



Synod Newsletter No. 2

Friday 31st December 2021



Pope Francis needs you!

The new calendar year is about to begin. However, the new Church year started a few weeks ago on the first Sunday of Advent. This date also heralded the start of the most exciting Synod of our lifetimes.

Pope Francis has called a Synod that is radically different from all those held in the past sixty years. Through this Synod, the Pope has two aims:



“The Church needs you, your enthusiasm, your creativity and the joy that is so characteristic of you.”

- 1) To maximise participation in a conversation about the future of the Church. The Synod is ‘intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be’.
- 2) To fundamentally change the way the Church works, returning to the approach used so successfully in the early Church. The Synod is more than ‘a series of exercises’. It is the beginning of ‘a journey of growing authentically towards the communion and mission that God calls the Church to live out.’

The Holy Father invites everyone to be involved. At St Joseph’s, we encourage you to accept this invitation and we will help you to do so.

The Synodal process

The Synodal process is designed to help us to discover God’s plans for his Church in the third millennium. There are three stages to this process.

1) Encounter

We must meet each other to share personal experiences and ideas about how the Church could better live out the mission Jesus has given us. The pandemic is an important part of the context for the Synod. But it also continues to affect how

easily we can encounter each other, especially as we seek to maximise participation in the process. In our parish, we are trying to provide as many routes as possible to allow all to have their voice.

2) Listen

Many of us are very good at having our say. However, the Synodal process reminds us that we must also listen carefully to what others say. No-one has a monopoly on wisdom! Every voice matters.

3) Discern

Having heard a variety of perspectives and ideas, we then ponder on what has been said. We reflect in a prayerful atmosphere, seeking to discern the will of the Holy Spirit.

How can you get involved at St Joseph’s?

The first thing to do is, simply, take an interest. There is lots of information about the Synod online. We will continue to promote the Synod within the parish, for example through these newsletters. Try to include the Prayer for the Synod in your prayer life and pray for the success of the Synod.

Secondly, join in the Synodal journey by looking for ways to actively participate. Make sure that Pope Francis hears from you. Initially, this means making sure that Bishop Richard hears from you. We will help you to do this throughout January. We will use a variety of approaches, so you should be able to find one that helps you.

As a parish, we will focus on each of the three Synodal themes for a week. There will be opportunities to encounter each other and we will provide resources to help you to listen to each other and discern what the Holy Spirit might be saying to us.

Informal approaches

You might prefer to discuss Synodal questions in familiar groups, for example family or friendship groups. It is also possible to reflect on the

questions individually, though to do so you should draw on conversations that you have had with others about relevant topics.

Parish groups

We will organise online groups each week. These will be on a variety of days and times, so hopefully you can find a suitable one if you would like to participate in this way.

Thank you to those who have already offered to lead these groups. There are still a few more days to volunteer to do so. Either email Chris Donovan using the address at the end of this newsletter or check the Synod section of the parish website.

We will invite parishioners to sign up for these groups soon.

If you would prefer to have these discussions in person, we hope to organise such an event at the end of January. Covid restrictions permitting, this will take place from 2pm to 5pm in the church hall on Saturday 29th January. Watch out for further details nearer the time.



School community

It is important that we include our school community in the Synod, particularly the children. We will arrange a series of suitable events through the school to ensure that the children learn more about the Synod and can fully participate.

Sharing responses with the Diocese

This first stage of the Synod is about gathering views from each Diocese across the world. Accordingly, we have to share the outcomes of our parish discussions with our Diocese.

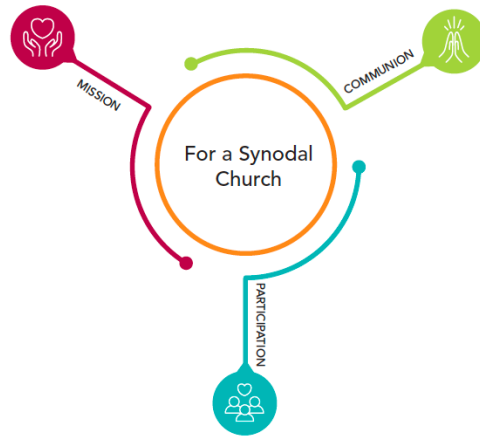
You can do this directly via the Diocesan website (www.abdiocese.org.uk/synod). If you want your views to be included in the response from our parish, which we encourage, you will be able to share them with us for this purpose. All responses have to be with the Diocese by Friday 4th February.

Bishop Richard will present a summary of what our Diocese has said online at 7:30pm on Wednesday 9th March. You can register for this event on the Diocesan website.

What will we be talking about?

The fundamental questions for the Synod are:

- ◆ How well do we 'journey together' to proclaim the Gospel?
- ◆ What steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our 'journeying together'?



To help us reflect on these big questions, the Synod centres on three themes.

1) Communion (week beginning 9th January)

This theme is about *who* is on the journey. Who is on the periphery of our

parish and why? How well do we communicate with each other?

2) Participation (week beginning 16th January)

This theme is about *what* those on the journey do. How strong is our prayer life? How well are we prepared for what we have to do within the Church? How well do we engage with those outside the Church?

3) Mission (week beginning 23rd January)

This theme is about *why* we are on the journey. How does our parish community bring people closer to God? Does the parish make good use of everyone's gifts? Are we good enough at passing on our faith?

Latest news

For all the most up-to-date information about the Synod and downloadable resources, please visit the parish website (st-josephs-epsom.org.uk/synod2021.php).

Contact us

If you have any comments, suggestions or questions about the Synod, please talk to Canon Bill, Fr Stephen or Chris Donovan (synod@st-josephs-epsom.org.uk).