

SYNOD 2023
FEEDBACK FORM ABOUT THE GROUP DISCUSSION

“What changes need to be made – in myself, in our parish, in the Diocese –
to make the Church’s mission today more vibrant and effective?”

(Please complete this form clearly)

Name/Type of group (indicate parish)	St James and St William of York Reading	
Date of meeting		
Particular details that you wish to be noted (e.g. ecumenical, school, university etc)	Parish wide consultations in person, at mass and via zoom	
Number (indicate males/females)	Numerous of all genders	
Age range	Various	

I. THE JOURNEYING COMPANIONS

How can we be more welcoming as a Christian community?

By active involvement in local community initiatives, especially those involving marginalised groups and issues.

The church as a whole needs to be more inclusive and must celebrate diversity.

2. LISTENING

How can we be good listeners to those close to us and those outside the Church? To whom do we listen?

Through Parish outreach and promoting involvement in the local community.

The church hierarchy must listen effectively to the comments from the Synodal Process and be honestly prepared to change.

The church needs a shift from obligation/duty to encouraging true belonging thereby allowing fulfilment of the baptismal mission of the laity.

3. SPEAKING OUT

How can we be more honest in our dealings with each other?

Society has moved on but the church has not kept up. The result is a big disconnect between church and society. The church must face up to contemporary issues such as misogyny, gender/sexuality injustice and its own failures. This has led to alienation and hurt, and loss of people in our churches. The church must acknowledge and address such issues openly to both “catch up” with and empower the laity.

4. CELEBRATING

How might we celebrate better the Liturgy in our parish?

Not everyone wants complete reliance on the mass - lay led worship should also be permitted. It is also important for there to be collaboration and teamwork in liturgy preparation.

5. CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION
How well do we work together as clergy and laity for the mission of the Church?

There is a strong feeling that the diocese and church hierarchy at best ignore and at worst censor the views of the laity. We need less authoritarian treatment and more listening by clergy to laity, followed by active change within church structures and practises. Then co responsibility can be effective. There must be no “smoothing” or altering to fit the mould of laity input into this synodal process by the clergy.

6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY
How can our group, parish, diocese and the Church be more outward-facing?

At every level the church needs to adapt to the changing world. It should lead by comment and example in all matters (however difficult) in a non judgmental way.

7. WITH THE OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS
In what ways might we improve our dialogue and relationship with other Christians?

Through local community action and participation, raising the profile of existing Catholic involvement to encourage greater participation.

8. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION
How can we make the Church more participatory and increase co-responsibility?

The subject of married and women priests and the need for both within the church was very strongly advocated.
There is also a wealth of experience in the laity whose skills remain largely unused, notably in women who make up 50% of society and yet are still marginalised in the church as a whole. Where the laity are asked and respond to a call by the church they feel their voice is still not heard. There is too much reliance on clericalism in church structures.

9. DISCERNING AND DECIDING
In a synodal style Church, what new processes of decision-making and decision-taking are needed? How transparent and accountable are the decisions made?

There needs to be a radical review of ministry and what it means by the church hierarchy. Autocracy must go.

Most people feel there is a complete lack of transparency and accountability at every level, yet the laity are expected to respond at a local level on numerous contemporary issues on which the church fails to provide clear leadership.

10. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

How do we form people to make them more capable of “journeying together”?

The Church must;

- **LISTEN and follow with action.**
- **Communicate from the top down on all initiatives and changes.**
- **Be open and accountable in both the hierarchy and the process.**

Then church and the laity can fully journey forward together.