

Walking Together



Synodal Update for the Diocese of Plymouth

Welcome to the sixth 'Walking Together' Update

The listening phase of our diocesan Synodal Journey has now drawn to a close and we have prepared a synthesis which has been sent through to the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) for the next phase of discernment and listening. We would like to thank all those who have participated in or facilitated meetings or sent through individual feedback. The final diocesan synthesis, a foreword by Bishop Mark and appendices are now on the Diocese of Plymouth website <https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/synod/>. We will send some printed copies to parishes in May. The wealth of contributions sent through will continue to be reviewed and shared in the coming months as we reflect in more detail on all the themes raised. Thank you for all your support!

Canon John Deeny and Deborah Fisher, Diocesan Co-contacts.

What next?

There will be further discernment by our Bishops leading to the preparation of a synthesis of the contributions from all Dioceses. A meeting with Bishops and diocesan co-contacts on 1 June will offer an opportunity for us to contribute our thoughts on this process. The national synthesis should be completed by early August and will then be sent for discussion at the continental phase. The national synthesis will be published and we will share it widely when it is available.

This is **not the end of our diocesan journey**. Everyone is invited to reflect on their parish discussions and the diocesan synthesis. The Diocese will be putting resources in place to support the continuation of our local journey.

In his foreword, Bishop Mark says that in offering our diocesan synthesis to the national reflection, and in sending it also back to the Diocese for further reflection, prayer and dialogue, there is a need to continuously allow an interplay between the "voice of the people of God" and "the discernment of the pastors".

We are still only at a very early stage of rediscovering this interaction in the Catholic Church. It requires more patience and attentive listening, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, moving forward. But it is important for us to note, at this point, that it is in listening to the people of God that discernment begins.

The way of the Cross

*Look at that cross, do you see it?
There, at the end of the road.*

*From the dawn I felt it calling me.
It looked at me and I looked at it,
and in its shadow I could see
the path I sought for my humble
feet.*

*Look at his arms, don't you see
that they anticipate the embrace
that we have been longing for,
that was missing inside us?*

*Take my hand and let us walk the
way of the cross.
Your strength will be rest. My
steps, those that you walk.*

*Soon we will be arriving, and we
will know that, in the end,
it is not the cross that is our
destiny, but the light that lies
behind it.*

*Ana Medina Heredia (Diocese of Malaga,
Spain)*

the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

Matthew 13:31-32

Some points for reflection in parishes and schools

Whilst waiting for further resources that will be sent in the coming months, Bishop Mark has suggested a number of questions for ongoing reflection and discussion in parishes and schools:

- Does what you see in the synthesis resonate with what you said? What can we take forward at diocesan level?
- To the 85-90% of men and women in the Diocese who seem not to have engaged with our walking together process so far, do you find your voice and your life reflected in what is said here? How can we walk more authentically with one another in our desire to encounter the Risen Lord and to share Him with our brothers and sisters?
- To our clergy - thank you to those who engaged, either in collaboration with the parishioners, or with other clergy, or in direct contributions. What will assist you in taking some of these themes forward more fully in the parish and in our schools, with people of all ages?
- To those clergy who have not yet engaged with this walking together process, what would you want to contribute? What can assist in giving you the confidence and the energy to be more intentionally part of this journey?

These points are for discussion at local level but if you would like to share your thoughts you can do so by emailing synodfeedback@prcdtr.org.uk. Some parishes are already doing things differently following the listening process. If your parish is already making changes as a result of your local listening journey, we would love to hear from you.

Where can I find resources for the ongoing synodal journey?

All the Diocesan resources are on our dedicated webpage <https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/synod/> and we will be creating more resources in the coming months.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference synod page is regularly updated <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/synodal-church/>

The Vatican has a dedicated website where you can find contributions to the Synodal journey from across the world <https://www.synodresources.org/>

New Prayers for the Synod continue to be added to the Vatican site <https://www.prayforthesynod.va/en/>

The Vatican has also produced a series of newsletters on different themes or issues – the March edition was about the participation of Priests https://www.synodresources.org/newsletter_post/newsletter-2022-no-8-mar-18/

If you have a story you would like to share with our global family, you can do so via media@synod.va.

