

Journeying Together





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.

Together,
listening
to the
Holy Spirit,
let us be led
by God



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Introduction

- What is Pope Francis asking of us – to participate in a Synod
- Dispel any misconceptions
- Understand the process of discernment
- How will it work in our diocese



Synod

- The General Synod is the national assembly of the **Church of England**. It came into being in 1970 under the Synodical Government Measure 1969, replacing an earlier body known as the Church Assembly.
- The General Synod considers and approves legislation affecting the whole of the Church of England, formulates new forms of worship, debates matters of national and international importance, and approves the annual budget for the work of the Church at national level.
- **Catholic Church** – Following the Vatican council Pope Paul VI was keen to continue with the idea of bishops gathering with the Bishop of Rome to reflect on a particular issue, debate it, discern the outcome and then have it ratified. it would lead to an exhortation or letter. Tended to happen every 2-3 years.

MORIS LÆTITIA CHRISTUS VIVIT

DEL SANTO PADRE
FRANCISCO

A los jóvenes y a todo
el pueblo de Dios

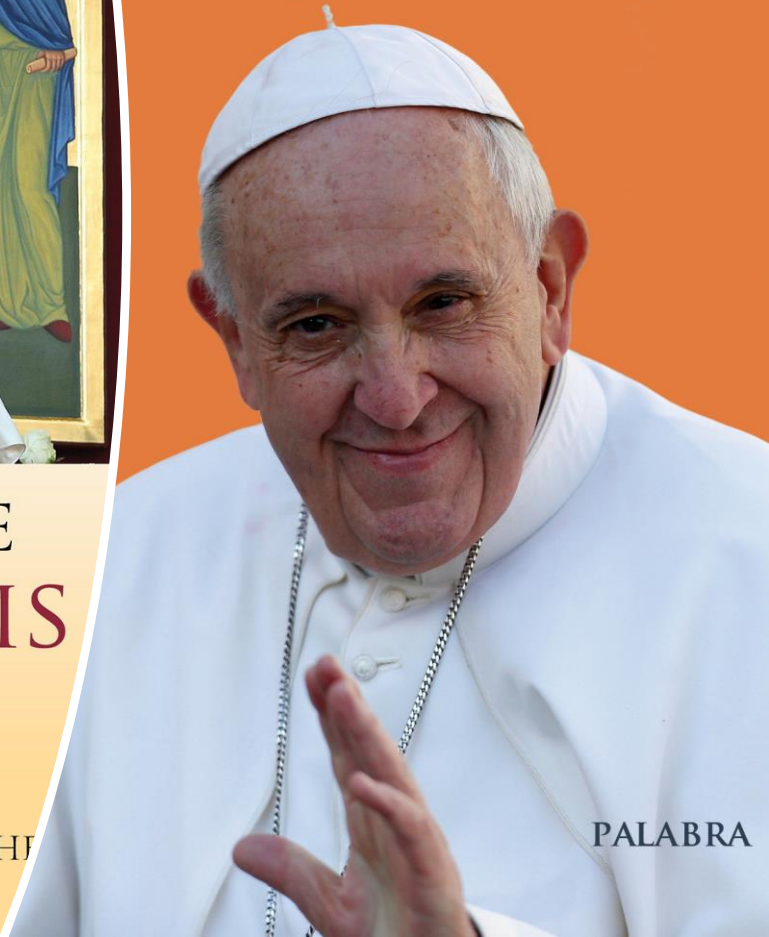
Synod - Pope Francis

Consultation with
groups of lay
people.

- Synod on the Family – led to Amoris Latetitia
- Youth – leading to Christus Vivit
- People of the Amazon - The Amazon: New paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology



THE JOY OF LOVE POPE FRANCIS



Synod – what does it mean?

Synod is a Greek word (synodos) meaning a meeting or assembly.

The two Greek words that make up Synod are **syn** meaning together and **hodos** meaning way or journey.

The entire Catholic Church is being called to participate in the 2023 Synod of Bishops, to journey together.

The goal of this journeying together is to be **present to one another**, to **listen and learn** with each other and to grow closer to the Lord and his Church.



Listen

Each local diocese is to gather clergy, religious and laity- to

1. listen to each other's joys and hopes, and griefs and anxieties
2. dialogue together on ways we can accompany each other as we seek to grow in holiness
3. pray - listening and speaking within the Church always involves prayer.

We are listening, dialoguing and praying together in order that we might hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

The "goal" of this journeying together is not to create a new vision or pastoral plan with objectives. Rather, the goal of our journeying together is to be:

- Present to one another
- To listen and learn with each other
- To grow closer to the Lord



- “The **purpose of the Synod**, and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents, but “to plant dreams, **draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to be nourished**, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another, and **create a bright resourcefulness** that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.”

- (PD, 32)

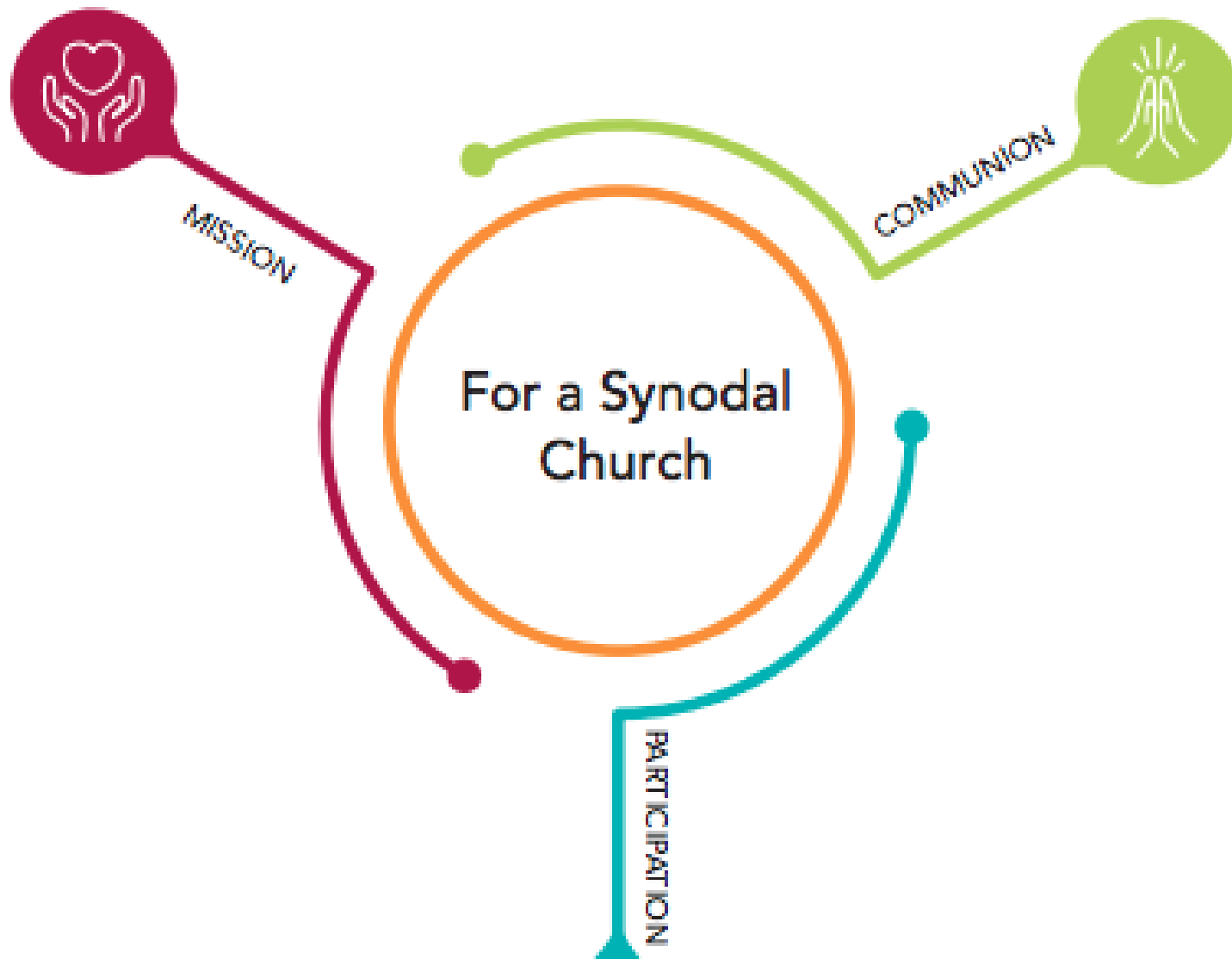
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Misconceptions

- One of the misconceptions is that this is a synod on synodality. It isn't - at its heart are three themes:
- **Communion, Participation and Mission within the context of our own diocesan Church**





Communion

Through our Baptism we are members of the Church - the family of God. This mirrors communion in the Holy Trinity. As baptised members of the Church we are on a pilgrimage to heaven ultimately. In communion we are called to participate – to participate in the life of Christ and the Church.

The conversations we have lead to conversion to Christ and commitment to active participation in the mission given by Christ.



Participation

We participate in the life of the Church through:

- Sacramental life of the Church,
- Sustained by prayer
- Reflecting on the Scriptures
- Learning about our faith

Participation also asks that as the people of God we also talk with one another and listen to one another about questions that matter.



- **Key convictions for a Synodal Church**

- Listen to one another in order to listen to the Holy Spirit
- In a spirit of prayer, grounded in the liturgy and the Word of God
- An experience shared with one another, not just filling out a questionnaire
- A process, not a one-time event
- **Discerning** together so that the decisions made are for the good of all



Discerning the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel

“The synodal journey unfolds within a historical context marked by epochal changes in society and by a crucial transition in the life of the Church, which cannot be ignored: it is within the folds of the complexity of this context, in its tensions and contradictions, that we are called to ‘scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel’ (GS, 4).”

(PD, 4)



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- The global tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Inequalities and injustices: the conditions faced by migrants, divisions across the family of humanity
- The cry of the poor and the cry of the earth
- We are all in the same boat... We are one human family living in our common home.

(Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti)

- Imagining a different future for the Church
- Being a prophetic witness to the human family, which needs to be united around a common goal rooted in the kerygma.
- ‘Dare to Dream..’





Basic Questions on the Synodal Process

A basic question prompts and guides us: How does this “journeying together,” which takes place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church? PD 2

The fundamental question for the consultation of the People of God

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”? PD 26

Themes to explore

- **COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY: FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY:** In the Church and in society, we are side by side on the same road. The spirituality of journeying together is called to become an educational principle for the formation of the human person and of the Christian, of the families, and of the communities.
- **LISTENING:** Listening is the first step, but it requires having an open mind and heart, without prejudice.
- **SPEAKING OUT:** All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, integrating freedom, truth, and charity.
- **CELEBRATION:** “Journeying together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.
- **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.



Themes to explore

- **Dialogue in church and society** - Dialogue is a path of perseverance that also includes silences and sufferings, but which is capable of gathering the experience of persons and peoples
- **Ecumenism** -The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey.
- **Authority and Participation** -A synodal Church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.
- **Discerning and Deciding** - In a synodal style, decisions are made through discernment, based on a consensus that flows from the common obedience to the Spirit.
- **Final Question on the Holy Spirit**



How the consultation is to be carried out:

- **Objectives:** Consultation of the People of God: to listen, participate, discern
 - **Honestly:** the People of God are truly consulted
 - **As broadly as possible:** everyone participates, including those on the margins
 - **Practical:** provides concrete help for the mission to evangelize
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- **Aids for the Diocesan Phase:**
 - Synodal Team coordinating this consultation in each Diocese
 - Diocesan Assemblies
 - Feedback from the Consultations



The Diocesan Phase of the Synod

- Opening of the Diocesan Phase of Synod by Bishop Declan 17th October 2021
- Information Sessions November 6th 8th 9th and 13th
- Assembly of Parish Delegates 20th November
- Beginning of the listening phase in parishes – 21st November
- Parish submissions by 28th February 2022
- Area assemblies on the four Saturdays of February
- w/c 7th March Bishop Declan with the Synod Team compile the report to be submitted by 8th April.



Toolkit for Parishes – available from the 22nd November on the Synod page of the website and via every parish delegate

- Facilitators' Guide
- Participants Guide
- Note taking sheets
- Resources for Listening Sessions – checklist
- Key Synod Questions and core questions for small groups
- Flexible Template for feeding back and submitting report both on-line and by email to synod@cliftondiocese.com



The Importance of Prayer to the Process

Pre-Session

- If possible, move to the Church
- Expose the Blessed Sacrament if this is possible and appropriate to the group you are sharing with.
- Listen to the piece of scripture provided or choose something for yourself
- Reflect in silence for 20 minutes
- Conclude with the prayer of the Synod

Post Session

Return to the Church and finish with midday prayer or night prayer





An example of the process...

A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.” In your participant booklet, reflect on the following questions:

- *How is this “journeying together” happening today in your parish?*
- *How is the Holy Spirit inviting your parish community to grow in “journeying together”? (Preparatory Document no. 26)*

Take a moment to write down your personal thoughts and reflection in your booklet. In your reflection on “journeying together,” think about:

- *What experiences, in your local parish does this question bring to mind?*
- *What are the joys of your parish life?*
- *What are the difficulties and obstacles to active parish life that you have encountered?*

After a sufficient time for participants to write down their reflections, remind the group that:

One member speaks at a time, without interruption, as other members listen. Please keep your responses to 1-2 minutes per person. I will call time and we will then move to the next question.

Allow 10 minutes for small group sharing. At the end of 10 minutes, pose the following question:

- *Where in these experiences do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit?*

Journeying Together

Not a talking shop

Not about single issues

Not for making decisions universally

Not seeking big changes or answering lots of questions

BUT about a way of being in our diocesan family and discerning what the important things are for us now living the life of faith as effective missionaries.



Journeying Together

- To Pray
 - To Listen
 - To Share
 - To Discern
 - To Act
-
- In and through the Holy Spirit



Contact

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