



## DIOCESE OF PAISLEY

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### PASTORAL LETTER ON THE LOCAL CONSULTATION FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Ahead of the next Synod of Bishops in Rome, Pope Francis is calling the Church to begin a synodal journey which includes each and every Catholic – clergy, religious and lay faithful. The theme of the 2023 Synod is: *A Synodal Church of Communion, Participation and Mission.*

Pope Francis wants our journey to begin this month with a listening phase in every diocese across the world.

We are being asked to give our thoughts on questions the Pope has sent us, which we will discuss first at parish level through our Parish Pastoral Councils, and then at diocesan level through our Diocesan Pastoral Council. Our Diocesan Pastoral Council is made up of a representative from each parish and has its first meeting on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November.

You may remember how, five years ago, we held our own Diocesan Synod on *Evangelisation and the Role of the Laity*, a theme which is similar to what the Pope wants us to think about now in this Universal Synod.

Our Diocesan Synod created a Charter which blossomed into nine diocesan Commissions: on Evangelisation, Education and Formation; on Youth, Marriage and Families; on Liturgy, Structures and Collaborative Ministry; and on Communications, Caritas and Ecumenism, and it is wonderful to see so many of our lay faithful now taking forward the life and mission of our diocese through them.

Our own synodal journey showed us how our Church needs all of us, the whole People of God – clergy, religious and lay faithful – joining together on the same journey, with each of us playing our unique part, all of us united in collaboration. It was a precious time for our diocese to see how we all share a common dignity and vocation through our Baptism to be active participants in the life of the Church.



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This is what Pope Francis means by a synodal Church where we all move forward together as one, carrying out one common mission, built up by the gifts and charisms of every member.

Getting everyone involved, of course, means getting as many of us back to our common celebration of Sunday Mass in our parish communities and I urge you to reach out to your families and fellow parishioners, to encourage them to come back to church and welcome them again to our parish families as we move out of COVID restrictions.

As we now look to the renewal of our diocese, I also encourage you to participate in this unique Synodal opportunity of listening to *what the Spirit is saying to our Church* through shared dialogue. I hope it will be a journey that not only guides our current pastoral mission at diocesan level but which can open up new pathways for the Church worldwide in the spreading of the Gospel and the salvation of souls.

With every good wish and blessing,

*John Keenan*

**+ John**

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