

Raising awareness about Synod and Synod Gatherings in Parish

Speaking Notes for Animators for speaking at Mass

- Pope Francis is inviting all Catholics, the baptised and anyone of good faith all across the world to take part in a time of prayerful reflection, listening and sharing, so that we can better hear the voice of God's Spirit, to help direct the Church into the future. This listening phase is part of a journey that will lead to a meeting of Church Leaders for a Synod in Rome in 2023.
- "Synod" simply means 'journeying together' and there have been many synods since the time of the early Church. The Universal Synod (or synod for the whole world) next year will focus on how we can journey together better, or be more synodal, as a Church going forward. We are also hoping that this listening will help with a National Synod here in Ireland which is due to take place in the next 4 or 5 years.
- You are warmly invited to two Synodal gatherings in March here in the parish. These gatherings will be an opportunity to share and listen to each other's experience of Church, in an organised, gentle and prayerful environment. This invitation is for everyone, those who come to church and those who do not, and the feedback from the gatherings will be collected and passed onto Church leaders in time for the 2023 Synod.
- Two people in our parish called Animators have been trained to lead the gatherings in a reflective, prayerful atmosphere. (I am one of the animators for this parish). Questions will be presented each evening and people will get into small groups to share on each question and listen to each other. Each small group will have a leader who will help everyone to have the opportunity to share and will collect the feedback from the group. Please remember we are being asked to listen with understanding, to respect each other's experiences, and to try to walk in the other person's shoes. It is not an opportunity to debate or convince someone of our opinions.
- It would be important to spend some time thinking about these questions in advance of the gatherings. There will be two questions each evening and the questions are:

First gathering:

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings joy?

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings sorrow?

Second gathering:

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings hope?

When you think of your experience of Church, what brings fear or anxiety?

We will be handing out invitation sheets after Mass with all this information including the questions, and we would ask you to invite family, friends and neighbours to come along, whether they are church-going or not!

- After the meetings have been held the feedback will be sorted into similar themes. These will form the basis for a Report to the Diocesan Synodal Committee and will be incorporated into the Dublin Diocese overall report for the Synod. The feedback will also be used by the Parish Team and Parish Pastoral Council to help in pastoral planning.
- The gatherings will be held on (insert dates and times) in (insert venue). (Or if you don't have this information at the moment) – We will let you know the dates and venue as soon as all this is available. Safeguarding and confidentiality guidelines will be in place and the gatherings will be Covid compliant.
- If you would like to know more in advance of the parish gatherings, you can go to the Dublin Diocesan website www.dublindiocese.ie/synod where you will find lots of information and Videos to help you. We will put further information on our website and on social media (Facebook, etc etc whatever social media the parish has) to keep you informed
- Finally, this is an important moment for our Church, and I would ask you to keep the synodal process in your prayers. We are at a crossroads in the Church today and we pray that this intervention by Pope Francis, supported by all the baptised, will bear much good fruit.

Thank you.