



Our Lady of Lourdes

Catholic Church

Stewards of the Gospel Parish Survey

FEEDBACK AND THEMES

22 SEPTEMBER 2016

AGENDA

- 1 INTRODUCTION**
- 2 SUMMARY OF EMERGING THEMES**
- 3 DISCUSSION GROUPS AT TABLE**
- 4 FEEDBACK TO THE WHOLE GROUP**
- 5 NEXT STEPS**

OLOL PARISH SURVEY SEPTEMBER 2016

Thank you to all who took part in the survey – we had a huge response – over 500 forms.

Overwhelmingly positive about Our Lady of Lourdes parish and the work Father Pat has done with us all

Universal desire to help to sustain all that is valued in the parish, accepting that the shortage of priests will mean doing some things differently

Hundreds of imaginative and generous suggestions – not possible to do justice to them all here

All responses being entered into a database and there will be a detailed report

First stage has been to identify themes for discussion

THEMES

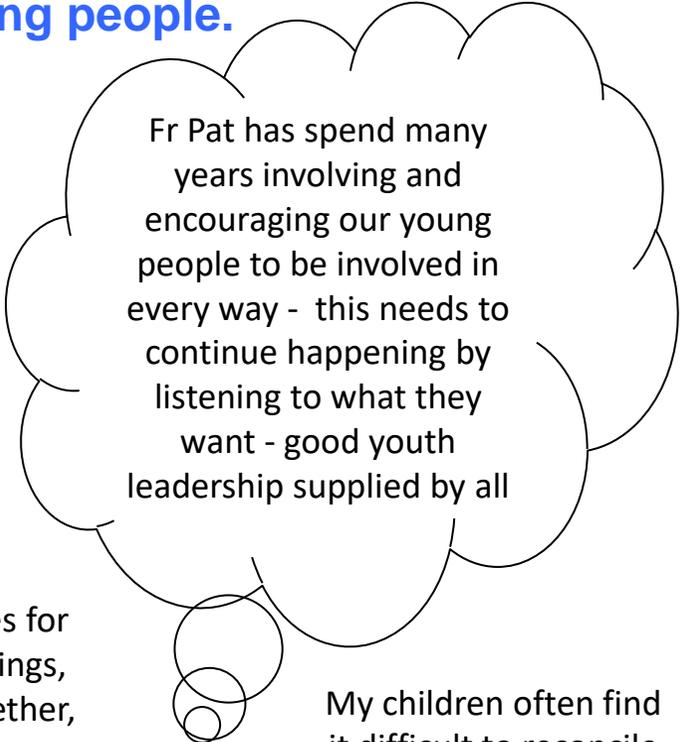
1. **Young people** – they are the future.
2. **Keep and extend what is working well** – lay roles, a funded focus on young people, a welcoming and happy atmosphere, inclusive environment, opportunities for spiritual and community development, social events.
3. **Review how we use resources** – people, time, buildings and money - how do we adapt them to meet future needs and pressures inside and outside the Church?
4. **Modernisation and remaining relevant** - considering women and married priests, using technology, style of services and changing population.
5. **Role of OLOL Catholic Church** - in the wider community.
6. **Maintain spirituality** - and increase vocations.

THEMES – 1. Young people

Retaining the involvement and commitment of young people.

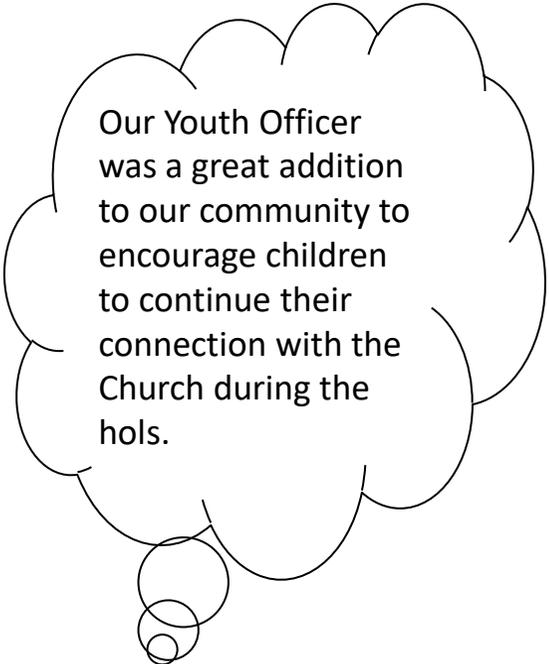
Chief priority - Youth awareness and involvement in key decisions. More than just Youth Clubs - how can Mass and the parish be relevant to them?

Encourage youth to be much more active for the Church. Make some activities that attract children and youth (teenagers)



Fr Pat has spend many years involving and encouraging our young people to be involved in every way - this needs to continue happening by listening to what they want - good youth leadership supplied by all

Activities for children to get involved with even after their Communion to help them on their journey of faith



Our Youth Officer was a great addition to our community to encourage children to continue their connection with the Church during the hols.

More weekly activities for teenagers (e.g. meetings, watching movies together, dinners etc.

Youth groups - parental involvement and participation. This could increase adult involvement within the Church life and could include secular friends.

My children often find it difficult to reconcile the teaching at school on such matters as gay people with their Catholic faith. They identify some hypocrisy that has distanced them from their faith.

THEMES – 2. Keep what works well

Supportive parishioners, a funded focus on young people, a welcoming and happy atmosphere, inclusive environment, opportunities for spiritual and community development, social events.

To try to maintain current levels of vibrant parish activity as this will help to continue to attract and retain willing and faithful help for the parish - current activity will help to sustain future activity.



Things are really good here – we need to encourage everyone to do at least one parish service

Make sure the message of the Church is relevant to current lives - it is now

Continue as it is - welcoming, inclusive and continue focus on young people. Solicitation of participation of all parishioners - thereby sharing the workload and responsibilities.

This parish has fantastic support from parishioners. Long may it continue.

Annual Mass at the football/cricket club is great. Cake sales - amazing. Kids' competition - Easter Bonnets, great, just keep up the good work.

You are doing a great job already. If it wasn't for Father Sammon's unconditional love I would not have decided to become a Catholic



Large social events such as the parish picnic and Fr Pat's anniversary were very successful in bringing the parish together and for parish members to meet and talk to people they had not met before

THEMES – 3. Resources

People, time, buildings and money - how do we adapt them to meet future needs and pressures inside and outside the Church?

No longer must we expect and demand so much of our parish priest – we must endeavour to lighten his load – Fr Pat is too important to us in ensuring the Eucharist is celebrated at least once a week

Volunteering opportunities

Employ parish administrator to free up priest time

Better use of the community centre and open more hours than at present

Support the parish priest by providing all necessary services from food/housekeeping to clerical / office work and a chauffeur if needed.

Succession planning – in another parish, when I asked to stop, other helpers kept pestering me to continue.

Appoint someone to be a parish security guard

Parish Committee more visible and accessible to parishioners at every Mass - we do not even know who they are and how many of them there are; in the newsletter " a day of the parish committee member".

I am a sheep in the flock, not a farmer or shepherd.

Oh how I wish I had a job in the church

Make it easier to understand which groups are out there and given instructions on how to take part.

Utilise individuals in the community with their skills and roles to give the parish resources

More collaboration with OLOLs/St Josephs to use their facilities to enhance the local Catholic community

Priests in danger of burn-out ...used to be a matter of personal pride for priests to be on call 24 hours a day .. Now need to prioritise and delegate

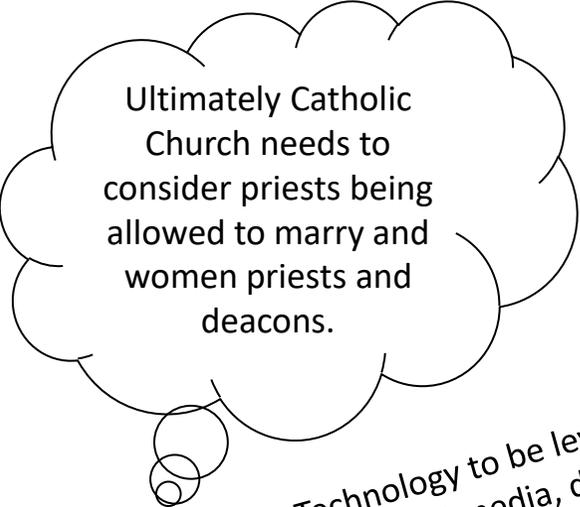
Small ways that are not intimidating might be a good idea to get 'shy' people to contribute.

improved communication of the great work Father Pat is doing, so that we can all assist.

Not to spend a lot of money on the building except what is really necessary. This can go where it is needed in the world.

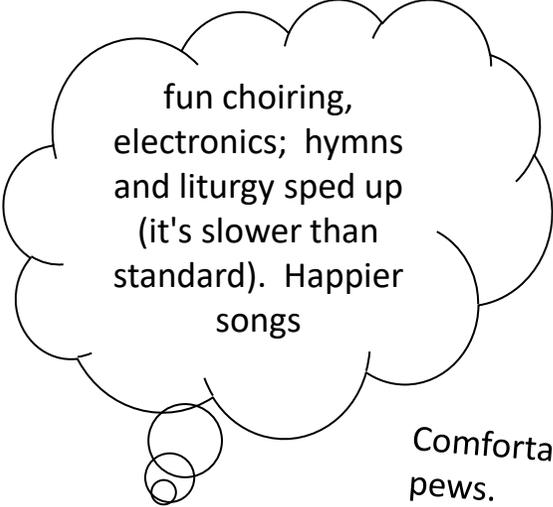
THEMES – 4. Modernisation

Considering women and married priests, using technology, types of service, changing population, links to Sacraments, relevance, and population mobility



Ultimately Catholic Church needs to consider priests being allowed to marry and women priests and deacons.

The Vatican needs to be brought into the 21st century. The church is the family of Christ and we need priests with families.



fun choiring, electronics; hymns and liturgy sped up (it's slower than standard). Happier songs

The Church hierarchy and responsibilities must be spread more widely within and across the laity including leading at Mass

Technology to be leveraged. Websites and social media, daily reflections from Church etc.... Consider streaming masses

I would like to see women priests - and an understanding of all forms of family life

Consider reducing 1 weekday Mass to service of the Word.

Think about the way the church engages young children once they have made their communion. Some of the readings are complicated and they lose interest.

I've never felt so happy in a parish as a gay Catholic.

Make the confirmation process shorter - it puts people off.

Stop hindering parents with buggies and prams in Church. They have made the effort to attend.

Comfortable pews.
Dancing.
Gospel music.
Reader pictures on newsletter.
Snacks

THEMES – 5. Wider Community

Role of the Catholic church in the wider community

Parish is growing with people from other cultures, need to reach out.

Outreach as per the call of Pope Francis to the marginalised and unloved.

Links with non-Catholic schools.

Greater collaboration with other churches in the area.

Community /parish events that take place outside the Church e.g. summer Mass at Eton Manor. Family-focussed participation

A more assertive manifestation of what we believe in - we are too meek and we are an easy target for ridicule

Humanist association hold monthly meetings in Wanstead Library

Strengthen links to other parishes and faiths

Community engagement and being able to stay connected to the mood of the people who live in Wanstead and Leytonstone

You have a multi-cultural community. Maybe you could include some of the Catholic traditions from other countries during the pastoral year. Our parish in London does this brilliantly.

Expand exposure to community and visibility outside the parish (e.g. non-Catholic)

The parish seems to be a constantly changing stream of different faces. I've been coming for over 10 years - it is not steady - rarely do I see anyone I know or a smiling friendly face.

Utilise the parish's financial strength.

Care of sick and those unable to get to Mass. Social Committee. Maybe volunteering or matching with a needy family or elderly member.

Active welcomers and support for refugees whatever their faith. Helping homeless people, for example running a food bank for the

Involvement from the community and to profess and encourage a current and up to date practice of Catholicism

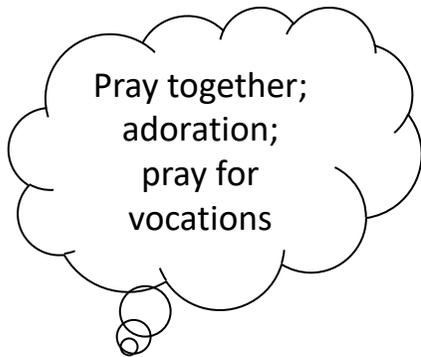
Catholic singles night, prayer, yoga evenings, possibly a cooking class.

Themes – 6. Spirituality

Spirituality, liturgy and vocations

That Mass can be said every day

Very good service for the Mass, and benediction.



Investigate how parish can play a part in encouraging and promoting vocations in the local community

Making sure the Gospel is taught clearly so we can get a better understanding of God's will and how to apply this to our own lives.

Review the practices of the Church by instructing proper catechists - without this the future is bleak. People must be made continually aware of the importance of religion otherwise people get lazy and do not come. Greater spirituality is vital.

Coming to Mass means living it out in our daily lives, it is not just a means of ensuring our children get a place in a Catholic school

Corpus Christ processions
Adoration of Blessed Sacrament
Celebration of the Divine Mercy Sunday

Return to decently celebrated Masses and teaching of sound doctrine. Pray for faithful priests.



Start Bible Classes for children for a strong future community in faith.

If we can't get our own priests from these shores, get some from Poland, Ireland or Italy

Discussion Groups at Table

Practical suggestions to form the basis of an action plan for the future of OLOL that we can all support.

Feedback to whole group –theme at a time

Summarise actions rather than discussion

Next Steps

Collate this evening's feedback and update database

Complete the detailed questionnaire from parish groups using Brentwood template

Formulate initial action plan

Further updates on website and newsletter

Future parish meeting