

<i>What do I like about our parish?</i>	<i>What might be better?</i>	<i>What's lacking in the way we witness to the faith?</i>	<i>What do we think is challenging about the future we face?</i>	<i>What do we think we have to offer that is hopeful?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly (we've been in other parishes in the past – parishioners @ St Nick's for 30 years). • A number of younger families attend regularly. • Willingness to get involved (though by the same few people – as everywhere else I suppose!) • Commitment by a number of parishioners to specific projects e.g. World Development Group, Fairtrade, Youth group, Fundraising events. • Inevitably the same people are involved in most parish activities, regular or occasional. (There wouldn't be too much difficulty in guessing who will appear at the 4 October meeting – and who will respond to this Q-aire!) • Friendly • Active groups – Children's Liturgy, SVP WDG • Ladies Guild Choirs • Strong leadership –vision of Fr Allen, Fr Van impact, his example • Opportunities to serve • Proximity to home • Social contact • Church open during the day • Variety of Mass times • Fellowship/social events • Commitment to good works • Music at Masses • Teams of readers etc • The Bell • Friendly, welcoming • Instrumental/choir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could we attract more teens and twenties? • Lose families when • <i>they don't/can't get their children in to our Catholic primary school</i> • <i>other activities become more important than churchgoing</i> • <i>or they 'fall foul' of church teaching in e.g. irregular marriages</i> • <i>or (quite often in our experience) they've had a less than Christian response to some difficulty from clergy.</i> • (All this probably applies everywhere, not only in our parish). • Working with other parishes in the Deanery on specific projects. • Could we work towards being a 'LIVE SIMPLY' parish? • PARISH COUNCIL? 2 recent attempts have been made to form a Parish Council but didn't get beyond preliminary meetings – firstly as one of our Millennium projects and again with Fr Van about 3 years ago. • Encouraging youth and their attendance at Mass • More parents involved • Embracing difference, and engaging those on the fringes of society • Novenas • Lose the communion hymn to allow contemplation • Thanking those who contribute at every mass not just special occasions • More opportunities for people to express their views. • Weekly offerings – presently miserly • Greater participation in Church music – including younger age groups • The Pink ceiling, interior decoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis on ecumenism. • I believe that we are CHRISTIANS before CATHOLICS and some reverse this priority. What a joy to have the most Christ-like Pope we've had for many years! • More lay involvement in all areas so that priests can be free to do priestly functions. • More retreats • Reverence and respecting silence • Coffee after Mass for people • Closer links with other churches • Reminded too often that we are sinners – need to express more joy • Welcome to those who have 'messed up' or are considered 'disordered' • Are we misogynistic and pharisaical (eg over birth control) • Absence of youth with their families – lack of commitment • Understanding importance of Sunday practice • Carrying it through the week ahead and draw people in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer priests! Many currently active priests (not only in our Archdiocese) are 70+ (some 80+) who will retire/expire within the next 10 years or so. Already some parishes have shared priest and threatened with closure. Fewer vocations/ ordinations (across the western world!) Priests coming from developing countries as 'missioners' help to ameliorate this situation. • Secularisation – generally. • Declining numbers of younger people • Erosion of Christian values in our society • Passing on faith younger generation • Replacing the older generation who do most of work • Decline in number of seminarians • Married priests • Women priests • Upkeep of churches • Declining vocations • Dwindling congregations • Young people finding Church irrelevant • Encouraging vocation • Halting moral decline • Improving etiquette and respect for Church and sacraments • We think we are too busy • Becoming selfish and materialistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cohesive community (overall). • Openness to change – certainly by some, though not everyone. • Existing teams • Skilled and talented parishioners • Wealth to share • More regular youth group • Beautiful church and people of hope • Pope Francis • Pope Francis recognition of need for change • Laity being heard in some quarters • Cardinal on mercy • Excellent facilities • High Profile Church leadership – London and Rome • Fine example by older generation -0 might schools do more. • Hope • Faith story of Christ linked to the contemporary world

Feedback from Parish Consultation and Meeting

1. For summary of first written submissions please see overleaf.

2. Summary of first responses to written submissions from those attending the Sunday meeting, held in the Benedict Room on the 4th October

- Where are the younger people in their 30s and 40s? Why do families stop coming to Mass?
- Ecumenism – an important thing
- Singing (1) we sing too much, especially at Communion. (2) Music is important and helps us pray.
- We need to keep our community intact
- We offer a good welcome – and want to.
- The impact of parish seems to be a good one for those who come – but what about those who don't? Not only Catholics but the others in the area.
- There are a variety of ways in which people are generous, that are not always evident to others.
- We want to learn more – retreats, talks
- Being open to change is important – and a challenge!
- Faith has to connect with our lives. And our lives have to be a way into our faith.
- Perhaps a social gathering every month? (maybe after a Sunday 12 noon Mass? Maybe not.)
- We have generous volunteers but many are elderly and generous. We need more and younger volunteers too, to share the load.
- Have we lost Vatican II?
- Who is our mission to? Ourselves or Boldmere (and beyond?) What is our perspective when we say 'we'?
- We talk of the secular society. But we are part of that society. How secular are we?
- Concerns about Church attendance and practice are nothing new. But we should have a care for them.
- Where do *our* values actually come from?

Conversation at the meeting went on from there.

A particular focus was about younger people and families. There was a perception that families were much more regular in attendance and participation while they needed to demonstrate practice to get support for their applications in places in Catholic schools, primary and secondary but that goal achieved people considered Sunday Mass, at least, as dispensable, and less important than other (good) things they might do.

The question of what it is to be Catholic (Christian) and why it is important to us was considered by those present – and we were left with a question of what is it we come to Sunday Mass for and see parish life as important to us.

Questions about the nature of Domestic Church and broader Church were touched on.

The meeting took encouragement from remembering that God is everywhere, and that whatever particular challenges we were facing, God is there for us.

Listening and being guided by God is something all need to be careful of.

A few things were agreed as immediate ways forward.

1. Making the information above available to the parish as a whole.
2. Looking for opportunities to speak with younger families about their attitudes and issues
3. Writing to the parents of children who made their first communion and confirmation last year to ask their views
4. Each member present bringing two more people to the next meeting – which would have a particular theme – maybe taking family life and the family as our theme.

Fr Allen
7th October 2015