

## Slide 1

Thank you, and welcome. We are Root & Branch, a forum for reform in our Catholic Church, based in Britain, but networking across the world. Some amongst us have campaigned for change for years or decades; others are still looking over our shoulders in case Father sees us! We're a forum for change that start swith women, and we don't end there.

## Slide 2

We work collaboratively. The pandemic has given us the tools to work and network across the world, just as we're doing here. Our friends are too many to show here, but we extend our gratitude to each one. Together, we are strong.

## Slide 3

a) As the Penny Catechism taught us, a sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace, six available in the Catholic Church to women, and seven to men.

b) "A sacrament is anything that awakens, enlightens, or expands the imagination, opens the vision of the inner eye, and enriches the sensitivity of any human being. This can be a flower, the sea, a picture of a scan of a baby in the womb." Michael Heinz, quoted by Ilia Delio.

## Slide 4

We held our own R&B Synod in 2020 - 2021, culminating in Bristol in Sept 21. At this seminal meeting we finalised our Bristol Text.

Before Pope Francis announced his worldwide Synod, we had determined on our Journey of Discernment towards a Synod which began with women, and didn't end there. Professor Mary McAleese headlined for us, and was in company with more than 40 internationally acclaimed leaders, theologians, writers and activists. We were delighted to have Virginia, Kochurani, Eleanor and Tina with us in September 2021, during a year of thought and debate, culminating live and online at Bristol. You can find our resulting Bristol Text to Reform, and every single talk, all on our website.

Not a conclusion, but a beginning. R&B DIY.

## Slide 5

How do R&B experience sacramental life?

Our concept as Catholics has become frozen in some ways, and static. What reality do those sacraments really hold for those young people? How many remain in the Church?

In Root & Branch, we have begun - as have so many communities across the world - to live out and to be, the Church we want to see. Together, in small groups. We call it, R&B, DIY. Do It Yourself.

Colm Holmes, of We Are Church Ireland, so wisely advises, use the 80 / 20 rule. Use 20% of our energy trying to change our Church, and 80% of our energy being that Church.

## Slide 6

The experience of God-amongst-us

How do we live the sort of Church we want to be?  
Like so many others across the world right now,  
we take the Acts of the Apostles:

"the faithful... met in their houses for the breaking of bread;  
they shared their food gladly and generously;  
they praised God."

Slide 7

Head to the DIY - Do It Yourself - page on our website

Slide 8

Here you'll find, for example, tables of where your nearest other Root & Brancher might be. If you want to gather with like-minded people, if you're wondering how to get started as a little group, then click on this very simple Template with its suggestions of a structure. Or listen to our wonderful Derek Reeve, encouraging us not to wait for priests, but just to get on with it. There's a Contact form so that we can put you in touch with others near you.

We pray, we read, discuss and share social action,  
We can bless and break food together, following Vatican II.  
We Zoom together on the first Tuesday evening of every month.  
All are welcome!

Slide 9

But we also find ourselves drawn to work for issues widely ignored by most of our parishes and churches. After many months of quiet collaboration with Scottish Laity Network, and in deep gratitude to our wise advisor survivors, we felt honoured to draw together our Stolen Lives series earlier this year.

In Koekelburg, in Flanders, in a quiet chapel of the Basilica, this infant's white dress holds witness to the suffering of little ones, and all who have been vulnerable to abuse. Amongst the experts who joined us to tell the stories that must be told, and to ask, What Can We Do, Francis Sullivan joined us from Australia, Tom Doyle from the USA, and ex-priest Brian Devlin with journalist Catherine Deveney from Scotland. From this we produced our Stolen Lives Learning Resource, freely available on our website.

The wounds to our Church are so deep, and so hidden, that we cannot truly move forward until they are healed. Our survivors are key to our Church's health.

Slide 10

We also have a Synod Watch section on our website dedicated to parish and Diocesan submissions - we are currently mapping the latter against our Bristol Text. So many parishes are asking for the simple reforms to ministry, diversity, moral theology, and authority in the Church which our Text spells out so clearly. And - we can also see where what the people ask for does not make the Diocesan Summary!

Slide 11

We LOVED the submission from Be The Change, Aotearoa!

Slide 12

It's difficult to compass so much so quickly, but if you head to our website, you'll find this simple Info sign-up form at the foot of every page, to get our mailouts and all info as it happens.

Slide 13

There is very little that we are doing that so many of you are not doing already. There is absolutely nothing special about Root & Branch. It's just one way of living outward signs of an inward grace. Only grace, and the blessed Holy Spirit, Sophia in her wisdom, have brought us this far, so fast. Let me leave you with this brilliant cartoon by Gerhardt Mester....

We do not leave our Church. We take it with us!