

Synod 2021-2023



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

Pope Francis has asked us, the people of St Bride's and St Peter's Parishes, to help him. Not just us, of course, but every parish in every diocese across the world. He wants us to spend some time listening to each other in our parishes. He wants us, individually and together with our families and friends, to ask ourselves what the Holy Spirit wants our Church to be in this Third Millennium.

Why us? Our Catholic Faith teaches us that the Holy Spirit speaks through all the members of the Church, lay-people, religious, deacons and priests, bishops and the Pope. Each of us have something to say and he wants to listen. That's why he recently said *"In the one People of God let us journey together, in order to experience a Church that receives and lives this gift of unity, and is open to the voice of the Spirit."*

Pope Francis seeks a Church where all can feel at home and participate. He wants us to become a listening Church, to break out of our routine in order to stop and listen, firstly to the Spirit in adoration and prayer, and then to our brothers and sisters, their hopes, the crises of faith around the world, the need for renewed pastoral life. So, Pope Francis needs us, each and everyone of us, priests and people, women and men, young and not so young, church-goers and non-church-goers. Let us all help Pope Francis to fulfil his ministry as our Holy Father. *Father Duncan, Parish Priest*

‘Synodality’ is about ‘walking together’. How is our ‘walking together’ in synodality realised today in the Church? What steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our ‘walking together’? To help people explore this fundamental question more fully, the following themes highlight significant aspects of ‘lived synodality’:

1. COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY: The Acts of the Apostles tells us how the first disciples worked together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to build the early Church. Pope Francis invites every baptised person to work—or ‘walk’—together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to build today’s Church.

- a. How are we already working/walking together?
- b. How can we do this better?
- c. Who is getting left behind and why?

2. LISTENING: The first step in walking together is to really listen to one another, without prejudice or personal agenda. When we can listen like this, we may hear God’s voice speaking to us through other people.

- a. How well do we listen, especially to people who have different views than our own?
- b. How can we better listen to young people, women and minority groups?

3. SPEAKING OUT: We are invited to speak out boldly and responsibly.

- a. What helps us to do this?
- b. What prevents us from doing this?
- c. How does the relationship with local media work (not only Catholic media)?
- d. How well do we choose the people who speak on our behalf to the wider community?

4. CELEBRATION: The celebration of the Eucharist—i.e. Mass—is at the centre of our Catholic communities, and forms the basis for our ‘walking together’.

- a. How well do communal prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and guide our sense of community?

b. How well do we allow and enable every member of the faithful to participate?

5. SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION: Every baptised person is called to use their natural and supernatural gifts and talents to participate in the life and missionary service of the Church.

a. Do we understand what this means?

b. What stops us from giving our gifts and talents to the Church?

c. How does the Church community support its members who serve society in various ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, education, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, caring for the environment etc.)?

6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY: Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding.

a. To what extent do diverse peoples in our community come together for dialogue?

b. How can we improve dialogue between our own communities, i.e. between parishes/deaneries, and with lay ministries?

c. What particular issues (in the Church or in society) do we need to pay more attention to?

d. How well do we dialogue with and learn from other areas of society, such as politics, culture, diverse groups; how can we improve?

7. ECUMENISM: The dialogue between different Christian groups has a special place in the synodal journey.

a. What relationships do we have with members of other Christian traditions or denominations?

b. What are the benefits and difficulties?

c. How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?

8. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION: A synodal Church is a Church where everyone participates and everyone shares responsibility.

a. How well do we identify our goals and how to reach them?

b. What good examples do we have of governance, teamwork and shared responsibility?

c. How do we promote lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people?

- d. What fruitful experiences can we share of lay leadership?
- e. How can we develop fruitful participation and leadership?

9. DISCERNING AND DECIDING: A synodal Church makes decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community.

- a. How well do we promote participation in decision making and how well do we make decisions together?
- b. How can we improve our methods so that everyone's voices can be included?
- c. How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?

10. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY: Synodality, that is journeying together, involves ongoing learning, and being open to change.

- a. What do we need to help us to be more capable of 'walking together', listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue?
- b. What training do lay leaders need to ensure they exercise their authority in a synodal way—i.e. that every member of the community is welcomed, respected and listened to?

Questions have been adapted from the Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality, which is available at <https://www.synod.va/en/news/vademecum-for-the-synod-on-synodality.html>.

Please respond to those questions that engage you the most. Talk about them with your family and friends. Encourage them to help shape your response. Do it prayerfully. Remember; it's not about 'this is what I want' but rather 'this is what I feel the Holy Spirit is saying to me about....' And begin by saying simply 'Come, Holy Spirit.' Also consider asking a friend or family member to also respond, we are looking for a wide range of voices to help shape our Diocesan response. Responses can be submitted at any time to the email addresses:
westkilbride@gallowaydiocese.org.uk for St Bride's Parish
ardrossan@gallowaydiocese.org.uk for St Peter in Chains Parish

Parish Meetings at West Kilbride and Ardrossan

St Bride's: Mondays 7th and 14th March 2022 at 7.00pm
St Peter in Chains: Thursdays 3rd and 10th March 2022 at 7.00pm