

Whilst seeing that streamed masses have been a lifeline for many, including ourselves, throughout lockdown and in sickness, we also see that for some people it has become too easy and for others it has undermined the importance of physically receiving the Blessed Sacrament.

Others perceive a lack of knowledge about the sacrament itself and long for more adult instruction.

We asked where are our young people and families going to find inspiration and support.

There was also very divided discussion about the right place for baptism and whether it should be included in the mass.

5. Co-responsibility in the Mission

We all understand that we genuinely bear witness through the way we live and the recognition others have that we are Catholics and go to mass and that our faith motivates us. We are also ready to speak up for what we believe when opportunity presents itself, some more confidently than others. We can also feel ashamed about our limited social commitment as a parish (not as individuals) when we hear about the things other Christians do in service to others. There was a warm welcome to our renewed support of the Wellspring Centre in Stockport.

We asked what we could do in our parish to motivate and rekindle the flame of our faith. We need input: mission (we think one is planned), pilgrimage (likewise), retreats, courses, groups sharing faith as well as giving service. Things need to be accessible to all ages and we understand the need for the laity to step up here. Christine has just organised an Advent reflection which was led by Joan and we saw this as a small step in the right direction. One helpful thing about watching other parishes on line has been an increased awareness of how others do things. We can learn from each other.

7. Dialogue with the other Christian Denominations

We feel we bring our reverence and love of the sacraments especially the Holy Eucharist and Adoration to other denominations but that we can gain from them their range of non-sacramental forms of worship, their serious approach to studying the scriptures, the value they place on hymns, both in the singing and in the use of them to nurture private prayer, and the experience of real fellowship - ironically often found in smaller congregations.

Finally we all see small shoots of growth and renewal and have not given up on the future. We appreciate the leadership and vision of our parish priest and we pray for the grace to respond.

Joan Bleackley and Christine Bodley
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