

Synod 2021-2023 – Journeying together



We feel that it would be helpful for you to have an idea of how we at St William’s are going to facilitate our response to the diocese and how we are going to provide a variety of opportunities so that everyone who wants to participate can do so.

We would like to invite you to pray that the Holy Spirit will bring us all together to listen to each other and to talk, and to put our ideas together for Bishop Ralph and Pope Francis.

Synod Prayer

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.

On our parish Synod webpage, which will be updated regularly, and on the Hallam Diocese website, there are plenty of resources and guidance to help us gain an understanding of what is sought from us and how we can participate – individually, in small groups and as part of St William’s family. We have to keep in mind that there is no “end” to this process – we are all on an ongoing spiritual journey together, at the heart of which are **Communion, Participation and Mission**.

Smaller Steps – *A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”*

In the light of this, Pope Francis invites us to respond to two questions:–

Question 1

What are your experiences of ‘journeying together’ as Church in your diocese, your parish, for you personally; and 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 (i.e. one that journeys together)?

The following may help to focus reflection on the main questions:–

1. The Journeying Companions

- Who is in your journeying community?
- Who are on the peripheries who we need to reach out to?
- Who is no longer walking with us?
- How welcoming are we?

2. Listening

- Do we listen to each other?
- Who listens to who?
- Do we listen ‘heart to heart’?
- How do we listen to the signs of the times outside the Church and how do we respond?

3. Speaking Out

- What is communication like in your group/parish/diocese?
- Can we speak out bravely and kindly in freedom, truth and charity?
- How am I living out my prophetic vocation given at baptism?

4. Celebrating

- Does the liturgy inspire a deeper encounter with the Risen Lord?
- Does my prayer draw me on to participation in the mission of the Church?

5. Co-responsibility in the Mission

- What do I understand as my mission in my life, in the local Church, in the universal church?
- What formation do I need to do this?
- What impact is our local community making in the area and are we helping?

6. Dialogue in Church and Society

- What dialogue do we have in and outside of the Church?
- How can we begin to dialogue with others?
- How do we address the challenges of dialogue?

7. Relationship with other Christians

- What is our relationship with other Christians like?
- Do we listen to each other and enrich each other?

8. Authority and Participation

- How is authority exercised in our communities?
- How do we share in this by virtue of our baptismal consecration as prophets, priests and kings?
- What are the fruits and what are the challenges?

9. Discerning and Deciding

- How do we discern together the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading us?
- Is there freedom to exercise our particular ministry in the Church and participate in this common work of discernment and decision making?
- Is my local community accountable and transparent in decision making and what can help improve this?
- Do I support the Bishops and Priests in arriving at their decisions?

10. Forming ourselves in synodality

- What additional formation do I need to be a missionary disciple?
- Is the local community effective in catechising and passing on the faith?
- What tools are necessary for the Church to be truly Synodal, listening and journeying together?
- How do we continue the listening and dialogue beyond this process so that the Church have a “lived synodality” as the Holy Father asks?

We have a limited period of time in which to bring together groups and request responses from individuals. We have to return a parish response to the diocese by 17th April. Our first step will be to get small groups reflecting, talking and responding. Further details on the time table will be announced later.

We are going to maximise obtaining responses by:-

1. **Inviting existing parish groups to come together**, virtually via zoom or in person, to talk and listen together and to provide a joint response on behalf of that group. If anyone would like to participate in a small group to pray and explore together then please contact the office and we will arrange for you to join one of the parish groups or we will facilitate a group.
2. **Emailing everyone** on the Parish Distribution list with an individual response document which will allow everyone who wishes to put their views, comments and responses to the questions raised by Pope Francis. If you are not on the Parish Distribution list and wish to receive this email then please contact the Parish Office at office@stwilliamofyorksheffield.org.uk.
3. **Writing to everyone** whose address is registered with the parish, again providing an individual response document. This will come out in Advent.
4. **We are considering holding a larger Parish meeting** in the Church Hall for those who would want to come together. If you could indicate whether you would wish to participate in such a meeting in person or virtually via zoom then we can look at what is feasible, bearing in mind ongoing restrictions and the importance of keeping safe in current times. Any such meeting will take place in the New Year.

We hope that this gives you an idea of how we are going to listen to you and seek your responses. If you have any questions, then please do email the Parish Office and they will be passed on to us. Alternatively, please do speak to us if you see us at Church.

We look forward to your contributions and we will provide a copy of the response formulated on behalf of St William's once it is complete.

Thank you!

Gerard Bonner and Louise Shield

