

St. Vincent Parish - Synod Responses – 270 questionnaires distributed - results - February 2022

Total responses – 82 – 72 surveys - 10 face to face conversations. One Parish meeting – 12 attendees. Numbers are inconsistent in the different sections as people added bits to the form or only filled in parts of the form.

Themes from Parish Feedback – number of times mentioned

- Sexism in the Church - need for women to have equal opportunities within Church power structures– 59
- The Church important to personal faith- valuing sense of belonging to a shared community- 57
- Less judgemental, more inclusive Church - especially for LGBT+ community & marginalised groups - 48
- Call for change in Church governance structures - address abuse and corruption - 46
- Return to a simpler Gospel based Church model -prioritise social inequality, justice and peace issues - 43
- Calls for change to Church rules and attitudes relating to sexual, reproductive, gender issues – 41
- Change to ordained ministry – open to all - married, women priests - 38
- Care for the environment, climate injustices - 34
- Need for more spiritual support and direction – 26
- More consultation, openness and transparency of Church matters - 24
- Needs of the young in the Church – ‘the future of the Church’ – 23
- Fear that Church teachings are being undermined/influenced_by secularisation & liberalism– 12
- Concerns around liturgy and sermons – 6
- Evangelisation – 6
- Ecumenism - 56

Answers from the second Questionnaire

What does the Catholic Church mean to you?

1. Part of my history and sense of community and connection let down by hypocrisy of leading figures - corrupt cardinals, political figures like Jacob Rees Mogg who bring shame and inhumanity to the teachings of Jesus. The pope gives me hope.
2. In theory: the community within which I will most closely encounter the living God through Christ. In practice: a lifetime of struggle to balance the truth of the gospel with the maze of man-made rules, an almost impossible task in more recent years.
3. It has always been part of me. Although there have been periods in my life when I have not attended Mass, I have always been proud to call myself a Catholic. Prayer and the Church are a source of spiritual comfort and strength.
4. It feels like belonging to something greater than myself and is a part of my heritage. My whole young life was immersed in the Church it was a huge part of my identity. I feel I am hanging onto shreds of my faith because of the hypocrisy of the Church, the corruption revelations in the Curia and the closed mindedness of so many of our spiritual leaders. The Church has damaged so many lives as well as inspiring so many people to work selflessly for others.
5. It fed my early spiritual life and gave me a moral compass to live my life by.
6. The hypocrisy of accepting CoE married priests while still professing celibacy for RC ones... I could go on and on but it would not be helpful.
7. To me the Catholic Church is the primary witness in the world to Christ's resurrection, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and the means by which God imparts his sacramental grace to believers. Being a member of it is a crucial part of my identity.
8. The Catholic Church stands alone among all the other Christian denominations because it has the fullness of Truth. It is our spiritual mother.
9. It's my spiritual home- but I feel sad about all the dreadful things that have happened over the years. This is not the fault of modern society but through misguided man-made rules by the Curia.
10. Providing a structure for spirituality – A sense of being part of community
11. A community sharing Christian belief and worship. As a 'cradle catholic' it is my heritage and culture. It is very important to me. It gives me a sense of belonging.
12. A life-long constant that has been with me through good and bad. I have not always attended Sunday mass but have always felt welcomed back after my absences – no judgements.
13. A community. A place to reflect and become a better person to serve others. Mass. Priest.
14. The abuse perpetrated by the clergy and covered up by the hierarchy is beyond shameful. The treatment of women, especially unmarried pregnant women, has been unspeakable- and still being denied by many in the church. The treatment of anyone not fitting in or being 'different' including those identifying as LGBTQ + has led to suicides, mental breakdowns, family breakdowns and more.

15. The Catholic Church is here to present the sacraments i.e.. our relationship with God. Our spiritual presence in all aspects of life enrich the corporal works of mercy given by the laity. The Catholic Church should teach all the faith within the gospels.
16. A focus for my life.
17. Good meeting place and praise to God.
18. International. Friendship. Family.
19. The Catholic Church is the very reason for my existence.
20. Home family, help
21. The only true church on earth. Our Pope is the only representative of Christ on earth. Many martyrs shed their blood, exemplary witnesses to God. We have to keep our faith and example for future generation.
22. An anchor to childhood, kin, and a global community of people trying to live a good life. A millstone round the neck. Adults taught me about Catholicism through fear of hell and of committing mortal sin. I still equate the institution of the Church with this- a vindictive old man clinging to power. You have to tread carefully or he will throttle you.
23. Haven of peace and love.
24. It is a community of people all sharing the same faith.
25. A good idea misinterpreted thousands of years ago by unworldly men and developed by war mongers and establishment Nobel's and still maintained by old white men out of touch more worried about wealth than humanity.
26. My history, roots. Brought up in strong close knit Irish RC family. Strictly conforming to the Churches doctrines. As I grew up, learnt more, saw the negative impact religions, especially RC had worldwide creating discord, power struggles, male hierarchies etc and all the cumulative Catholic riches when there was and is so much poverty. I rejected Catholicism. As a woman and now a lesbian I feel there is no place for me, my gay brother and all the other folk who identify as LGBTQ+ despite the current slightly more liberal Pope the Catholic Church is still a male dominated, sexist, homophobic and racist organisation. Despite some good things individuals or specific Catholic communities do in social welfare and combatting poverty the overwhelming stance of the RC church is right wing, supporting dictators and oppressive regimes.
27. I do recognise there are some good people and good things that happen within the church, but my overwhelming experience has been negative.
28. It used to mean a lot but gradually my faith has been chipped away to nothing. That makes me very sad.
29. Community of faith. Inherited faith tradition.
30. I can't imagine life without it.
31. I grew up in the Catholic Church and whilst I believe in God, I have become detached from the Church. That detachment began when I realised that St. Pope John XX111 was not being followed in the clear direction and modernisation movement I so hoped would save the Church.
32. Community. Space for spiritual reflection.

33. It is my home. I am safe. I am loved by God. But I am challenged to be a better person there too.
34. This is the Sacrament of Salvation for all the world for all time. The mystical body of Christ which makes God's Love most visibly present for all peoples. The Catholic Church is for me eternal life, eternal truth, and where the highest form of charity is fostered. The Catholic Church is the Home for which all men were made as it shows forth the Kingdom of God here on Earth.
35. Nothing. Grew up Catholic, family still ostensibly religious. I'm atheist.
36. The uniting body of faith in God. The presence of moral and practical guidance for both Catholics and non-Catholics. The church in which I can meet God in his full presence and learn to grow in worship.
37. A place where I can pray with people who have similar spiritual values as myself
38. A stable part of life , things remain the same no matter the chaos .
39. Something I have felt a part of since I was very young... this began from being in the Church and feeling listened to as a small child. I have a sense of belonging.
40. In its wider context, through various individuals, it has been in some ways a moral barometer in my life. It has been an anchor through which I have appreciated belonging to both a local community as well as having a sense of its place in the world. I feel a degree of awe and wonder at the History of the church, its sacred scripture and history of holy men and women; a sense that we can 'stand on the shoulders of giants'. I wonder if need to look with open minds and hearts at both the past and present, ensuring that traditions are fit for the purpose of discipleship in our age.
41. The richness of its liturgies have been important in my life; marking important events through Sacraments as well as the varied opportunities for communal prayer based liturgies. I have loved the welcoming sense of community in parish life, at its best 'like a beehive' with the potential for being a great means of putting the gospel into action. I feel that this can be lessened by the great weight of Church structures, its patriarchal organisation and its reluctance to refine and re define its methods.
42. I love the Church even with all its issues. Although I rarely go to holy Mass I pray more deeply and regularly each day now. The Church to me feels like a blanket surrounding me, in a good way!
43. A place of worship – but it needs to change.
44. The faith that I follow. As part of this, one of the major influences in my day-to-day decision-making and moral opinions, particularly in matters regarding life and the family.
45. The Catholic Church means everything to me. I believe it is the only true Church where I can genuinely encounter Jesus Christ and receive his love and mercy. I am proud to be member of a compassionate, inclusive, global Church. However, I believe the Church is currently being badly run and the leadership is ignoring its apostolic mandate to preach the Gospel to all nations, instead focusing too much on internal problems and squabbles.
46. Masses, the Eucharist- these matter enormously to me they feed my spirit and keep me healthy.

47. A community of like-minded people, sharing my belief in God and sharing worship and the word. My spiritual home.
48. A community with a shared faith. A structure/institution in which to practice a shared faith and receive sacraments. A global family/community that is accessible beyond my locality and country.
49. It is the source of my spiritual food. It's the family of my soul. It provides me with the Eucharist on a daily basis without it my soul should surely die.
50. The Holy Spirit needs to start a revolution in the Church to expose the corruption of it's rigid, male hierarchical structures that have been too powerful, too secretive and too worried about it's wealth, status and control. The message of Jesus Christ is hard to hear for so many.
51. My spiritual home.
52. My spiritual home- but it saddens me and frustrates me as it persists in its rigid male dominated hierarchical practices.
53. At best it can be a supportive faith community working in local areas . At worst it can be seen as victim blaming and driving people away.
54. I don't know how to answer this question. I guess I see the church as an anchor that I can go to, wherever I am in the world, the mass rites are the same, and a place to find fellow people who find solace in God. It does sadden me that many friends and young people don't see the church for its good, but the church has also not been very good at admitting its faults or being transparent (generally not great at living out the commandments I suppose).
55. The Catholic Church is a force for good for the world with its teachings of morality, a community, a family.
56. The Catholic Church is my spiritual home- even though it is dysfunctional.
57. I am ashamed to tell people I am a catholic.

What three words would you use to describe the Catholic Church?

Traditional. Familiar. Sanctuary / Misogynistic, Bureaucratic, Blinkered / Overbearing. Misogynistic. Struggling. / Sexist- male dominated- conservative / Apostolic, universal, holy / Misogynistic- global- fixated on sex / caring, inclusive, just / arrogant, hypocritical, shaming/ Love, hope ,truth / aloof, cold, a stranger / Father, son, Holy Spirit / Good for community / Universal, inward looking, too concerned with dogma – forgetting the populace need to socialise in order to make a catholic community / Christianity, faith, salvation / Community, old-fashioned, posh, well-off, exclusive, cliquey / Community, faith, friendship / Community, endeavouring, human(with all its flaws) / Community, ritual, guilt / Mother, Magisterium, Pontiff./ Traditional. Familiar. Sanctuary./ Sexist- male dominated- conservative / Apostolic, universal, holy / Misogynistic- global- fixated on sex / Community, journey, faith / Community, sexist, ceremonial / Theatre, lost, hypocritical / Traditional, misogynistic,, outdated / Community, faith, friendship. / Belonging to a global family that is supportive. / Bureaucratic, clericalist, arbitrary / Family-oriented, compassionate, reliable / Calm, informative and holy / People, structure, insular /

Prayerful, Patriarchal introspective / Pointless, pushy, dangerous / forgiving, loving, traditional / out of touch, Christian, Messy / Open, Caring but hypocritical / Salvation, Truth, Love / Heterogeneous. Misunderstood. Majestic / Infancy. Confused. Striving./ Community, Institution, Rigid / Stuck, behind, outdated / A safe Haven / Judgemental, Lost, misogynistic / Exclusive, Deaf, male -dominated/ in need of reform / hypocritical, sexist, outdated / Home, dysfunctional, tired/ Confining, male-dominated- broken/Judgemental, misogynistic, Stuck/ Faith , community ,/ big, universal, detached? / Sexist, Community, Salvation

Looking to the future (next 10 years), what do you think should be the three priorities of the Catholic Church?

1. Women priests, married priests, marriage for all loving couples regardless of gender.
2. 1. That we become a 'synodal' church. 2. that the laity be consulted on church matters 3. that there is a more stringent vetting of students for the priesthood.
3. Work with other faiths and churches in the community. Encourage everybody to get involved in parish work & activities & make it as easy as possible for them to do so. Work to make all people feel welcome.
4. To be more inclusive of cultures and sexual orientation. To be less judgemental. To promote ways of protecting the environment.
5. A welcoming Church that is non-judgemental.
6. 1. Dismantling the current male structures and enabling and empowering women to serve at every level in the Church - including the priesthood. 2. Prioritising social justice and caring for creation 3. Revise/change a lot of the rules of the Church
7. Making liturgy loved again; ordination open to all as service to all; and justice the aim of our preaching and action.
8. 1. Open up ministry to everyone- men, women, married people, at all levels 2. Making laudato si the main driver- save the planet, social justice for the poor and forgotten. 3. Genuinely make amends and beg forgiveness for all those damaged by the church and church doctrine
9. Get back to the simplicity of the Gospels – give true access and equality to women – be brave and dismantle so much of the unnecessary cruel rules that have ruined so many lives. The Clerical system is corrupt and broken.
10. Focus less on lack of vocations to the priesthood and more on laity involvement in the sacramental life of the Church. More general recognition that all make up 'the Church' and there should be more in-put from women in decision-making/management (particularly as women make up more than 50% of the Catholic Church). Keep focused on Jesus' teaching in the Gospels- we won't go far wrong if we do! – this is really my no. 1 priority.
11. To hold steady in an ever-changing world. To promote love and inclusion throughout the world. To respond to the needs of the poor and marginalised in our world.
12. Welcome everyone and aim to get people to become better people through self-reflection and enlightenment – rather than preaching at them with lots of rules. Less rules on how to live but more about figuring it out yourself and doing the right thing

because you want to not because of following a rule. Focus on excluded group in society not the ones that come to Church.

13. Catholic Church will be always here and will be forever.
14. Look after the needs of children and young people. Engage with other faiths. Recruitment of priests – ie. married priests, women priests.
15. Married priests, openness, female clergy.
16. Good example. Stand for the poor, downtrodden. Lobbying against abortion, euthanasia as the Catholic church has always done.
17. Educate at all levels the entire Gospels, contents and applications. Ensuring the laity are active, devotional about their spirituality. Ensuring Churches, seminaries etc and staff (clergy, teachers etc) are enthusiastic, persistent, etc to reach the laity. What on earth does 'Missio' mean?
18. Must work/engage with the young, they are the next life of the Church. Encourage parishioners to use their talents in activities and leadership of groups. Include other nationalities to share in and participate at mass. Not separate masses for different nationalities.
19. Acknowledge the shame of institutional abuse of children, women and indigenous peoples, beg forgiveness and make reparation. Recognise the work of the Holy Spirit in us all and open up the airless priesthood. Move heaven and earth to protect creation.
20. Look after the world's poor. Reach out to our fellow man. Help us to save the planet.
21. To evangelise, to be "salt of the earth" by clearly presenting the teaching of the Gospel and the Church to a secular world, and to pray more.
22. Give women equal status in the Church, only then will true change happen. The whole governing structure of the Church is wrong and must take responsibility for the all the heinous sins committed under this faulty, misguided way of operating and exercising power.
23. 1. Make preserving the planet a moral obligation for all Catholics- 2. Open up the Church so that anyone male, female or gay could take holy orders- not necessarily for life but specified periods of time. 3. Put social justice as a core to the Christian life.
24. Embracing change, being inclusive, global issues.
25. Address inequality, poverty, inclusive leadership.
26. 1. Evangelisation – tell people the good news of the Gospel and that it is for everyone. God loves us all, no-one is excluded. 2. Become more visible I the community. 3. Reconnect with Catholics who no longer have contact with the Church.
27. Equal rights and status for all, focus on goodness in people, own up to past mistakes, ask for forgiveness and build a new open truthful honest church
28. Reform the attitude and practical approach to women, gay people and children within the Church. This should be aimed to make it welcoming and to give them a equal voice in how it runs.
29. More friendly, less judgemental encompassing more females – stop excluding people who identify as different genders etc.

30. Recognise the value of women and allow them a full role in the Church. The Catholic Church remains one of the few world organisations that does not permit women the same recognition as men. This is so incredibly outdated and is extremely detrimental to the church. I feel that the Church has a significant part to play in this world and it's diminishment is harmful to all.
31. Look after the world's poor. Reach out to our fellow man. Help us to save the planet.
32. Ordination of women. Movement away from a male, conservative hierarchy. To be a loud, radical, prophetic voice in relation to environmental issues and social justice.
33. 1. Look after the needs of children and young people. 2. Engage with other faiths 3. Recruitment of priests i.e.. married priest women priests.
34. Married priests, women priests, marriage for all loving couples regardless of gender.
35. Faith formation (trying new and fresh ways to explain teachings that are challenging to our times). Humble listening to the worries and concerns of everyone (not only one side or the other). Recapture of the wonder and awe that has been lost (Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist... but the way we receive Him doesn't acknowledge that - would anybody watching us realise how amazing it is!)
36. Better catechesis for the young, especially instruction in orthodox doctrine so as to prevent false ideas from damaging the Church and risking souls. Encouraging better catechesis for the old as well in countries where the Church is better established. Better evangelisation, including in post Christian countries, through encouraging and fostering charity and a missionary zeal amongst the laity.
37. Creating communities. Allowing priests to marry to encourage family feel to church and encourage more people to be involved be more inclusive
38. Acceptance of everyone, root out dangerous outdated ideas/views, reduce ostentatious wealth
39. 1. Sexuality - Boldly and correctly inform its members (both religious and lay people) on the teachings of how to properly integrate our sexuality into our daily lives. 2. Teaching - improve general teaching of the faith 3. Community - forming a thriving community and improving the sense togetherness and belonging within parishes.
40. Allow priests to marry, ordain women as priests and bishops, to accept gay marriage
41. Try to be seen as less judgemental, help come up with solutions to environmental problems and climate change - including financially the church is seen as wealthy.
42. Evangelisation of young people Being ecumenically engaged Care of disadvantaged (no particular order)
43. 1. Overcome its timidness and along with being Parish centred, Mass should be more accessible in the community. Reverence to the holy eucharist is less threatened by local people who don't go inside a church, than by fear of inclusive ideas. 2. Make women's role in the church a matter for open discussion. 3. Increase all means of communication more effectively and honestly. Look outwards as Pope Francis consistently asks us by his example.
44. Young people (new members of the Church and returning non-practicing people), maintaining family values (particularly when modern society challenges/tries to remove them), find better ways to reach the 'hidden' vulnerable in our society (people struggling with mental health issues, loneliness etc.)

45. Proclaiming the Gospel anew to a non-Christian society; fostering authentic clerical vocations; restructuring church institutions for mission.
46. To rebuild Church community. To value all people regardless of gender. To support the priests and lay people to work together in liturgy.
47. Priests – how to ensure that we can continue to celebrate the eucharist. Evangelisation which I think is tricky nowadays. Looking after the poor, the marginalised, the elderly, infirm.
48. 1. Acknowledge past (and possibly even current) institutional failings that have caused harm and ensure systems prevent individuals or groups within the Church from being accountable. 2. Prioritise/promote teachings of Jesus Christ in how we live our lives, not just rigid doctrines that can lead to extremism rather than compassion. In many ways priority 2 can help to avoid issues in priority 1.
49. To provide the Eucharist – make it available to right the wrongs done and to be humble – put the Church house in order! To provide support for our shepherds – for them to have more community - for more organised prayer times for them – novenas, vigils, rosaries etc.
50. We the people are the Catholic Church it is time to listen to us and stop imposing rigid, harsh doctrines on us, especially us women we have had enough. The Church has so much to give people but it is failing.
51. 1. Give women their rightful place in the Church- so much can then be healed and improved. 2. Reassess what is important. 3. Make it an inclusive welcoming Church for all, especially young people they are our future.
52. Green environmental issues, the positive role of women in the church (not just as baby making machines) - inclusive language in prayers etc , social justice 1. Dismantle the hierarchical male dominated structures. 2. Embrace accountability and transparency. 3. Return to the simple Gospel messages.
53. 1) Listening? creating space for dissent (but respectful discussion)? I don't know, being not judgmental/shaming? 2) Addressing corruption and sexual abuse in the Catholic Church? 3) Addressing past injustices perpetrated by the church (e.g. missionary schools that abused and removing native children from their culture, and the mass graves)?

What one thing could the Catholic Church do to make it a more attractive community for people like you?

1. Less cliquy. Less critical of other religions and ways of life. Welcome to everyone – LGBT etc
2. That the mass is celebrated with the utmost dignity and reverence. That priests brush up on their homilies.
3. Focus on being welcoming and non-judgemental to all.
4. Stop telling people how to live our lives- the gospels do that adequately. The Church feels like an exclusive club- so many rules around human sexuality, who is accepted who is not. It comes across a hypocritical and judgemental.
5. Stop constantly castigating people who do not fit into man-made categories of behaviour or relationships.

6. Abandon all the hypocrisy- completely revise the teaching in sexuality and stop trying to control women's bodies- we're fed up of being told how to live our lives- from the pulpit- people in glass houses!!
7. I would like more attention given to beautiful, uplifting liturgy, harnessing the richness of Catholic tradition.
8. Truly respect everyone regardless of gender or sexuality.
9. Less emphasis on rules which were written many years ago and more thought into how words written so long can be interpreted today.
10. Welcome gay people.
11. Accept equal rights.
12. Bringing back alter rails and taking communion kneeling as we used to not in the hands.
13. It couldn't be more attractive to me, but for the wider community the church needs to stress it's inclusivity. Ensure that it's "a community of sinners" means something to people.
14. I am housebound and I am happy to receive communion at home.
15. Status marriage and women.
16. Set it's focus on helping the world's poor- via practical visible means.
17. Greater inclusivity re gender and sexual orientation.
18. Give women a full and equal role – including ordination.
19. Be more friendly and welcoming in all parishes.
20. Remain close and committed.
21. Show humility.
22. More care of the elderly and sick and housebound, visit bring news.
23. Remove the philosophy now preached as liberal theology that God loves each one so much, that to reach heaven depends on God. Responsibility by each person to entirely live the gospel life is necessary.
24. Community actively – Use a mini-bus to pick up the elderly.
25. Engage with the wider community.
26. Offering community inclusion.
27. 1 hour weekly for exposition of Blessed Sacrament in the Parish.
28. Just continue the ministry of love and inclusion.
29. Stop telling me not to use contraception. My marriage is still a loving on despite the fact that we do not want any more children – childbirth is painful!!!
30. Women priests, married priests, marriage for all loving couples regardless of gender.
31. Be more welcoming and compassionate to people whose marriages have failed, people who are gay and women in general. The Catholic Church presently appears very misogynistic.
32. Allow priests to marry.
33. Facilitating lay people to take more ownership of their faith through organising prayer groups, etc. rather than relying on clergy to always take the initiative
34. Focus on conceptual discussion (for example, showing benefits of prayer in schools) before trying to get people to come to mass; greater freedom to express personal

faith and develop personal relationship with God before being involved in community aspect -> greater emphasis on mindfulness

35. Stop obsessing about sexuality and gender and treat women as equals.
36. Publicly and widely produce a global action plan with clear targets to tackle discrimination & inequality in all its forms.
37. Accept equal rights/status marriage and women
38. My parish to communicate with non-church goers in its own community. Posters of real welcome around the outside of the church. At the moment my lovely church seems happier to stay within the confines of its parishioners.
39. Have a wide teenage group to do activities within the community
40. Encourage people to put their faith into action- whether that is challenging people to be more welcoming or to put themselves out more or to talk about their faith more. Sometimes it feels rather lonely.
41. Speak the truth more boldly but in love, by whatever means are available.
42. Be more inclusive less judgemental.
43. Stop being so sanctimonious.
44. Encourage parishioners to be more involved in actively helping with charitable affairs, within the close community. E.g. helping the homeless or single/ young mothers. This shows, outwardly, that the Church still cares for people and that charity is a major aspect of living intentionally as Christians, but also helps to build charity within individuals in the church community and build relationships between individuals in that Church.
45. Join more with other Christian denominations, perhaps for a Christmas carol sing, or an open- air service in a city centre.
46. Be more welcoming I have found Catholics all my life to be quite standoffish, people don't say hi if they don't know you, my children didn't go to Catholic school and therefore I didn't have the connections many others did it made it more difficult
47. Developing different forms / gatherings for inclusive prayer.
48. For more singing and fun social events.
49. I think my Parish does a good job of making the Catholic Church attractive and creating a strong supportive community but could possibly do more for younger people or those new to the community or living more isolated lives.
50. It fulfils my needs. I don't really have any wishes in this regard.
51. Accept married and women priests.
52. Prioritise social and environmental justice and stop focusing on sexuality and gender stuff.
53. Abandon/ reject ideas teachings about sex, sexuality, contraception.
54. Be more inclusive of relationships based on love regardless of sexuality, marital status . Too many people have left the church as they can't live up to expectations with " irregular marriages " or relationships but are still in loving and stable relationships. I don't want to undermine marriage as I think it's important but they aren't the only loving consensual relationship.

55. Be proactive in making newcomers welcome. Get to know people (show interest in them, and care about them, don't wait for them to come to you. Erm be less judgmental?

Imagine you had the chance to give Pope Francis one piece of advice, what would you say?

1. Ease up on the ad lib stuff especially when travelling on planes. That he listens to everyone in the church especially those with whom he has major differences. That, in his exhortations he doesn't contradict what his predecessors taught infallibly on important moral issues.
2. Keep on listening.
3. Consider married priests. Consider women priests.
4. Imagine you are Jesus in the temple – now is the time to upturn lots of stall holders (in your male -run Church) the Church has lost its way- we need vision and reform.
5. That his reforming instincts are correct. Keep going, don't be ground down by conservative forces in the hierarchy.
6. Continue reaching out to everyone.
7. Give equal role to women, appoint Cardinals that are of like mind to you. Follow the direction of John 23rd make my granddaughters feel that they are as equal in the eyes of God as my grandsons.
8. Make three women cardinals, but only one can be a religious Sister and all should be in their 60s. At a stroke you would have the chance to make actions speak louder than words, to break open the logjam on debate about power and ordination, and to offer women (and many men) hope of change - because once it was done, it would be difficult to be undone in a hurry. The power of a Pope to effect change is not as great as many people think, but in some things it is still absolute - and this is one of them. Use your power. Don't delay.
9. Be brave- open your heart to the holy spirit- all human beings are equal they need that confirmed by the Church.
10. Please, Holy Father, remember that the Holy Spirit may also be talking through those on the more traditional wing of the Church with whom you disagree and whose motivation and sincerity you so often malign.
11. Be brave- the Church is in need of a radical overhaul- the people are hungry for change and thirsty for spiritual leadership. Women in the Church want equality.
12. Be inclusive in what we preach and embrace change.
13. Get rid of the corrupt, right- wing cardinals so you can build a caring and inclusive church.
14. Prune the rot, clean up the church and stop living in the past.
15. If you could hear all the views of the people damaged by the Church, you would know that now is the time for massive change - please be brave.
16. Watch your back! Stand firm and don't let the bigots take over and remember the good parts in the Bible around inequality, poverty and the abuse of power.
17. Continue to shake up the Vatican and its structures and make serious reform.

18. Continue as you are with an open mind.
19. To my mind the Church has got fatally trapped in its own temporal and psychic power. It is "God the Father" dressed up in its grand robes and ritual. It avoids the uncomfortable, radical messages of Christ, and makes up messages of its own to put heavy burdens on the people. And the Holy Spirit does not figure – but the Holy Spirit does figure and is power through gentleness.
20. The establishment needs to match the individual responses I observe in nearly all clergy. I find them compassionate and caring. The 'Church' sometimes struggles to portray this.
21. Encourage all the clergy to become more like Jesus. He didn't spend time in Synagogues. He met all the people – captivated them with stories, caring for them.
22. Be humble, sincere etc not wanting to be known throughout the world. Ensuring all the Pope says is in line with the whole gospel- (Many are called but few are chosen).
23. Make the Church a place everyone wants to come because they feel welcome no matter what. Make sure no Catholics seen as a judgemental person – honestly leave the judging to God.
24. Don't store gold give more to the elderly/disabled/poverty.
25. Allow the Church to be more open.
26. Never allow same sex marriage in the Church.
27. To ask Catholics to pray that the Lord will heal this broken world we live in.
28. I really admire how you are opening up the Vatican, encouraging change and for the Church to address current issues.
29. To enforce safeguarding procedures throughout the world.
30. Stop appointing bishops and priests who want to lord it over the laity, patronise them, and force their will onto them. Start appointing bishops and priests who want to pastor their flock and help them to grow in holiness.
31. The Church is doing as good a job as ever in reaching the peripheries of our community, but from my experience, is losing the masses more easily. Let's remember to focus on Christ's whole body - we are reaching the far corners but glossing over the core.
32. Make church more inviting for youths
33. Continue to show your compassion and honesty to the world, it is noticed.
34. Keep going despite opposition
35. Be aware of the Catholics not happy still about Vatican 2 , tackle the subjects directly because the internet is spreading fake and out of context 'quotes' to feed their causes. Having become the Pope in unusual circumstances be aware of the ones trying to create schism.
36. Let our priests marry if they so wish, I feel sure it would swell our depleted number of priests
37. Keep going! I admire what you say to the public about how Catholics should face modern day issues, specifically environmental issues and the involvement of women in the Church, calling us to come together on certain issues, regardless of political or other divisions.

38. Make lives better, stop the enforcement of so- called teachings which negatively impact on people's lives.
39. Do not alienate the young by being overly harsh or stern towards tradition, especially a more traditional liturgy. Encourage the laity to be different to the world and to appreciate the value of traditional beauty and morals
40. Remember this is Christ's Universal Church - not yours. Give us freedom to worship God as we feel called to - stop alienating people who don't conform to how you think things 'should' be.
41. Prioritise/promote teachings of Jesus Christ in how we live our lives, not just rigid doctrines that can lead to extremism rather than compassion.
42. We are in the business of saving souls not the Planet (although this is important) nor saving face. You are our Pope not our Prime Minister/President. Be a good shepherd not a politician.
43. Open everything up to women – working as equals great things can be achieved.
44. Don't be stuck in the past- value marriage and the role of women in society.
45. Carry on speaking out about injustice, the dangers of materialism, the abuse of power.
46. Listen to the Holy spirit – rid the Church of corruption and ditch rigid, misogynistic power structures.
47. Get rid of all those judgemental doctrines that do not help people to live a good Christian life and that exclude so many people from the comfort and nourishment that a rich spiritual life could bring to them.
48. Let the Holy Spirit work in your hearts and the hearts of the powerful in the Church - really listen to the people and make changes within the Church.
49. Stand up to the curia- dismantle the dysfunctional way of running the Church.
50. For an inclusive church you need inclusive language, more recognition of women outside of childbearing . Blessings for same sex stable and loving relationships.
51. Rebuilding trust requires admitting mistakes? Is there a new way to bridge divides? Maybe we can turn to the mystics to fill our spiritual void?
52. Keep up the good work.
53. Bring back the alter rails and no more communion in the hands.
54. Something is badly wrong with the way priests are trained. This ontological business creates an arrogance and superiority that gives priests too much power. It has allowed many to abuse and bully people. Yes to women priests but in no way using the old models of training and way of being.

Anything else you would like to say?

1. 1. That the views of the laity are taken into account when appointing bishops. 2. That episcopal conferences are by and large streamed online so that we can see what individual bishops are saying and know their agenda. 3. That all parents should have been consulted when the bishops drew up guidance for schools on sex and relationship education. Instead, the bishops just cow towed to the secular

authorities whose views play fast and loose with basic catholic teaching. The bishops are meant to be the guardians of the deposit of faith which is sacrosanct.

2. I hope this is not a 'paper exercise' and that real change of attitude in the Church results from this process.
3. Every parish should make it as easy as possible for newcomers and returners to join in. Ensure that information about how to contact the parish is readily available in churches and on websites. Have a simple form available so that individuals can make themselves known to the clergy - not everyone finds it easy to introduce themselves in person. In established parishes, things can sometimes feel a bit "cliquey" and it can be hard for new members to get involved, particularly if they are older and/or don't have children attending the Catholic schools.
4. There is something radically wrong with the way the Church has been operating. The hopes of Vatican 11 were stymied by the closed minds of the Curia and those who pull the levers of power in the Church and indeed the world. So much of the right-wing Church thinking is financially underpinned by the fruits of capitalism and those with secular power. They all want to keep the status quo as it has served them so well.
5. The Church is about the unimaginable - the mystery who is God. The history of the Church includes many followers of Jesus who have helped to unravel some of that mystery, but also those who have limited our understanding, confining, and defining the mystery. This struggle is not just in the past. It's going on now. If this synodal process and final synodal event are allowed to be the work of the Holy Spirit, fear will be swept away, courage will be strengthened, and the people of the Church will know some joy in their faith, maybe for the first time in their lives. It only took half a dozen years from the vision of Pope John XXIII in 1959 to the close of the Council in 1965 for an edifice that had stood immutable and detached for four hundred years to be rocked to its foundations and for a process of rebuilding to begin. The process ran into opposition and the planning authorities took fright - that, maybe, the Holy Spirit had not got it quite right and needed to be reined in a bit! In the light of eternity, fifty years is not that long (though it sometimes seems so) but look who is back! Pope Francis is calling on the Holy Spirit to help us recapture the freedom of the followers of Jesus to pursue justice and peace and the good of our world. How can we refuse such an invitation? Those of us who lived through the time of the Council, and rejoiced as it opened out the possibilities for the Church in the modern world, can be glad that the Spirit is blowing in the wind and giving us one more chance in our lifetime to turn the Church from being an enemy of the people into a compassionate and accepting friend. A bit like Jesus, I suppose.
6. I pray this is not just another invitation for views from the laity which the Bishops then ignore. We are fed up with being dismissed. So many people I know are hanging on by their fingertips. I'm often ashamed to admit that I am a Catholic who still attends Church. The scandals just go on and on....
7. What the world needs is a Catholic Church that is in it but not of it, one that guards the faith and presents it afresh and in full to every generation, and which proclaims the truth of the Catholic faith as something that is beautiful, coherent, persuasive

and life-affirming. We mustn't look inwards and think the answers to current challenges lie in changing teaching or practice, but instead have confidence that our faith is the true faith and a beautiful seamless garment.

8. Why do we keep being told it will be the Bishops who discern on our feedback? Half the Church are treated as second class citizens- women- and anyone who does not identify as heterosexual is made to feel an outsider.
9. This survey is a load of bobbins. (only comment made on their form)
10. Be inclusive in what we preach and embrace change.
11. Get rid of the corrupt, right wing cardinals so you can build a caring and inclusive church
12. Prune the rot, clean up the church and stop living in the past.
13. Women have been so badly treated by the Church. They have been dismissed, ignored and preached to -we have had enough, my grandchildren want nothing to do with the Church. I miss the comfort that my faith gave me.
14. Not sure how, if at all, this will be used. Essentially the Church must stop being right wing.
15. It was a good idea that Jesus shared and has since been squandered by ugly greedy men supported by some women who have smothered 'love thy neighbour as yourself', with hate for difference, exploiting the poor and ignorant to maintain an organisation that is about hate, discrimination and self- interest. The Curia needs culling.
16. Publicly and widely produce a global action plan with clear targets to tackle discrimination & inequality in all its forms.
17. If the reforms mentioned above do not happen, the Church will die within a generation.
18. Help to make the world a better place, without war and strife. To keep fighting against abortion.
19. I have been privileged to have grown up a Catholic.
20. The Church for me has played a hugely valuable role in our world. Its influence has for the most part been positive to civilisation, but it is falling back. It is becoming less and less relevant to young people it must modernise if it is not only to grow, but to survive.
21. 1. Love can be demanding, involve suffering, unanswered at times, as well as bliss, but it is not a laid- back philosophy expecting God to clean up at the transition to the next life. 2. This theology is not a pre-Vatican 2 position. It is not post Vatican 2 nor Jesuit 1970s onward positions.
22. I like the community of the Church- the good behaviours just rub off on me, but I do feel it is exclusive and those seen as 'sinners' don't feel welcome – so they'll never be exposed to the good values and behaviours of the community.
23. To visit the elderly and people in hospital and prison.
24. Mass should be a joyful occasion. We should come away from mass feeling uplifted – sometimes sermons aren't always uplifting. We need to consider a younger congregation and their way of life in the 21st century. Most liturgy is awful – so far removed from the way we speak.

25. Take communion to people who can't walk far to come in front to receive communion eg. Come to them instead.
26. As an older person with serious health issues, I have been humbled by the support I have received from my Church whilst shielding from the Covid pandemic.
27. Thank you, ST. Vincents, for making me feel so welcome when I moved to the Parish. I feel privileged to be part of the Catholic community.
28. The very young like dressing up, bring back processions they can use their first communion/confirmation outfits again. This would bring parents etc in as well. I feel the awe (magic) has gone from the Church – bring back bits of pomp and ceremony and bits of latin. Use outside groups, business organisations to raise funds to cater for activities for young and old eg. Cantenians etc.
28. Busy, working lay people with families honestly don't have time to fill out surveys, reflect on documents, or attend synod preparation talks and lectures. Methods such as these will only elicit the opinions of older, more affluent catholics who already have the ear of their bishop and who already dominate the church in this country. Stop making the church navel-gaze and start focusing on bringing Christ to the whole world again.
29. The Church should have a FAR greater presence in schools than at present. We should be seeing priests around school weekly, for example, rather than once a term.
30. I still love the Church and know I am an important part of it. The Church is just us people and we should be honest about what we genuinely feel.
31. The Church has to listen to us all.
32. Has this, or a similar questionnaire been sent to all the pupils in our Catholic schools, and their parents?
33. I'm very grateful to have had a priest willing to try new ways to give us a Mass during the pandemic and to be a constant, it was a great comfort when seeing no one outside our homes to visit church virtually and receive mass.
34. Some of the readings put women in a very subservient place and I don't think many of our young people would agree as I do with all the rules. I also nearly left the church when they changed the words of the mass without asking the lay people what they thought. I was very upset that I could no longer say 'it is right to give Him thanks and praise' Also the beginning of the our Father - we dare to say. I really felt we were going back to the dark ages. Also that part of the creed 'consubstantial with the Father' what child will understand that.
35. Stop preaching about sex and gender and contraception. The Church stance on these issues has created years of suffering and has ruined the lives of so many women around the world. Also the secrecy, rigid rules all male priesthood alongside inadequate, outdated doctrines have infantilised so many men and have damaged them psychologically hence widespread sexual abuse in the Church.

36. I have total respect for other faiths as long as kindness and compassion are part of them but I think our church sometimes thinks we are the chosen ones and I disagree as I know our Lord loves us all as long as we are trying our best to be good caring people.
37. It is wonderful to ask people their thoughts but please don't go against the Lord's way just because the consensus is that the teaching is too hard. Remember when Jesus was asked about divorce, he said 'it was because of your hardness of heart that Moses allowed <divorce> but in the beginning it was not so'. I would like the Church to lead us to be the amazing people God created us to be - not just conform to the lowest common denominator. If the teaching is hard, maybe it needs to be taught better.
38. Focus first and foremost on educating the young, encourage them to stand firm against the secular tide of liberalism and explain why.
39. Allow people to make their own choice, don't impose beliefs and indoctrinate children into the church. If they want to be a part of the church, great, if not, let them be.
40. I am really, really grateful to the Church- it has made me who I am, gives me a goal to work towards and nourishes me all the time.
41. We need strong priests, Bishops, Cardinals, shepherds that will lead by example to protect our faith not those that bend in the wind to the will of politicians. We are a Holy Church – NOT a secular organisation.
42. Need to look after parishioners who are lonely. Get the Church community back together.
43. I don't really have any concerns- I know I am very fortunate. Sometimes it bothers me that my children are not practising Catholics anymore but I do believe I should leave that to God and they do God's work.
44. It is not Christian to diss other religions from the alter. I am fed up with the nonsense contained in so many sermons.
45. The Church needs to look at itself and truthfully analyse why there are so many scandals and sexist behaviour and structures etc The rest of the world has worked it out- now is the time for big changes.
46. No one gives up their power easily- if the church really believed in the Holy Spirit- the Church could be saved for future generations. Men give all the orders most of the hard slog is done by the women in the church. It is my Church too.
47. I think the church gets too pre-occupied with sex and sexuality at the expense of other issues such as the environment, social justice , poverty , the plight of women eg domestic violence , rape . It can appear victim blaming rather than inclusive and supportive.
48. We need to address corruption and sexual abuse in churches worldwide (and not just scapegoat it to the Satanists). We need to address the valid criticisms against the church, by LISTENING to these criticisms, listening to how ordinary people think about the church (how a lot of people think of the church as an institution that shames people and takes away joy), and not being defensive, but be humble.

49. I would like to see faith based 'youth clubs' where our children could gather in a good environment, which hopefully would get them into Church and therein would be our future priests.

The views expressed in the first survey and face to face discussions have been incorporated into the themes as outlined above.

The first survey

How have I experienced faith during the pandemic?

1. A real sense of needing to get involved rather than expecting things to happen.
2. Having more time to think has been helpful. I have realised how I feel out of step with the Church. I have realised how I feel out of step with the official Church.
3. The neighbourliness of my neighbours who looked out for me with shopping etc and keeping contact.
4. In different ways.
5. Strong quiet belief that would be tested but not destroyed by pandemic. God's presence seemed wrapped in the natural world -seas, rivers, air all that wanted to recover from our pollution. Felt like the natural world wanted a rest to recover.
6. I have learned to trust God. I have come to know God as Abba /father. I have found he really does provide new mercies every day.
7. As an awareness of his presence ...both through prayer and through other people, and through attempting to discern his will in a difficult time.
8. I have realised how little the formal Church feeds my spiritual life. I have not missed coming to mass. This surprised me, I contemplated on the sacrament of communion and realised how little it meant for me most of the time. It was as though I just needed it for the larger 'life events' like a funeral, a wedding, an anniversary. On returning to mass, I have hardly spoken to anyone, except in superficial way. It did not feel like a prayerful occasion it felt like 'going through the motions'.
9. I have felt closer to God through reflection on my own and through connecting more with nature. I do not need sermons that frequently emphasise our 'sinfulness', I want to be encouraged to live a better life by caring for the people around me and feeling a greater obligation to the wider unfair and unjust social and global issues that stubbornly persist in the world. I have had more time for prayer, and this has brought me a greater inner peace and feeling at one with God.
10. I have always been connected with faith due to my upbringing but also hugely cast out by it as members of my extended family used Catholicism as a reason to cut me and my family out of their lives, accusing us of being the reason my father killed himself. Now any intelligent person religious or not can see that a distraught widow and two children under five were not responsible for that, nor was my ill father, but here was someone using religion as an excuse to blame us. I have grown up still having a spiritual connection to the church but seeing consistent examples of people using religion as an excuse to further their personal goals and hatred, such as preventing women to have choices over their own body when it comes to abortion, a

basic human right, or preventing people who love God and each other of any gender or sexuality to marry. Neither of these things are of course actually banned by God in the original version of the bible, people have just taken segments or translated things that they think they can use to support their point to make it sound like God hates these things too when really, it's just the individual's personal prejudice's showing through. These are not acts of people who love how I was taught to love as a Christian, they are acts of people who hate for their personal gain. Jesus, the way I was taught him, would be ashamed of people using his name to cause so much hurt and justify so much hate. And still I have this spiritual connection to the church, which I have found reassuring in the time of the pandemic, and I have found some church congregations that agree with me that any person no matter who they love or what they do with their body is welcome, however the groups that don't do this make me feel guilty for being involved in the church as a whole at all. I suppose you could say I am conflicted and a little ashamed that something that brings me such comfort does only one or two churches away still do so much harm to others, and I have chosen to visit church and find that comfort regardless.

11. Weirdly stronger with private prayer.
12. As a support, and as an inspiration.
13. Lonely.
14. It's an abstract question I don't know how to answer! I continued to attend mass virtually/in person. WFH I was able to develop a habit of spending 10 mins over breakfast with scripture, almost daily. Virtual zoom daily mass with Fr. Lee was intimate and helped me to connect with them a bit better.
15. It was hard while the churches were closed and then when Mass was so sparse afterwards. I missed the sacraments so much!
16. It has been a very hard time for a wide variety of reasons. To be honest I have found faith rather difficult. Not being able to attend Mass or go to Confession for long periods was very difficult and I became aware of how easy it can be to let one's faith wither on the vine. However, the pandemic has also demonstrated how much I rely upon God and the sacraments.
17. The camaraderie of neighbours, the parishioners who were so generous with their time organising communication with those over 70, the lovely chats I had with parishioners, the joy of having immediate family around more, the joy of meeting regularly on zoom with family members further afield, the thankfulness I felt for those carrying on with their roles and putting themselves at risk. Sitting together in the sofa watching Mass on YouTube was a very special time.
18. I suppose faith is always within you but it was your effort to pray.
19. Strong quiet belief that would be tested but not destroyed by pandemic. God's presence seemed wrapped in the natural world -seas, rivers, air all that wanted to recover from our pollution. Felt like the natural world wanted a rest to recover.
20. Made me think I don't need to come to Church- my faith was stronger not having to grapple with so many issues that the priest thinks is so important but most ordinary folks do not. I felt closer to God through nature. I am too old to put up with the corrupt Church any more.

What has helped?

1. As a widow most of my children do not live nearby and so I am conscious of a lack of human companionship but as an answer I have frequently invited one or two friends to join me for meals remembering to be socially distanced. This has really been a help to me as has my bubble family in York.
2. Prayer whilst walking , my children, and more recently pondering the experiences of the Old Testament
3. On-line mass. Other 'safe' events which were organised.
4. The lockdown inevitably gave more time for reflection. The world seemed quieter, though I never lost the awareness that for many people it was a constant strain and daily confrontation with death and pain and loss. I think as a family we expressed how much we loved each other - in our missing each other. I read more and thought more.
5. Watching live mass on live stream, praying the rosary online.
6. The on-line masses were really great. I got into the habit of watching every day and found them uplifting.
7. Reading, talking to others, listening to other Catholics who have a similar outlook to myself.
8. I walk in the church, light candles for people in my life, and I am instantly in a meditative state, and I need that comfort in my life. I feel closer to my lost loved ones and to Jesus and I believe God welcomes me purely because of that.
9. Online mass and knowledge everybody was the same.
10. Having time away from routine to reflect. Seeking the help of the Holy Spirit and often finding a confidence in its presence. The availability of opportunities to attend retreats and faith sessions online. Being part of a parish community and the work to maintain phone contact with each other. Praying and working outside. Seeing people enjoying being outside.
11. Knowing that there are people on church who cared about me? It was nice to begin getting to know parishioners through the WhatsApp group, what people care about. Delivery of the day-by-day booklets was very helpful to my daily prayer.
12. The generosity of those that helped out - stewards, organizers, the people who made phone calls, the priest etc. It felt like a community working together and caring for each other. Having Mass and adoration online was a blessing while the churches were closed. The priests worked hard to pull that off.
13. We watched our parish priest say mass every week on YouTube for a few months but everyone would fall asleep so we stopped watching. We would have been better with a more interactive opportunity to engage in the mass.
14. Mass on Zoom when it happened and parish online events such as quizzes and wreath-making at Christmas
15. Through Sunday mass on YouTube - Through the kindnesses of friends and strangers. Through my daughter who was inspired to create a regular family prayer group. My

daughter prepared for her confirmation over Zoom and I was involved with the group.

16. People in the parish organising others and parishioners giving up their time to be stewards. The WhatsApp group has been brilliant for keeping us in touch. Going further back the efforts made by Fr. Paddy to record Mass for us every week.
17. Experimenting with Sunday masses from different parts of the world on 'net. Spiritual songs on YouTube. A quietness/slowing down allowed.
18. Religious books. Prayer. Mass streamed online. Parish WhatsApp group. Weekly book through post.

What was missing

1. Physical contact with family, being at mass feeling part of a community.
2. I missed the community aspect to some extent.
3. I did not miss being berated for my sinfulness.
4. Common prayers with community not receiving Holy communion.
5. Physical contact with family and friends. I missed music in mass and the general contact, feeling being part of a community at mass.
6. Mass together.
7. Our weather not always being suitable to spend much time with others out of doors on common land.
8. Social meetings. Feeling of mass being the gathering of a community.
9. The contact with my family and friends. Not being able to celebrate and go through the usual rituals associated with funerals. A funeral on zoom was a gift but a wholly different experience.
10. What is missing for me is the fact that these congregations who try to tell people who they can marry or have sex with or to keep a baby that isn't right for them think that they somehow know more about people's lives than they do. A church will continue to lose support if they do not accept that people don't come to church to be told what to do anymore, they want to come somewhere where they are accepted and can connect spiritually to some higher power that comforts them and maybe get some guidance. Nobody has the right to tell me what I can do with my life because nobody understands the things I've been through. I believe God understands that and wouldn't try, he just accepts and protects me.
11. Interactions.
12. Communal prayer. Direction.
13. Previously I would've said care for creation was largely missing, but somehow this year everybody including the Church leaders became "woke". Seems a bit slow and insincere now that the big businesses are all into green now.
14. The sacraments. I was tearful at the last Mass before the first lockdown and tearful when we were able to return. Even more so for confessions!
15. I missed discussing my faith with others. There were opportunities, I know (eg the Lectio Divina that was kindly put online) but I somehow never had energy (after juggling work/children/home/various emotions in the family) to attend. It was hard to have energy and zeal when the world seemed to be imploding!

16. Regular mass on Zoom with opportunity to sing hymns.
17. At the start it was very difficult not being able to receive Holy Communion but that couldn't be helped.
18. Acts of Parish community- singing together; wishing each other a sign of peace; Children's Liturgy; Holy Communion and Confirmation classes.
19. The big thing that was missing during the first two lockdowns was access to the sacraments. In fact, one evening during the first lockdown I parked outside St Vincent's Church to be as close as I could be to the Blessed Sacrament and burst into tears. Since churches have been open again, I have missed the music and being able to sing. Mass seems to be cut down to his barest essentials and this continues to be hard because singing and music are one of the ways in which I derive spiritual benefit.

Who was left out?

1. Meeting parishioners, sign of peace.
2. Meeting parishioners, singing, greetings and the sign of peace.
3. Those not on the internet.
4. Parishioners who would typically be low profile – youth, children and young people.
5. I feel it must have been particularly difficult for carers of the disabled or elderly, those in difficult situations physically with limited means, those who lost jobs, those who felt isolated.
6. We have to keep asking.
7. I think those who have been truly housebound must have felt left out. I did visit an elderly lady from our church who was starting with dementia! Her chief need as she expressed it was for company but when she had a bad fall she had to go into a home where she could only have two named visitors which were her nieces.
8. Anyone who wasn't connected online and especially those who were isolated. I think many families - especially those on the fringes of the church - have and are struggling to stay connected. Regular worshippers lost the routine of attending while the churches were closed. The booking system - although necessary - definitely put a barrier up to easy returning and then the ongoing pandemic has kept the risk awareness high. I suspect it must be very hard for families who were only irregularly worshipping to come back yet.
9. Those more vulnerable and less confident.
10. Those who live on their own or those that live with others and are still lonely. Using IT opened up a new way of communicating. So many of us found meeting up online became normal and so for those who haven't access/knowledge of IT this felt like it was excluding them. Better perhaps to ask the people who felt 'left out' as I did not feel left out during the lockdown.
11. People who have abortions, people who love the same gender, people of different genders and who aren't born in the right body, people who want to remarry after divorce, people who have killed themselves, people of other religions, people who don't believe in God as the bible describes him or don't like a lot of what he says or does but find something different in visiting church. These people are left out in

some places and not others but I will never feel truly welcome in a church unless they are welcome in everyone. I believe God welcomes them all, it's people acting as his gatekeepers that choose not to.

12. People who don't voluntarily engage in the first place, maybe because they didn't feel a sense of belonging. Like in my case I've been attending mass (at St Vincent's and chaplaincy) every week for two, three years but hardly spoke to anyone because I didn't know what to say and it seemed like everybody already knew each other. Hardly anyone spoke to me either (a few did but it was difficult to establish connection without a common activity). In my case I only started to get to know ppl after joining choir. And then later a bit more when I joined the wreath making festivities.
13. People who were not IT savvy.
14. I worry about this. Because I appreciated many aspects of life's slowing down, I feel I don't fully understand how difficult and lonely it was for some. There must have been people left out, there always are, but I was reassured to be part of a community which worked hard to draw people together.
15. Those without technology. Fortunately that wasn't our family.
16. Not sure anyone was intentionally. Those who maybe weren't established in the parish and who no one had a contact number for, so they could be added to the WhatsApp? Or those who didn't feel they wanted to be part of the WhatsApp in case it was "too holy" and not for them? Those who don't have or are unable to use a smartphone. However the over 70s were well catered for by the phone rota.
17. My teenagers enjoyed novelty of masses from the other side of the world, but missed out on peers support of face to face local mass.
18. We have to keep asking.

How did God touch my life in those long and difficult months?

1. I think he showed me to look around at the small things, wild- flowers, sunsets, the beauty of the world around me and enabled me to find a peacefulness and a gratitude for my good fortune.
2. More time for silence, reading the Magnificat books.
3. Hit and miss because of weakness with commitment.
4. Profoundly in nature and in the wise words of others.
5. Countless ways
6. Revealed himself through nature.
7. Well, I became much more dependent on him. As an older person and liable to make mistakes I find myself seeking the help of the Holy Spirit all the time.
8. Helping me not to seek fixed hopes and experiences but to take one day at a time.
9. I saw God in the beauty of nature and in the love of family and friends. I felt the holy spirit was with me on new journeys of discovering the way my life should be going. I saw how the bigger issues in the world were far more important than my own worries.
10. He didn't really, I wasn't able to get over the people telling me I wasn't welcome at church until after the pandemic. Then I went to church regardless and I really do

think the comfort I felt there is God telling me that I and all the other people certain churches say aren't welcome are welcome there as far as he's concerned.

11. Always a fallback.
12. Hard to recall all the ways. Conversations with people were often special, precisely because circumstances were different and strange. I loved the sense of God in green spaces, and I loved having so much time to enjoy it.
13. So many kind people who reached out to support. Some from church. Taking walks and having proper conversation.
14. He helped me to centre myself on Him in online adoration. He gave me courage when I needed it - to keep going ... to keep trying. He reminded me how much He depends on us to do His work on Earth. He was always there. I am blessed to have known that throughout.
15. A good friend helped me with the shopping for many weeks.
16. He helped me to centre myself on Him in online adoration. He gave me courage when I needed it - to keep going ... to keep trying. He reminded me how much He depends on us to do His work on Earth. He was always there. I am blessed to have known that throughout.
17. Through the kindnesses of friends and acquaintances online. We connected in a new way. I started following mass in Lourdes.
18. All of the answers to q1. Made me feel grateful for his love and what he has given me.
19. Helping me not to seek fixed hopes and experiences but to take one day at a time

Anything Else?

1. When Christian friends visit it has been most helpful to pray together knowing that where two or three are gathered Jesus is there amongst us.
2. The Church has to change – it is split between 'right wing' pre-vatican 11 ideas and post Vatican 11. We need inclusivity – we need women priests, married priests, less clericalism (these statements do not contradict each other). Abandon destructive ideologies like 'theology of the body' – sexuality is a private matter- concentrate on social justice. The Church has been exposed on so many levels as corrupt and misguided.
3. How many more child abuse scandals can we take?
4. Not coincidence that this period was also a time of such concern for the climate and our future existence. It broadened the goal to thinking of how we can live sustainably with and for others and to alter our lifestyle accordingly.
5. I value that as a Parish we are gradually re-engaging and that slowly, a wider group are getting involved. Would love it if we could all be reaching out more to those who feel distant from the Church.
6. My health was very good with regular exercise, limited opportunity for indulgence and the stress free days once the first jittery weeks were over. There was a chat phone friend scheme set up so I had someone who phoned me every week to chat and check everything was ok. She was wonderful.

7. When Christian friends visit it has been most helpful to pray together knowing that where two or three are gathered Jesus is there amongst us.
8. I feel grateful for being brought up with a faith. It is the backdrop to my life. The Church needs reforming- it needs to listen more. I feel as though this synod might be it's last chance to deeply reflect on its deeply flawed structure and processes- it is an unjust Church. We have already been told that doctrine should not be discussed as part of the synodal process - why not? It doesn't seem right to say - 'speak we are listening - but don't talk about this or that'. Women cannot be excluded from the decision-making processes. The holy spirit is often used to justify and perpetuate maintaining the status quo. The holy spirit does not only talk to men/priests though, no matter how many times we are told this.
9. The corruption and wrongs that have been exposed in the last thirty years must be a wake up call for the Church to change. Hypocrisy is such a familiar adjective used about the Church alongside arrogance. I am tired of trying to defend such an institution -so many of the wonderful things that the Church engages in are glossed over by the dark shadow of all it's wrongs and it's stubborn refusal to reconsider some long held tenets within the Church.
10. Where are all our young people? We get enthused by about 20 teenagers attending Church, yet we have so many of our young parishioners attending a nearby large Catholic school, where are they? There is often an assumption that it is the young who push for change. I know so many elderly people who would welcome change - indeed yearn for change as they see their families challenge and ultimately reject some of the teachings of the Church which they find discriminatory and unjust.
11. I did not miss Mass. I remain a Catholic because of fellow parishioners who show tolerance, kindness and dedication to Christ's teaching. I frequently receive the message during Mass that I am the 'wrong sort of catholic'. I think I can continue to weather this, because I believe in my heart that it is the 'wrong sort of message'. But it is wearing, and I am sad that other people receive it and feel sent away. My children would listen to homilies and feel alienated, as I do, by the sense of spiritual exclusivity, and by what they came to see as an obsession with controlling sexuality that sat ill with church sexual abuse. I don't foresee them returning to church, and I have no arguments to persuade them to do so, other than trying to live out faith as an example of its gifts.
12. Instead of being quick to condemn, take hard look at ourselves as a church, and deal with the planks in our eyes. Sexuality and gender issues will also become a major issue among the youth. Instead of being quick to condemn, take hard look at ourselves as a church, and deal with the planks in our eyes.
13. Sexuality and gender issues are a major issue among the youth- they are more compassionate and inclusive than the Church.
14. Somehow a space for the conservatives , liberals and non fitting Catholics to dialogue??
15. Just want to express my gratitude to all those living their faith by taking an active role in the parish and keeping us all connected.

16. Women cannot be excluded from the priesthood, there should be married priests and gay priests their sexuality or gender should not matter.
17. The young people are fed up with the hypocrisy of the Church. The Church has failed them.
18. Stop preaching to us about sex – Something is very wrong with the teaching on sex and sexuality. How can it not be as it is largely driven by male celibates. Terrible hurt and damage has been done over the years with continuing to condemn contraception. The Church's thinking in this area is wrong and misogynistic.
19. I think like many people I am nervous of the synodal pathway because some people seem to think it's a way of ushering in change to doctrine and sacramental practice. Yet the unchanging nature of the truths we proclaim as Catholics are such a source of consolation and clarity to me - even more so during the long months of this pandemic. I don't want the Church to be in a constant state of flux and change, but to preach the Good News fearlessly and share the truths of the faith. If the synodal pathway means involving all Catholics in announcing the Gospel more clearly, then that's a good thing. If it means a certain democratisation of the Church, and especially of the Magisterium, then that would be disastrous. As Catholics we are in the world, not of the world, and we must resist being unduly influenced by the values and agendas of the world.

Face to face discussion- 10 people- the process was explained no specific questions were asked

7 mentions - need for married/women priests. Expressed views that the Church should treat women equally and not like 'second class citizens' – more involvement in running the Church.

6 mentions - need for the church to be more inclusive – less judgemental about irregular partnerships, differing sexuality

2 mentions - wish for more formality in the mass – more 'solemnity' – improvement in Children's behaviour during mass.

2 mentions- liturgy at mass was too formal unhappy with change in the liturgy had become out of touch with how people talk.

4 mentions - need to do more to keep young people engaged in their faith

5 mentions - Church needs to show real repentance for all the abuse scandals

5 mentions - need for greater engagement and commitment to social justice issues/environmental issues

1 mention - Church gave solace and comfort - felt that it wasn't their 'place' to criticise the Church.

2 mentions - shame around the sexual abuse scandals and corruption in the Church and shame about the Church doctrines on gay people, especially as one had a gay child, she felt that the Church had rejected her child.

1 mention - not good for the priest to talk negatively about other faiths and that it would be good to work more with other Churches.

1 mention - Church - "corrupt at its core and this needs to be somehow driven out". 'three generations driven from the Church by its rigid rules, its hypocrisy and its scandals'. Personal faith kept alive by not thinking about all the negative stuff connected to the Church but by treasuring essence of what Catholicism is.

Age range where stated

< 15 – 1 male

16-18 – 1 male

19-25 -1 female – 1male

26-35 – 2 female, 1 male

36-45 – 1 male – 1 female

46-55 – 1 female 1 male – 3 not stated.

56-65 –8 female – 4 -male

66-75 – 3 female/2 male – 6 not stated.

76-85 – 3 female 1 male-4

85+- 2

Age prefer not to answer - 1