

Parish of

What sort of a parish are we?

This is an attempt to look at ourselves and see what we do well and what we perhaps have lost sight of. Many of us are so familiar with how things happen here that we take it all for granted, and perhaps some visitors and newcomers see us very differently. This audit can help us to strengthen what we do well and remind ourselves of things we might have overlooked. This is a way of helping us reflect on what we experience. It is best done in small groups with general feedback and an agreed consensus. The parish pastoral council or equivalent could facilitate this and perhaps agree priorities with the parish priest. This is intended to be a self-audit – it is designed to assist the priest and people to identify how the parish carries out its mission.

*“The Parish community is the human context
wherein the evangelising work of the Church is
carried out, where Sacraments are celebrated and
where charity is exercised, all with missionary zeal.”*
The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community n.19

Worship and Prayer

1. The congregation participates fully, actively and consciously in the liturgy.
2. Congregational singing is an important part of every weekend Mass
3. Homilies are relevant to the needs and cares of the people.
4. Special feast days are appropriately celebrated throughout the year.
5. Various forms of expression of Catholic spirituality are provided for parishioners e.g. prayer groups, novenas, days of recollection, missions, devotions, faith sharing opportunities etc.
6. The housebound and the ill are visited regularly with the Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick
7. The Rite of Christian Initiation is being implemented and involves the entire parish community
8. There are options for face-to-face confession, seasonal penitential services and communal penance services with individual confessions.
9. The celebration of baptism, weddings and funerals involve the parish community.
10. The weekend mass schedule promotes quality liturgy, builds a sense of unity and community and reflects the size and diversity of the parish community. Aids are available for those who are disabled or have special needs.

Scoring – What is **your** perception? How does it seem to you? Give a mark to each of the statements above.

5= I agree very much

4 = I agree

3 = to some extent

2 = not really

1 = no

Share your answers with the group, and agree on overall strengths and weaknesses. Think of any specific things that the parish could do.

One that you could do straight away

One to work on and one to aim to adopt by this time next year

Communicating the faith

1. The parish has its own or supports a local Catholic school.
2. The parish has a nominated Coordinator of Catechesis, who is supported in that ministry, with adequate resources.
3. The parish offers sustainable religious instruction programmes for adults, families, children and youth.
4. The parish provides for and supports initial and on-going training and formation for catechists
5. The parish encourages and supports parent as the primary religious educators of their children.
6. The parish has sustainable programmes for adolescents and young adults
7. The parish offers a variety of opportunities for adult learning experiences (e.g. Bible Study, speakers, magazines, books etc).
8. The parish supports its lay leaders/volunteers with regular and ongoing in-service programmes.
9. The parish has programmes that strengthen marriage and family
10. Catechesis is provided for parishioners with special needs.

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Parish as community

1. The parish has an organised welcome programme for new members
2. Parishioners with disabilities are included in every aspect of parish life and ministry.
3. Persons of all races are welcome to participate fully in the life and ministry of the parish.
4. All approved liturgical roles are open to both men and women
5. Parishioners are encouraged to invite others, who may be estranged or not committed to a church, to come and meet the Lord.
6. The parish has a way of ensuring the high quality and condition of pamphlets, posters and other material on display in the church buildings so that they reflect the values of the community.
7. The parish consistently identifies the talents and interests of parishioners
8. Parish organisations regularly invite new people to participate in their activities.
9. Parishioners are encouraged to use their talents for the good of the parish.
10. The parish actively involves the elderly, adolescents and young adults in parish activities, in person and through social media and visiting.

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Mission

1. Parishioners understand that they have a responsibility to invite others to meet the Lord Jesus in the believing community.
2. The parish has a way to train people to become missionary disciples and know how to reach out to others in faith, and to practically carry this out.
3. The parish has an evangelisation team reviewing ways of inviting others to meet the Lord through parish life and events.
4. Parish welcomers are prepared to engage with people who may just be curious and invite them to come in and introduce them to others
5. The parish deliberately uses local community events to present the face of the church in a friendly and unchallenging way.
6. Weddings, baptisms and funerals are seen as opportunities to invite visitors to explore the Catholic faith.
7. The entrance to the church has attractive posters and well produced leaflets which can enable people to investigate the faith.
8. The parish website has information for enquirers and appropriate links and has a presence in social media
9. Parishioners are encouraged to invite friends and families to parish social events where some prepared parishioners can be of help in presenting aspects of the faith.
10. The parish has a group of people who can be asked to support those who may be searching.

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Caring and outreach in the community

1. Someone - or some group - assists parishioners in meeting their material needs, this has an ecumenical dimension where this is appropriate.
2. Parishioners respond when invited to volunteer for various parish and ecumenical programmes of service to others.
3. The parish is sensitive to the needs of families when it schedules ministries, programmes and events.
4. Awareness of Catholic social teaching is raised through homilies and formal discussion of encyclicals and other church documents.
5. The parish sponsors or supports local food banks, refugee support, social care projects etc and other ways of expressing solidarity with the poor.
6. The parish opens its facilities to community groups for meetings (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous).
7. The parish reaches out to those who are in institutions (e.g. nursing homes, hospitals, prisons etc) within the parish's boundaries.
8. Parishioners respond generously to local and national appeals for aid to the poor and needy.
9. Parishioners participate in peace and justice activities, pro-life activities, letter writing campaigns, CAFOD, missions etc. The parish is actively engaged with Caritas Plymouth
10. The parish calls attention to important local and national legislation in light of Catholic social teaching.

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Administration

1. The people with expertise are consulted in making decisions in the parish with the parish priest.
2. A variety of people in the parish participate in planning and decision-making activities together with the parish clergy.
3. The parish meets its recurring expenses in a timely manner from operating income without the need for fundraising or bank loans.
4. The parish maintains its buildings and facilities in good condition and has a plan for future maintenance and contingencies.
5. Parish facilities are adequate for the present and future needs of the parish, its people and its programmes.
6. The parish has active pastoral and finance councils which fulfil their responsibilities as outlined Canon Law.
7. Parishioners help care for and maintain parish grounds and facilities.
8. Parishioners are given opportunities to share in leadership responsibilities by being empowered to use their skills.
9. The parish has sufficient qualified personnel to run its programmes and meet the legitimate needs of the parishioners.
10. The parish has written policies and procedures that enable continuity of operations in the event of unexpected absences or turnover in positions.

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