work for unity, but the Catholic Church needs to be confident with its identity in order to have authentic dialogue.

Ecumenism requires cordial relationships to initiate dialogue, and robust structures to sustain it. We have to be brave in exploring our own beliefs and those of our faith companions. There is little doubt that most Christians are “good people” generally with noble intentions in this area. There are increasing opportunities to engage with other Christian denominations at local level. Locally, Christians are respectful of each other’s beliefs, what unites and what divides. Perhaps this has been stimulated by recent social movements highlighting the wrongs of discrimination – e.g., based on gender and race. West of Scotland Catholics seem to be less apologetic and more able, encouraged by their priests, to assert their love of God and the church. The example of “Bridging the Gap” – set up in the Gorbals by local churches- has supported a lot of people of different faiths – asylum seekers/refugees etc. It has tackled difficult issues and provided a lifeline in material ways for these people.

In addition to Ecumenism, the Church is concerned and actively involved in inter-religious dialogue which brings benefits and healing to all believers. (In Glasgow the Council for Christians and Jews offers opportunities for meeting together and sharing faith which is enriching for both faith communities.)

In Glasgow there is a particular social concern for a deep-seated bigotry and sectarianism. This characteristically shows itself in football tribalism, and this can easily spill into other areas of society and be a force for destruction. The Church should be more consistent in condemning what can so easily develop into hatred and irrational feelings of disrespect and distrust. These have no place in the Church.

## **8. Authority and participation.**

***“...Appropriate participation is not a matter of political correctness but of human rights”***

A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church yet the structures of the Church still reflect its hierarchical nature. For many lay people this is a somewhat confusing model of the Church. Few lay people fully understand the nature of “Church.”

What is needed is a clear vision of the Church as a creation of God alive and living in the modern world. (...” *On this rock I will build my church...*”) So, the church is not simply an “institution” but a community; that it, it is a living, spiritual and social entity, constantly changing and engaged in “the real world.” It derives its ultimate authority from God, and we are called onto be participants in this great work. What is needed is education in leadership among the laity. There are people and organisations capable of offering this and this should be encouraged. Perhaps more could be done in schools to educate young people with a positive view of participating in church activities.

The idea of “authority” is a complex one, but it includes “being an authority”, that is, a source of truth, wisdom and understanding. There is a perennial question of where this authority derives from; and the synodal process raises the question about whether we can be participants in creating the tenets by which we form our beliefs. A synodal Church moves us to that discussion. How this is to be achieved is another matter, but certainly the willingness to hear the voices of laity is part of the process. This means participation in responsible decision-making at the appropriate levels, using the many gifts and talents of the laity. When we do not have structures and opportunities to hear certain groups, they can feel disenfranchised and disempowered. In this discussion, of course, we need to be clear about “ends” and “means”. The synodal process brings these together.

We reiterate that when we do not hear the voices of women, the teenagers, the marginalised we run the risk of a having authority deriving from a segment of the Church and not the whole Church. Appropriate participation is not a matter of political correctness but of human rights. In this regard it is recognised that many of those who attend services, including the Eucharist, are women. Yet the balance of men and women in the structures of the Church is disproportionate.

Again, this requires structures such as pastoral councils working at diocesan and parish levels. The shortage of priests and ordained ministers in our parishes calls on the need to review parish structures and practices. It is clear that this shortage coupled with the increasing average ages of priests adversely affects their capabilities to undertake some pastoral duties of some priests, and this should be the subject for wider open discussion inside the church and the diocese. In this regard the participation of the whole community would be welcomed. There is an educated laity to be mobilised.

## 9. Discerning and deciding.

### *“...See, Judge, and Act...”*

Discernment is a distinctive process within the Church. In a synodal style we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community. This is a process in which we “See, Judge, and Act”, doing so with trust in the Holy Spirit enabling decisions which are advancing the common mission.

Do we fully understand what it means to discern? Making good judgement within our faith, intuition, listening to God and deepening our understanding of Scripture. It is not by any means the idle reflection of one’s own thoughts, but rather a rigorous process based on certain principles and processes so that we might better understand what the Holy Spirit is saying.

There may be value in considering a more widespread interest in spiritual discernment, particularly for adults. In schools pupils are encouraged to discern their life choices and their values. After school there is something of a void and having adult education for spiritual reflection is rare. Since the days of parish retreats focusing on “discernment” is unusual. In Glasgow there is an Ignatian Spirituality Centre and the Craighead Institute which use Ignatian spirituality for supporting those who wish to use this method of discernment. There are other approaches to discernment.

How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment? Sharing with others our faith, listening, attending faith-sharing and prayer groups. There is clearly scope to join voices with other faiths to share the common beliefs; to discern what is in the common good; and give stronger voice and witness to the world on faith issues. That “common good” is not to be restricted to Christian thoughts and beliefs. Yet opportunities for inter-faith dialogue are not well developed. More adult ongoing formation at both Parish and Archdiocesan level would be welcome.

There is a feeling that decisions concerning the Church are taken by the parish priest or, as appropriate, by the Archbishop (and his advisers). It is rare to feel that there is any corporate decision-making, and deaneries are rarely used for decisions. For there to be more distributed decision-making would require a change of culture. This would necessitate a willingness for parish councils to be established and led in a way that was more in accord with the idea of a “synodal Church.” That in itself would require significant skills of leadership. Some thought should be given as to how that leadership can be formed, educated and organised.

## 10. Forming ourselves in synodality.

***“... a commitment to engage in a Church that serves the needs of all humanity. ”***

Synodality entails being receptive to change, formation, and on-going learning. It requires an adherence to the central tenets of the Christian faith and a preparedness to read the signs of the times and act in accord with what we discern is appropriate for strengthening our faith and service to others.

This requires us to “know God” more completely, and not just “know *about* God”. The formation of the person is not only an intellectual exercise, but centrally it is a spiritual one. We must try as best we can to see the face of God. How we do that will vary from person to person, and the Church should provide the lenses for us to see His face more clearly. So, forming ourselves requires self-reflection, a sense of our own gifts and talents that can contribute to the common good, and a humility that places us before God conscious of our own sinfulness.

At a practical level reading and meditating on scripture, and inspirational spiritual literature would encourage us to grow and change. The purpose of this is to allow Christ to increase while we decrease, forgiving others as Christ forgives us; re-discovering the gift of the Holy Spirit in our Church and our lives. Forming ourselves in synodality is not only a matter of acquiring or reflecting on greater knowledge and understanding; it requires a spiritual open mindedness to discern the word of the Holy Spirit; a willingness to be respectful of “the other”; and a commitment to engage in a Church that serves the needs of all humanity. We require to recognise a change of outlook and culture will be challenging for many. This is a form of inner renewal – not deviating from the truths of the faith, and not imposing a rigid mould for all. We are part of the Church committed to diversity, inclusion and equity as part of our spiritual DNA.

Forming ourselves in synodality allows us to discuss and debate the key issues which face the Church, and which sometimes cast a bleak shadow over it. We need to have confidence in our faith and speak out to achieve justice where there is injustice and bring hope where there is none. Synodality is as much about our attitude and approach to being a member of the Church as it is about exploring its rich teachings and traditions.

The Church is commonly seen as a sound place where “help” is available. This can take the form of help for those in need – and particularly the vulnerable and those suffering from addictions and mental health problems. It should be a place, not of last resort, but where the generous hand of God is always outstretched. A synodal Church has this at its heart.