

Synodal pathway in Hallam:

II. Smaller Steps



“For a synodal Church: communion, participation, mission”

Pope Francis has asked every one of the People of God to let him know how things are for them in the Church. He believes we are all trying to journey together through life, finding ways to communicate the fundamental message of Jesus, to love one another, in how we live our lives and in our words. That is the meaning of the word “Synodal” - it means “journeying together”.

He has asked the Bishops of the world to ask you and then tell him. You can do this with other people in your parish; tell Bishop Ralph what you think between October 2021 to April 2022. In Hallam, your parish will hold meetings so you can think together about what important things you need to say. All the Bishops of England and Wales will collect your thoughts and will gather in Rome for a Synod (meeting) in 2023 to tell the Pope what they have heard from you all.

The question Pope Francis is asking you to pray, listen to each other and talk about is this: “How does this “journeying together” take place today on different levels (from the local to the universal one), allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel?”

Question 1:

What are your experiences of ‘journeying together’ as Church in your diocese, your parish, for you personally?

What joys, difficulties, wounds have you encountered?

Question 2:

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through those experiences?

And what steps is the Spirit inviting you to take in order for the Church to grow as a synodal Church?

Hallam’s Synodal Pathway: next steps

You attended or watched the Opening Liturgy for the Synod in Hallam on-line. Now what?

Step 3. Get informed. Find out about the synodal process. Read the resources available from the Vatican, and the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW); the links are on the Diocesan website. Talk to other people about it.

Step 4. Reflect, pray and discern your own gifts and what you can offer to the process and your community. Offer your services:

- to the small Synod Core Group who will meet frequently and regularly to plan, steer and support the process
- to the larger Synod Working Group who will meet at least each month to share how things are progressing, in your Community/Parish/Deanery.
- to any other existing groups, to talk and listen, pray and discern together about Communion, Participation and Mission in your Church. e.g. Parish Council, SVP., RCIA,
- Create or join other groups to fulfil particular projects e.g. a Synod Stall at the Christmas Market, run a Catholic Social Teaching Conference...

Step 5. What personal resources do you need? For example, go on retreat, attend a 'Pray, Listen, Discern' series of 3 workshops that we are running in the Diocese to understand the synodal process more deeply, with others. If there are things you think might be helpful to others, suggest it to your Representatives to see if it can be made available.

Step 6. Know who your parish representatives for Synodal Working Group Meetings are and offer your help. And feedback to them what you are doing. Pray for them.

Step 7. Listen, pray and discern, and gather in the views and voices of as many people as possible. Meet as existing groups, or create new groups to particularly focus on the Synodal process. Particularly include those on the margins, who may not always feel listened to. No-one is excluded, everyone has a voice, all are invited to participate, and your group can decide how best to do this in your area. Make sure none of the existing groups in your parish are left out. **Pray for each other and for the people you listen to.**

Step 8. Reach out. Plan with your parish representatives how you are going to reach out to the more difficult-to-reach groups. Do it. **Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance and miss no opportunity.**

Step 9. Don't be in a hurry to respond. Deliver the messages from your group to Bishop Ralph by 17 April 2022. You can write a letter, send a postcard, you can email synodresponse@hallam-diocese.com, you can fill in the survey that will be on the Diocesan website. As well as responding as a group, you can respond individually. Bishop Ralph will put your thoughts together and take a 10 page summary of what you have all told him to the meeting of Bishop's. **Pray for Bishop Ralph.**

The Bishops of England and Wales will pray and discern and collate the views from all the dioceses. **Pray for the Bishops.** They will bring those views to the meeting with Pope Francis in October 2023. **Pray for Pope Francis.**

Step 10. Attend the Pre-Synod Celebration, to reflect on and celebrate our work together, and to think about next steps.

Prayer for a synodal Church gathering

(This prayer was said before all the sessions of the Second Vatican Council. It is attributed to St Isidore of Seville 560-636 AD)

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity,
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.
Amen.

Other resources to help you.

1. The Vatican website has a Roadmap for the Diocesan Phase, a glossary of terms used, some suggestions about spiritual conversations, a Preparatory Document (available in several languages), a Vademecum, and the Adsumus Prayer.
<https://www.synod.va/en.html>
2. The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales website has details of the synodal process, a timeline of the different phases and a FAQ page.
<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/synodal-church/>
3. Edinburgh Jesuit Centre hosted three short lectures by people involved in the synodal process and the recordings of these are available free on-line via jesuit.org.uk “Some Synod Scenarios”
4. Hallam Caritas Counselling Service webpage has details of where emotional help and well-being support can be found
<https://hallam-diocese.com/caritas/counselling/>
or contact Bernie Ware from Caritas on 0114 2566407/079804061986.
5. Talking to a Spiritual Director/Accompanier might be helpful for you to talk over things related to your spiritual life, particularly those that may have arisen from the synodal process. Contact ffrances@hallam-diocese.com for more information about talking to a Spiritual Director
6. Your Diocesan Synod Contacts are Fionnuala Frances and Kevan Grady. Pray for them

Contact emails are:

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Email address for responses is: synodresponse@hallam-diocese.com