

**After our Synod:
What is the most meaningful way forward for R&B?**

OPEN FORUM

Sun 14 November 16.00 GMT
UK, EUROPE & AMERICAS

**ZR&B held an Open Forum by Zoom to present R&B DIY
and ask what is the most meaningful way forward....**

QUOTES:

"If there's no seed there will be no tree. R&B Core Group have been the seeds, and the tree is growing magnificently!"

"I felt I was in the Upper Room and experiencing the work of the Spirit at work and I have learned so much to pass on to the Church in Canada."

35 breakout groups reported back in answer to our question:

"What is the most meaningful way forward for us?"

- **empower** ourselves as Laity to focus on the teachings of Jesus, outreach and mission with the support where possible of the Priests and Bishops in all Christian Churches.
- have small groups, diverse in all ways, online or in person, of people who **listen with their hearts** and ask questions without knowing the answers.
- have **more opportunities like this**
- share, support and speak freely in a **safe** place, so that we are able to **nourish** ourselves in moving forward in small groups in our parishes. We had some consensus that some of us are putting a time limit on synodal process as we fear the universal church will not share our views for reform. We have evidence for being in a minority in our parishes. We then need to create **something new** and all of this has to be accompanied by **prayer** to the Holy Spirit.
- focus on developing a vision for the **alternative** future...
- just step out and **begin** house groups.
- not to wait for the hierarchy but get on with **grassroots work**, challenging people in our parishes to walk and talk together.

- find ways of engaging with younger people and people who are **alienated** from the Church. The synodal process might be a way forward for communication
- 'house groups' as the way forward both DIY in our local area/ parish but also **facilitated by R&B** for those who cannot start a local group
- small groups which will allow us to **explore** and **question** our faith
- hear and listen to the voice of all baptised and to enable the reception of **spiritual food**
- Justice, Equality and Inclusivity for all with a new type of **Priesthood for all**.
- **radical change**, some thought radical change of canon law and magisterium, some thought radical change of whole church working together, some thought 'radical change' too vague.
- The **Holy Spirit is in charge**, and we need to recognise and accept the work of the Spirit - but **not to split** from the main Church
- increase in role of laity, especially women, and develop **skills** for them to participate, this is new for Catholics.
- **small DIY services** acknowledging everyone's priesthood conferred on us at Baptism.
- find a way to **give voice** to ordinary parishioners, that will be listened to and responded to by the hierarchy, and remember we can contact the synod direct.
- *connect* in small groups - *communication* needed to make this possible including hearing **diversity of inputs and opinions** not just those who agree with us or act like us) - and *courage* to just try and get things started
- talk about topics which are "**off limits**" - dialogue with no constraints - respect for others - all voices are relevant - engage in **conversations** which are **lifegiving** - but not hammering priests!
- **full involvement of the laity in every aspect of parish life**, making sure that everyone is encouraged to take part. IF this is not possible within parish structures then the laity should establish communities outside these, if necessary, using technology such as Zoom.
- **interconnect** our own small groups with one another informally **through R&B**.
- BE the **Field Hospital**
- listening which is vitally important and we need to have **Eucharist where priest and people celebrate together**. Communications are key.
- have the **courage** to speak up and the confidence that we will be listened to
- reach out through the **secular press** (don't rely on the Catholic press); encourage priests to listen to us; the HS works through every baptised person & we need to reach out to young people; connect with other parishes on the same wavelength; **model** a liberating; empowering; democratic mode of parish education (as opposed to top down); listen to women; give them a space to speak and be. **Deep listening** was the overarching theme of our discussion.

- recognise that **the church is the people of God**, loving one another without making distinctions
- 1. organise a detailed analysis of **what people think is wrong and want to put right**;
2. appoint a leader with the skill and weight to speak up for us, e.g. Mary McAleese;
3. establish and make public a **programme of action** which will engage **young people** in our deliberations
- **small groups** communicating and working as described by Kevin
- **empowerment** of the laity
- **new spaces** , different contexts to meet, support conversation partners around specific questions. Create zoom supports for those feeling isolated or on their own
- find a way to **give voice to ordinary parishioners altogether everywhere**
- working out how to **empower** each other as fully flourishing human beings - properly ACTUALLY being the field hospital and caring for each other and creation. Keeping **connecting** with each other to find the energy and confidence to have the necessary **conversations with clergy**. Talking about **reform of 'priestly' formation** - with one person feeling **'we're beyond priests'**?
- use our Gospel freedom **not to rely on church figures**. The **local house groups with ecumenical links** are the way forward. Still relying on Big Daddy - even if as wonderful as Francis. **Lay people have the power** because you have greater freedom than clergy.

Other individual suggestions:

- Catholic Church is the largest provider for health and education and member of UN (only religion that has this right) - one way to get attention is to say 'if you have this exalted position you must adopt **good governance** procedures, crimes and cover-up crimes would be investigated in any other organisation. A lot of other things would follow
- question our Roman Catholic presuppositions that the Romanisation of our liturgy and sacraments does not need radical changes. The way forward is for **all humanity** to be involved in our groups.
- formation of small groups **Base Communities** but mindful of a need to **change the controlling structure**
- find ways of undermining clerical control. **Resisting bishops who want to control responses to the synodal pathway** would help to mine the fortress from without!
- **refusing to co-operate with silence, denial and dismissal re the many forms of abuse** is a key theme we must expose this
- **Communications** MUST be improved at all levels

- we have AGENCY. We should take it.
- Clear that the level of isolation felt by many in our break out room needs R&B small group support. as Kevin and all suggested. Urgent
- We are church Ireland: DIY Community Groups sharing the Word and Eucharist and giving a small amount of time to respond to the synodal process calling for VATICAN 3 WITH 50% OF VOTES FOR WOMEN. [V3 50% WV]
- If we had a Vatican III with 50% women voting - which would never be approved anyway - the hierarchy would have no difficulty whatsoever in stuffing it with women who would just support whatever the bishops told them to vote for. More radical change than that is needed.- Margaret Hebblethwaite
- it's important that the monarchical power of the priest in canon law is adjusted such that priests and people can exercise their baptismal call equitably and justly while taking up a variety of roles at the service of what needs doing - spirit inspired 🙏😊

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OPEN FORUM

Monday 15th November 08.00 GMT

ASIA & AUSTRALASIA

R&B were also delighted to hold the second part of our Forum with our friends on the other side of our time-zone in Asia, Oceania and Australasia.

We shared likewise with them the experience of our R&B associates who are already forming small support groups, meeting, sharing and praying together, to help bring reform into our Church. The response was most positive.

We were deeply impressed at the extent and longevity of similar groups for reform and social action programmes that many different folk on the Zoom outlined to us. We were most warmly invited to the the [3rd Australian Convocation for the Future of Catholicism](#) (insert link, please) in Australia three days later, and will extend all invitations that come our way in future.

Not to be missed!

