



Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

**Responses to the DCS document**

**Parish of Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury**

**1<sup>st</sup> January 2023**

# **“Enlarge the Space of your tent” (Is. 54:2)**

## **Working Document for the Continental Stage.**

**Question 1.** *Which intuitions resonate most strongly with the lived experiences and realities of the Church in your Continent? Which experiences are new, or illuminating to you?*

“The tent is a place of participation and a foundation for the mission”.

Several intuitions resonate strongly with the lived experience in our parish of The Shrine of Our Lady, St Mary of Glastonbury. These are as follows:

### **The process of “Journeying together”**

Many parishioners have welcomed the new opportunity to take part in the Synodality process... journeying together. Especially in the post Covid environment, where normal established channels of communication were on hold and lockdown created a new experience. Synodality has presented an opportunity for “listening as a basic attitude”.

### **Co-responsibility and Structural Renewal**

The quote from Isaiah 54:2 is again poignant... and was a subject of discussion in our listening sessions. Co-responsibility and membership in a body requires participation. Pastoral Councils should not only be consultative but also places where decisions are made based on communal discernment. Membership in a body requires participation. “A style of leadership anchored in a Synodal way of proceeding will produce trust and credibility”.

### **The role of women**

Re-thinking women’s participation was echoed in our listening sessions. Many agree with the statement that “the church must find ways to enable women to participate more fully at all levels of Church life.”

### **Children and their families**

There was resonance with the statement regarding “the meagre presence of the voice of young people in the Synod process.” Fortunately, our new parish priest is working hard to include children and young families in both the spiritual and pastoral sides of parish life. In a changing society, and with the modern world threats of individualism and consumerism, the importance of listening to views and modifying structures was identified.

### **Working with other Christians**

This is established in our parish, although more participation is always required.

In conclusion, these five points are intuitions which resonate strongly in our parish.

**Question 2.** *What substantial tensions or divergences emerge as particularly important in your continent's perspective and what questions, or issues should be addressed in the next stage of the process?*

### **The care for the environment**

This subject, so eloquently extolled in Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* was almost overlooked in the Continental Stage report. This is a topic which resonates strongly in our parish. This subject is also an ideal tool for involvement of young members of the parish, as the lack of care for our planet will impact strongly on their futures. As a global subject it offers insight into the lives, hopes and fears of fellow Catholics.

### **Listening to those who feel neglected and excluded**

Space must be made and understanding given to parishioners who experience tensions between belonging to a church and their own loving relationships, e.g., divorced, re-married, and women who have experienced abortion.

### **Pre-Conciliar Mass**

This is recorded as an area of tension in our parish, given the experience of clericalism and the dissension caused. However, the statement... "The Eucharist, sacrament of unity and love in Christ, cannot become a reason for confrontation, ideology, rift or division" is evidence that this is a tension which requires discussion and action.

**Question 3.** *With reference to the previous questions what are the priorities, recurring themes and calls to action that can be shared with other local Churches around the world and discussed during the First Session of the Synodal Assembly in October 2023.*

Structures for communication within the parish and diocese are a top priority to facilitate the process of Synodality... journeying together.

The Synodal journey has personal, parish, diocesan and world dimensions, and "spiritual nourishment" will be essential. The meeting at St George's Church in Taunton and the online seminar with Father Jan Nowotnik were excellent in this respect and provided "energy" for the journey.

