

What are the limitations on our listening?

There can be wariness and ignorance of others with differing points of view. Are we really prepared to listen to them?

We can all be distracted, either by our own thoughts or by the things going on around us.

Patronising and condescending attitudes can be problematic; how do we avoid these?

Do we listen but not respond?

Losing concentration, and not encountering different views and voices.

Sometimes we are too busy to stop and listen to people.

We feel guilty because we fail to try to listen.

How might we improve our listening?

We need to be better at listening and being interested, do we have an openness, or do we have preconceived ideas?

Do we give time to understanding what facilitates our listening – giving time and attention, noticing those who do not speak out, we should try to ask them about their thoughts.

We must create the space to listen to the voices of minorities, but how do we do this?

How do we create a safe space where everyone can be heard and listened to?

We need to reduce the idea of hierarchy and stand alongside each other.

We cannot know everything that has happened in someone's life, so we should not judge when we are listening to people.

We need to make more effort individually to listen.

Help me through the Holy Spirit to understand what I can do to help people to me more open.

Look and listen properly

Make time and act.

Parish Contribution

These notes will be delivered to the Diocese as part of our contribution to the Synod, along with the feedback from the next three meetings.

Do you agree with the points raised during the meeting, are their points you would like to make on the themes of 'Companions on the journey' and 'Listening'?

If you would like to make a written contribution to the parish response there will be a box in the porch of each Church where you can leave your response .

You may also email any contribution to the parish by emailing stanthonystmark@rcdom.org.uk



ST ANTHONY'S & ST MARK'S SYNOD

MEETING 1

RESPONSE

In the first part of the meeting we read and prayed through the first lines of the Road to Emmaus story

In the second part we focused on the following themes:

- **COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY**

In the Church and society, we are on the same road.

In our Church, who are those who "walk together"?

Who are those who seem further apart?

How are we called to grow as companions?

What groups or individuals are left on the margins?

- **LISTENING**

Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.

How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore?

How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people?

What facilitates or inhibits our listening?

How well do we listen to those on the peripheries?

How is the contribution of consecrated men and women integrated?

What are some limitations in our ability to listen, especially to those who have different views than our own?

What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalisation, or social exclusion?

PART 1

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

LUKE:24:13-18

^{13.} Now that very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem,

^{14.} and they were talking together about all that had happened.

^{15.} And it happened that as they were talking together and discussing it, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side;

^{16.} but their eyes were prevented from recognising him.

^{17.} He said to them, 'What are all these things that you are discussing as you walk along?' They stopped, their faces downcast.

^{18.} Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.'

GROUP RESPONSE

The two are friends and they meet up with someone who they think is a stranger, but who is really the Lord. How do they respond? We shouldn't be dismissive of the stranger but should always be welcoming.

We also notice the sadness of the men. They were in deep discussion about what was going on. The horror that these people, especially the close companions of Jesus, must have felt and the disappointment must have been terrible at his death. They can't believe that anyone could have been unaware of what happened.

The men on the road were disciples and the Lord. What exactly were they talking about? Jesus, or course, knew exactly what they were talking about. He asks them a question to which he already knows the answer. He does the same with us, encouraging us to reflect on things happening around us, which is a process we are going through with the current synod.

Jesus walks alongside us all the time, but often we don't recognise him.

We need to recognise and encourage each other; we also need good priests and teachers.

PART 2

COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

GROUP RESPONSE

We walk with those we meet within our own parish groups – mainly during times of Masses and meetings organised within frameworks, such as Mass times etc. Groups and events need to be inclusive of all.

Did I make them feel that their visit to the Church a worthwhile experience? Even when there is an opportunity, why don't people come to Church? A great deal depends on the person's attitude.

Women usually make up most of the Church attendees and are usually keen to be part of the Churches family. However, woman and especially young woman, are largely ignored. Some women have been made to feel that they are not capable or intelligent enough to fully participate in the life of the Church. We have been discouraged by the attitudes of some of the clergy.

Are we seen to be giving lip service, rather than being encouraging, are we really welcoming?

There can be a lack of understanding.

Is the Synod itself off putting?

So much is offered out with the Church which people find to be a better use of their time than coming to Church, community groups which don't make that many demands,

Companionship also depends on the areas in which people live, our friends and the people we talk to usually live near to us

We are always sitting in the same seat, does this make visitor and strangers uncomfortable?

Older people have more time and experience.

People are trying to be honest, but we are so bamboozled by the lies which dominate modern times. Satan is the prince of liars; he deflects our focus from the truth. We need the strength of the Holy Spirit to hold on to truth.

We need to speak the truth, however unpopular it is, in the face of opposition even from our own loved ones.

Can we confront the truth about the Holy Catholic Church? Is that the only way we can arrest the decline of the church? Is it enough for us to be personally Holy and leave the rest to God?

Most people of good will continue to walk together, even who do not attend church.

Some people are pushing an anti-Christian agenda.

We can grow as companions through prayer and fasting.

Who are on the margins? Those who have lost out on being exposed to the basic precepts of the faith.

Poverty is no excuse for rejecting God. The lie that it is, is one of the most frequently used tactics of the world/Satan, c.f. Judas/expense ointment, Jesus tells him "The poor will be with us always".

Christian/Catholics are welcoming. Putting people into categories like minorities or the poor or socially excluded is a way of distancing us from the real challenge. We are responsible for ourselves first and foremost. We must act charitably towards the needy without losing sight of our duty to God.

We need to have a care for those who are not there and those who are not known to us, or people who we don't normally talk to. We must accept that they cannot come to us, so we must go to them, but how do we do that?

The poor, and often the young are left on the margins, sadly many of the poor do not come to Mass because they feel excluded, we must find a way to share our lives with theirs.

We must also consider others not in full communion with the church e.g. divorced and remarried.

Like minded people, church goes walking together (some through obligation, some through need to hear and participate).

There can be a perception that joining in, taking part is just for those already involved.

We need to increase our own understanding and acceptance of our faith

Do we need to be more welcoming to people we don't see very often – to make them feel that they want to attend more.

Listening

How is God speaking to us, are we listening to him? God is with us even when we feel at rock bottom. When we feel alone, he is with us, we just need to be better at listening.

Are we seen as being prepared to listen? Do we show compassion?

Are women listened to? Are gay people listened to, do they feel as though they have a voice?

Do we take time to have a pleasant word with someone who may have a worry at that particular time?

There are many challenges

Preconceived ideas about others. If people have not been listened to in the past or have experienced judgement attitudes, they will feel marginalised.