

'Synodal Pathway'



"We have to look at where the Lord is leading us in order for us to be effective in making new disciples for the Lord"

Pope Francis is inviting the faithful all over the world to come with him "on a journey" as a "Synodal Church". The word 'synod' means "walking together" and "indicates a way of being together as Church and 'discerning' how best to spread the Gospel amidst the challenges of life in the 21st century." This Synodal Process entitled, for a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission coincide with the start of the two-year Synodal Pathway for the Catholic Church in Ireland which will lead, in time, to a National Synodal Assembly in Ireland. We pray that the next two years will be a time of prayer, listening and discernment, involving a consultative conversation. This will allow all people - both within the Church and in society at large, to share their insights into the Catholic Church in Ireland – past, present and future – so that we can prepare for a National Synodal Assembly in the coming years. Bishop Donal explains this is the start of our **Synodal Journey**: "We have set ourselves in Ireland a five year period, to look together in a prayerful context where God is leading His Church" In this video, <https://youtu.be/Lhky65OFfEQ>, Bishop Donal McKeown reminds us of the purpose of the Church and outlines the prayerful consultation process of Synodality, of walking together, of listening, of being led by the Holy Spirit to understand where the Lord is leading us!

Starting conversations in our parishes "We have to look at where the Lord is leading us in order for us to be effective in making new disciples for the Lord"

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What happens next? In the coming weeks and months information will be shared here and throughout each parish in the Diocese on planned events and discussions. Watch your Parish Bulletins, your parish website and social media channels. Further access to resources – <https://www.derrydiocese.org/news/synod-tools> and <https://www.derrydiocese.org/synod>

Synodality aims to develop our ability to be 21st century missionaries in this parish and diocese.

Our structures are intended to serve the **mission**

- They need to be examined to see how effective they are at the levels of
 - o Parish
 - o Diocese
 - o Church throughout Ireland
 - o Universal church (Cf *Evangelii Gaudium* 27-33)
- Here are the main objectives, which manifest synodality as the form, the style, and the structure of the Church:
 - o recalling how the Spirit has guided the Church's journey through history and, today, calls us to be, together, witnesses of God's love.
 - o living a participative and inclusive ecclesial process that offers everyone—especially those who for various reasons find themselves on the margins—the opportunity to express themselves and to be heard in order to contribute to the edification of the People of God.
 - o recognizing and appreciating the wealth and the variety of the gifts and charisms that the Spirit liberally bestows for the good of the community and the benefit of the entire human family.
 - o exploring participatory ways of exercising responsibility in the proclamation of the Gospel and in the effort to build a more beautiful and habitable world.
 - o examining how responsibility and power are lived in the Church as well as the structures by which they are managed, bringing to light and trying to convert prejudices and distorted practices that are not rooted in the Gospel.
 - o accrediting the Christian community as a credible subject and reliable partner in paths of social dialogue, healing, reconciliation, inclusion and participation, the reconstruction of democracy, the promotion of fraternity and social friendship.
 - o regenerating relationships among members of Christian communities as well as between communities and other social groups, e.g., communities of believers of other denominations and religions, civil society organizations, popular movements, etc.
 - o fostering the appreciation and appropriation of the fruits of recent synodal experiences on the universal, regional, national, and local levels. (Synodal Preparatory document, para 2) [English Version of the Preparatory Document \(synod.va\)](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/assembly/documents/rc_syn_20180927_english_version_en.html)

In the Diocese of Derry, we plan to have our local conversations between mid-January and mid-February. These will be collected and feed into the Irish national report to the Vatican. Both documents will be published so that people can know what is being heard in the Irish Church. This can be an exciting, Spirit-led journey of becoming the Church that God wants us to be in this century. I hope everyone will free to take part and to be honest – and seek to discover in prayer together what God is calling us to do and to be.

Synod: In addition to the information provided below, there is a new national website providing additional resources for the up-coming deliberations for the synod. www.synod.ie