

Pastoral Message for Synod Sunday 2020

I am writing this to you today because this was to have been the weekend of our Synod 2020 gatherings. The situation we are living in at the moment has, as you know, meant that we felt it was right to move this weekend until June next year.

The work of the Synod has not stopped – God is still asking us to reflect on becoming the kind of Church he is calling us to be and in many ways we have been invited to do this with a new urgency at this time.

Our Synod journey brings together the “imperatives” of co-responsibility, collaboration and genuine listening between Church leaders and the lay faithful. Synodality is an essential aspect of Church life today. Pope Francis is firm on Synodality as the way forward. I am reminded of something that Pope Benedict said in 2012:

“Lay people should not be regarded as ‘collaborators’ of the clergy, but, rather, as people who are really ‘co-responsible’ for the Church’s being and acting ... It is therefore important that a mature and committed laity be consolidated, which can make its own specific contribution to the ecclesial mission with respect for the ministries and tasks that each one has in the life of the Church.”

This is very much your role in the next part of our Synod journey. Over 3,500 proposals were submitted – thank you. The Synod Working Party (and others) have worked with all these proposals and have faithfully kept all the proposals and ideas that you have highlighted. They have produced a summary which we are making available to you this weekend. (You can find them at synod2020.co.uk/proposals).

I need each of you to play your part in discerning the next steps forward. At the beginning of December each Synod Member will have to indicate which of the ideas and issues that they are most drawn to. They will need your input to do this faithfully. This will then enable us to present to you, in March, the Synod Proposals to be voted on in June. After June we will work on drawing up a Pastoral Plan in the light of the Synod Proposals which will be promulgated at the start of Advent 2021.

The next months are an exciting opportunity for us all to listen again to the voice of the Spirit of God guiding and directing us. Please play your part, we will not be able to complete this task faithfully without you.

+ Malcolm McMahon OP

**Most Rev Malcolm McMahon OP
Synod President**

