

For a Synodal Church
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SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

Exploring the Role of the Laity

Saturday 4 May 2024 | 10:30am to 1:00pm

Canon Hoban Hall, Ss John Cantius & Nicholas,
34 W Main Street, Broxburn, EH52 5RJ

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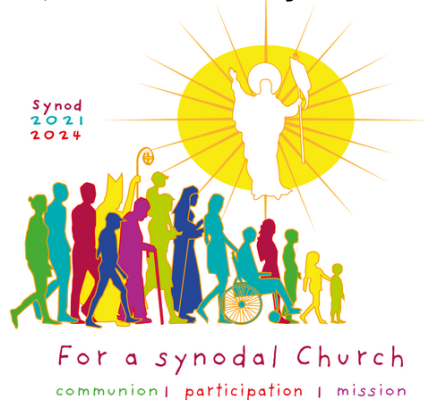
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Introduction

This document contains information on the event and background reading.

You are asked to familiarise yourself with the background reading and questions on the following pages so that our *Conversation in the Spirit* is as informed as possible and infused with prayer. Thank you!

Fr John Deighan, Archdiocesan Synod Lead



The event

The Archdiocesan Synodal Team is pleased to welcome you to its first (but not last) *Conversation in the Spirit* event.

Spiritual Conversation is a framework for communal discernment. It was used extensively at the Synod held in Rome in October 2023. Local churches are being encouraged to use it too.

The overall theme of this event's Spiritual Conversation is **The Role of the Laity** in the context of our Archdiocese.

To help us explore this theme, we have formulated four questions, drawing on *A Synodal Church in Mission*, the synthesis document of the October 2023 Synod. You will find these questions and background reading on the following pages.

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Event format

In the first round of discussion, you will have an initial two minutes in your group to offer your views on the four questions. That's a short time, so we recommend you pick one question to focus on.

In any event, your two minutes will be more beneficial to those who are listening if you have an idea of what you want to say in advance.

Therefore please prayerfully reflect on the questions in this document before the event.

The background reading material in this document is meant to help you prepare. Please take time for prayerful reading and reflection. In this way, our Spiritual Conversation will be (a) *as informed as possible* and (b) *infused with prayer*.

Then come along and speak from the heart! When considering what you want to say, please remember that the scope of the conversation is limited to our Archdiocese.

Event schedule

1030: Holy Mass in Ss John Cantius & Nicholas.*

1110: Synod in 2024: Where are we now?

1125: Meet Fr John Deighan & the Synod team

1140: Spiritual conversation in groups.

1240: Sharing the fruits (feedback).

1300: End

*After Mass you will be directed to the Church Hall for the Spiritual Conversation.



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Question 1

“In their immense variety, the charisms of the laity represent distinct gifts to the Church from the Holy Spirit that must be called forth, recognised, and fully appreciated.” - From A Synodal Church in Mission.

To what extent are we already doing this?

How could we do it more effectively at parish and diocesan level?

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Question 1 background reading

From International Theological Commission, Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church.

[...] In this perspective [of synodality], the participation of the lay faithful becomes essential. They are the immense majority of the People of God and there is much to be learnt from their participation in the various forms of the life and mission of ecclesial communities, from popular piety and generic pastoral care, to their specific competency in various sectors of cultural and social life.

[...] We must, therefore, overcome the obstacles created by the lack of formation and

recognised spaces in which the lay faithful can express themselves and act, and by a clerical mindset which runs the risk of keeping them on the edges of ecclesial life. This requires a priority commitment in the task of forming a mature ecclesial sense, which, at the institutional level, needs to be transformed into a regular synodal process.

[...] As Pope Francis has emphasised, "Only to the extent that [we] keep connected to the 'base' and start from people and their daily problems, can a synodal Church begin to take shape."



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Question 2

The Synthesis proposes an expansion of existing lay ministries (such as the ministries of lector and acolyte) as well as the creation of new ones (such as a ministry assigned to married couples to support marriage and family life, and a ministry of “listening and accompanying”).

In the context of our Archdiocese, would this be an effective way of calling forth and recognising the charisms of the laity?

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Question 2 background reading

From John Paul II, Post-Synodal Exhortation Christifideles Laici.

[...] In the course of Synod work, the Fathers devoted much attention to the Lectorate and the Acolytate. While in the past these ministries existed in the Latin Church only as spiritual steps on route to the ordained ministry, with the motu proprio of Paul VI, *Ministeria Quaedam*, they assumed an autonomy and stability, as well as a possibility of their being given to the lay faithful, albeit, only to men.

From Pope Francis, Spiritus Domini, On Modifying Canon 230§1 Regarding Access of Women to the Ministries of Lectorate and Acolytate.

Following a venerable tradition, the reception of “lay ministries”, which Saint Paul VI regulated

in the Motu Proprio Ministeria Quaedam, preceded the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, although such ministries were conferred on other suitable male faithful. A number of Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops have highlighted the need to deepen the subject doctrinally, so that it may respond to the needs of the times [...]

Consequently, after having heard the opinion of the competent Dicasteries, I have decided to modify canon 230 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law. I therefore decree that Canon 230 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law shall in future have the following formulation: “Lay persons [i.e. men and women] who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.”



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Question 3

Are we doing enough to equip our lay people to be confident witnesses to Christ in today's world?

If not, what more could be done?

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Question 3 background reading

From John Paul II, Post-Synodal Exhortation Christifideles Laici.

The situation today points to an ever-increasing urgency for a doctrinal formation of the lay faithful, not simply in a better understanding which is natural to faith's dynamism but also in enabling them to "give a reason for their hoping" in view of the world and its grave and complex problems.

Therefore, a systematic approach to catechesis, geared to age and the diverse situations of life, is an absolute necessity, as is

a more decided Christian promotion of culture, in response to the perennial yet always new questions that concern individuals and society today.

This is especially true for the lay faithful who have responsibilities in various fields of society and public life.

Above all, it is indispensable that they have a more exact knowledge - and this demands a more widespread and precise presentation - of the Church's social doctrine, as repeatedly stressed by the Synod Fathers in their presentations.



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Question 4

The Synthesis proposes that the role of women in the Church be expanded, especially with regard to decision-making (although it does not open up the possibility of female priests).

To what extent has this already happened in our Archdiocese?

To what extent do we still have work to do?

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Question 4 background reading

From A Synodal Church in Mission.

Where dignity and justice are undermined in relationships between men and women in the Church, we weaken the credibility of our proclamation to the world. Our synodal path shows the need for relational renewal and structural changes. In this way we can better welcome the participation and contribution of all – with lay and consecrated women and men,

deacons, priests, and bishops – as co-responsible disciples in the work of mission. The Assembly asks that we avoid repeating the mistake of talking about women as an ‘issue’ or a ‘problem’. Instead, we desire to promote a Church in which men and women dialogue together, in order to understand more deeply the horizon of God's plan, which sees them together as protagonists, without subordination, exclusion and competition.

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Conclusion to background reading

From John Paul II, Post-Synodal Exhortation Christifideles Laici.

A new state of affairs today both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with a particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful. If lack of commitment is always unacceptable, the present time renders it even more so. It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle.

We continue in our reading of the gospel

parable: "And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?'. They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us'. He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too'."(Mt 20:6-7).

Since the work that awaits everyone in the vineyard of the Lord is so great, there is no place for idleness. With even greater urgency the "householder" repeats his invitation: "You go into my vineyard too".

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Getting to the event

Address

Ss John Cantius & Nicholas Church
34 West Main Street
Broxburn
EH52 5RJ

Parking

Limited parking in church grounds. Free parking on street outside church.

Nearest train station

Uphall, Livingston EH54 5QD
(then bus from Pumpherston Road)

Queries:

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