

Synodal Process - HAM Parish January 2022

Suggested format for each group consultation session or use by individuals

Maximum duration 1.5 hours.

Leader of the session to be appointed within the group. Fr Phil or Deacon Jim available if necessary. A scribe is required to record reflections, areas of consensus, etc and prepare a short summary report. All feed-back from individuals and meetings to be sent in writing either electronically to synod@dioceseofshrewsbury.org or by post to: **Bishop's Office, 13 Belmont, Shrewsbury SY1 1TE** to be received by 1st March 2022.

Arrange a comfortable space, sitting around a candle and crucifix to emphasise the need for prayer and listening.

Introduction. Walk through the Fundamental Question followed by the three invitations. Emphasise the need for quiet prayer and listening to the Spirit during the next 20 minutes of prayer.

Recite the synodal prayer as an opening prayer and then ask someone in the group to read the Gospel from the prayer card. After 10 minutes, a second person reads the Gospel again and after a further 10 minutes the group are asked to spend a few minutes making some notes following their prayerful reflection before moving into a discussion.

Distribute a sheet of paper to each participant with the Fundamental Question and three invitations for them to reflect on.

The discussion invites each to share experiences the fundamental question calls to mind. Then, those experiences are explored in greater depth. Finally, 'gather the fruits to share' in recognising where in these experiences does the voice of the Spirit resound and what is he asking of us?

The session leader will also have the 10 suggested topic areas from the Synod preparatory document available which might help prompt discussion if needed.

Close the session with thanks for participating and recite the Lord's prayer and Glory be' or other suitable closing prayer.

The fundamental question that guides this consultation of the People of God, is the following:

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together:" How is this "journeying together" happening today in your particular Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"?

In order to respond, you are invited to:

a) ask yourselves what experiences in your particular Church the fundamental question calls to mind;

b) reread these experiences in greater depth: What joys did they provoke? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds have they brought to light? What insights have they elicited?

c) gather the fruits to share: Where, in these experiences, does the voice of the Spirit resound? What is he asking of us? What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for change, the steps to be taken? Where do we register a consensus? What paths are opening up for our particular Church?

(Ref: section 26 of the Synod Preparatory Document)

Suggested topic areas to be explored

The Journeying Companions, Listening, Speaking Out, Celebrating, Co-responsible in the Mission, Dialogue in Church and Society, Dialogue with the other Christian Denominations, Authority and Participation, Discerning and Deciding, Forming ourselves in Synodality.

(Ref: section 30 of the Synod Preparatory Document)

Questions for reflection from the Secretariat for the Synods of Bishops in Rome:

This Synod poses the following fundamental question: **A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.” How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?**

The questions accompanying each of the following ten themes can be used as a starting point or helpful guideline. Your conversation and dialogue do not need to be limited to the following questions:

1. **COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY** - In our local Church, who are those who “walk together”? Who are those who seem further apart? How are we called to grow as companions? What groups or individuals are left on the margins?
2. **LISTENING** - How is God speaking to us? As a Church how well do we listen and how well are we listened to? How well do we listen to those on the peripheries or the margins? How can we listen and be listened to better?
3. **SPEAKING OUT** - What enables or hinders speaking up courageously and responsibly in our local Church and in society? When and how do we manage to say what is important to us?
4. **CELEBRATION** - “Walking together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist. How do prayer, the Mass and liturgical celebrations inspire and guide our common life and mission in our community? How do they inspire the most important decisions? How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?
5. **SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION** – All the faithful are called to participate in the mission of the Church as missionary disciples, how is every baptised person called to participate in the mission of the Church? What hinders them from being active in mission? What areas of mission are we neglecting?
6. **DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY** - To what extent do diverse peoples in our community come together for dialogue? What are the places and means of dialogue within our local Church? How do we promote collaboration with others and what issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to?
7. **ECUMENISM** - What relationships does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions and denominations? What do we share and how do we journey together? What are the difficulties? How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?
8. **AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION** - How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church? How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? How are evaluations conducted and by whom? How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted? How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?
9. **DISCERNING AND DECIDING** - In a synodal style we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community. What methods and processes do we use in decision-making? How can they be improved? What is the relationship between consultation and decision-making, and how do we put these into practice?
10. **FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY** - Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and on-going learning. How does our church community form people to be more capable of “walking together,” listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue?

Questions from the Diocese for reflection individually or in groups:

Communion: In what ways has the unity of our parishes in faith and charity, above all in Eucharistic communion, been strengthened or weakened by the experience of the past two years?

Participation: What has the experience of this time taught us about participation in the life of the Church?

Mission: What have been the fruits of this time for mission to those outside the life of our parishes and especially to those on the margins of society, what more needs to be done?