



*An Update from the*

**VICARIATE FOR FAITH & MISSION**

**November 2021**

### **Reflecting on the first month of the Synod**

The Universal Synod is a beautiful and exciting opportunity for us as Church to take stock, pray and discern: Where is the Holy Spirit guiding us as the people of God? We are all invited to journey together, to connect with one another, and to enter into meaningful dialogue.

The first month has seen a series of opportunities to kick start this process locally, beginning with the Opening Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert at St Mary's Cathedral for both the Synod and the Diocesan Year of the Eucharist. Over this last month, the First Diocesan Synod Assembly gathered with Bishop Robert, and clergy, laity and religious who hold the responsibility of serving the parishes, Partnerships and other bodies within the Diocese. Here they pondered with the Bishop the Synod questions for themselves and discussed how we best take this forward.

Following on from this, we held a gathering of Partnership representatives in the North and the South of the Diocese. These two Saturday mornings again worked with the recommendations from the Rome Synod Office that we use our existing diocesan structures to reach out on the synodal journey. The representatives got a feel for the purpose and process of the Synod and were given the task of taking this to their Partnerships.

Other synod opportunities in the Diocese this month have included a gathering of Catholic women with Bishop Robert to explore what it means to be a woman in the Church today and the issues that concern them.

Newcastle University Catholic Chaplaincy members met to look at the Synod and this extended the invitation to those studying in our Diocese. This coming Sunday, we also have an invitation for 18-25-year-olds to meet and be synodal.

The Youth Council have met and explored how the voices of young people in our Diocese can be heard and lead the way in the Synod. CHARIS (Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service) has been launched, and they began with exploring the principles of Synodality.

A meeting took place with Bishop Robert and the Pastoral Forum (formerly known as the Council of Laity) to discuss the Synod questions and to consider how those from our communities who are Filipino Catholics and African Catholics can be involved.

This is the beginning of the journey, a walking together to find how we can better support one another in faith. Synod isn't a data collecting consultation; it is an invitation to pray, talk, and move forward. I have described the events taking place at diocesan level; alongside this, there are many conversations taking place in our parishes, schools, and homes. Every baptised person and beyond is invited to take part, connect with their local community, and feed this discernment through the structures that serve us in the diocese to help us all grow.

Photographs from Synod gatherings - see over.



For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission



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