



TRUST SYNOD

Session 2

● RELATIONSHIPS // PATHWAYS // PLACES

Synthesis Report



Tuesday 21st January 2025

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The Trust Synod

Our second session of our 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 Relationships, Pathways and Places.

Each of the sections in this report, in line with the process for the Synod in Rome, have again 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?

Direct quotes are highlighted in bold.





Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. Love one another warmly as Christians, and be eager to show respect for one another. Work hard and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion. Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times.

- Romans 12:7-9



Relationships

How can we, as members of our school / Trust community, deepen our relationship with Jesus and with each other, and how can we better show God's love to those around us?

Areas of convergence

Those who gathered recognised the importance of **prayer, reflection, and scripture** in deepening our relationship with Jesus. Delegates spoke of the **power of prayer**, emphasising the need for **regular, meaningful prayer in daily life**, with many suggesting we need to **make time for God**. Many delegates also emphasised the importance of taking time for **quiet reflection**, and the **use of silence to connect with God and discern his will**. The role of scripture was also widely acknowledged, with delegates suggesting that **reading, sharing, and studying the Bible can bring individuals closer to Jesus**.

There was strong shared understanding that **deepening relationships within the community is crucial**. Many delegates expressed a desire for **more opportunities to come together in prayer, worship, and shared experiences**. The importance of listening and showing compassion to one another was also a recurring theme, with many delegates urging us to **listen without judgement and show empathy**.

There was overwhelming agreement that showing **God's love to others requires acts of kindness, service, and mission**. Many responses emphasised the need to be **the hands and feet of God in the world, reaching out to those in need and sharing the love of Christ and Catholic Social Teaching, with those around them**.

Matters for consideration

There was broad agreement on the importance of prayer, reflection, and scripture, and there are varying perspectives on how these practices should be implemented within the school/Trust community. Some delegates advocate **for more structured prayer times and opportunities for collective worship**, calling for **more whole school worship and more Celebrations of the word**. Others emphasised the importance of **individual prayer and personal reflection**, suggesting that we must **pray daily and find the time to talk and pray together**. Going forward each community must dialogue on how to strike a balance between communal and individual spirituality in a way that serves the whole community.

There were also diverse views on how to deepen relationships within the community. Some delegates suggested **more collaboration between schools**, proposing a **student exchange between schools and coming together for events**. Others focused on strengthening relationships *within* individual schools, urging us to **gather together each day** and see everyone as one big family. Some responses highlighted the importance of **intergenerational connections**, calling for us to **cross the age divide** and find initiatives and opportunities to **reconnect with familiar faces and our faith**. Others focus on the need for peer-to-peer support, suggesting we **support one another and be role models**. Further dialogue is needed to determine how to best foster a sense of belonging and connection for all members of the community.





Relationships

Proposals

- **Establish a strong rhythm of prayer:** This could involve more dedicated times for communal prayer, such as whole-school Masses, Celebrations of the word, and adoration. It could also include creating more quiet spaces for individual reflection and providing resources to support personal prayer practices, recognising the importance of personal silent reflection and meditation.
- **Facilitate opportunities for spiritual formation:** This could involve organising retreats, establishing scripture study groups, and offering workshops on different forms of prayer and meditation. It could also include inviting people to share their faith journeys, especially those of other faiths, and providing access to inspiring books and resources, recognising the desire to grow and pass on knowledge.
- **Foster a culture of listening and compassion:** This could involve implementing programmes that promote listening and empathy. It could also include creating opportunities for dialogue and encouraging open communication within the community, seeing the need to listen to each other's feelings and be open in our relationship with God.
- **Encourage acts of service and mission:** This could involve organising outreach initiatives, partnering with local charities, and creating opportunities for students to engage in community service. It could also include promoting awareness of social justice issues and encouraging students to be advocates for change, recognising the call to help people and be stewards of the earth - working for the common good of all.
- **Strengthen inter-school connections:** This could involve joint events, such as retreats, pilgrimages, and student exchanges. It could also include establishing collaborative projects and initiatives that bring students from different schools together, showing the value of communicating with different schools and making new connections.
- **Promote intergenerational relationships:** This could involve creating opportunities for students to interact with older members of the community, such as parents, grandparents and former students. Inviting them to participate in school events and establishing mentoring programmes, recognising the importance of crossing the age divide and reconnecting with familiar faces and our faith.



Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice. If you listen to the word, but do not put it into practice you are like people who look in a mirror and see themselves as they are. They take a good look at themselves and then go away and at once forget what they look like. But if you look closely into the perfect law that sets people free, and keep on paying attention to it and do not simply listen and then forget it, but put it into practice—you will be blessed by God in what you do. - James 1:22-25



How can we, as members of our school / Trust community, become better listeners and decision-makers, and how can we work together to discern God's will for our school?

Areas of convergence

There was a strong desire to **improve listening and decision making within the school/Trust community**. Delegates spoke of the importance of **authentic listening**, creating space for **diverse voices**, and fostering a culture of **respect and inclusivity**.

Many delegates highlighted the need to **truly listen to one another**, recognising the **value of each individual's perspective**. They stressed the importance of **paying attention, removing distractions**, and **seeking to understand different faiths and viewpoints**. Delegates also emphasised the need to be inclusive, ensuring that all voices are heard, particularly those who may be marginalised or less confident.

There was a shared belief that **decision-making should be collaborative and informed by the Catholic Social Teaching principle of subsidiarity**. Delegates advocated for **greater involvement of students, staff, and the wider community in decision-making processes**. They also emphasised the importance of **considering the impact of decisions on all everyone**.

Finally, delegates spoke of the importance of seeking **God's guidance in decision-making**. They highlighted the role of **prayer, scripture, and reflection** in discerning God's will for the school/Trust community.

Matters for consideration

While there was broad agreement on the importance of **listening and collaborative decision-making**, there were different views on how to implement these practices effectively. Some delegates advocated for more structured approaches, such as **focus groups, student councils, and regular meetings with stakeholders**. Others saw the importance of **informal conversations**, creating **opportunities for dialogue and spontaneous interactions**. Further dialogue is needed to determine how to balance structured and informal approaches to create more effective listening practices.

There were diverse views on how to best **discern God's will** for the school/Trust community. Some delegates spoke of the importance of **prayer and scripture**, while others highlighted the role of the **Holy Spirit and individual discernment**. Further dialogue is needed to explore **different approaches to spiritual discernment** and to develop practices that resonate with the community.

There were many perspectives on how to foster a **culture of inclusivity and respect**. Some delegates focus on creating **safe spaces for dialogue**, while others emphasised the importance of **education and awareness-raising**. Further discussion is needed to identify specific actions that can be taken to promote inclusivity and ensure that all voices are valued and respected.



Proposals

- **Develop our listening skills:** This could involve providing training for staff and students on listening techniques including synodal styles, such as conversations in the spirit. It could also include creating opportunities for practicing better listening in different settings.
- **Create spaces for dialogue:** This could involve establishing student forums, staff focus groups, and regular meetings with parents and the wider community. It could also include creating online platforms for sharing ideas and feedback.
- **Promote inclusivity:** This could involve implementing diversity and inclusion training, celebrating different cultures and perspectives, and creating opportunities for students from different backgrounds and different faiths to interact and learn from one another.
- **Integrate prayer and scripture into decision-making:** This could involve reflecting on how we begin our meetings with prayer, reflecting on relevant scripture passages, and creating opportunities for spiritual discernment within existing structures.
- **Empower student voice:** This could involve creating or strengthening student councils, providing opportunities for more student leadership, and involving more students in decision-making processes at all levels.
- **Promote transparency and communication:** This could involve sharing information about decisions and their context with the community, providing regular updates on progress, and creating opportunities for feedback and dialogue.
- **Foster a culture of respect:** This could involve establishing clear expectations for how we can practice respectful communication, addressing instances of disrespect promptly, and celebrating acts of kindness and compassion.



My friends, as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, you must never treat people in different ways according to their outward appearance. Suppose a rich man wearing a gold ring and fine clothes comes to your meeting, and a poor man in ragged clothes also comes. If you show more respect to the well-dressed man and say to him, "Have this best seat here," but say to the poor man, "Stand over there, or sit here on the floor by my feet," then you are guilty of creating distinctions among yourselves and of making judgments based on evil motives. - James 2: 1-4



How can we, as members of our school / Trust community, create a more welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and loved, especially for those who may feel excluded or marginalised?

Areas of convergence

Nearly all delegates spoke of the importance of creating **welcoming and inclusive environments** within the school/Trust communities. Delegates consistently emphasised the need to recognise the **human dignity** of all and that we should make **everyone feel valued and loved**, particularly those who may feel **excluded or marginalised**.

There was a strong focus on **treating others with kindness and respect**, demonstrating **Catholic Social Teaching** and emphasising the need to **embrace diversity** and **celebrate differences**. The responses also spoke of the need to **actively include everyone** in activities and discussions, ensuring that **no one feels left out**.

Many delegates emphasised the importance of **understanding and respecting other cultures and religions**, recognising the richness that diversity brings to the community. There was also a strong call to **stand up to all discrimination**, ensuring that the school/Trust provides a **safe and welcoming space** for all.

Matters for consideration

The responses provided a variety of perspectives on what an inclusive environment is. Some delegates focused on **individual actions**, such as **smiling, greeting others, and showing kindness**. Others spoke of **organisational changes**, such as **adapting policies, providing resources for specific groups, and ensuring physical accessibility for all**. Further dialogue is needed to develop a shared understanding of inclusivity that encompasses both the individual and organisational approaches.

The responses highlighted the need to create an inclusive environment for various groups, especially **those with additional needs, different ethnicities, and diverse religions**. However, there was limited discussion on how to address the specific needs of each group. Further dialogue is necessary to develop targeted approaches to ensure everyone feels valued and supported.

The responses focused on **actions and initiatives that promote inclusivity**, but there should be more dialogue on how to measure the effectiveness of these efforts. Further dialogue is needed to develop approaches that assess the impact of our work within the school/Trust community and track progress over time.



Mission

Proposals

- **Foster a Culture of Kindness and Respect:** Encourage individual actions that promote inclusivity, such as smiling, greeting others, and showing kindness. Implement approaches that teach everyone about empathy, respect, and celebrating differences.
- **Provide Targeted Support:** Develop strategies to address the specific needs of various groups within the school/Trust community. This could include creating resource groups, offering specialised support services, and ensuring accessibility for all.
- **Promote Open Communication:** Create platforms for open communication and dialogue, where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and perspectives. This could include regular forums, suggestion boxes, and opportunities for student voice.
- **Celebrate Diversity:** Organise events and activities that celebrate the diverse cultures, religions, and backgrounds within the school/Trust community. This could include cultural days, guest speakers, and opportunities for students to share their heritage.
- **Stand in Solidarity:** Implement policies and procedures to address all types of discrimination. Train staff and students on how to identify and respond to these issues, and create safe spaces for reporting incidents.
- **Find Opportunities for Friendships:** Create opportunities for members of the community to find friendship and support. This could include buddy schemes or wellbeing ambassadors who look out for those most in need.



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission