

# **DUNKELD DIOCESE**



## ***Report and Priorities following the publication of the Synthesis Report 2023 for the attention of Fr Gerry Maguinness, General Secretary of BSO***

### **A SYNODAL CHURCH IN MISSION 14 MARCH 2024**

As we awaited the appointment of our new Bishop, the main priority for the Dunkeld Diocesan Core Group was how best to convey the experiences of the Synod Assembly held in Rome last October, communicate widely the fruits of the synod and reawaken the enthusiasm for synodality in the diocese manifested by the faithful during the Diocesan Consultation Process in 2022/3.

Having read, and discussed the Synthesis Report and set out our priorities for action, the group ensured that both Bishop Brian McGee's update on his experience as a participant at the Synod in Rome and the subsequent Synthesis Report were made available on the diocesan website.

### **PROGRESS REPORT**

#### **PART I – THE FACE OF THE SYNODAL CHURCH**

1. *Synodality: Experience and Understanding.*

2. *Gathered and sent by the Spirit*

**With the above priorities in mind we:**

- Composed our own Synodal Prayer, designed and published our Lenten Retreat card, 'Journeying Together' and delivered copies to all parishes and schools.
- Held a Diocesan Lenten Retreat Day in the Spirit of Synodality which was attended by more than 100 participants from parishes throughout the diocese. This was an uplifting spiritual experience grounded in prayer, music and praise. The programme included a presentation, 'Why Synodality?' clearly outlining the background to the Synod on Synodality, an update on the October assembly, and, with reference to the Synthesis Report, how local parishes need not wait to begin the journey towards synodality. Participants were also given an opportunity to experience 'A Conversation in the Spirit'.

**Furthermore we:**

- Uploaded the presentation 'Why Synodality?' to the Diocese of Dunkeld website
- Produced a video of the presentation for future use

- Published our diocesan ‘Journeying Together’ Bookmark and Synodal Prayer to be made available for all parish priests at the Mass of the Chrism in St Andrew’s Cathedral, Dundee, for distribution to their parishioners on Easter Day
- Archived feedback from ‘Conversations in the Spirit’, to help discern the way ahead and the support needed to take forward issues identified by the listening groups including:
  - engaging the clergy more fully in the synodal process
  - recognising and enhancing the role of women in our churches
  - finding varied and uplifting opportunities for prayer
  - reaching out to others especially the poor, the youth and those at the margins of society
  - accepting responsibilities inherent in our baptismal vocation
  - ecumenism

**Meanwhile, the following developments were taking place:**

- A member of the Diocesan Core Group completed a course on facilitating ‘Conversations in the Spirit’ at the School for Synodality organised by the Catholic Diocese of Northampton and Fruits of the Synod.

- A few local parishes included frequent updates on synodality in their weekly newsletters
- A few local parishes have already begun to engage in or are making preparations for synodal style meetings for parish groups.
- A few parishes have requested support from the Synod Core Group.
- Synodality is a regular focus in the Dunkeld News publication and on the agenda for a few Parish Pastoral Councils.

## **PROPOSED PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD**

With reference to the Proposals identified in the Synthesis Report 2023, and taking account of the above Progress Report, we plan to put before our new Bishop, the following three priorities, one from each part of the Synthesis Report, for his consideration.

### **Part 1: THE FACE OF THE SYNODAL CHURCH**

#### *7. On the road towards Christian Unity*

In 2025, the anniversary year of the Council of Nicea (325) at which the symbol of the faith that unites all Christians was elaborated, we propose a common commemoration of this event which will help us better understand how in the past

controversial questions were discussed and resolved together in Council. To this end, we would wish to encourage local celebrations, between other Christian Churches in Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland.

## **Part 2: ALL DISCIPLES, ALL MISSIONARIES**

### *9. Women in the Life and Mission of the Church.*

*(9:l)* We seek to carry forward our understanding and practice of Women in the Life and Mission of the Church encouraging local churches 'to extend their work of listening, accompaniment and care to the most marginalised women in their social contexts.'

*(9:m)* We propose that women in our local churches are given opportunities to 'participate in decision-making processes and assume roles of responsibility in pastoral care and ministry' where appropriate.

## **PART 3: WEAVING BONDS, BUILDING COMMUNITIES**

### *16. Towards a listening and accompanying Church*

A synodal Church must be a listening Church. We propose to become a listening and accompanying Church, especially for those who feel excluded. We recognise that many local parishes already engage in services which include listening and journeying with those in need both in their own communities and across the globe. In order to develop synodally there is a need for adequate formation.

(16:o) ‘We do not start this work from scratch. Numerous institutions and structures carry out the valuable task of listening, including the accompaniment work of Caritas amongst the poorest, and among migrants and refugees, and the many other contexts of accompaniment linked to consecrated life or lay associations. Connecting their work in a more integral way with the local Church community enables this work to be seen as part of the life of the whole community, not a delegated task. ‘

16:p ‘Those performing the service of listening and accompaniment, in its various forms, need adequate formation, taking into account the experiences of those they come into contact with. They also need to feel supported by the community. For their part, communities should become fully aware of the meaning of this service exercised on their behalf and to receive the fruits of this listening. We propose establishment of a ministry of listening and accompaniment in order to give greater prominence to this service. It should be grounded in baptism and adapted to different contexts. The way this ministry is conferred should promote the involvement of the community. ‘

***The Dunkeld Diocese Synod Core Group***