

**DIOCESE OF PAISLEY**

**WORLD SYNOD OF BISHOPS 2023**



**CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

## Prayer for the Synod: *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*

*As we embrace this Synodal Process, this prayer invites the Holy Spirit to be at work in us so that we may be a community and a people of grace.*

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go  
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;  
do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity  
so that we may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of truth  
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,  
who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son,  
forever and ever. Amen.

## DIOCESAN PHASE OF PREPARATION

The theme of the Synod is:

*A Synodal Church of Communion, Participation and Mission.*

Ahead of the Synod, Pope Francis is calling the whole Church to begin a “**synodal journey**” which includes each and every Catholic – clergy, religious and lay faithful. He wants our journey to begin this month with a listening phase in every diocese across the world. Bishop John has now begun our Diocesan response to Pope Francis’ request and we are being asked to give our responses to the questions the Pope has sent us. We will discuss these questions and responses first at parish level through our **Parish Pastoral Councils**, and then at diocesan level through our **Diocesan Pastoral Council**. Our Diocesan Pastoral Council is made up of a representative from each parish and has its first meeting on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November.

The word “**Synod**” means “**Walking** (or “**journeying**”) **together**” and this Synod is about the future direction of the Church and about how decisions are made in the Church at parish, diocesan, national and universal level.

Pope Francis believes that a “synodal” approach, where we come together to discuss matters and listen to what the Spirit is saying, is a better way of making decisions.

**This Synod poses the following fundamental question:**

**A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”**

- **How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church?**
- **What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?**

In responding to this question, we are invited to:

### **- Recall our experiences:**

- What experiences of our local Church does this question call to mind?

### **- Re-read these experiences in greater depth:**

- What joys did they bring?
- What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered?
- What wounds did they reveal?
- What insights have they elicited?

### **- Gather the fruits to share:**

- Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound?
- What is the Spirit asking of us?
- What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for change, the steps to be taken?
- Where do we register a consensus?
- What paths are opening up for our local Church?

To help people explore this fundamental question more fully, the following themes highlight significant aspects of “**lived synodality**”.

In responding to these questions, it is helpful to remember that ***“journeying together”*** occurs in two deeply interconnected ways.

- **First, we journey together with one another as the People of God.**
- **Next, we journey together as the People of God with the entire human family.**

These two perspectives enrich one another and are helpful for our common discernment towards **deeper communion** and **more fruitful mission**.

The questions accompanying each of the following ten themes can be used as a starting point or helpful guideline.

**Your conversation and dialogue do not need to be limited to the following questions, but should reflect on and discuss the 10 Themes:**

### **1. COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY**

**In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road.**

- Who feels left out of the church?
- How can we include them?

### **2. LISTENING**

**Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.**

- What stops us listening?
- How do we reach out?
- How do we reach the laity, especially women and young people?

### **3. SPEAKING OUT**

**All are invited to speak with courage and *parrhesia*, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity.**

- How can we speak the truth more boldly, both within the church and beyond?
- How do we relate to social media?

### **4. CELEBRATION**

***“Walking together”* is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.**

- Does our liturgical celebration of word and sacrament help us in our mission, to make the right decisions?
- How active is our participation?
- Do we use ministries?

### **5. SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION**

***Synodality* is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all members are called to participate.**

- Every baptised person is called to share in the mission of the church. What stops us?
- What areas of mission are neglected?
- How does the Church community help and support the mission of the individual?

## **6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

**Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding.**

- How does the Church engage with the world around us?
- How do we communicate between groups in the church – dioceses, religious, movements?
- How do we cope with and resolve conflicts?
- How do we dialogue with other religions or with those without religion?

## **7. ECUMENISM**

**The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey.**

- How do we relate to other Christian communities?
- What have we learned?
- What obstacles still exist?
- How can we go forward together?

## **8. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION**

**A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.**

- How do we arrive at decisions?
- How is authority exercised?
- What about teamwork?
- How do we evaluate progress?
- How do pastoral councils work at diocesan and parish levels?
- How can we be more synodal?

## **9. DISCERNING AND DECIDING**

**In a synodal style we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community.**

- How do we practise discernment?
- How do we relate consultation and decision making?
- How do we promote transparency and accountability?
- How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?

## **10. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY**

**Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and on-going learning.**

- How do we change, grow, and keep learning?
- How do we form people to do all this?

ALL correspondence and responses should be emailed to  
[Synod23@rcdop.org.uk](mailto:Synod23@rcdop.org.uk) by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

Thank you for your collaboration.