

# **Our Lady of the Portal and St Piran Catholic Church, Truro**

## **Walking Together-Synodal Journey**

### **Mission**

**Summary notes from a zoom session on Tuesday evening, 07.12.21 and a Wednesday morning face-to-face session 08.12.2021**

#### **What is our mission?**

There was a strong feeling among participants that their mission involved acting on Jesus' instruction and teaching in their daily lives. This involved supporting family and friends, the sick, the elderly, the homeless and anyone they might "encounter". Many are involved in activities and voluntary work both within the church and the wider community, on an individual basis and with others. It was felt that God's love can be shown through these contacts. Some have found that wearing a crucifix has initiated an enquiry leading to a conversation. Some felt that the Holy Spirit enabled "amazing things" to happen as a result. The witness of our lives in the community provides the example for others. It was recognised that the Holy Spirit worked through people, and we must be open to the Spirit working in us. Having the confidence to be witnesses to our Faith was seen as a part of our mission. It is about what we do as much as what we say.

Another aspect of mission was to encourage faith in family and friends. Several respondents reported difficulties and challenges in knowing how to approach this matter in the case of their children who no longer attend church or actively participate in Catholic life, despite having been baptised and raised in the Church.

However, it was stressed that the values of these children remained Christian, and many were involved in what might be described as socially responsive work and careers. Many described how they prayed daily for the return of their children to practice of their faith. We heard about the delicate line to be traced when approaching grandchildren. In this context, the theme of teaching by example emerged and then was applied more widely. Not everyone has the gift of

proclamation, but we all have some other gift we can offer; we are witnessing God's love by what we do, show, and demonstrate in our lives.

Examples of the support people found helpful were the Bible, prayer, Mass and the Sacraments, Adoration, eucharistic ministry, family, parish community and, in recent times, a variety of online services. Two people described how they had found great assistance from a spiritual advisor.

### **What is the mission of our parish community?**

By parish, it was wholly accepted that this meant all of us in this Catholic community. The general feeling was that our parish is not outward looking enough; that if the Catholic church in Truro disappeared tomorrow there would be little or no impact on the city. This is notwithstanding the engagement and service of individual parishioners in the wider community but does the parish support these individuals? There was concern that we need more interaction with other Christians in the city. Some regretted the ending of a more public face such as in the Blessed Sacrament (Corpus Christi) processions in years gone by.

We questioned what the role of the parish is other than its sacramental responsibilities. Who are we, what are our aims and goals? It was felt that we needed a shared "vision" of mission.

It was recognised that catechetical formation was quite strong (more would be welcomed) and there are active SVP and CAFOD groups which are well supported. Prior to the pandemic, a soup lunch/afternoon tea group was regularly attended by parishioners and non-parishioners alike. The hall is used by outside groups such as the AA which goes some way to raise our profile.

Some ideas were offered as to how the parish might build on what we already have, to encourage more members to take a more active role. The significant number of other nationalities attending Mass is a group we should be paying more attention to in this regard. The dearth of young people involved is a major concern too. Due to the Covid regulations we already have a small team of "stewards" guiding people to places at Mass; could this be permanently extended to a team of "welcomers"? Working with the Parish address list, could we in the future visit families in their homes to support and encourage them? Could we

extend the livestreaming facility? Could we audit the parish and find out what skills and expertise members could offer?

The proposed setting up of the Pastoral Council was widely welcomed and was seen as a potential springboard for some new and further initiatives.

### **What is the mission of the whole Church?**

This section elicited fewer comments; one view was that if parishes are stronger the whole Church is stronger. What happens on the ground at local level was felt to be a significant factor in how the Church is perceived.

Pope Francis' call for a "change of direction" resonated with several participants. We concluded that this meant that the message from the Church to the world is the same but how we communicate it needs to change, particularly as we adapt to new technologies. (Many enjoyed being a "liturgical tourist" in the lock-down months by hearing Mass at churches or cathedrals all over the world.). The pandemic had given some a greater sense of being part of a worldwide Church.

There is grateful acknowledgement of and gratitude for Pope Francis' ecumenical approach, his openness to all "brothers and sisters" of other faiths or none, showing God's love for all. His speaking out this week on behalf of migrants in Greece and holding world leaders to account over this and climate change is a great example to us all.