

Synod Report



Archdiocese of
St Andrews
& Edinburgh

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

The Holy Father's desire to embark upon a synodal process was announced at a time when the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh was involved in a process of renewal and deeper reflection on the sources of our identity as a Church.

The Holy Father's initiative has enriched this already ongoing and necessary process and has given it a decisive focus around the themes of communion, participation, and mission. For this I am immensely grateful, and I am confident that the work done in preparation for the 2023 Synod will, in due course, bear fruit in this Archdiocese.

I take this opportunity to thank the clergy and laity who collaborated in facilitating and implementing the synodal process in our Archdiocese. In particular, I should like to single out Sr Anna Marie McGuan RSM, and Frs John Deighan, Samuel Burke OP, William McQuillan, Andrew Kingham, and Michael John Galbraith.

Moreover, I extend my thanks to Derek Buglass, Shelley McAinsh, Martin Cassels, Agatha Kai Kai, and Sarah Schuler, all of whom gave generously of their time and talents. Finally, I am indebted to the parishes of St Francis Xavier, Falkirk, St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, Edinburgh, St Mary's, Bathgate, St David's, Dalkeith, and St Margaret's, Dunfermline for hosting synodal deanery meetings. I offer my heartfelt gratitude to the people and the serving priests of those communities.

The Synodal process has brought to the fore many challenges and opportunities for this Archdiocese. Three immediate avenues of response present themselves. First, this Archdiocese has already done much to promote an authentic participation of the laity in the Church. One important way has been in the expansion of the board of trustees, which runs the Archdiocese civilly, and which now enjoys a substantial majority of professional and high qualified lay men and women. There is however more to be done, and what has been achieved needs to be properly communicated to our people. This, I hope and pray, will foster a greater confidence between the laity and clergy and enable them both to discern how best to offer their gifts and talents in the service of the Lord and His Church.

Secondly, anxieties were expressed by some of those who participated in the synodal process about historical safeguarding issues in the Archdiocese. In recent years the Archdiocese has invested intensively in training personnel to the highest and best standards. The most stringent and up-to-date protocols and procedures have been adopted and applied. There is much good to communicate in this regard, and our people should be made more aware of this, and of this Archdiocese's commitment to ongoing vigilance in these matters where the highest of standards is a duty, not an option.

Finally, though many issues were raised in the synodal process, I am encouraged by the desire for prayer and a deeper spiritual life among our faithful. Indeed, given the weighty concerns expressed by the people and clergy of the Archdiocese, which do not admit of easy or instant answers, I am convinced that prayer must be the core of our response. Arising from the synodal process in this Archdiocese, there is, I believe, a real need to deepen the prayer life, the spirituality, and discernment of every individual in this Archdiocese. In these days following the feast of Corpus Christi I feel we may have made a start on this process this year by reinvigorating the Forty Hours' devotion in the Archdiocese, but much remains to be done.

To this end, I will institute a monthly Holy Hour at the Gillis Centre to which I invite all the faithful to come and pray with me before Our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament. As it says in the very motto of the City of Edinburgh, *Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain* (Ps 127:1). Together let us ask the Lord to bless our endeavours and raise up committed disciples in this Archdiocese. Let us pray for insight, courage, and joy in our mission as His followers. Let us be confident that He is with us and He will hear us.

+Leo Cushley

Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh

Introduction

In accordance with the Holy Father's wishes, it has been our privilege in the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh to embark upon a synodal journey in preparation for the Synod on Synodality to be held in October 2023 at the Vatican.

This initiative, following upon the Covid-19 crisis and its impact on public and communal religious practice, has provided a chance for those within the Archdiocese, clergy and laity alike, to reflect, to talk together, and to try to discern a way forward. What follows is a brief description of how the Archdiocese went about engaging in the process of synodality and a synthesis of the issues that emerged from this rich process.

Measures taken

In St Andrews & Edinburgh the diocesan phase of the synodal process was articulated through certain existing structures, but it also required the creation of new initiatives in order to ensure as wide a participation as possible in the time which we had available.

- Materials were created that could be adapted for parish meetings and used as resources for other groups. Given the understandable hesitancy among many of the faithful about meeting in person, this necessarily required that these materials be appropriate for both in-person and online meetings.
- Conscious of the importance of prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit in this process, and responding to an expressed desire among the clergy and laity for shared times of prayer, various prayer services were held. To summarise, Holy Hours and synodal meetings were held in each deanery. Parish meetings were also held throughout the Archdiocese.
- Some parishes chose to feedback the results of their meetings at the deanery meetings, while other parishes made individual submissions.
- School lesson plans were distributed to the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese, both primary and secondary, so that children could contribute.
- Individual responses, online and via post, were encouraged and welcomed.
- The Archdiocese hosted a national online Colloquium on Synodality, organised by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, to which various internationally recognised scholars contributed.

Beginning the synodal process

The main question posed in the synod preparatory document (par. 26) is: *A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together:" How is this "journeying together" happening today in your particular Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"?*

Beyond this fundamental question, ten themes in the synod preparatory document were employed to help local churches "articulate different facets of 'lived synodality'" (par. 30). Each of the ten themes included many points for reflection. In preparatory discussions with representative groups, it became apparent, however, that the lack of a clear focus on Christ was a stumbling block for many of the faithful. Some wondered what the Synod was about and what its purpose was, and others distrusted the process entirely because it did not seem centred on Jesus Christ. Consequently, as part of the preparatory phase, focused questions that both incorporated the themes of the synod preparatory document and made explicit the Christological presuppositions underlying the synodal process were drawn up and circulated as a starting point for dialogue and discussion.

Therefore, arising from the desire and faith of the lay faithful in the Archdiocese, the movement of the People of God on our synodal journey was, from the beginning, purposefully focused on Jesus Christ, not as an imposition, but as an opportunity for deeper knowledge and love of Him as a local church.

Time and time again, people expressed gratitude for the opportunity to speak about their faith and share their experiences of the Church.

Listening to other people's perspectives and opinions challenged everyone—first, to be open; second, to listen patiently; third, to withhold judgement; fourth, to be changed.

For some participants, the synodality experienced at the parish and deanery meetings was a new way of gathering together. The language of “journeying together” was also new, but the experience of it was welcomed.

Discussing ideas, sharing opinions, and praying to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit were all encouraged and enabled at the meetings.

As a Church, the movement towards synodality (listening to the Holy Spirit and to one another in order to journey together) has been a welcome one.

While many people have already had the experience of synodal fellowship with other Catholics—although they may not have called it that before—it was generally agreed that this should be encouraged. Several themes came forward through the discussions that need more reflection and discussion.

Other themes demonstrate that the Church's teaching is not well understood or is deemed unacceptable to people's current sensibilities. There are also possible steps to be taken as we continue this journey together. In some instances, these overlap.

Issues emerging

Sincere engagement in the synodal process involved touching upon controversial issues and, of course, tensions and differences emerged. Specific issues will be dealt with below as they arise. Nonetheless, two very clear trends emerged that characterised almost all these tensions.

First, those who expressed disagreement or reservations about some of the Church's teachings very often were not engaging with the Church's actual teaching. They were, instead, engaging with negative stereotypes or even caricatures of the Church's teaching.

This made finding a starting point for dialogue difficult. It further shows the shortcomings of the Church's present methods of evangelisation and catechesis. Secular narratives play a disproportionate role in forming the mindset and understanding of the faithful.

Secondly, a generation gap emerged. This is perhaps most succinctly articulated by Dr Sara Parvis of the University of Edinburgh speaking at the Archdiocesan-hosted national conference, *Synodality in the Life & Mission of the Church*:

“The young and the Vatican II generation...see things very differently...the necessary task of telling their stories to each other is going to be painful...The sheer difference of what the young think the Church is, the generation for who to be Christian at all is to be effectively an everyday martyr...what the world looks like to young students is so different from what it looked like to my parent's generation where Christianity was normal...”

As predicted, this second tension emerged again and again in discussions. Dr Parvis herself expressed the hope that the synodal process might be a moment of healing and rapprochement. In doing so she articulated the implicit desire of so many involved in the synodal process.

Liturgy

There is a desire for the liturgy to be better understood in order to foster participation and a fruitful reception of the Sacraments.

While many individuals expressed their own particular liturgical preferences, nonetheless, it emerged that there was a real willingness to be open to how others might find it useful to pray.

The consensus seemed to be that there should be a place for a variety of forms of worship, both traditional and contemporary, and in particular that both the Traditional Latin Mass (extraordinary form) and the Novus Ordo should be reverently celebrated and warmly embraced.

Communication

Several topics regarding communication came up: first, we can learn to listen better to one another, and especially to young people. The synodal meetings have already shown that.

Second, there is a need to communicate within our parishes and throughout the Archdiocese to know what is happening in our communities and more broadly.

Third, parishes may need assistance with their communication platforms, such that websites, social media presence, and information flow can be improved.

Another theme was that if there is to be genuine consultation of the laity and a flourishing of co-responsibility, these synod responses should be the start of a regular dialogue between the whole People of God in the Archdiocese.

Dialogue, in this sense, can be a path towards a greater grasp of the truth and a more intense participation in the life of Christ. It is desirable that such conversations become the norm and that issues and concerns of both the clergy and the laity be discussed in an open and respectful manner.

Young People

A strong, recurring theme was a concern about the number of young people leaving the Church. Like people of all ages, the primary human need of young adults is for meaningful and life-giving relationships.

Beyond this first and irreplaceable exigency, a life lived generously with a clear purpose (and not necessarily without sacrifice) is universally desired, especially by young people. The Church has not always communicated well about the importance of good friendships, nor how to meet the need for a life filled with meaning and intentional, generous love.

The Catholic schools and chaplaincies could be an opportunity to begin these conversations and to reach younger people and families.

Strengthening the connection between the parish and the school could also be a way to hear what the needs of young people are, especially having priests visit the schools and speak with the children and young people, to listen to their questions and understand their perspectives.

Inclusivity

Education and discussion about Christian anthropology, especially human sexuality and family life, is a great need. Many synodal submissions included the word “inclusive” or “inclusivity”, but the implication of these terms was not elaborated upon. Moreover, the use of these words seems to be derived from an entirely secular origin.

It does seem that underlying the expressed desire for greater inclusivity there is a lack of awareness of the pastoral application of the Church’s teaching, that is, why the Church teaches what She does, and how that is completely ordered towards personal flourishing and integral happiness.

There were also many submissions that expressed gratitude for the clarity of the Church’s teaching, especially about sexual ethics, and whose concerns focused more on how to live the Church’s call to family life in a socio-economic situation that marginalises stay-at-home mothers or fathers. The challenges all families face are real and should not be overlooked or underestimated.

Cooperation between clergy and laity

The People of God desire to contribute to the Church and to collaborate in Her mission with an awareness of their spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit can make us more fruitful if we know how we are best able to cooperate with Him and with others.

This in turn makes more effective the entire work of the Church. Co-responsibility requires self-knowledge on the part of everyone, openness on the part of the parish priest, and generosity and initiative on the part of the laity.

One parish expressed this succinctly: *“People need to know how and why to contribute...”*

Women in the Church

The topic of the role of women in the Church was raised many times. There was little to no awareness, however, of the leadership roles currently held by women at the Archdiocesan level or parochial level. In general, there appears to be little awareness of these, perhaps because they are less visible than the role of the archbishop or the parish priest. But, as many commented, need this necessarily be the case?

Moreover, there may be ways to encourage the contribution of women even more in decision making at every level, especially in places where this has not yet happened, and also to give women a voice in the magisterial dimension of the Church, when and where that is possible.

Regrettably, while touching upon something significant, the questions about the place of women in the Church were usually posed in a reductive manner based upon presuppositions drawn from secular discourse. The significant question of 'do women have value?' was masked by the question of 'what can women do?'

The first is an existential question, not a ministerial one, and much deeper. The answer, of course, is yes, but value and dignity are not outgrowths of function.

Attempts to make the equal dignity of women dependent on women doing the same things as men reduces dignity to activity. This mindset diminishes the true dignity of both men and women. Activity and function tell us something about a person, but dignity touches something much more essential and is prior to both. This is not clearly understood in the Church or in society.

Vocations to the priesthood

The dwindling number of priests is a cause of grave concern for the faithful. However, little attention was given to the underlying spiritual causes of this crisis.

Instead, common suggestions to bolster the number of priests were that the Church should ordain women or allowed married priests.

However, such responses do not address the underlying spiritual reality that the crisis in priestly vocations is a crisis of faith. If we, as a Church, no longer seek God, then God will no longer send us priests. If young people are not invited to seek God more in their daily lives, and if they do not see this modelled, then a vocation to the priesthood or religious life will likely never occur to them.

It should be stated frankly that the question of women's ordination has been answered definitively by the Church. It is not possible for women to be ordained. Continued discussion of this topic therefore cannot be part of a synodal journey that is genuinely ecclesial in nature and focused on Christ as both its starting point and its goal.

Faith formation

The spiritual lives of Catholics need support and development. This should include opportunities to learn how to pray, to make retreats, and to understand better the Church's rich spiritual heritage.

People are seeking meditation and recollection – both inside and outside the Church – but they do not necessarily equate it with Catholicism. The spiritual wisdom of our tradition can be opened and shared with among the Church's children and with all.

Care for the earth

Concerns about the environment were expressed, and care for the earth is part of our responsibility as stewards of creation.

While the Church cannot fix the environment, Her members are fully capable of engaging in a robust discussion about how our parishes, properties, and civic communities can be more ecologically responsible.

Contemporary society and the Church

Many expressed the opinion that the Church is out of date and must update to the pace, style, and tastes of modern life.

While certain things can most certainly be adapted, a discernment is required about how the spiritual needs of modern people can be met most effectively by the Church.

What the world has to offer is never satisfactory at the deepest spiritual level, and so to “update” in order to offer less of Jesus Christ to the world would be a betrayal of the Church's identity and mission.

As Saint Ignatius of Antioch wrote in the second century, and which is still pertinent today: *“For the work we have to do is no affair of persuasive speaking; Christianity lies in achieving greatness in the face of a world's hatred.”*

Steps to take

Mass and confession availability

An urgent desire that was expressed numerous times was that Holy Mass and the Sacrament of Penance be more widely available.

It was noted numerous times that in order to enable the priests to be more available, people must engage in their parishes and assist with parish councils, finance councils, and as volunteers for various groups (fabric committee, altar and sanctuary care, cleaning, hospitality, etc.). If, indeed, people are willing to collaborate in this way, it is hoped that this would allow the priests to be more available for the celebration of the Sacraments.

Vocations to the priesthood

The example of faith-filled and dedicated men is the greatest incentive for young men to consider the priesthood. The deep joy that comes with a life of such sacrifice is also attractive. Supporting our priests to share their lives and their faith, along with their hardships and triumphs, could open up to young men the possibility of a priestly vocation.

Catholic devotions

Many people desire that Catholic devotions be promoted in parishes and in families. Obviously, in family homes, any prayers or devotions may be practiced, but perhaps a reintroduction to some of the more common ones would be helpful for families.

Prayer groups and faith formation

There is a strong desire for prayer together, especially for the parishes and their needs, as well as for the needs of their members (illnesses, bereavements, celebrations, etc.). The formation and nourishment of groups intentionally praying for others, both at the archdiocesan level and at the parish level, should be implemented.

Additionally, small groups that meet together over time should be encouraged. These can be focused on the study of Sacred Scripture or other faith formation; they could be a fruit of Alpha courses or Cursillo; or as a new faith-sharing initiative. The laity can initiate such groups on their own; small groups need not be tied to a parish location or function, although some form of dialogue with a spiritual mentor should be encouraged. Further, faith formation in general is greatly desired at all levels.

It is clear from comments made in the synodal process that this faith formation, though it must have an intellectual content, also requires something more: an affective element. One will not embrace the truth – and certainly not a challenging and potentially life-changing truth – unless one first loves the truth.

The recent Archdiocesan initiative of the Diploma in Catechetics has been enthusiastically taken up by dozens of people; it is hoped that more will take advantage of this resource.

The Archdiocese has also provided catechetical content on various topics through its YouTube channel and Facebook account—this was noted and appreciated. The recent implementation of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, focused on catechesis for 3–6 year-olds, is also a new catechetical endeavour and a sign of hope in the Archdiocese.

One difficulty in terms of faith formation is that what is being offered is not always communicated to or among the parishes, such that many do not know or have not heard about what is available.

Hospitality and outreach

Parish communities should be welcoming—this is universally desired.

This includes the preparation of the worship space and common spaces, that they be clean, ordered, properly furnished, and well-lit.

Parish members should be friendly, and also aware of and sensitive to those have been hurt by the Church or may feel excluded because of their life situation.

While all should be welcome to worship in the Church, the guidelines for the reception of Holy Communion should be clear, lest anyone “eat or drink judgement upon himself” (1 Cor 11:27-29), recalling that clarity need not be rude or punitive in any way.

As many of the participants in the synodal process commented, calling people to live by the standards of Christ might be a challenge but it is often an invitation to live more authentically.

Many good and practical suggestions were made to help people come back to Mass after the pandemic. For example, using parish registers to reach out to non-returners or having welcome packs for new or returning people in the parish.

To create a welcoming environment, again, people are willing and ready to help. However, rather than waiting on people to come to us, parishes can be creative in generating opportunities and events that demonstrate our genuine care for others and a desire to be supportive and caring.

At a very practical level, we need good facilities, wherever possible, for those with challenges to mobility (the handicapped, the elderly, those with small children, etc.).

Communication within and outside the parish

Regarding online services, prayer groups, and meetings: we can and should continue what is helpful for people.

Parishioners with particular skills in website design and management as well as social media can be key to extending hospitality and community in a virtual dimension.

Cooperation between clergy and laity

Parish councils are seen as an obvious way for laity and clergy to collaborate, and for members of the parish to be heard.

Such cooperation can aid communication, support priests, and ensure financial transparency.

Having parish teams with lay leaders (paid when possible) would enable delegation of tasks and foster co-responsibility (for example, delegating youth ministry to a paid youth worker), while also being of great benefit to the entire parish.

Parishes have different needs, so an ongoing and open dialogue between the parish priest and the laity, a dialogue that is rooted in prayer together, is necessary to identify needs, obstacles and solutions.

Abuse and the Church's response

It is a source of deep shame for Christians that some have used the sacred ministry as an opportunity to attack the vulnerable and the weak.

In recent times successive popes have recognised this problem. Pope Benedict memorably referred to the 'filth' that was inside the Church and the priesthood.

Through new processes, the Holy See has sought to make sure that all dioceses around the world will treat safeguarding concerns properly.

The popes have also been consistent in their call to the bishops to root out this wickedness wherever it is to be found, and the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh takes this responsibility seriously.

It has cooperated fully with a recent independent safeguarding audit which reported positively.

The Archdiocese also has a policy of mandatory reporting. This means that any criminal accusation that it receives against any of its members, both lay and clerical, is taken directly to the police.

Additionally, the creation of the independent Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency earlier this year, to be chaired by a senior member of the judiciary, will give Catholics and people of all faith the reassurance that no effort is being spared to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable in God's family.

Conclusion

Journeying together means moving toward a common goal.

The goal of all our striving is nothing else than "the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:14). This will necessarily mean conversion for all of us. Being on the way to Jesus Christ requires recognising areas where change is necessary and then acting upon that insight.

This first part of our synodal journey has made us aware of things in our local church that need to be explored together.

As our next step, we should pray and then act upon what comes from that prayer, both at the parish and archdiocesan level.

Not all parishes have the same needs or concerns, so there is not one answer that can be given to how the Church should journey together.

Additionally, the action needed cannot be only the work of the clergy or the laity. Both are essential and co-responsible for the mission of the Church.

As needs arise and areas for potential change manifest themselves, clergy and laity must pray and collaborate in order to respond with integrity to the challenges our Church faces.

Appendix 1

Ahead of each Deanery synod meeting a Holy Hour was held to help participants spiritually prepare. Below is the order of service.

Hymn for Exposition

Godhead here in hiding,
Whom I do adore,
Masked by these bare shadows,
Shape and nothing more,
See, Lord, at thy service
Low lies here a heart
Lost, all lost in wonder
At the God thou art.

Seeing, touching, tasting
Are in thee deceived:
How says trusty hearing?
That shall be believed:
What God's Son has told me,
Take for truth I do;
Truth himself speaks truly
Or there's nothing true.

On the cross thy godhead
Made no sign to men,
Here thy very manhood
Steals from human ken:
Both are my confession,
Both are my belief,
And I pray the prayer
Of the dying thief.

I am not like Thomas,
Wounds I cannot see,
But can plainly call thee
Lord and God as he:
This faith each day deeper
Be my holding of;
DAILY make me harder
Hope and dearer love.

Jesu, whom I look at
shrouded here below,
I beseech thee send me
What I long for so,
Some day to gaze on thee
Face to face in light
And be blessed for ever
With thy glory's sight.

Synod Prayer

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.

First Reading (1Co 12:1-2, 4-11)

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were heathen, you were led astray to dumb idols, however you may have been moved. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every-one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

First Hymn

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit;
Let us find that second rest;
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Second Reading (Rom 12:1-2)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Second Hymn

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see.

*Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church
gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

QUESTIONS FOR NEXT WEEK:

1. Journeying together as a Church implies a vital relationship with God, individually and communally. How can we foster and deepen each person's relationship with God through Christ? What are we doing well that needs to be maintained? What needs improving?
2. Journeying together as a Church implies loving concern for those who no longer walk with us. How can we reach out to the "lapsed", the disillusioned, the wounded, the angry, the apathetic? How can we help them feel they still have a home, and a mission, within the Catholic Church?

Appendix 2

Each Deanery synod meeting followed the same agenda to ensure consistency.



Deanery Synod Meeting Agenda



I. 7:00 p.m. Welcome and Opening prayer

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.

II. 7:05 p.m. Sister Anna Marie: principles of dialogue from *Ut Unum Sint*

III. 7:15 p.m. Father John Deighan: spiritual conversations

IV. 7:25 p.m. Conversation #1:

Journeying together as a Church implies a vital relationship with God, individually and communally. How can we foster and deepen each person's relationship with God through Christ? What are we doing well that needs to be maintained? What needs improving?

V. 7:55 p.m. Conversation #2:

Journeying together as a Church implies loving concern for those who no longer walk with us. How can we reach out to the "lapsed", the disillusioned, the wounded, the angry, the apathetic? How can we help them feel they still have a home, and a mission, within the Catholic Church?

VI. 8:30 p.m. Conclusion with Blessing

Appendix 3

The below document was shared with secondary schools in the Archdiocese to encourage them to host their own Synodal Spiritual Conversations.

**Synod 2021-23
High Schools**

Suggested time: 1hr

You are invited to hold a Synodal Spiritual Conversation with the pupils in your school.

Resources needed:
Screen/smartboard to show introductory clip
Flipchart paper to record group discussions
Questions sheets for participants
Copy of the Prayer to the Holy Spirit

10 min	1) Show the <u>2 minute</u> clip of Archbishop Cushley speaking about the <u>Synodality</u> . https://www.facebook.com/EdinburghRCdiocese/videos/311465224104902
	2) Explain that this process is a Spiritual Conversation. That we are inviting the Holy Spirit to work in each of us and help us contribute to the Synod process.
	3) Give out a copy of the prayer to the Holy Spirit <u>or</u> show on screen [prayer for the synod, <u>Adversus</u> Sancte Spiritus]. Ask participants to think about the prayer whilst opening their heart to the Holy Spirit.
5 mins	4) Give out a copy of the questions below to each pupil. Ask participants to take a quiet moment and reflect on the questions before moving to the next stage.
20 mins	5) Ask participants to break into 5 smaller groups to discuss the groups of questions. Ask someone in the group to record the ideas on a flip chart.
5 mins	6) Call the group back to one large group. Ask a representative from each group to feedback ideas from their discussion. At this point everyone else listens but does not engage in a discussion.
10mins	7) Take a quiet moment to reflect on all the ideas that everyone has discussed and then ask the group to discuss using the following prompts: - How were you affected by what you heard? - Is there a common thread in what was shared? - Is there something missing that you had expected would be said? - Were you especially touched by a particular sharing? - Have you received any particular insight or revelation? What is it? - Where did you experience a sense of harmony with others as we shared with one another?
	8) Write down what has been shared and return to:

Questions:

Seek and finding God
Would you describe God as part of your life? Would you say that the Church leads you towards God? Do you see the Church as indifferent, or an obstacle in the way?

Listening
Do you feel that you are listened to in the Church?
How do you think the church could listen to young people better?

Understanding and Inclusion
Do you feel part of the Church? Please say why?
In what ways could the Church understand young people more?

Involvement and participation
In what ways are you involved in the Church?
How can the Church involve young people more in the Church?

Decision-making
How can we improve decision-making in the church so that we properly take account of what the Holy Spirit is saying through each of us?
What actions do you think the Holy Spirit is calling the Church to make as part of this Synod process?
How do you think we are being called to be witnesses of God's love in today's society?
How can we strengthen and grow our Catholic community?

Journeying with others
What persons or groups do you think are marginalised in society that the Church could listen to, involve and support more?

Appendix 4

The below document was shared with primary schools in the Archdiocese to encourage them to host their own Synodal Spiritual Conversations.

Synod 2021-23 Primary Schools
Suggested time: 1hr

You are invited to hold a Synodal Spiritual Conversation with the pupils in your primary school.

Resources needed:
- Screen/smartboard to show introductory clip
- Flipchart paper to record group discussions
- Copy of the Prayer to the Holy Spirit
- Paper and pens/pencils to make your drawings

10 min	1) Show the <u>2 minute</u> clip of Archbishop Cushley speaking about <u>Synodality</u> https://www.facebook.com/EdinburghRCdiocese/videos/311465224104902 2) Explain that this process is a Spiritual Conversation. That we are inviting the Holy Spirit to work in each of us and help us contribute to the Synod process. 3) Read the prayer to the Holy Spirit and ask everyone to join in. (A copy of the prayer is attached. This can be printed out and given to each pupil or it can be shown on the screen). Ask participants to think about the prayer whilst opening their heart to the Holy Spirit.
5 mins	4) Read the story below of Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24 13-35) You may wish to read only the introduction section to younger classes.
20mins	5) Ask pupils to draw a picture of what it means to 'Walk together with Jesus'
15mins	6) When <u>the pupils have</u> finished their drawings ask them each to hold up their art and describe what they have drawn and why?
10mins	7) Take a quiet moment to reflect on all the ideas that everyone has shared and then ask the group to have a discussion using the following prompts: - How did it make you feel hearing about everyone's picture? - Is there a common message in what everyone was sharing? - Is there something missing that you had expected would be said? - Were you especially touched by a particular picture?
	8) Write down the responses and return to: (Please include the pictures).

Synod Prayer to the Holy Spirit

*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.*

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS - Introduction

Synod is not a word that you may know.

The bible story of 'The Road to Emmaus' is a great place to begin to understand what is meant by Synod. This is in Luke's Gospel. (Luke 24 13-35).

Cleopas and another disciple are walking together seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day of Jesus's resurrection. As they walked "they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them" (Luke 24:14-15).

Later, after the disciples had recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread, they recounted, "Were not our hearts burning within us as he spoke to us on the way?" (Luke 24:32).

Walking together, discussing, welcoming and recognizing Jesus, who is present with us, letting him speak to our hearts and set them afire, these are the essential elements of the reality we call a "synod" in the Church.

(Info adapted from the SF Bishop's bulletin on the synod process <https://www.sfcatholic.org/bishopsbulletin/we-journey-together-during-the-synod-on-synodality/>)

On the Road to Emmaus – Luke 24 13-35

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles[a] from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." ²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward

evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" ³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Appendix 5

To help people understand synodality and how the process would work in our Archdiocese, an explainer video was compiled featuring Sr Anna Marie McGuan RSM and Fr John Deighan. View the video on the Archdiocese's Synod playlist on YouTube at bit.ly/SynodPlaylist. Below is a promotional poster for the playlist.

