



ARCHDIOCESE OF CARDIFF

SYNOD 2021-23

PARISH REPORT

The Parish of St...St Patrick's..... Town/City ...Cardiff.....

To be submitted no later than **Monday 21st March 2022**

Introduction – Special Characteristics of the Parish

There has been a Catholic Church in Grangetown since 1866 and the current Church of St Patrick was opened in 1930. It has an adjoining Presbytery.

St Patrick's is an inner city Church and is in one of the oldest residential areas of Cardiff.

The building is brick-built and is well designed with multiple entrances and exits. There is no Parish Hall.

Parishioners are drawn from the local area and beyond and the Church has a capacity of approximately 600 adults.

Grangetown is a very multi-cultural area and Parishioners reflect this racial mix.

Over the years St Patrick's has been fortunate to have had many priests who have dedicated their lives to the service of the Parish and community and currently Canon Michael Evans is the Parish Priest.

The Parish has a thriving S.V.P. Conference and close contact is kept with as many Parishioners as possible.

There is a Catholic school within the parish. The parish priest also visits two other neighbouring Catholic schools.

The Parish has a Website which is updated daily, a newsletter which is uploaded weekly, many links to various current publications such as Caritas Bulletin, Catholic People, Bishops of England and Wales, and the Vatican. The website has a dedicated e-mail address for any communications.

The Church closed for services for the first time in its history on March 13th 2020 and after a few intermittent openings, re-opened for services on March 12th 2021.

It has remained open since that date for weekend Masses, Masses three days in the week as well as for weddings, funerals, baptisms and other services. There is an evening Vigil Mass on Saturdays.

All restrictions have been observed during the Coronavirus Pandemic and a team of stewards ensure the safety of all worshipers.

Services were not live-streamed.

Communion- How does our Church function in our local area?

We asked our parishioners to answer the following questions:

Reflecting on the last two years of the pandemic, how has participation in St Patrick's Parish been affected? Were the issues there before?

Most respondents felt that our parish had managed the pandemic regulations very well and had felt safe to return to Church. They were very grateful to all who continued to keep the church clean and safe. They were also grateful for the information provided on our website keeping them up to date with parish news and many used the links to participate in the Masses online.

We now have a person who greets every parishioner as they enter the church and many have commented that this makes the Church more friendly and welcoming. It has also made the Church feel more caring and more like a family.

A small proportion of the respondents wanted to see the Church return to "normal" ie singing, holy water, children's liturgy and the choir.

A small proportion of the respondents raised the issue of the child abuse scandal and felt that this was driving people away from the Church. A number also commented on the lack of communication between the clergy/bishops and the laity and expressed doubts that the synodal process would indeed allow the voice of the laity to be heard.

A number of people voiced their concerns over Catholic schools, including our own. They felt that the school no longer teaches the basics of Catholicism and that the preparation for the Sacraments was being left to the parish alone.

When asked about their individual participation in the parish a number of people stated that they would be prepared to be more involved. This will be explored further at a later date.

Participation – How do we work with others in supporting our local area?

We asked our parishioners to answer the following questions:

How do I hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in my life? What signs of the Spirit do I see at work in the life of St Patrick's?

The majority of respondents felt that the Holy Spirit was at work in their lives and expressed a desire to get more involved with parish activities.

The welcoming nature of the parish was much appreciated, as was the 'common touch' of the parish priest.

Most respondents commented that the church was a family and it was pointed out that if you tell someone that you love them then you will want to see them. Likewise if you love Jesus then you will come to Mass to see Him.

It was acknowledged that you cannot force anyone, especially the young, to attend Church, but we must lead by example and use gentle encouragement and love. A Year of Prayer was mentioned as was Eucharistic Adoration.

Most respondents felt that the Church needs to be more proactive in using Social media and the internet to attract young people. The on-line Masses were a great help during the pandemic and were still used by some who cannot always attend Mass in person.

A number of people felt that the Church should be more 'inclusive' and stop what they referred to as 'Catholic guilt'. It was mentioned that people were sometimes afraid to return to Church as they would be excluded from receiving, especially the divorced.

A number of respondents felt that a good community spirit could be established by ensuring a good Christian education from school, church and family. It was also mentioned that Catholics should be more 'visible' ie processions at Easter and Corpus Christi. Also a leaflet inviting people to Church was suggested.

Most respondents felt that having a Church hall would help not only the parish for meetings, coffee and children's activities, but would also be of help to the local community.

Having bible readings on-line was mentioned and it was noted that every day the bible readings for the day were already published on our parish website along with other aids for reflection and prayer.

It was felt that we should keep on being a place where people can take refuge from the world and be with God.

Mission: How do we take the Gospel message out from our parish community?

We asked our parishioners to answer the following questions:

Who are the people who feel left out and excluded from the Church? How do we reach out, listen to and love them?

Many respondents felt that a number of groups of people were excluded from the Church including the housebound, the LGBT community, the homeless, divorcees and remarried.

Some felt that some excluded themselves due to not feeling welcome ie the divorced and remarried. It was felt by some that the Church should allow divorcees to remarry in Church. Some felt that the Church rules on Divorce is quite confusing, and there were some who believed that they could no longer attend if they were divorced but not remarried.

It was felt that the Church needed to do more to reach out and 'chase' the people who no longer attend and so encourage them back. We need to be great listeners and non-judgemental.

Some felt that the reason people become detached from the Church is because it doesn't 'fit' into their lives anymore. The demands of work and family seem to dominate everything.

It was suggested that writing to every parishioner and non-attendees emphasising that the door is always open and stressing that the future of the parish was in their hands would help.

Being joyful in the faith was a good witness and would encourage people back to church.

It was felt by some that having an evening Mass on Special Days would give those who are working an opportunity to attend Mass.

It was noted that the parish priest at every baptism and funeral he conducts always states that the door is always open and a welcome is there for all who wish to come in.

A day of World Prayer followed by a novena was suggested. Also having an open celebration for all faiths to gather together.

Having a Bible Study Group was suggested.

We should learn from other churches about reaching out to those who feel excluded.

It was felt that there needed to be more social community based activities (if we had a church hall) as this would encourage the young parents and children into the Church. Also having a visible presence in the school would encourage young people to attend.

Having coffee after Mass was also felt to be a way of reaching out to new members.

A few respondents felt that women needed to be more involved and that the Church should consider ordaining women.

Canon Michael Evans is a wonderful preacher and new young inexperienced members of the clergy would do well to come and listen to him. By watching others is how you pick up good ideas which you can adopt as your own.

With the shortage of priests in the UK why is the training of priests so long?

One respondent was happy with the Church as it is.

Sign Off

This Report is submitted to the Diocesan Synodal Team on behalf of the Parish community of:

St Patrick's Grangetown, Cardiff

.....

It is an honest reflection of the work undertaken over the last six months and has been endorsed by the Parish Advisory Council

Signed M. Evans Parish Priest

Signed [Signature] Parish Representative

Once complete please forward to:

madeleine.walters@rcadc.org

The Diocesan Synodal Team wishes to convey its appreciation for all the work undertaken in the preparation of this Report

May I add my appreciation to all who from the St Patrick's Community have contributed & in particular Anne Hines for her dedication & hard work

Michael Evans.