**LIVING THE PROCESS OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Guidelines for reflection and work in the parishes**

In the whole Archdiocese of Pretoria, SCCs or groups must gather regularly to reflect and discuss the SACBC Pastoral Plan.

During regular meetings, each SCC or group reflects and answers the questions provided below. A summary of the answers is written and sent to the parish to collate.

The Parish Synod Facilitators under the supervision of the Parish Priest, compile a summary of the answers received form the SCCs or groups. The summary of the responses must be submitted to the Synod Steering Committee by each parish not later than 31 July 2021 through a link that will be sent to the Parish Priest in due time.

No summary will be accepted and taken into consideration after this date.

**SECTION 1**

**First meeting:**

Members of SCCs or groups must have read the SACBC Pastoral Plan before the meeting. This will help to answer the questions speedily.

It is important that answers are concise and precise.

1. What are the most relevant parts that touch you and “give you life”? Explain why.
2. “The parish is the centre of pastoral care.” What are the most relevant points that touch you from the description of the parish (pages 21-22)?
3. To what extent, is the parish you belong to, a place where everybody feels at home and can find his/her place?
4. Read page 12 and 14 and reflect: to what extent is your community an evangelising one?

**SECTION 2**

**The focal areas:**

At each meeting, the SCC (or group) reflects on the given focal areas. Members must reflect on the questions in advance. This will help them to prepare for the sharing during the meeting.

1. **Evangelisation:**

Personal encounter and relationship with God is fundamental to the Pastoral Plan, all other areas flow from it.

*Take some time to reflect on Evangelisation in the parish you belong to.*

1. Share your personal experience of encounter with the Lord.
2. How is the encounter with the Lord facilitated in the parish you belong to?
3. What more can be done to promote this encounter with the Lord?
4. Taking into consideration the view of the Pastoral plan, what should be taken up in your parish in the area of *Evangelisation*?
5. How can your parish become more missionary minded?
6. Feel free to make additional suggestions to the Archdiocese in this area.
7. **Laity formation and empowerment**

“The laity, by their very vocation, seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God” (*Lumen Gentium* #31).

*Take some time to reflect on Laity formation and empowerment in the parish you belong to.*

1. How are you involved in the life of the parish you belong to?
2. How is laity involved in the leadership and running of the parish you belong to?
3. What programs for laity formation, are offered in the parish you belong to?
4. Taking into consideration the view of the Pastoral Plan, what more should be done in this area?
5. How have Covid19 and the lockdown impacted on you and your spiritual life?
6. How have Covid19 and the lockdown impacted on your participation in the life of the parish?
7. Feel free to make additional suggestions to the Archdiocese in this area.
8. **Life and ministry of Priests and Deacons (and Religious)**

Priests, Deacons and Religious have a special calling to serve the People of God. It is a calling which begins with a relationship with Jesus, which matures through prayer and personal integration and which is a calling to selfless service of other people.

1. How is the relationship between the Parish Priest and the faithful in the parish you belong to?
2. Besides the Parish Priest, are there deacons and/or religious sisters and/or brothers who minister in your parish? How do they fit in the ministry of the parish?
3. How do they sustain their vocation and ministry? What more can they do?
4. What is done in your parish to promote vocations to ordained ministry and religious life? What more can be done?
5. **Marriage and family life**

“… ‘marriage was not instituted solely for the procreation of children but also that mutual love might be properly expressed, that is should grow and mature’” (*Amoris Laetitia* #125).

*Take some time to reflect on Marriage and family life in the parish you belong to.*

1. How is vocation to Sacramental Marriage promoted in the parish you belong to?
2. What programs on marriage (in preparation for and post Sacrament) and family life, are offered in the parish you belong to?
3. How are married couples involved in this ministry?
4. Taking into consideration the view of the Pastoral Plan, what more can be done in this area?
5. Feel free to make additional suggestions to the Archdiocese in this area.
6. **Youth**

“Youth is a time when genuine and irrepressible questions arise about the meaning of life

and the direction our own lives should take.” Therefore, they “need witnesses and teachers who can walk with them, teaching them to love the Gospel and to share it, especially with their peers, and thus to become authentic and credible messengers” (*Africae Munus* #61).

*Take some time to reflect on Youth in the parish you belong to.*

1. What are your concerns about the youth in the parish you belong to?
2. What programs are provided for youth in the parish you belong to?
3. How are youth accompanied in their vocation (married, single, religious and clergy)?
4. Taking into consideration the view of the Pastoral plan, what more can be done, in the parish you belong to, in order to support and help youth develop and grow in faith.
5. Feel free to make additional suggestions to the Archdiocese in this area.
6. **Justice, peace and non-violence**

“Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appeared to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation” (*Justice in the World, Synod of Catholic Bishops*, 1971 #6).

*Take some time to reflect on Justice, Peace and non-violence in the parish you belong to.*

1. How do you promote Justice, Peace and non-violence in the parish you belong to?
2. What programs, in this area, are offered in the parish you belong to?
3. How is the parish you belong to, open to the integration of migrants and refugees?
4. How is the parish you belong to, dealing with issues of racism, tribalism, xenophobia/afrophobia?
5. How is the parish responding to the scourge of gender-based violence?
6. Taking into consideration the view of the Pastoral plan, what can be done more in the area of justice, peace and non-violence in the parish you belong to?
7. Feel free to make additional suggestions to the Archdiocese in this area.
8. **Healing and reconciliation**

“It is God’s grace that gives us a new heart and reconciles us with him and with one

another. Christ re-established humanity in the Father’s love. Reconciliation thus springs

from this love; it is born of the Father’s initiative in restoring his relationship with

humanity, a relationship broken by human sin” (*Africae Munus* #20).

In order for humanity to be healed, it is important that each of us comes to a space of self-healing, which would then allow reconciliation with others.

*Take some time to reflect on healing and reconciliation.*

1. What is your understanding of healing?
2. What is your understanding of reconciliation?
3. What do you think people need to be healed and reconciled with themselves, with others and with God?
4. What opportunities of healing and reconciliation are offered in the parish you belong to?
5. What more can be done in this area in the parish you belong to?
6. Feel free to make additional suggestions to the Archdiocese in this area.
7. **Care of creation and the Environment**

The consequences of the exploitation of the Earth, our common home, call not only political leaders but also each one of us to “protect such fundamental goods as land and water for the human life of present and future generations and for peace between peoples” (*Africae Munus* #80).

*Take some time to reflect on the importance of care of creation and the environment.*

1. How do you promote care of creation and environment?
2. What programs are offered in the parish in this area?
3. Taking into consideration the view of the Pastoral plan, what more can be done in this area in the parish you belong to?
4. Feel free to make additional suggestions to the Archdiocese in this area.
5. **Sustainability**

This area is not mentioned in the Pastoral Plan. However, the Archdiocese of Pretoria wants to work towards becoming a self-supporting and self-sustaining Archdiocese.

*Take some time to reflect on how sustainability plays a role in your parish.*

1. What is your understanding of sustainability in the church?
2. Considering that sustainability includes spiritual and pastoral aspects and resources, what has been developed, in the parish you belong to, to make it self-sustaining and self-supportive?
3. According to you, what are the initiatives that should be taken up by the parish you belong to in this area?
4. Feel free to make additional suggestions to the Archdiocese in this area.