

## **LGBTQ+ Catholics Liverpool Archdiocese Prayer and Support Group**

Inclusivity and diversity at many levels have been very prominent in the discussions and proposals in our Synod journey.

In April 2021 Archbishop Malcolm shared with us in the Ad Clerum and then to our parishes the following words in response to the Dubium from the CDF on the blessing of same-sex unions.....*It is important that we reach out to all our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters to show them that they have a place in the heart of our Church and the Archdiocese.* He goes on to say that ...*We are a stronger and more powerful witness to Christ because of the presence of our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters and far from denying their experience and the reality of their lives we should learn from them and **hear God speaking through that reality**.....It is his hope, he says, that we may find new ways of expressing inclusivity to witness to the fundamental Gospel teaching that **God's love has no limits.***

Over several months I have had the privilege and blessing to have met with many LGBTQ+ Catholics and their families and their friends. Listening to their stories and their commitment to the church has been very powerful. Sadly so has their experience of rejection and hurt caused by the pronouncements the Church has made about them and how they identify and by homophobic attitudes within some parts of the Church community.

During our conversations it was apparent to me that our LGBTQ+ Catholics do have a place in our Church and we are all the better for their presence and active involvement in our parishes. It also became evident that they would welcome opportunities to meet together in prayer and in social gatherings to support each other and share their experiences as members of the Catholic faith communities in which they live and worship. On Sunday September 26<sup>th</sup>, here in our parish of All Saints, we had Mass followed by a social gathering with Archbishop Malcolm and with those LGBTQ+ Catholics and families and friends with whom I had been meeting. It was a joyous occasion.

Following further conversations we are now looking to have regular gatherings for Mass, prayer and support of each other. This is not intended to be and indeed will not be a kind of an alternative Church. There are many different types of groups within our diocese who meet and find support for each and who focus on particular needs, as such, this group would be no different. Whilst the normal place of belonging is in the parish, a support group responds to a specific need. In time, as the group develops, we would hope to have days of reflection and spiritual and pastoral support, especially for those who feel unwelcome in the Church due to being LGBTQ+.

Our next Mass will be at **All Saints Anfield on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 12.30pm** followed by a social gathering. This is an open invitation to our LGBTQ+ Catholics, their families and friends but also to anyone who would like to come along.

It would be helpful to know who might attend for catering purposes. If you are intending to come along you are very welcome but please do let us know :

You can phone 0151 287 8787 or email [frsmaloney@aol.com](mailto:frsmaloney@aol.com)

Canon Stephen Maloney



*This Cross was made by a friend of mine, Philip Patterson. The piece contains over 500 units of hand crafted wooden blocks, with the difference in shapes, sizes and colour to represent the diversity of Gods people.*

*The middle section of the cross is a representation of the Progress Pride flag that brings the six coloured Rainbow flag which is recognised as the symbol of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBTQ+) community.*

*The piece includes Black and Brown chevrons to represent marginalise LGBTQ+ communities of colour along with the Pink, Light Blue and White chevrons which are used on the Transgender Pride flag.*

*The central piece of the cross which supports the flag is made of the same wooden block in bands of the Liturgical Colours of the Church.*

*It is a very stunning piece of work.*



