

BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH

Parish Vision Day 9 April 2022

On Saturday 9 April almost 80 parishioners responded to the invitation to help create a vision for the parish.

As a community we reflected on how we have been in the past, how we are at the moment, and how we could be in the future.

After presentations about various aspects of parish life we spent time in small groups considering the question: "What do I dream of for our Church?"

Each person had a chance to air their views, positive and negative and these were recorded on Post-it notes. These have been distilled and gathered under the major themes which emerged. They are presented here:

I DREAM OF A CHURCH...

that is invitational and inclusive

- ...where all are welcome, known and loved, not just people "like us"
- ...where everyone feels accepted, valued, and empowered
- ...that is non-judgemental – that says "come just as you are"
- ...that is family friendly and offers friendship
- ...that is more inclusive and has less rules e.g., around divorcees
- ...that feels like getting into a warm bath when you enter
- ...where we notice if people aren't there
- ...that welcomes and offers something for every age group
- ...that welcomes lay-leadership
- ...that recognises and uses everyone's gifts and talents
- ...full of Christians filled with the Holy Spirit (Alpha is a great way in)
- ...is inclusive of cradle Catholics who may struggle with change
- ...has a "new" congregation offering more than just the Mass
- ...that offers a wide range of activities of the church
- ...that feeds the hungry and clothes the naked
- ...where people bring their everyday lives into the church
- ...that communicates what's on offer

I DREAM OF A CHURCH...

that actively listens

- ...that has e.g., an ideas board
- ...where no one leaves the church unnoticed
- ...that cares for one another's spiritual health
- ...that helps everyone who has a need – spiritual, emotional, mental

I DREAM OF A CHURCH...

where everyone can experience personal conversion and formation

- ...that feeds our spiritual health (spiritual health = mental health)
- ...that recognises the need for personal conversion (the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) and formation to enable people to evangelise (take the person of Christ) to others
- ...that offers ongoing formation and opportunities to be filled by the Holy Spirit with outreach and evangelisation projects
- ...that holds regular Alpha courses with most of the guests being non-Christians or non-churchgoers

I DREAM OF A CHURCH...

that is visibly active in the locality

- ...that witnesses to our faith
- ...that cares for the less fortunate
- ...that goes out into the streets – has thriving outreach
- ...that looks inviting – what would people see if we had 'glass walls'?
- ...that is full of joyful parishioners
- ...that is more active in the local community
- ...where the physical space is used for community activities
- ...that goes beyond evangelisation – that goes out and helps

I DREAM OF A CHURCH...

that is visible online

- ...that is online and in person (hybrid church)
- ...that maximises online impact to introduce people to church
- ...that has a welcomer at all online opportunities

I DREAM OF A CHURCH...

with clarity of purpose

- ...that makes clear what Blessed Sacrament is all about
- ...that is clear about the meaning of evangelisation and joyful proclamation of the Gospel
- ...that addresses the disconnect between preach and practice
- ...that is unified
- ...that asks WWJD (what would Jesus do)
- ...that communicates how to get involved (e.g., Freshers Fair) and listens to new ideas where people can share their talents and gifts
- ...where ministry groups are open, inclusive, offer taster sessions

I DREAM OF A CHURCH...

which encourages and values young people

- ...that is a full of young people – a different age demographic
- ...that encourages young people to lead ministries
- ...that encourages young people's participation
- ...that offers events and services with youth appeal
- ...that offers a weekly youth group - something great that to which young people will commit, as they do with scouts, DofE award etc
- ...that encourages young people with music ministry
- ...where younger people don't drift away
- ...that is/offers a safe place for teenagers to come
- ...that is open every-day for teenagers to hangout and talk
- ...that offers a way to counter secular values that children are fed
- ...where teenagers can say "I have a problem and I'm looking for help" and not be judged

I DREAM OF A CHURCH...

that celebrates

- ...that *celebrates* the Sacraments
- ...that uses more varied and inclusive music
- ...that uses music as a "way in"
- ...that has one music group with many musicians who play together in various configurations, not a few different groups
- ...that celebrates the important special occasions of people's lives

I DREAM OF A CHURCH...

that cares for Our Common Home

- ...with visible leadership on environment
- ...that has solar panels and bike racks etc
- ...that is a building worthy of housing the Blessed Sacrament
- ...where everyone (not just the priest) is part of the solution

WHAT NEXT?

I hope you agree it's an inspiring list, full of creative ideas and aspirations. Some of the things mentioned are already coming to fruition, others may be a little further off, but I have no doubt that each of them is achievable.

Together with the feedback from the recent global synodal process it offers us an opportunity to bring our parish from a community which focusses primarily on maintaining the status quo to one with mission at its heart.

You can find the synthesis of the feedback of the synodal process from the diocese at this link: **[Diocesan Synodal Synthesis](#)**

Please take time to read and ponder the list. Share your thoughts with your family, your friends, other parishioners. Do they feel the same as you?

And please share your thoughts with me. Drop me a line either by email to exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk or a letter to the Parish Office. You could helpfully mark it 'Parish Vision'.

Working together we will develop a plan to move forward with these ideas and deliver our vision. It will need resourcing and action. We want as many people as possible to be involved – after all, it is **our** parish.

Thank you for your consideration. Please keep the parish in your prayers.

Fr Jonathan