

We are all called to contribute to making our local, national, and global church better and to raise awareness about the things that we feel strongly about so have YOUR say about YOUR CHURCH!

You can participate by:

1. Joining a Listening Circle Group on a specific topic by emailing your group choice to alanteec1@gmail.com and a group facilitator will let you know when that group is running. You will need to indicate which topic you are interested in.
2. By making a written submission by picking up a specific topic questionnaire 26 February Saturday evening Mass or, 27 February after the Morning Masses. Tables will be set up outside the church for this.

The groups will be facilitated and are an opportunity for personal expression, they are NOT a debate forum nor is it a teaching space. Each participant will have an opportunity to answer the questions and express their views and experiences and make suggestions. No names will be included in the submission summaries and group participants must maintain confidentiality.

SYNOD 2021 to 2023 Bryanston Catholic Parish: Church of the Resurrection

Parish-based listening groups

Group		Questions
Liturgical celebration:	The way our liturgies are enacted has the potential to engage—or not—the life, faith and imagination of the faithful.” This was a sentiment that resulted from the 2019 archdiocesan synod. “Well-planned and executed liturgical celebrations can deepen our understanding of faith and draw us more deeply into its mysteries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How do we promote the active participation of all the Faithful in the liturgy?</i> • <i>What space is given to the ministries the faithful exercise in our parish?</i> • <i>What steps can we take to ensure the smooth coordination of different liturgical ministries, and that ongoing liturgical formation, at all levels of the Church, takes place?</i>
Integrated and holistic lifelong formation:	The SACBC Directory on Catechesis reveals a broad understanding of what instructing in the faith really means. It understands catechesis as a lifelong journey of conversion and faith, based on scripture and tradition, nourished by liturgy and prayer, and forms believers for discipleship. It involves the whole community. Catechesis is not the responsibility of a select few. The entire Christian community is called to be involved in the process. It is a service performed jointly by the bishop of the diocese, the priests, deacons, religious and laity. As we can see from this description of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is your experience of the Church supporting your spiritual, intellectual and life formation beyond that of sacramental preparation?</i> • <i>How is each Baptized person called to be an active participant in the mission of the Church and do you feel adequately prepared for it?</i>

	<p>catechesis, catechesis is not limited to what happens inside a catechism classroom. Properly understood, catechism is about faith formation at all stages of one’s life and involves all aspects of one’s life.</p>	
<p>Missionary discipleship</p>	<p>In our archdiocesan synod, we agreed that to be missionary disciples we needed to be “faithful to the 'great commission' in Matthew 28:19-20, i.e. evangelising and/or re-evangelising non-Christians and lapsed Catholics, as well as carrying the love of Christ to the needy and marginalised.</p> <p>Pope Francis makes repeated mention of the need for true “encounter” and invites us to go out and encounter one another. “When we go into the street, every person thinks of him/herself ... but does not listen,” says the pope. “People pass each other, but they do not encounter each other”. Instead, he says, we need “to draw near, to touch and to say: ‘Do not weep’ and to give at least a drop of life”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When we say: ‘our Church,’ who is part of it?</i> • <i>Who is asking us to journey together?</i> • <i>Who are the road companions, including those outside the ecclesial perimeter?</i> • <i>What persons or groups are left on the margins, expressly or in fact?</i> • <i>What space is there for the voice of minorities, the discarded, and the excluded?</i> • <i>Do we identify prejudices and stereotypes that hinder our listening?</i> • <i>How do we listen to the social and cultural context in which we live?</i>
<p>Youth</p>	<p>“Youth do not find our parishes places of welcome, where their own particular giftedness is appreciated, and their voices heard.” Shocking as this may be to read, this was the conclusion reached after our archdiocesan synod. Of particular concern was “a lack of engagement between authorities/structure in parishes and the youth, who find welcome and connection in other denominational churches. “Young people “want to be heard, acknowledged and accompanied,” reads the final document of the Synod on Young people held in 2018. “Many find that their voice is not considered worthwhile or helpful in social and ecclesial circles”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How are the laity, especially young people listened to?</i> • <i>How do we foster a spirit of accompaniment alongside the young people—especially in their engagement with those in authority—to ensure, as our archdiocesan synod resolution says, “we stand with and journey with our youth as they face the many challenges that life throws their way?”</i>
<p>Marriage & Family Life</p>	<p>In our archdiocesan synod, we acknowledged that “education about and promotion of marriage as a sacrament” is lacking. Tied to this was the need to include traditional/cultural views of marriage. The 2019 synod also acknowledged that marriage and family life ought to be addressed as “situated in its broader socio-economic context”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How are young people’s contemporary perceptions of marriage being received, particularly that of engaged couples?</i> • <i>Are the pressing struggles of parents (married, single, young, or old) in the face of various socio-economic and socio-political realities being considered?</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How are the concrete experiences of married couples in different stages of marriage being encountered and listened to?</i> • <i>Which ecclesial spaces allow for encounters with and compassionate listening to the tangible and varying experiences of family life, especially those of family members who find themselves on the margins of the family?</i>
A welcoming and inclusive community	<p>“There is a great need for parish communities that are open and welcoming to all, irrespective of gender, language, race, national origin or socio-economic class,” concluded our 2019 archdiocesan synod report. “Parishes are encouraged to reach out to marginalized groups in the Church and in the community, particularly the unchurched, lapsed Catholics, the sick, prisoners, LGBTI, and those living in squatter camps.” A key outcome that is hoped for with the current synod is for “a participatory and co-responsible Church, capable of appreciating its own rich variety, embraces all those we often forget or ignore”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore?</i> • <i>What facilitates or inhibits our listening?</i> • <i>How well do we listen to those on the peripheries?</i> • <i>What are some limitations in our ability to listen, especially to those who have different views than our own?</i> • <i>What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?</i>

Voices from the Margins		
Group		Questions
LGBTQ+		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is your experience as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual queer, questioning or intersex person in the Catholic Church, what are your particular joys and challenges?</i> • <i>How well does church—its individual members and as an institution—listen to your experience?</i> • <i>What are some limitations in our ability to listen as a church, especially to those who have different views than our own?</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What space is there in the church for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?</i>
<p>Women</p>	<p>An important topic that is in the minds of many women is the topic of patriarchy. The word patriarchy expresses in a nutshell the system of domination of women by men throughout the ages. In the minds of many men, women are still “second class” citizens. Today world over, women are the face of poverty. Crimes against women such as rape, human trafficking, sexual abuse, femicide, inequality in the economy and many others are directly rooted in attitudes and beliefs about women from time immemorial.</p> <p>The Church has not been immune to these attitudes and beliefs. Scripture, the teachings of the Church Fathers and the theology of the Church need to be critically re-examined. It is imperative that we listen to and respond to the plight of women, as affirmed by the Archdiocesan Synod of 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is it like to be a woman in the Catholic Church, what are your particular joys and challenges?</i> • <i>How well does church—its individual members and as an institution—listen to your experience?</i> • <i>What are some limitations in our ability to listen as a church, especially to those who have different views than our own?</i> • <i>What space is there in the church for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?</i>
<p>People with disabilities and their families</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is your experience as a person with disabilities in the Catholic Church, what are your particular joys and challenges?</i> • <i>How well does church listen to your experience?</i> • <i>What are some limitations in our ability to listen as a church, especially to those who have different views than our own?</i> • <i>What space is there in the church for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?</i>
<p>The poor and homeless</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is your experience as a person who is materially impoverished in the Catholic Church?</i> • <i>How well does church—its individual members and as an institution—listen to your experience?</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are some limitations in our ability to listen as a church, especially to those who have different views than our own?</i> • <i>What space is there in the church for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?</i>
Migrants and refugees		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is your experience as a migrant, refugee, asylum seeker or displaced person in the Catholic Church?</i> • <i>How well does church—its individual members and as an institution—listen to your experience?</i> • <i>What are some limitations in our ability to listen as a church, especially to those who have different views than our own?</i> • <i>What space is there in the church for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?</i>

Special Questions		
Group	Questions	
Integral Ecology: Listening to the Voice of Creation	<p>In recent years Pope Francis has spoken about the suffering creation of which our human family is part. This is eloquently written about in <i>Laudato Si</i>, where he points out that the future of humanity is inextricably linked to that of creation. Unless we listen to the voice of creation, we have no future. The voice of creation has been marginalised, and we also need to learn how to listen to it.</p> <p>“...a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” (LS 49) “Environmental education has broadened its goals....It seeks also to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God.” (LS 210) “So what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (LS 217)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is your experience as a parishioner about environmental education in the Catholic Church?</i> • <i>How well does the Church - its individual members and as an institution listen to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor?</i> • <i>To what extent does our encounter with Jesus Christ becomes evident in our relationship with the world around us?</i> • <i>What space is there in the church for a greater commitment to preserve and care for the environment, promote behavioural change and simple lifestyles?</i>

<p>Ancestor Veneration and its relationship to Christianity</p>	<p>The apparent interest in some aspects of African traditional religion has been aroused by a deep-seated desire for people to identify with their own tradition and culture. This identification generates a deep sense of both individual and collective pride and in some cases even national pride.</p> <p>The reason why Synodality dialogue should have high on its agenda the question of inculturation is because some aspects of traditional beliefs militate against genuine conversion. Ascribing some mysterious spiritual power to ancestors and the subsequent belief in their intervention in the lives of their offspring is a stumbling block to believing in the Lordship and the all-powerful and omnipresence of Christ.</p> <p>The absence of clearly delineated points of divergence and compatibility between Christianity and traditional religions lead to the challenge of “double affiliation” or “double self- insurance (Africae Munus, no. 93). Adherence to two incompatible religions attests to the stark reality of non-conversion on the part of the searching followers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What has your experience been of being both African and Christian?</i> • <i>Which African values, spiritual and moral truths are consistent with the practice of Christianity?</i> • <i>Which ones are inconsistent? What impact has your culture had on the living of your faith?</i> • <i>To what extent has your culture been transformed by your faith?</i>
<p>Sexual Abuse: The Body of Christ is Wounded</p>	<p>One in three girls will experience some form of sexual abuse while one in five children will be sexually assaulted. Sexual abuse has a devastating and often life-long impact on the mental and physical health of victim-survivors. It also significantly impacts the family and community. The interdisciplinary physical, psychological, and spiritual care necessary for the recovery of victim-survivors is often absent – and where it is available, it is costly. In different studies done across Africa the correlation between child sexual abuse and children who get into difficulty with the law is well-established. Children who have experienced abuse are more likely to struggle to establish healthy relationships and may struggle with depression and anxiety.</p> <p>Perpetrators of abuse may be male or female, family members or strangers. Abuse is often perpetrated by people in positions of power and trust such as teachers and church workers. It is especially scandalous and devastating when abuse happens within the context of the church. Clergy and religious are held in high regard and hold positions of trust. When this trust is broken it is very difficult to repair. The consequences for the victim-survivor are likely to include a damaged relationship with the church and often damage to their experience of God</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How has the Church responded to allegations of abuse?</i> • <i>What more do you think the Church could be doing?</i> • <i>What would make you feel safer/more protected? How have the revelations about clergy sexual abuse impacted your relationship with the church?</i>