



TRUST SYNOD

● COMMUNION // PARTICIPATION // MISSION

Synthesis Report



Thursday 19th of October

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The Trust Synod

Our first Trust Synod brought together over 200 participants representing the whole of our CMAT community.

The passionate, sincere and inspiring conversation centered around the three themes of Communion, Participation and Mission.

Each of the sections in this report, in line with the process for the Synod in Rome, have been broken down into three areas:

Areas of convergence - Where did a shared voice emerge around a topic or issue?

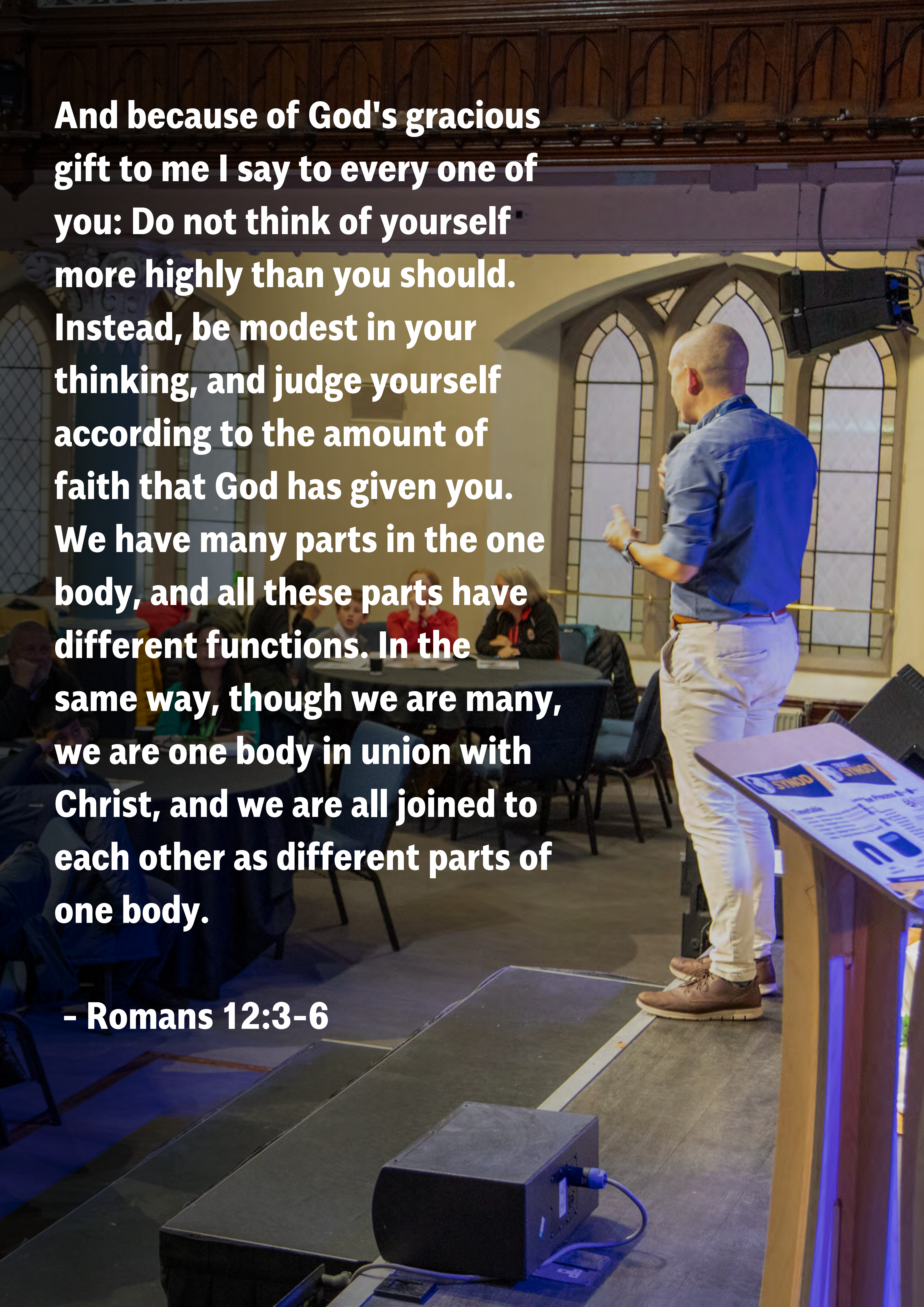
Matters for considerations - Where do we need to talk more and continue the dialogue in our own settings?

Proposals - What concrete actions might the Holy Spirit be calling us to make?



And because of God's gracious gift to me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking, and judge yourself according to the amount of faith that God has given you. We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body.

- Romans 12:3-6





Communion

Areas of convergence

Our shared humanity lies at the heart of communion. To build a more welcoming church, we must dismantle stereotypes and avoid singling people out. Our collective responsibility is to stop judging and, instead, listen to others. By finding common interests, we can cultivate equality, a sense of belonging and enter into communion with one another.

In our discussions on communion, a prevailing theme emerged – the importance of creating safer spaces where everyone feels welcomed and included. We recognised the rich diversity within our communities. It's crucial to open our arms to all, embracing people on the outskirts, especially those identifying as LGBTQ+.

Inclusion echoed loudly in our dialogue. The call for a more inclusive church highlighted the need to meet people where they are, extending practical support that makes a real difference. We acknowledged the diversity of views, personalities, and opinions within our community, emphasising that everyone has a part to play in communion – collectively, we are the body of Christ.

Prayer took on a broader meaning, extending beyond personal needs to encompass support for others, particularly those facing mental health issues. The commitment not to leave anyone behind came out strongly, urging us to ensure that everyone has a role to play. Unity, we recognised, comes from compromise and a willingness to go beyond our comfort zones.

Small gestures emerged as powerful tools in making a big difference. Encouraging humility and an invitational spirit, we recognised the significance of stepping out of our friendship groups and embracing the diversity that surrounds us. Communion, we concluded, thrives when each individual actively contributes, recognising that we are all responsible for building up the body of Christ.

Matters for consideration

Firstly, we must think about how to encourage individuals to reach out to those who may seem on the margins, fostering a sense of inclusivity and connection.

Is the Church perceived as 'too serious'? In what ways can encourage engagement, making the spiritual journey more relatable and appealing, particularly to those of no faith?

In the spirit of celebrating diversity, we must think about on how our Church can be an open door, embracing individuals from various backgrounds and experiences. This prompts us to think about creating events that are not only welcoming to all, but which also help us enter into dialogue with those who may feel excluded.

Catering to all ages is crucial for an inclusive community. How can we remove barriers that may get in the way of participation? What small steps can we take initially to make our gatherings more accessible and enjoyable for everyone?

Lastly, putting ourselves in the shoes of others is a profound exercise in empathy. How we can better understand and connect with different perspectives so that we can contribute to the sense of communion we aim to grow?



Communion

Proposals

We propose a series of initiatives centred around the theme of communion, fostering a sense of togetherness and inclusivity among our diverse community.

To organise special events to warmly welcome new members into our school family. These gatherings will provide a supportive environment for newcomers, making them feel embraced and valued.

To celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures within our school, we should host Culture Days / Weeks, inviting individuals from various backgrounds to share their stories, traditions and experiences. This will not only broaden our understanding but also promote unity and mutual respect.

Additionally, we aim to instil a spirit of generosity and compassion through high profile fundraisers, reinforcing the values of charity and communal responsibility.

Recognizing the importance of outreach, we advocate for a continuous effort to connect with others, even if their initial response is hesitant. Small gestures, such as sending cards to those mourning a loss during the season of remembrance, can make a significant impact on fostering a sense of care and empathy.

In our pursuit of inclusivity, we propose dedicated support for individuals facing physical, mental or emotional barriers. This will ensure that everyone, can actively participate in our faith community.

We propose working with parishes to create or reopen youth clubs and the development of child-friendly events. These initiatives will create spaces where the youth can gather, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging the sharing of their unique gifts and perspectives.

To extend the sense of community we propose the creation of spaces where people can come and be together within their schools. We must also be committed to creating safer spaces for those who may feel left out, ensuring that every individual feels a genuine sense of belonging within our community.

We must find new ways to make collective worship inclusive and welcoming everyone so they can participate in a shared journey that unites us all.



Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.

- Hebrews 10: 23-25



Participation

Areas of convergence

In our discussion about participation, we emphasised the importance of making everyone feel acknowledged and valued. Recognising each person's contributions helps create a sense of belonging within our Catholic community.

Connection is vital. We saw how some individuals may not feel welcome in the Church and to build a welcoming atmosphere, it is crucial that we consider the needs of families and work towards making the church a place of comfort for all.

Judgement emerged as a barrier to participation. To foster a more inclusive environment, we should strive to encourage one another rather than passing judgment. This positive approach will help break down barriers and build a stronger sense of community.

Acting together for the common good was another key theme. We discussed the importance of providing opportunities for those who may not typically engage in various activities. By doing so, we contribute to the strength and unity of our Catholic community.

In our dialogue, we reflected on the significance of being concerned for one another and the strength that comes from unity. Finding harmony in our collective efforts requires each person to play their part, and we should celebrate the diverse gifts and talents that individuals bring to our community.

Putting others' needs first emerged as a guiding principle. We recognised the importance of learning about different cultures and faiths, including and celebrating them within our Catholic schools. Embracing diversity enriches our community and enhances understanding among us.

Finally, we discussed the need to be brave and open to trying new things. This courage should empower us to explore innovative ways to foster participation and make our Catholic schools even more vibrant and inclusive for everyone.

Matters for consideration

How can we create opportunities for deeper understanding within our community? Exploring diverse stories and experiences can foster connections and help us celebrate our shared identity.

In what ways can we create excitement about our faith? Can we use innovative approaches to religious education to make the exploration of our faith dynamic and engaging for all, embracing diverse perspectives?

How can we enhance gatherings to ensure everyone feels included? Creative approaches can strengthen our bonds beyond the classroom.

Addressing life's challenges, particularly in relationships and around areas such as mental health and addiction, calls for a compassionate church. How can we be more understanding and supportive during difficult times?

Fostering genuine concern for each other is fundamental. How can we deepen our compassion and responsibility towards the well-being of our community? In what ways can we create a culture of care and empathy can ensure no one feels alone?

Lastly, walking with those who are suffering or excluded demands new approaches. How can we extend support beyond conventional means, demonstrating the transformative power of solidarity and compassion in times of hardship?



Participation

Proposals

In our Catholic school communities within the Multi Academy Trust, we propose a range of initiatives to enhance participation and strengthen the bonds that unite us.

One key aspect involves new social events that bring people together, creating opportunities for students and staff to connect beyond the classroom. These events aim to build a sense of unity.

Furthermore, we advocate for increased collaboration between trust schools to facilitate the sharing of experiences and insights. By gathering more frequently, we can strengthen our bonds, learn from one another, and collectively contribute to the growth of our community.


To deepen engagement, we propose dedicating additional time within Religious Education lessons for active listening. This will provide a platform for students to share their thoughts and perspectives, fostering a more inclusive and participatory learning environment.

We propose organising significant trust-wide charity events that align with our common mission across communities. These events not only serve as a means of fundraising but also strengthen our collective commitment to making a positive impact beyond the walls of our schools.

In our parishes we must find new opportunities to engage young people, ensuring they feel included and connected to the broader Catholic community. By exploring these possibilities, we aim to nurture a sense of belonging and shared purpose.

We must find new ways to support those who may be experiencing hardship, making a concerted effort to let them know they are loved and cared for within our community.

We propose the creation of new ways to affirm individuals who generously share their gifts with others. By acknowledging and valuing these contributions, we aim to create a culture that encourages everyone to contribute their unique talents for the greater good of our community.



**My child, don't forget what I teach you.
Always remember what I tell you to do.
My teaching will give you a long and
prosperous life. Never let go of loyalty and
faithfulness. Tie them around your neck;
write them on your heart. If you do this,
both God and people will be pleased with
you. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
Never rely on what you think you know.
Remember the Lord in everything you do,
and he will show you the right way.**

Proverbs 3: 1-6



Mission

Areas of convergence

In our Trust and schools we embrace our mission with a foundation of unconditional love. This means showing love to everyone, without exceptions, and understanding the importance of kindness in our daily actions.

Courage is a vital aspect of our mission. It involves being brave, facing challenges with resilience and determination. We must learn to make decisions together, involving people from all walks of life and all ages. This collaborative approach ensures that the voices of our diverse community are heard and respected.

Trust in The Holy Spirit is key, reminding us that we are never alone in our mission. Listening becomes a powerful tool in our missionary journey, encouraging us to stop judging others and instead embrace the unique voice that each individual possesses.

We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to be heard, with all members of our community represented. Mission is not just a concept but something that must be demonstrated in action. We can use different ways and technologies to reach out, engage and listen to what people are saying, ensuring that everyone has an equal voice and a chance to speak.

In our mission, we acknowledge the importance of having leaders we can relate to. This fosters a sense of connection and understanding within our community. Trusting in God reminds us that we are not on our own in this mission; With God we are supported, guided and strengthened. Together, we must build a community and a world that is rooted in love.

Matters for consideration

How might we create a sense of safety in our Catholic schools and an environment where every individual's opinion matters? What initiatives could be implemented to encourage open dialogue and a sense of community, ensuring that diverse perspectives are not only acknowledged but embraced?

In acknowledging the rich tapestry of faiths within our Multi Academy Trust, could we explore the possibility of providing training and support for individuals from other denominations or faiths? How might this inclusive approach empower those of different faiths to actively contribute to the spiritual well-being of our schools?

How can we engage in a meaningful dialogue about the evolving role of women, particularly in the capacities of priests or deacons? What steps can be taken to ensure a more inclusive and equitable landscape in our communities?

In our commitment to promoting respect and a welcoming atmosphere for all, regardless of ethnicity, culture, or sexuality, what community projects can be developed to actively foster an environment that reflects the values of compassion and acceptance?

Considering the importance of empowering youth to play a more significant role in the Church's present and future, how can we ensure that their voices are not only heard but respected? What measures can be implemented to involve the youth in shaping a vibrant and relevant community?

How might we facilitate meaningful engagement with other faiths, encouraging dialogue and shared experiences for mutual understanding and collaboration?

In our pursuit of inclusive worship, what avenues can be explored to make our Collective Worship resonate with the diverse backgrounds of our school communities? How can we enhance the spiritual experience for all members of our congregation?

What steps can be taken to ensure that our Catholic identity remains relevant to the needs of our school communities?



Mission

Proposals

We propose to create more spaces dedicated to prayer across our schools, creating a stronger connection with our faith. Alongside this, we aim to organise additional charity events, encouraging students to actively contribute to their communities.

Moreover, we believe in inviting the community to join together in new and innovative ways, promoting inclusivity and shared experiences.

To enhance our spiritual journey, we propose to extend the use of the synodal process, incorporating 'Conversations in The Spirit', and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us.

Recognising the importance of empowering our young people, we propose involving them more in decision-making processes.

We propose incorporating dedicated time in collective worship and in the classroom for open conversations, allowing students to engage in meaningful discussions about their faith.

To strengthen the faith aspect in our schools, we recommend establishing a faith council or forum that can serve as a platform for dialogue and collaboration.

We must recognise the importance of taking care of the Earth in our schools and find new ways of, instilling a sense of responsibility towards our environment and promoting stewardship among our students..



Synod
2021
2024

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission