

SYNOD 2020: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

At the Synod Open Meetings many hundreds of questions were asked or submitted as written questions. The full list of themes covered in the written questions can be found here: synod2020.co.uk/news/post?id=23

Many questions were answered during the events and we hope the answers below go some way to addressing the remainder.

THE SYNOD AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We are making every effort to ensure that young people are at the heart of our Synod Journey. We are working with Animate Youth Ministries and our school chaplains we will be ensuring that High Schools will be resources to listen to the young people in their communities. We also have a team of primary specialists to produce resources to do this same with our younger children. Two of the planned 10 focus groups will be specifically for young people and we will be listening to Young People during the Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes and at various other times over the coming months.

In addition to this we have asked every Pastoral Area to ensure that at least two of the Synod Members from their local communities is aged 15-25.

As a direct consequence of the Open Meetings, Archbishop Malcolm has invited Kate Wilkinson, a school chaplain and national president of the Young Christian Workers, onto the Working Party to help ensure concerns of Young People are not overlooked.

OUTCOMES

Many issues were raised during our Open Meetings that people would like to see addressed by our Synod.

Synod 2020 is able to address only those things that are within the Archbishop's power to make decisions upon. This means that there are certain things concerning the law of the Universal Church that may emerge as key themes during our listening and discerning but it is not within the scope of a Diocesan Synod to address. Archbishop Malcolm has resolved to take those issues that are beyond the remit of our Synod to Rome and make representation there to ensure that those views from our Archdiocese are heard there.

The process will be as open and transparent as possible. The outcomes are not pre-written, we are embarking on this journey with the openness to the Holy Spirit working in all of us and it is through listening to the Holy Spirit and listening to each other that we will be able to discern where God is calling us.

Other diocesan Synods have led to the development of a Pastoral Plan. It may be that ours does too. Our Synod Co-ordinator's role extends one year after the Synod to begin the task of implementation. During this time we will also be addressing what is needed to be put into place for long-term implementation of the deliberations of Synod.

ISSUES

It is difficult to talk in specific terms about issues that may come up and themes that may emerge from our Synod Journey for fear of prejudicing the process. What is clear from the Open Meetings is that there are many issues and pastoral concerns that affect the faithful of our diocese that people hope Synod 2020 will act upon.

Over the coming months the people of our diocese will be invited to reflect deeply on our Synod questions about the joys, sorrows, hopes, and struggles of the Christian life today. We will be invited to speak from the heart and to listen compassionately to each other as we share our stories and speak about the things that touch our lives and the lives of those we know and love.



SYNOD MEMBERS

The Synod Membership will consist of all the priests with a diocesan appointment (parish priests, assistant priests, etc.), one Member for every parish, eight Members for each Pastoral Area (with extra for Widnes, Leigh, and Liverpool South & Central to ensure fair representation). In addition there will be Religious, retired priests, and others who can make a special contribution to our Synod.

The selection of Parish Members is co-ordinated by the Parish Priest who has been provided with guidance about how to do this. This guidance is available under *Becoming a Member* on the Synod Website.

Selection of Pastoral Area Members will be co-ordinated by Deans and they too have been provided with guidance on doing this. The hope is that the team of Members in a Pastoral Area [Parish Members + Pastoral Area Members + Priest Members] will reflect the diversity of the local faith community. So, if a parish has two churches and two distinct communities that would be difficult to represent with one Parish Synod Member, it might be that this is addressed in the choice of Pastoral Area Members.

Membership is designed so that the whole Synod Membership in a Pastoral Area forms a team and works together in their role of listening and discerning. Beyond that we hope that parishes will consider forming groups of others who will support the work of the Synod Members.

Within the Synod Membership there are a number of discretionary places reserved to Archbishop Malcolm to ensure that, as far as possible, the whole diocese, and all the groups active within it are represented in the Synod Membership. All Members will have an equal vote. Should a Member need to withdraw for any reason they can be replaced in consultation with the Working Party.

PROCESS

The Synod began in October 2017 with a year of Prayer which culminated with the Eucharistic Congress.

Year 2 (October 2018—September 2019) is Listening and Discernment. The Synod Membership is confirmed by mid-January 2019 with the Synod Opening Ceremony taking place at the Cathedral on 3rd February. Members will attend an initial gathering in early February before taking part in listening and discernment preparation during Lent 2019. Local listening takes place in our communities between May and July 2019 where everyone will get the chance to share their reflections on our Synod Questions.

From this listening themes will emerge and these will be taken back to local communities at Pastoral Area pre-Synods. Here the themes will be discussed, discerned, and developed into practical proposals to be taken forward to Synod.

At the Synod (17-18 October 2020) these proposals will be voted on by the Members and a plan for the Archdiocese of the Liverpool will begin to emerge.

The four Synod Questions have been developed to be open and allow for people to speak freely and from the heart. They are currently being tested and fine-tuned and we are confident that they will serve the process well.

PARTICIPATION

A great concern from the open meetings has been to ensure that we listen to those who might be hard to reach. A great strength of the Synod is that Membership is organised locally and listening is to take place in our communities. We know those hard to reach people, they attend our churches, and schools, we serve them in our groups and voluntary initiatives, and they are in our families. Locally we can develop strategies to ensure their voices are heard.

Our Focus Groups too will have a specific remit to hear these voices and our online survey will help extend the listening as far as possible.



More information about all of this can be found on our Synod 2020 website

synod2020.co.uk