



SYNOD 2021-2023



What is a Synod?

The word Synod means **journeying together**. Synods are meetings held within the Church to discuss various topics.

The Synod is not a vast opinion poll; rather it is a process of deep listening to each other, of prayer and discernment to hear together the voice of the Holy Spirit, and to discover the will of God for his Church. This is the first time that every Catholic in the world has been asked to participate personally in a Synod.

The theme of this Synod is 'Communion, Participation & Mission'

We have been asked to consider the following questions:

If we are a Church that, in announcing the Gospel, journeys together,

- How is this "journeying together" happening in today's Church?
- What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"?

In responding to these questions we are invited to:

- **Recall our experiences:**

What experiences of our Parish does this 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 Parish?

Meeting Dates and Themes

Meeting One: Saturday 26th of February

1. Companions on the Journey
2. Listening

Meeting Two: Saturday 26th of March

1. Speaking Out
2. Sharing Responsibility for our common mission
3. Dialogue in Church and Society

Meeting Three: Saturday 3rd of April

1. Celebration
2. Ecumenism
3. Authority and Participation

Meeting Four: Saturday 30th April

1. Discerning and decoding
2. Forming ourselves in Synodality

The meetings are spread over a number of weeks to give you the chance to attend as many as possible. Notes on each theme will be printed in the Bulletin before each meeting

THE MEETINGS

The meetings will be after 10.00am Mass. Tea and Coffee will be available before we begin. The times of each part are provisional and dependant on how quickly we proceed. We will not go beyond 1.00pm

PART 1: 11.00am-11.45am

will be in four parts

Step 1: The Reading of a Scripture text. The text will be read twice by two different people. The first reading will allow you to get a feel for the passage. During the second reading note the word or phrase to which your attention is being drawn. It is God drawing your attention to this word or phrase. The Holy Spirit has a special message for you in this moment

Step 2: Meditate on the word or phrase. How is God speaking to you through the word or phrase? Is there an invitation? Is there a call? Does a memory surface? What image comes to mind? What feelings are invoked? Take your time and allow God to speak to you in the depths of your soul. Notice that God is speaking to you personally about your life right now

Step 3: Respond to God who has been speaking to you. What is your response? What is your prayer? Allow your own words to come from a place deep within where the Spirit dwells.
(You will be invited to share your prayer with the group)

Step 4: Still yourself at rest in the loving embrace of your Maker. Words are never sufficient to express all that stirs within. Simply present to the Sacred One. Savour the silence. Connect with the Presence deep in your soul. When distractions occur, return to your word or phrase and repeat it to re-centre

PAUSE FOR SOUP AND SANDWICHES, TEA AND COFFEE

PART 2: 12.15pm-1.00pm

will be in six parts

In this part, participants are asked to keep in mind the themes of the meeting.

Step 1: Everyone takes equal turns to share the fruit of his or her prayer, in relation to the reflection questions

There is no dialogue at this time and all participants simply listen deeply to each person and attend to how the Holy Spirit is moving:

- Within yourself
- Within the person speaking
- And in the group as a whole

Step 2: A time of Silence to note one's interior movements

Step 3: Some dialogue may occur within the group with care taken that spiritual attentiveness be maintained. Here, each individual is asked to respond to what someone else has said in Step 1, for instance by seeking further clarification, expressing agreement or expanding what the other person said.

Step 4: A time of silence to assimilate what has been said

Step 5: Participants reflect on what seems to be resonating in the conversation and what moved them most deeply. New insights and even unresolved questions are also noted

Step 6: Spontaneous prayers of gratitude can conclude the conversation

THE MEETING CLOSSES WITH THE SYNOD PRAYER