

# Synod FAQ's



## What is happening at the moment?

The 19 Recommendations that will be voted on in June have been published and the Synod Members are preparing to discern how they will vote on June 19th.

When the Synod began, almost 4 years ago, a deliberate decision was made to have Members and not representatives. A representative has a group of people who they are representing, a Member comes from a group (parish or Deanery usually) and having listened over the years to the parish or Deanery or community, they are then able to discern how they should vote at the Synod.

Some Synod Members are anxious because they cannot call meetings at this time – but we keep telling them that they have been working at this for over 3 years and so they are already equipped to respond appropriately as a Synod Member.

## Where will the Synod take place?

There is still a need for us to be cautious due to social distancing regulations and so it has been decided that, as it is a full day event, the Synod will take place on a Zoom meeting on Saturday 19th June, and then the Mass on Sunday June 20th will be at the Cathedral.

The Synod Core team worked hard to enable us to have the Synod day on the 19<sup>th</sup> in the Cathedral, but we didn't believe people could stay there safely for 6 hours within COVID guidelines considering logistics around visits to toilets, food and refreshments.

There is a place available for every Synod member at the Mass of thanksgiving on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June in the Cathedral at 3pm, but as social distancing guidelines are still in place we cannot offer an open invitation to those who are not Synod members. The Mass will be streamed online and can be accessed through the the Cathedral website. For more information about the Mass of thanksgiving, please contact the Synod office ([synod2020@rcaol.co.uk](mailto:synod2020@rcaol.co.uk))

## Who can vote?

All the Synod Members will have a vote, and how they vote is not as a representative of a community, but based upon their own discernment. The Members are parish members, deanery members and priests with an appointment in the Diocese. There are also Members representing the religious and special interest groups. At the Synod there are ecumenical observers, but this stage of the Synod journey they will not be able to vote, but their contributions so far have helped on the journey. On Synod Day, June 19th, there will also be observers from other Diocese and from across the Catholic world.

## What will happen to the votes?

On the day of Synod each Synod Member will be asked to look at the 19 Recommendations and respond in one of 4 ways:

- a. This is a high priority which the Archdiocese should enact soon
- b. This is an excellent idea but not at the top of my list
- c. This doesn't strike me as vitally important
- d. This is not the right way forward for us in the Archdiocese

Additional information about voting will be sent to Synod members a couple of days before Synod weekend.

Once the vote has taken place, the Synod Members will receive (in the afternoon of the 19th June) the outcomes. This will be done in a series of bar charts. (The July Pic will have all this information for everyone, and it will be on the Synod website.) The Archbishop will receive the responses and in the light of these he will begin to put together the Pastoral Plan.

## **Will the Archbishop put together the Pastoral Plan by himself?**

A Pastoral Plan Group has already been meeting – not to write the Plan in advance, but to begin to understand the Synod process so far in more depth and get a better appreciation of the context in which the Pastoral Plan will be implemented. This Group is made up of people from the Diocese, men and women, priests and lay people and it has on it 6 people from around the country who work in different church settings who can help in the crafting of the Plan because of their breadth of experience. This is the list: Avril Baigent (Northampton), Amy Cameron (H+ N Spirituality adviser), Fr Thomas Clarke, Steve Davies (Missio), Fr Richard Ebo, Sue Faulkner, Karen Foong (Nottingham), John Griffin (Salford), Fr Philip Inch, Helen Jones, Fr Grant Maddock, Martin Miller, Fr Peter McGrail, Fr Matthew Nunes and John Sergeant (L'Arche UK).

Archbishop Malcolm will come together with this group and his Council to work on the Pastoral Plan. Members of his council are: Bishop Tom Williams, Mgr John Devine, Cn Chris Fallon, Cn Michael Fitzsimons, Fr Phil Gregory, Cn Stephen Maloney, Cn Tom Neylon, Fr Tony O'Brien, Fr Godric Timney, Fr Matthew Nunes and Fr Philip Inch.

## **When will the Plan be ready?**

From July 12th – July 16th the Archbishop, his Council and the Pastoral Plan Group will go away for 5 days. This will be an intensive time to pray, discern and to decide what will be in the Pastoral Plan. This work will take as long as it takes, but the Plan will have to be ready to be launched on the 1st Sunday of Advent 2021.

## **What can I do to be part of this important moment in the history of the Diocese?**

You can engage with the Synod Recommendations by buying the Synod book, 'Together on the Road', which has reflections to help you think about each of the Recommendations. It is £3.00 from the Synod office or from Pauline Media at their new premises on Church Street, Liverpool. Ask at your parish if you want a copy, or use an order form available on [this page](#). All the information in the Synod book is also available online on our new Synod Recommendations site, [here](#).

On the 4 weekends before the Synod there will be opportunities to pray at Mass for the Synod. This will culminate in a week of prayer across the Diocese which we invite people to engage within their own parishes, schools or families.

You can ask your Synod Member (priest or lay) if you can talk to them about the Synod and about how they have discerned how to vote.