

Diocese of Clonfert

Diocesan Phase of the Universal Synod Synthesis



May 2022

The Diocese of Clonfert

The Diocese of Clonfert is comprised principally of parishes in East Galway along with a parish in County Roscommon and a parish in County Offaly. It is mainly rural in nature with three principal towns – Loughrea, Ballinasloe and Portumna. It has a population of approximately 30,000 Catholics and is served by twenty diocesan priests along with three guest priests from Nigeria. These are supported by the part-time service of some retired priests living in the Diocese. For the purposes of administration, it is divided into three deanery areas and twenty-four parishes.

The context

The Diocese of Clonfert had embarked on a process of consultation, restructuring and renewal. As a first phase, Bishop Michael published a reflection document on the Future of the Church in the Diocese along with Norms for Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Committees. The diocesan phase of the Universal Synod took place against the backdrop of firstly the Covid-19 pandemic and the various restrictions placed on public gatherings and secondly, the joining of the diocese with its neighbouring Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora in the person of the Bishop, which occurred on May 1st 2022.

The journey so far

- Feedback following the Publication of *Renew and Strengthen your People: A Pastoral Reflection on the Future of the Church in the Diocese of Clonfert* (May 2021)
- Norms for Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Committees (September 2021)
- Launch of the Diocesan Phase of the Universal Synod with a pilgrim walk from the burial place of Saint Brendan to the Shrine of Our Lady of Clonfert (October 2021)
- Facilitated meeting of priests on the future of the diocese (November 2021)
- Facilitated Deanery Meetings of Parish Pastoral Councils, Parish Finance Committees, Key Parish Personnel and Priests (December 2021)
- Feedback from facilitated local Parish Meetings (January 2022)
- Feedback from Diocesan-wide online questionnaire (April 2022)
- Feedback from Diocesan-wide paper questionnaire (April 2022)
- Feedback from various focused conversations to include people distanced from the Church, ethnic minorities, young adults, LGBT+ Community, those in second relationships, those involved in safeguarding issues, etc (May 2022)
- Facilitated Synthesis Gathering with representatives from each Parish (May 2022)
- Submission of Synthesis to the Irish Episcopal Conference and the subsequent publication of the Clonfert Diocesan Synthesis (29th May 2022)
- Participation of Diocesan committee in National Synodal Gathering to discuss the National Synthesis Document in Athlone (18th June 2022)

A brief table of statistics on the interaction of participants in this process is to be found in the appendix.

On the issue of Child Safeguarding and the voice of survivors of child abuse – various conversations have been engaged in with key people in this area. A listening process with survivors of abuse was organised at a national level. This facilitated listening has now taken place and the feedback will be submitted directly to the team who are collating the national synthesis.

Limitations of the process

Throughout, the impact of Covid-19 restrictions made the process difficult. It also remained a challenge to engage both parishioners and clergy in the process. While some effort was made to reach beyond the regular faith practicing community, it is recognised that much more will need to be accomplished in this area in the context of an ongoing national synodal pathway. As the process develops in the coming years, more in-depth discussion, analysis and discernment of the emerging issues along with appropriate catechetical formation is desirable.

Gratitude and appreciation

A word of gratitude and appreciation is due to the many hundreds of people who took the time to engage in the various phases of this process.

Emerging areas for affirmation

Quotes included are from responses to questionnaires or from accounts of meetings and interactions had with participants

1. The perennial value of the Gospel message

Many respondents expressed their belief that the Gospel Message, Christianity, and the Church still had much to offer people as they journey through life.

- *“I believe in the Gospel teaching and try to live my life as such and trust in ‘I have come that they may have life. Life to the full’ (John 10:10)”*
- *“I thank the God with all my heart that throughout life I have experienced my parents, teachers and priests preach the good news to me. They lived the Gospels in their everyday lives, and they were a great example to me. ‘The kingdom of God is close at hand, repent and believe the good news’ (Mark 1:15)”*

2. The importance of and desire to experience local living faith communities

There was an evident desire to affirm, preserve and support living local faith communities.

- *“The community are the Church.”*

- *“Our parish has been a place of gathering, celebration, prayer, silence and communal support.”*
- *“I get comfort from going to Mass and being part of my community.”*
- *“Personally, I found my parish and the Catholic Church to be a place of profound peace, support and comfort in my life.”*
- *“Why can’t we experience in Church the sense of community and belonging that is experienced at the local GAA club.”*
- *“We hope for a faith filled, vibrant, enthusiastic, new, uplifting, spiritual Church.”*

3. Positive experience of local Church communities especially at times of personal joy or sorrow

Many spoke with deep appreciation of the important role the Church and priests play in ritualising key moments of joy and sorrow in their lives.

- *“I have a very positive experience of my Church”.*
- *“The Church is brilliant at the sacraments, funerals, weddings etc, the Church is such a big part of these events.”*
- *“The Church has a massive role in births, deaths, marriage, and I feel these are done very, very well. They tend to be personal, and I think people relate to this.”*

4. Recognition of the care and dedication of priests to their ministry

There was a genuine appreciation of the ministry of a declining cohort of priests and a sympathy for the strains and pressures they were subjected to even as they advanced in age.

- *“Thank God for the gift of our wonderful priests”*
- *“We have hardworking and caring priests”*
- *“Our PP is steadfast and selfless in ministering to the parishioners”*
- *“We are truly blessed here in our parish to have our priest”*
- *“Our priest is very dedicated and hard-working, keeping the local parish Church a place of openness for the community. He does his best to work with the parish community 100%”*
- *“I do think a massive effort is being made by some priests.”*
- *“Our priests need our support at this time.”*

Key Challenges of the Present

1. Integrating the aftermath of Covid-19

The effects the Covid-19 pandemic have had on the practice of the faith, in particular as regards a move from in person to online participation at Mass, emerged.

- *“People have gotten out of the habit of going to Mass because of Covid.”*
- *“Covid was a scourge for the people. Some people have forgotten what Sunday is.”*
- *“When can we shake hands again?”*

2. Decline in belief/faith

Many spoke of living in families, communities, and a country where people no longer believe in God or in the key aspects of the Christian Message.

- *“A lot of people no longer believe in God.”*
- *“Hard to keep the motivation to go to Mass. Impossible to explain the relevance of Faith. People find it intangible.”*
- *“Many friends, family, children are finding our faith irrelevant at this time.”*

3. Decline in faith practice

There was a general recognition of the decline in practice of the faith at parish level and a sadness about the fact that many, including family members and friends, no longer attend Mass.

- *“There are lots of young couples in our area but sadly not many Church goers.”*
- *“The youth have no interest in Mass anymore.”*
- *“For the majority of younger people, the Church is only used for births, deaths, marriages and Sacraments. There is nothing beyond that.”*
- *“There is a stark dwindling of people attending Church, supporting Church and general non interest.”*
- *“I regret that some of my children and grandchildren no longer attend Mass.”*

4. Ageing congregations

Many noted that young and middle-aged people are absent from Church congregations.

- *“I am saddened by the age profile very visible in Church attendance and the lack of energy and vitality.”*
- *“I believe our older parishioners get a lot of fulfilment and joy from mass and the sacraments at the minute however, I think there is lot of work required from the Church to engage the younger people.”*
- *“I think it is working well at meeting the needs of our older generation but not engaging or reaching out so much with non-practicing youth.”*
- *“The Church gives a sense of community, a place to worship, a place of peace - but mainly for older generations.”*

5. Ageing clergy with difficulty keeping morale high

Many noted the age profile of priests. With an increased workload there was a sense of the need to foster a renewed sense of mission and purpose among the clergy.

- *“Our priests are tired.”*
- *“An aging priesthood faces natural problems of energy.”*
- *“In the future, where will priests come from?”*
- *“Some priests don't seem interested anymore.”*

6. Aftermath of decades of bad news about the Church

A sense of a Church battered and broken after years of bad news and having now to negotiate a somewhat hostile environment for believers.

- *“The stigma of the child abuse scandals have driven a wedge between the Church and the people.”*
- *“Sadly, due to all the Church scandals and horrible abuse issues, people have lost interest in the Church.”*
- *“The Catholic Church has to take ownership for the wrong-doings in the past. It was a terrible big sin and evil.”*

7. Competing with the secular world when it comes to religious activities

Many noted a struggle between the secular world and religion at both a national and a local level

- *“Youth opt for sport before prayer.”*
- *“Secularisation is sweeping the country, the new Religion is Sport – GAA, Camogie, soccer, cycling and forest walks etc.”*
- *“Change all training and sporting fixtures from Mass times on Saturday and Sunday. This has to be the first way to get youth and their families back to Mass.”*
- *“There is a growth in secular marriages and secular celebrations of birth and death.”*

8. Call to be a more welcoming, loving, serving and inclusive Church

The theme of welcome and inclusivity emerged in many submissions. Many dreamt of a Church/parish where people would feel welcomed and included.

- *“Belonging to the Church would be more fulfilling if it were more open and accepting to all people, meeting their wants and needs not over just religious terms but also their everyday lives.”*
- *“Church is not as compassionate as it preaches. The Church needs to be more inclusive.”*
- *“The Church must not be all about obligation but must be encouraging and invitational.”*

Emerging Themes

1. The perceived existence of a disconnect between the Church and the everyday life of people

Many spoke of a general feeling that the Church was out of touch with the lives of ordinary people.

- *“A Church that reflects me and current times would make my experience of belonging to the Church more fulfilling. I don’t think it is fair or reasonable for it to be only single bachelor men to lead a Church - how can they accurately represent and lead a Church that is full of people from all walks of life.”*

- *“The Church is out of touch with real people.”*
- *“The Church isn’t meeting people’s needs in today’s world. Society has changed, people have changed.”*

2. Need to communicate all that is good about faith and the Church

A recurring theme was the fact that much of the good being done by the Church at a national and local level seems to go unacknowledged. There was a general sense that as a community the Church needs to better explain itself and celebrate its achievements in the public space.

- *“The Church has much good to communicate, however where we have failed as a Church is on the level of communication.”*
- *“The media had a free reign and contributed a lot of damage to good people, so maybe the Holy Spirit is inspiring you to get a good Public Relations team.”*
- *“The Church both local and national needs to enter the social media space and use it to spread the message.”*
- *“The local parish newsletter is vital – this could be developed as a method of online communication.”*
- *“The Christian message on environmental issues needs to be heard more.”*

3. A Church online

The rather recent reality of access to Church celebrations online was commented on both favourably and with some reservations.

- *“I have found the Masses on the television really beautiful.”*
- *“The Church is trying to move with the times with on-line technologies.”*
- *“Every Parish should have a webcam service available.”*
- *“Communities need to gather on Sundays. Are parish radios and live streaming an obstacle?”*
- *“The internet could be used to deliver a wide range of courses and catechetical programmes on the faith.”*

4. Spirituality and Church going not necessarily the same thing

A rather common theme among those who were not regular Churchgoers was a desire for some connection with God and a spiritual life on a personal level but little evidence that this was being found or nourished in the Christian community or by traditional Church practice. Many were willing to identify as spiritual rather than Christians or Catholics.

- *“I enjoy the quietness of the Church - almost more than weekly Mass.”*
- *“I have faith and believe in going to Mass but find sometimes the Church doesn’t make it easy for people to participate and are selective/ showing favouritism towards certain parishioners.”*
- *“I find that my religious or spiritual faith to be more of a personal journey.”*
- *“I don't need to belong to a parish to have faith.”*

5. Evangelisation – renewing belief in the Christian Message

Some spoke of a need to present anew the Good News of Christianity and to invite people to consider if it can be a source of meaning in their lives.

- *“People need answers to life’s deep-down questions which they won’t find in the secular world.”*
- *“The basic simple message of Christianity must be gone back to again and again.”*
- *“There is a need to reach out and bring the message to young families.”*
- *“I think the Holy Spirit is leading us to rediscover our faith and how to integrate it in how we live our lives. We need to have conversations around this – how the Good News impacts how we live, what does my faith mean to me?”*

6. Concern that the core message of Christian belief and practice might be watered down or abandoned

There emerged from some respondents a fear that, for various reasons, the core message of Christianity was being eroded, faith practices were no longer being insisted on and key Christian doctrines were not being preached about.

- *“A wishy washy faith is of no good to anyone.”*
- *“Few know what is right or wrong anymore.”*
- *“We need to go back to basics and instruct the young in the truth of the Gospel.”*
- *“Church Leaders slow to speak on morality – backlash from media, are afraid they will turn people off.”*
- *“Many people, including priests, do not really believe anymore what the Church has always taught. The Church must regain its nerve to teach unpopular things.”*
- *“Accept a certain amount of change without compromising core beliefs and values.”*
- *“I feel unity with fellow believers but feel that the Church has no courage to stand up for itself and its beliefs. Continues to take the scourging, admitting to and repentant for its sinful past but needs the courage to express its faith.”*
- *“There is great preparation for the Children’s First Confession, First Holy Communion – after that there is no confession provided in this Parish.”*

7. Need for life-long Religious Education

Many spoke of their own and others lack of understanding when it came to key Christian beliefs and practices.

- *“There is a great need to improve people’s Religious Education.”*
- *“People don’t know what they believe in.”*
- *“Many no longer know or understanding the teachings of the Catholic Faith.”*
- *“Study groups about faith and the Bible are needed.”*
- *“We want laity involved but who is going to train them?”*

8. Struggle to understand Scripture

Some spoke of how they often struggled to understand the Scripture readings. Others expressed a desire to learn more about the Bible so that they could better understand and appreciate the message contained therein.

- *“The readings at Mass are impossible to understand.”*
- *“Parishioners don’t know God’s Word – they don’t even have Bibles.”*
- *“Scripture reading (a group) during Lent and Advent.”*
- *“There is a need for Bible study classes.”*

9. More meaningful celebration of the Mass and the Liturgy

A recurring theme was the need to connect the Mass and Liturgical celebrations in a meaningful manner with people’s lives.

- *“Anytime I do go to Mass it is very dull, there is no interaction with the people in the Church and does not engage with what is going on in the world today.”*
- *“Where is the Joy we should feel and experience in our worship?”*
- *“Have better, shorter homilies using relevant stories or local experiences to show God’s presence in everyday life and not just Mass.”*
- *“Encourage the congregation to sing at Mass.”*
- *“Have regular renewal meetings for Choir, Readers, Communion Ministers and Servers.”*
- *“Get younger people involved e.g., Confirmation Class in a Justice or Care for the Earth Project.”*
- *“Make Mass more family friendly.”*
- *“Have congregation send in request for Prayers of the Faithful.”*
- *“Use inclusive readings – not always him/his.”*

10. Importance of preparation for and celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

The Sacraments of Baptism, First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation were identified as key moments in young people’s lives and in the lives of their parents and families. There was a general consensus that more needed to be done at parish level to engage with people at these important moments.

- *“While people are still presenting for these Sacraments, we need to engage with them in a more meaningful manner. This is an opportunity to reach out to them and welcome them into the parish community.”*
- *“We need to involve young families who have children receiving the Sacraments.”*
- *“Preparation at parish level for the Sacraments has almost totally died out.”*
- *“So many just turn up for the day out with no follow up afterwards.”*

11. The role of Catholic Schools

The role Catholic Schools have in the education of young people in the faith was raised by many. Some complimented the religious education provided in Catholic Schools while others felt what was happening was not enough.

- *“Like to see Priests more involved in Sacraments in the schools.”*
- *“I’d like to see our Parish Priest come into the school and visit each classroom, talk to the children and get to know them.”*
- *“Liaise more with local primary and secondary schools to see if the parish can support any initiatives that are taking place in schools.”*
- *“Teaching of RE in schools needs to be done by fully qualified and interested teachers.”*
- *“A fun form of Sunday School for our young people should be introduced.”*
- *“There is a need to connect the parish with the school more.”*
- *“Preparation for the Sacraments should be taken out of the School and rooted in the parish community.”*

12. Ministry to Young People

The need to reach out to young people was a recurring theme throughout the process. Many recognised the difficulties involved but emphasised its absolute necessity.

- *“Young people need to be the focus of each parish.”*
- *“Our parish has started a Youth Mass on the first Saturday of every month. It’s a great way to make teenagers feel needed and involved in their parish.”*
- *“Young people are the Church of the future – they should be encouraged to get involved in all aspects of Church life – this is not happening in this parish.”*
- *“I feel the Church is meeting the needs of the older generation but not of the younger generation.”*
- *“Young people should be encouraged to have their say.”*

13. Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life

Some mentioned the lack of vocations to the Priesthood and Religious life.

- *“There is no one coming forward to be priests or nuns.”*
- *“You don’t see young priests nowadays.”*
- *“Many people lament the lack of priests, few pray for vocations or considering encouraging their own family members to pursue a vocation.”*

14. A new heart for our Priests

There were some submissions that noted a need to bring new heart to priests.

- *“Priests are disillusioned.”*
- *“The Spirit is asking Bishops and Priests to “be not afraid” and move out of the Upper room and preach the Gospel.”*
- *“Sometimes I wonder are our priests happy?”*
- *“Our Priests need to be sociable and sympathetic to our daily struggles.”*
- *“We need to pray for our Priests.”*
- *“The formation of Priests for the realities of the life of a Priest in Ireland today needs to be revisited.”*

15. The identity of the priest and mandatory celibacy

A significant number of participants mentioned a sense that priests were seen as separate from the rest of the community and as a result out of touch with the realities of life. Many felt that this situation might be remedied by allowing priests to marry.

- *“If priests could marry, they would have a better understanding of what family life is all about, more empathic and people could connect more easily with priests if they were wed.”*
- *“The concept of married priests must be accepted.”*
- *“If priests could marry and if women were allowed be priests, it would make the experience of belonging to the Church more fulfilling.”*
- *“Allow priests to marry - it’s not natural to travel through life on your own.”*
- *“As a Priest – celibacy was my choice – I feel I know about people’s lives – I am involved in everyday life.”*

16. A non-judgemental welcoming Church

Some respondents experience of Church was one of judgement and exclusion. Many expressed the wish that the Church of the future would be more accepting and welcoming of all people.

- *“A change in the way the Word of God is told to people. Less preaching and more leading. No more shaming people when they don’t go to Mass regularly. More of a discussion about God rather than speeches by one person – the priest.”*
- *“Let everyone know they are all welcome – single/ married/ divorced, gay etc.”*
- *“Invitation on the newsletter that all are welcome.”*
- *“The Church needs find ways to be open to and welcome those who are not living up to its ideals.”*
- *“Remarket the Church as an accepting place for all, regardless of stance.”*

17. The LGBT+ Community and the Church

A sense of anger and injustice at the Church emerged from participants who were members of the LGBT+ community and also from other participants when it came to the inclusion of the LGBT+ community in Church life.

- *“As a young person, I cannot understand why the Church condemns gay people. This is not right.”*
- *“The Church is still not inclusive of all e.g. LGBT+ community.”*
- *“The Church and its attitude to the LGBT+ Community has been hurtful and divisive.”*
- *“We need the Church to be more inclusive to LGBT+ community and spreading positive message when it comes to LGBT+ families.”*

18. The experience and role of women in the Church

Many participants mentioned the role of women in the Church and advocated developing a conversation on the experience of women in the Church and the development of more meaningful and equal roles for them.

- *“Women need a role which is more equal and less servile.”*
- *“There has been a lot of hurt felt by women in the Church.”*
- *“Holy Spirit leading the Church to be more respectful of women as part of God’s creation – this has not happened yet.”*
- *“Structures must be put in place for women of faith to have a formal active role in the Irish Church at local, diocesan and national level.”*
- *“Women clearly dominate the Church attendance and parish involvement but are, in my mind, underrepresented in key areas.”*
- *“The concept of women priests must be accepted.”*

19. Inclusiveness of all levels of society

Some respondents spoke of a certain elitism among Church communities. There was a general consensus that the Church needed to reach out to the various ethnic groups that constitute our society and to stand with the poor and those in need.

- *“Go out to the poor, the drug-addicted, the wounded.”*
- *“Become a living Church.”*
- *“Need to welcome back the many who have “broken the rules” of the Church. Young adults in this situation feel vulnerable - they are not sure how welcome they are in our Church. Many peoples’ lives differ and have conflict. Need to encourage those who feel pushed out of participating through life’s circumstances.”*
- *“What about Catholic Social Teaching – why is that message not spoken more of?”*

20. Need to build a more vibrant Church community

Some compared the experience they had of their local Church community with more vibrant experiences they had of Church communities in other parts of the country or of the world. Many expressed the need to engage in activities to build up and support a living local Church community.

- *“Our Church is tired, stagnant.”*
- *“Our Church is in big decline.”*
- *“People should want to go to Church every week and leave feeling uplifted, instead I leave not wanting to go back.”*
- *“There is no life in our local Church community – it’s dead.”*
- *“We should have a more involved Church - Jumble sales, tea after Mass, community fetes.”*
- *“Apart from the Mass, the social aspect is important to me.”*
- *“Bring Church into the community, as opposed to being just a building.”*
- *“We need to encourage meetings after Mass - parish socials to build up again a sense of community.”*
- *“Our Churches must be open to be the centre of our Communities, welcoming and vibrant, attempting to draw people of all ages back, maybe only in small numbers initially.”*

21. Cooperation between and reorganisation of faith communities

Given the context in which some of the consultations took place – the theme of cooperation between parishes emerged. Many focused on their own parish and keeping their local Church open while others spoke of the need for reorganising and restructuring of parishes and cooperation between parishes.

- *“A need for bigger, amalgamated parishes to increase participation and volunteers.”*
- *“Increase size of parishes so more volunteers available.”*
- *“I think the sharing of resources is vital. I can never understand why each parish/diocese seems to be isolated.”*
- *“Small communities must join together for Sunday Masses and for social activities.”*
- *“The Spirit will continue to nurture and nourish even if Churches have to close.”*
- *“Parish boundaries need to be looked at – too many Masses. Less with better organised liturgies would be better.”*
- *“Parish communities have to become less reliant on the presence of a permanent resident priest.”*

22. Role of the Laity in the Church

There was a general recognition that in the future lay people would have to play a greater role in the organisation of local parish communities.

- *“The Holy Spirit is leading us to a more lay-led Church.”*
- *“There is very little ownership of the Church by the people – the Priest does everything.”*
- *“Lay people only ticking the boxes, not feeling they own the Church.”*
- *“Use online training to ensure everyone can be involved.”*
- *“Training and information will give laity confidence and skills.”*
- *“The Lay vocation must be nurtured – a leap of faith must be taken.”*
- *“Empower more lay people to get involved in various ministries as we need to be prepared for the future.”*
- *“Come Holy Spirit, help us to turn our parishes around with Priest and lay people working together.”*

23. Development of new roles eg. permanent diaconate, catechist, prayer ministry

Some people raised the need to introduce a variety of official ministries in parishes.

- *“Why don’t we introduce married permanent deacons like in other places.”*
- *“Commission a lay person in each parish to coordinate preparation for the Sacraments.”*
- *“Paid lay people eg Deacons will have to be employed in order to keep the Church alive and functioning.”*
- *“Some lay people should start prayer groups or bible groups in parishes.”*

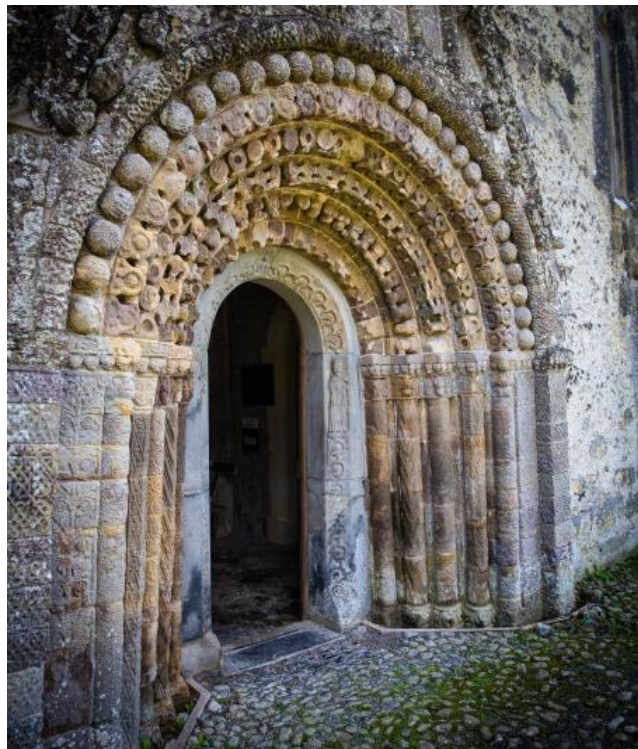
24. Need for duly elected and regularly renewed Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Committees

Within the context of finding a voice for lay people in the Church, a significant number of submissions lamented the fact that parish pastoral councils and parish finance committees were non-existent or not functioning properly.

- *“Pastoral councils and parish finance committees must have a more empowered role – not simply rubber-stamping decisions made up the chain.”*
- *“We have no pastoral council – we never receive a report on the parish monies.”*
- *“We have no parish pastoral council for the past number of years and that would be a good base for Church and community to start especially for lay people to get involved.”*
- *“No involvement now of the community in this parish - only a finance committee in name.”*
- *“No functioning P.P.C. in this parish – same few people involved all the time.”*
- *“Pastoral Councils should be more focused on pastoral care and service.”*

Conclusion

The process outlined in this synthesis and the emerging themes identified is but the start of a conversation of discernment that will need to develop at a local, national and international level over the coming years. The challenge from here will be to find ways to develop occasions and structures that favour and promote this type of conversation and discernment within our local faith communities. Conversations and discernment that will eventually lead to the genuine renewal in faith and practice that the majority of participants in this process so evidently desire.



Pic Doorway of the Cathedral of St Brendan, Clonfert (c 12th Century)

Appendix 1

Statistical information on the journey taken

Date	Action	Statistics
May 2021	Feedback following the Publication of “Renew and Strengthen your People: A Pastoral Reflection on the Future of the Church in the Diocese of Clonfert”	10 written submissions made
October 2021	Launch of the Diocesan Phase of the Universal Synod with a pilgrim walk from the burial place of Saint Brendan to the Shrine of Our Lady of Clonfert	Approximately 200 people in attendance
November 2021	Facilitated meeting of Priests on the Future of the Diocese	30 Priests in Attendance
December 2021	Facilitated Deanery Meetings of Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Finance Committee Members, Key Parish Personnel and Priests	180 People in attendance online
January 2022	Facilitated local Parish Meetings	21 Parishes engaged with the process and submitted feedback three parishes did not
February 2022	Presentation on the Synodal Process to an Assembly of Priests of the Diocese by Ms Janet Forbes Member of the National Synodal Task Group	26 Priests in Attendance
April 2022	Diocesan wide online questionnaire	68 Respondents
April 2022	Diocesan wide paper questionnaire	2,500 questionnaires distributed across 24 parishes – 140 responses were received
May 2022	Various focused conversations to include people distanced from the Church, ethnic minorities, young adults, LGBTQI Community, those in second relationships, etc	35 participants
May 2022	Synthesis Gathering with representatives from each Parish Facilitated by Rev Eamon Fitzgibbon, Convenor National Synodal Task Group	Delegates from 23 parishes.
June 2022	Attendance at National Synodal Gathering to discuss the National Synthesis	4 diocesan delegates plus Bishop attending

The interim Synodal Pathway Committee for the Diocese of Clonfert is comprised of: Bishop Michael Duingan, Ms Ruth Conroy, Ms Mary Harney, Mr John Coughlan, Ms Marcella Fallon, Sr Alacoque Gleeson, Ms Sinead Watson.

Pic on Cover Page – Saint Brendan, the Navigator, Church of St Brendan at the Shrine of Our Lady of Clonfert