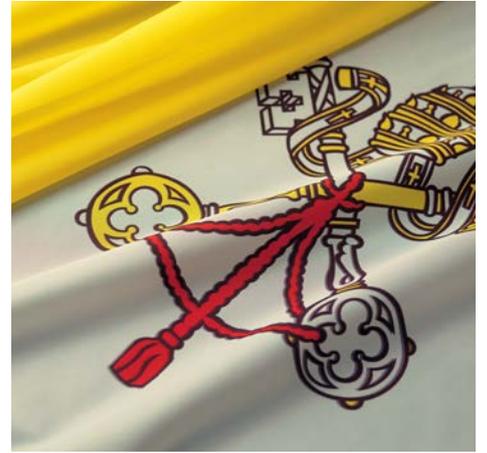




SYNOD 2021-2023



Synod comes from the ancient Greek word *synodos* (σύννοδος), meaning the 'way together' (syn-) a 'particular way' (-hodos).

The 'particular way' has been defined by the International Synod of Bishops due to take place in 2023.

Here in our diocese the process for this will begin on October 17th 2021 with Bishop Robert celebrating Holy Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral.

The Synod depends on an open process with everyone having the right to discern, to listen to the Holy Spirit and to respond.

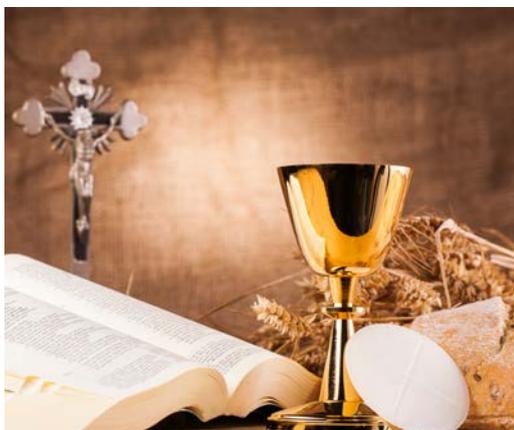
"SYNODALITY-BEING CHURCH IS BEING A COMMUNITY THAT WALKS TOGETHER". IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE A SYNOD, YOU MUST BE A SYNOD'.1

It is a walk together to implement and manifest the nature of the Church as the People of God on a journey, a sign and instrument "of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (LG1) in solidarity with whom she walks.

An invitation to discern

THE POST PANDEMIC CHURCH

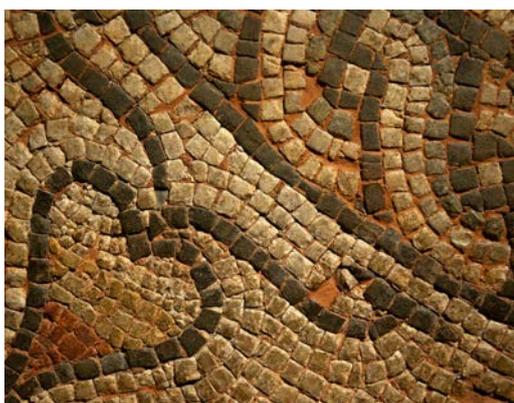
Pope Francis is inviting us to discern individually and collectively where the Holy Spirit is calling us as Church. The themes from the title of the Synod can help in understanding why now is the right time for this to take place:



a. Communion – bringing the people together as communities in the local Church allows prayerful insight into the ways of the Holy Spirit. When the Church gathers for the Eucharist we gain self-understanding of our mission. Dialogue at this level is to be rooted in the life of the ecclesial communities and parishes.



b. Participation – The past 15 months of pandemic form the context of how the Catholic Church in England and Wales reflects on the future, revitalising its mission of bringing the Good News to all. The gentle invitation to the full practice of Catholic life, with the Eucharist at the centre, is an integral part of this walking together.



c. Mission – understanding the local situation will feed into an overview of the mission for the diocese. Like the tesserae of a mosaic, a picture is built up so that the mission to all is firmly rooted in the life of the local worshipping community. We gather, by gentle invitation by the Lord, to worship him, to be sanctified by him and to exercise both an individual and collective prophetic voice.



Taken from <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/>

The Synod process will be provided with ten questions based on the themes above. Here in Hexham & Newcastle the Synod will be underpinned by the Diocesan Year of the Eucharist.

Pope Francis in his book *Let us Dream* says **“we need a respectful, mutual listening, free of ideology and predetermined agendas”**.²



Pope Francis says “what is under discussion at synodal gatherings are not the traditional truths of Christian doctrine. The Synod is concerned mainly with how teaching can be lived and applied in the changing contexts of our time.”³

Therefore all topics can be raised but it is important to realise that not all will form part of the ongoing discussion.

“The Church needs intense internal sharing: a living dialogue between the Pastors and between the Pastors and the faithful”



"The process of spiritual discernment is incumbent on everyone; truly being open to the Spirit and seeing where the local Church is being led in its own context.., with the bishops listening carefully to the views of the faithful, and the faithful respecting the authentic role of the bishop as one who governs the local Church and promotes communion".⁴

Discernment is always orientated towards the mission of the universal Church which continually moves towards Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life who calls his people into a unity of purpose.

Three aspects revive Synodality:

- listening,
- co-responsibility,
- involvement of all members of the Church,



The Rome Synod Office has emphasised three levels of dialogue which constitute the overall synodal process:

- in local dioceses
- at the intermediate level - Bishops' Conferences & regions
- at the Universal Level – Rome 2023.

This is a new methodology for the Synod of Bishops, which offers a model for the work of all areas of the Church.

In Hexham & Newcastle Diocese the diocesan contribution to the Synod will be shaped by the principles set by the Rome Synod Office and will be supported by our present diocesan structures.

Bishop Robert will lead the diocesan synodal journey through our diocesan councils and Vicariates. In addition, there will be online gatherings that are open to all.

A working group has been established led by Monsignor Andrew Faley and the Vicariate for Faith & Mission.

Resources will be made available for individual and group discernment, Adoration and prayer. Further details about the Synod will be made available later in September.

To find out more contact: adminfaith.mission@diocesehn.org.uk

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**

1. Francis, Address for the Audience with the Major Archbishop, the Metropolitan and the Permanent Synod of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, July 5 2019

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2019/07/05/190705a.html>

2. Pope Francis, Let us Dream: the Path to a Better Future, Simon and Schuster, London, 2020, page 93

3. *ibid* page 84-85

4. Pope St John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Pastores Gregis, 16 October 2003 §44