



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
VICARIATE FOR FAITH & MISSION

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Dear Reverend Father, Reverend Deacon, Sister, Brother, Parishioner,

Diocesan Year of the Eucharist - *Blessed are Those Called to the Supper of the Lamb*
Synod of Bishops - *Communion - Participation - Mission*

Last Sunday in his pastoral letter, Bishop Robert invited us all to join him in celebrating our Year of the Eucharist, and to take part in the Diocesan part of the Synod initiated by Pope Francis. To help you in this we have prepared resources for both events, and these are available on the diocesan website.

The Year of the Eucharist - Blessed are Those Called to the Supper of the Lamb

This Year will celebrate the Eucharist at the heart of the life and mission of the Diocese as we gather people back to Mass and the Sacraments after the lockdowns. It gives us the opportunity to revitalise and renew our faith through a deepening prayer and devotion of the Eucharist and to be strengthened and nourished to go out and serve the world.

The Year of the Eucharist has three phases which pick up the themes of the Synod:

- October - November 2021 - Listening and Belonging to the Father - Communion
- December 2021 - May 2022 - Listening and Belonging to the Son - Participation
- June 2022 - October 2022 - Listening and Belonging to the Spirit - Mission

Each phase will invite us to prayerful participation in the Holy Eucharist in our parishes, schools, and homes. Given the difficulty of meeting in large gatherings, for the moment we are planning local celebrations rather than big diocesan events. The Associations of the Eucharist and other volunteers are busy creating resources, and these will also be available on our website.

The Synod of Bishops - Communion - Participation - Mission

Pope Francis, in announcing the Synod, urges us to have a vision of missionary communion focused on evangelisation.

For the first time, the Synod process of 'walking together' begins in each diocese before the bishops meet nationally, regionally and in the final Synod Gathering in 2023 with the Holy Father. This diocesan stage only lasts until January 2022, so we are asked to make this one of our priorities for the next three months.

The bishop has a key role in listening to the people of God in his diocese, and under the power of the Holy Spirit, to hear and discern what is being said of that local church. Bishop Robert has invited us to assist him by reflecting on what we have learnt as a Diocese during the Pandemic.

What we would like you to do:

The core question Pope Francis asks us is:

'How do we journey together as a local church, and What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"?'

For guidance we are offered ten questions framed within the account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus from St Luke's Gospel. There is a lot to consider, so your groups may need a number of meetings to prayerfully reflect on these questions. A leaflet with these reflective questions is attached, along with some suggestions of different ways to plan and organise meetings in the parish, and a resource on discernment. If you would like further printed copies of these resources please contact adminfaith.mission@diocesehn.org.uk

Given the time restrictions we recommend that parishioners or appropriate representatives would gather in Partnership meetings (virtual or face to face) to share local discernment and reflection, keeping in mind COVID safe practice.

To feedback your reflections we are inviting each Partnership Dean and Lay Chair together with two lay representatives from the Partnership to gather for a Partnership reflection morning which will be held in both the North and South of the Diocese. For the North of the diocese this will take place at St Cuthbert's High school, Gretna Road Newcastle on the 6th November 2021 and the 15th January 2022. For the South of the diocese this will take place at Carmel College, The Headlands Darlington on the 13th November 2021 and the 8th January 2022. The Diocesan Pastoral Forum will support these gatherings and produce the final Parish/ Partnership reflection which will feed into the diocesan discernment process. At the same time, the Board of Trustees, Vicariates, Curial Departments and other diocesan bodies will be carrying out their own prayerful discernment.

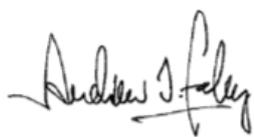
The various strands of prayerful reflection and discernment between October 2021 and January 2022 will be brought together in three 'assemblies' presided over by the bishop as the chief discernor. These assemblies will help participants to recall our post-pandemic experiences, re-read those experiences in greater depth open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and gather the fruits to share. As the reflection and discernment move on it is hoped that, open to the Holy Spirit, greater depth will be revealed.

Bishop Robert ended his pastoral letter by saying:

I look forward to celebrating with you all the Year of the Eucharist and joining you in discernment of what the Holy Spirit is stirring in us for the future of our Diocese and of the Universal Church. Let us pray for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, for the bishops and for all the People of God in our re-dedication to communion, participation and mission.

Please contact the Vicariate at any time for more information and guidance via synod@diocesehn.org.uk. We look forward to supporting you over the year ahead and ask you to pray for us in the work we do together.

Yours sincerely



Monsignor Andrew Faley
Episcopal Vicar for the
Vicariate for Faith & Mission



Amy Cameron
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