



Parish Meeting for St Mary's Brownedge and Our
Lady and St Gerard's Lostock Hall
1ST MARCH 2022

This meeting on Shrove Tuesday began in a traditional manner: we had pancakes!

Prayer for the Synod: "Adsumus" Prayer written by Isidore of Seville and used before each session of the Second Vatican Council:

***We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our
actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal
life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.***

Three keywords for Synodality: **Communion, Participation and Mission**

The Church is communion; the Church is mission. Vatican II: Communion is the nature of the Church, and the Church has received the mission to continue being Church in the world. Communion and mission become abstract without the concrete participation of everyone. All Baptised are called to participate in the communion and mission of the Church.

- A. Fr Mark gave a presentation on what the Synod is and what we are being asked to do: listen to the Holy Spirit and discern what type of Church God wants us to be.
- B. These discussions are primarily about listening to God and to each other; we will use praying with the scriptures to help us do this in a more prayerful way. We are going to use a **listening exercise** based on praying with the "Healing of Blind Bartimaeus" Mk: 10:46-52
- C. As this Gospel passage is read, Fr Mark invited people to enter into the scene; make it a prayer; Also, to be aware of the context of this passage in Mark's gospel: in the immediately preceding verses, James and John think they know the sort of Kingdom (Church) Jesus is bringing and they want their special places; i.e. they want the church they want but it not the Church Jesus wants for them. Immediately following the healing of Bartimaeus, Jesus enters into

Jerusalem to begin "Holy Week"; everything we are as Church must be in the context of the Paschal Mystery. These two elements of context make this a very significant healing.

Mk: 10:46-52

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

The Group of 30 people split into 6 groups of 3/4 people:

groups 1 & 2 consider questions 1 - 3;

groups 3 & 4 consider questions 4 - 6;

groups 5 & 6 consider questions 7 - 9;

The feedback and discussion was then opened to the whole group

SYNOD – QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION –

1. **Who have you met crying out for God's mercy like Bartimaeus?**
 - a) People who are in distress, seriously ill, in pain, in war zones. People looking for guidance and sometimes guided by superstition.
 - b) A lady in a wheelchair living in a small flat locally. She has very little money, no friends and one brother, who she has recently fallen out with. She is under threat of eviction. One of the problems is that she lacks motivation and is unable to take the small opportunities that come her way – like the offer of better accommodation. She has carers but they are very busy and distracted and give a very unsatisfactory service. She is visited once a week by a Eucharistic Minister and receives Holy Communion but is sad and anxious. By any consideration she is on the extreme margins of society. Because she is in such a state she is surely very close to the love of God.
2. **What are their lives like?**
 - a) Afraid, uncertain future, lonely.

b) Her life is chaotic and disordered. Her main occupation is watching television and she drinks a good deal of alcohol. There is a deep sense of purposelessness and lack of support. She is lonely.

3. **What do you think they are asking of Jesus?**

a) Help, to be cured, to be understood. To have support.

b) Not sure she asks anything, but at least she receives Holy Communion. She is blessed as one who is truly poor of spirit.

4. **How does the Church make itself visible so that people will cry out to it?**

a) Charity in the community and around the world, welcome and value people, accept people at where they are at. Schools and education are a great resource to reach young people – need to be seen as attractive by the young – use of modern media in evangelisation.

b) The church is physically visible as an impressive building in the midst of the community; we need also to be visible as a “people”, by our witness; show that we are happy – smile!; be seen in action – foodbanks; social care; live in the public square – local/national political issues; be relevant to the daily lives of people.

5. **What steps does the spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?**

a) To come together as a community and therefore grow together and recognise the opportunities we have so that we can reach out to others. Commit to be united as a local and a universal church. Beware of excessive “parochialism”.

b) listen to the voices on the margins; pray about issues which are current; mix with other churches and other social structures beyond faith groups.

6. **How do you respond to Jesus saying bring Bartimaeus to me?**

a) To take every opportunity to bring people of all ages and circumstances to Jesus.

b) fearful; we don't have the means or the time to reach out; why me? Why not me? Give us the means of reaching out - the platform – can the church give us this commission?

7. **How will the Bartimaeus' of our day answer the question of Jesus, “what do you want me to do for you”?**

a) Help to provide for my family; help me find happiness/satisfaction in my life; heal me; pray for me.

b) To recognise the presence of Jesus in your life and what he has done for you. This takes time – looking back sometimes so that things become clearer, to become more attuned and to recognise more in the present.

8. **What is your answer to the question Jesus asked Bartimaeus, what do you want me to do for you?**

a) Fight for a more just society. To be equal. Fair and just treatment of all members of the community. Stop us being too exclusive; Be with me and help me to remain close to you. Help me in my weakness; help people to see how good the Church is and want to be a part of it, especially young people and families.

b) More faith- illuminate answers to prayers and understand why if unanswered. Jesus always to be with one in a personal way. To recognise where Jesus has influenced how life has gone. "You have already done it, died on the cross".

9. **Who or what are we following along the way, and what difference does it make to our lives?**

a) The examples set by Jesus. To pray and to take action so that our faith is alive. A life of faith which gives comfort especially in times of trial; it makes a huge difference to get us through the dark times, knowing that God is with us.

b) following a person – Jesus, not a structure. Following the truth, a path which brings redemption – the road from Jericho to Jerusalem!

The meeting concluded with a short liturgy of the burning of palms outside the church to provide us with ashes for Ash Wednesday.