



ARCHDIOCESE OF CARDIFF

SYNOD 2021-23

UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY REPORT

Town/City – Cardiff

To be submitted no later than **Monday 21st March 2022**

Introduction

The University Chaplaincy of Cardiff is invited to submit a Report based on discussions. The maximum size for the Report is 10 pages. You may be able to record your views in much less space.

Please use the structure suggested within this Template so that the Diocesan Synodal Team [DST] is best-able to synthesise Reports from across the Archdiocese.

This Report will contribute to the Diocesan Report that + George Stack will submit on behalf of the Archdiocese.

Introduction: In this part of the Report, you might wish to record some of the special characteristics of your chaplaincy – urban or rural, special features [hospital/ school / prison /care homes in your chaplaincy boundaries]. Some reflection on the demographics of your parish. You might want to include details of any special ministry / service/project.

Methodology: In this section give a brief overview of the different ways in which you have engaged with chaplaincy members and those beyond the worshipping community. It might be useful to present this as a Timeline with a short comment for each month between the Training of the Chaplaincy Representatives to the finalising of the Chaplaincy Report. Some reflection on the numbers of people attending / contributing to discussion would be helpful. Comments on special circumstances [e.g., telephone conversations with the housebound/ meetings with distinct groups / outreach activity] would be valuable.

Key Issues Raised: This will be the main part of your Report. You will be presenting a summary of the issues raised and the points made in your discussions/ interviews / submissions. We will be reporting across the three headings of Communion, Participation and Mission and suggest you might do likewise. Some issues may be recorded under more than one heading. There may be material to record that does not fit into these categories and space is provided for that. You may choose to summarise these in bullet points or in a few paragraphs. It is important that your summary reflects not only the responses of the majority but also some minority views.

Example: “Most respondents were of the opinion that XYZ. A minority, however, felt that ABC was more important “

Sign Off: The Report needs to be signed by the University Chaplain and the lead Chaplaincy Representative. Any Report submitted should have been made available to the community as a draft and should be formally considered by the University chaplaincy members prior to submission

Introduction – Special Characteristics of the Chaplaincy

Cardiff Catholic Chaplaincy is comprised of students and staff who predominantly come from Cardiff University. It is also populated by members from Cardiff Metropolitan, the University of South Wales, and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Until September 2021, the chaplaincy had been concentrated at Newman Hall – a private Halls of Residence, under Fr Sebastian Jones, Cong Orat. With the appointment of a new chaplain – Fr Nicholas Williams – the chaplaincy returned to its former home at 62 Park Place.

Delays in recovering use of the Aquinas Hall for the celebration of Sunday Mass meant that it was offered at the Cathedral for the first term of the academic year. In previous years, there has been a strong tradition of choral masses on Sunday at the informally titled ‘University Church’ at Nazareth House. These were assisted at by a number of music scholars where there was a special commitment to pronounced solemnity and dignity in the liturgy. This has been a defining feature of worship at the chaplaincy and has attracted a large and diverse number of students. There was also high demand for the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, which was offered every Friday.

The make-up of the chaplaincy has gone through radical change as a number of active members have come to the end of their degree programs and pursued careers or further studies elsewhere. Nevertheless, the chaplaincy has retained its international character with a number of exchange and overseas students participating in the chaplaincy’s liturgical and social life.

The advent of the Coronavirus pandemic adversely affected the chaplaincy in a number of ways. Chief amongst them was the inability to offer Mass at the University Church and the complexities of ensuring adequate social distancing elsewhere. Daily Mass was offered for a time in the former library of Newman Hall but ceased on the First Sunday of Advent 2020. The administration of the sacraments did not resume at the chaplaincy until the following academic year. This was partly because of an internal outbreak of Covid at Newman Hall and the risk this posed to vulnerable people at Nazareth House.

The Chaplaincy has made a concerted effort to take intellectual and spiritual formation seriously and provide weekly catechesis courses and opportunities for retreat. The former has materialized

in the form of Journey in Faith and Pints with Aquinas; and the latter has included the St David's Day and Downside Abbey retreat.

Cardiff Catholic Chaplaincy has contributed to the life of the Church in a number of ways. It is significant that a number of alumni have gone on to be formed for the Sacred Priesthood with various traditional and orthodox communities; and that others have pursued prominent roles in public life.

Methodology

<u>Nov 2021</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training session 1 and 2 • Planning meetings 	<p>Both chaplaincy representatives attended training sessions on Zoom and began to think about what areas of concern may be discussed and how to reach a broad range of individuals. Questions were asked about how to safeguard against ideological hijackers and the possibility of setting parameters so that valuable time is not lost on discussing irrelevant topics.</p> <p>Both chaplaincy representatives met to discuss potential dates for meetings and to record a short informative video on the synodal process. Information was shared informally after Mass and included in the notices.</p>
<u>Dec 2021</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First meeting 	<p>The first synodal meeting was held in person at 62 Park Place. A small but diverse group gathered for a discussion on the purpose of the synod and how we can participate in it; and on personal experiences of the Church. This was especially framed in the context of the pandemic and comparing experiences from home to those at university.</p>

<u>Jan 2022</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="479 268 727 346">• S e c o n d meeting <li data-bbox="479 583 727 745">• D i o c e s a n s y n o d a l p a t h w a y Zoom session 	<p data-bbox="738 268 1419 504">The second meeting was also held at 62 Park place with a greater number of people. There were some attendees who were not well-known to the chaplaincy and who relished an opportunity to speak. One participant was from Latin America and another from Africa.</p> <p data-bbox="738 583 1419 856">One chaplaincy representative attended this session and discussed how the synod meetings were taking shape. There was a concerted effort to remind other participants of what challenging and controversial issues could arise and how best to respond to this whilst being respectful and discerning – and keeping the integrity of the Synod.</p>

<u>Feb 2022</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="479 268 711 304">• Third meeting <li data-bbox="479 604 711 913">• ACTA and Root & Branch 'What do you think of the Catholic Church' Zoom session 	<p data-bbox="738 268 1419 504">The third meeting took place with a good number of students and a couple of staff members. It opened with an even more reflective ethos than before, and was guided by three questions from a list of 10 recommended ones. These had been made available on the chaplaincy website sometime beforehand.</p> <p data-bbox="738 583 1419 1249">One of the chaplaincy representatives attended this session organized by the Synod facilitators. There was wide discussion about the current climate of the Church and a variety of possibilities and potential solutions proposed. A significant proportion of the discussions were doctrinal in nature and outside the scope of the Synod. They specifically considered the abolition of the 'wounded and broken' priesthood; a non-hierarchical, 'flatter' church; female ordination (with reference to the 'personal opinion' of John Paul II in Ordinatio Sacerdotalis); greater inclusivity for same sex attracted and homosexual persons; and other points. These were largely theologically problematic and reflected a number of widely-held erroneous and heterodox views. This was communicated to the Chaplain and by extension to His Grace, the Archbishop.</p>

<u>March 2022</u>	<u>Action</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTA & Root and Branch 'Listening to the Voice of Young People' Zoom session • Submission of the Synod report 	<u>Comment</u> <p>One chaplaincy representative attended a supplementary session and heard from four teenagers from St David's College on their experiences of the Church and their hopes for the future. This generated wide discussion on the role of the laity in the Church and the involvement of women; and how the Church should approach topical themes such as the environment. It ended with another doctrinal clarification on the scope of the Synod and female ordination and our ecclesial communion with other Christian churches.</p> <p>Both of the chaplaincy representatives had a couple of informal meetings to compare notes and share thoughts before the writing of the report. The anonymous written submissions were carefully read and reflected upon, and then synthesized into the current report. Recordings of meetings was partly transcribed and absorbed into the findings. It was finally sent to the Chaplain for his signature.</p>
<u>April 2022</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>
<u>May 2022</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>

Communion- How does our Church function in our local area?

Cardiff Catholic Chaplaincy functions in our local area by being an authentic witness to the person of Jesus Christ on campus. It does this by fostering a strong ethos of love for Almighty God and for the Church – finding dynamic ways to engage more deeply with Her teachings and

exploring means to serve others – and in love for neighbour, which is expressed in providing spiritual, emotional, and sometimes practical support to those in need.

The spiritual dimension of the chaplaincy is integral to its existence and its presence on campus. This is primarily achieved through the administration of the sacraments – and namely the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It was widely reflected upon that the experience of the liturgy should elevate the heart and mind and be ‘other’ to what is experienced outside. Students were very vocal about this being accompanied by something ‘authentic’ – a theme that permeated many of the discussions. Some students had experiences of worship in other Christian communities and suggested how they were more comfortable with regular and ordered mode of prayer and communal worship than constant innovation and ambiguity. They responded strongly to the idea of having concise (though sometimes longer and more substantial) sermons on the Church’s teaching in the context of Mass and reflections on Scripture.

A large proportion of participants agreed that an experience of beauty and transcendence were akin to “passive or subconscious evangelization”. Some students had accessed this in the context of the Extraordinary Form, where there is noticeably more silence and external reverence. Students strongly agreed that this helped to engender a sense of ‘encounter’ with Christ, particularly in the context of Eucharistic Adoration. The inability to participate in these services during lockdown was unanimously agreed to be a source of desolation and difficulty. Online worship was preferred by a small minority with most students finding greater solace in physical worship together. One non-British participant spoke movingly on how they discovered the traditional liturgy when their own church was not fully re-opened after lockdown, and how this felt ‘counter-cultural’. This initiated a wide discussion on the role of the Church as a moral authority and how She should relate to the world around us.

A sizeable number of students were keen to emphasize that the Church should reorient its focus and give greater attention to the institutional lack of clarity on moral issues. They felt that the Church should be bolder in promoting a response to issues they encounter on campus such as atheistic secularism and a plethora of ideologies that are rooted in liberal post-modernism.

Additionally, students were keen to have the Christian life presented to them in an authentic and appealing way – and not just in a manner that is perceived to be interesting or engaging by elders. The question of personal holiness generated an unexpectedly interesting conversation. Many students looked to Catholic internet personalities as a model and guide in how to navigate through the modern world, and were less familiar with the life and witness of the saints. When asked if this was problematic or not, there was some debate. Some voices were more enamoured by contemporary examples of virtuous living; others more comfortable with favourite saints from childhood and adolescence.

The impact of the pandemic and lockdown had a profound impact on a number of students and staff. This was largely articulated as being unable to reach out for confession and physical, emotional support whilst confined to student accommodation whilst away from home (and in some contexts whilst away from home but away from friends).

The chaplaincy supplements its liturgical and spiritual support by facilitating opportunities for fellowship and formation. This manifests itself in networking and social events, and in catechetical instruction. This latter activity is not just limited to those seeking baptism or confirmation, but is open to everybody. This responds to the exhortation of St John Henry Newman, who wanted an “intelligent and well-instructed laity... not arrogant, or rash in speech, not disputatious, but who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand...who know their creed so well they can give an account of it.”

Participation – How do we work with others in supporting our local area?

The Chaplaincy works with partners at the university in an official capacity but this is frustrated by the fact that the Catholic Society is not part of the Student’s Union. This is because of a policy that supports abortion which Catholics cannot materially support. Efforts are being made to rectify this situation.

There is also some collaboration with the other Christian churches and chaplaincies on campus – but this is largely limited whilst we work to restore and build up personal relationships.

Mission: How do we take the Gospel message out from our chaplaincy?

A number of people at the chaplaincy indicated they have been involved with the democratic and political life of the university with some participants elaborating on their work in various committees and groups within the Student's Union. This has allowed them to engage in debate on a variety of moral and philosophical issues and defend Catholic orthodoxy. It has also allowed them to discover unique ways of communicating the truth intelligently and respectfully.

Other students have pursued a career in health, medicine and education and take Christ into the world in this capacity by giving witness to the teaching of the Church. The Chaplaincy also tries to cultivate an atmosphere of seeing Christ in the face of other people and responding generously with gifts and talents in the service of others. This is principally achieved in different ministries within the chaplaincy, but some students suggested that they would like to engage in apostolic work with the Order of Malta and the Society of St Vincent De Paul.

A couple of students shared an anecdote on the theme of engaging non-Catholics with the Christian faith. They spoke about their efforts to try and encourage at least one person to come to Mass and meet others in the chaplaincy community and how this had led to more serious consideration about their eventual conversion. These initial conversations were framed as not being intense but friendly and grounded in personal conviction of truth and love. This opened up a conversation on what is effective to bring young Catholics back to the Church if they have fallen away and how to be more open to those who are discerning becoming Catholic.

Some voices were keen on having a comprehensive 'intellectual' exploration of the Catholic faith and rationally coming to a conclusion; whereas a greater number were more satisfied by a spiritual experience of God. A couple of students explained how they had encountered this in meditative prayer and the Divine Office. This moved us back to a brief discussion on the liturgy and the benefits of praying in common. One good example that was given was the praying of Lauds and Vespers and sometimes Compline in the domestic chapel which could replicate the model some home parishes have adopted. Another example was public processions and devotions throughout the year – May and June for Our Lady and Corpus Christi respectively. The regular night fever Eucharistic adoration was mentioned too.

Any other matters that do not fit under the three thematic headings of Communion, Participation & Mission

- Unilateral rejection of the moral and doctrinal direction of travel of the German Synodal Pathway. These issues are being earnestly voiced by some individuals but they are not representative of every demographic. There are legitimate pastoral questions to be explored for marginalized groups such as those who identify as same-sex attracted and who are divorced and re-married, but this must not occur in the context of agitating for some form of doctrinal shift. Truth must always be communicated in charity and the Church must work harder to encourage individuals to live holy lives without being fundamentally unhappy. This means there must be a frank conversation about sex and relationships and how different individuals properly and fully respond to the Church's teaching.
- Dismay and rejection of the Church's embrace of secular culture. The Church must be of God and not of the world – both as an universal institution and local unit.
- Sympathy and support for Catholics who have deepened their relationship with Christ and refined their Christian identity through the traditional liturgy. This is an attractive and important part of many student's spirituality – and has contributed to their continued faith journey. An outdated, 1970's ecclesiology has proven ineffective and unsuitable.
- Refocus on placing Christ at the centre of our life and work – in society and in our personal lives. Many questions were asked and discussed around the theme of conversion. What would a Catholic England and Wales look like? Can and should we be working towards this?
- Upset and dismay at the significant lack of respect some individuals have for the teachings of the Church and repeated attempts to dominate discussions by inappropriate suggestions. Whilst this demonstrates a lack of catechesis and knowledge, it can appear orchestrated and premeditated.

- Too much emphasis on buzz-words and ambiguous language. The Church must do the simple things well – it need not reinvent the wheel. Young people desperately want orthodoxy, authenticity, and transcendence. They do not seek the banal and uninspiring. Language should not be flowery and ambiguous.
- Older priests and laymen appear superficially interested in the interests and concerns of young people. It appears we are only being listened to at surface level and only if what we say is convergent with a pre-existing agenda.
- The Church must not function as a political activist. Real change is affected by personal holiness and is long and arduous. It does not need an ideology to be superimposed onto Jesus Christ and presented as what young people want.
- Young people desperately need human yet resilient role models who are ‘other’ from themselves – something to make them aim higher. This can certainly but not exclusively be holy priests. Actual reform must encompass a reform of how we relate to the priest. Whilst detractors will say that he is wounded and broken and should be abolished, we must remember that St Peter himself denied the Lord and eleven out of twelve apostles abandoned Him too. The priest must be supported to take Christ again as his model and intimate friend – and be supported equally as the laity demand to be supported: materially and emotionally and spiritually.
- Accommodate young people to take an active part in the life of the Church but not in a way that denigrates or patronizes them but that empowers and encourages them to feel included and valued. A very high proportion of students felt unable to get involved in their home parishes because there was a small ‘clique’ of volunteers who dominated proceedings and was resistant to change. This contributed to feelings of isolation and ‘otherness’ and perpetuated a gulf between younger and older Catholics. One pertinent example was how one young person was encouraged to ‘retire’ from Altar Serving because they were no longer a teenager.

Sign Off

This Report is submitted to the Diocesan Synodal Team on behalf of the University community of:

Cardiff Catholic Chaplaincy

It is an honest reflection of the work undertaken over the last six months and has been endorsed by the Chaplaincy.

Signed.....Fr Nicholas Williams..... University Chaplain

Signed: **Luke Doherty** – University Chaplaincy Representative

Once complete please forward to:

madeleine.walters@rcadc.org

The Diocesan Synodal Team wishes to convey its appreciation for all the work undertaken in the preparation of this Report