



Archdiocese of Southwark

Pastoral Letter for the Opening of the Synod

To be read at all Vigil and Sunday Masses over the weekend of 16/17 October 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has invited the Catholic Church across the world to begin a journey of listening attentively to the Lord and to each other. We want to deepen our understanding of what it means to live together, in union with Christ, as fellow disciples called to announce His Gospel. This experience of encounter is called a Synod and follows a Synodal process. The word Synod comes from two Greek words which mean 'journeying forward on the way together,' the Way who is the Lord Jesus, our Truth and our Life.¹

There are three key words for this Synodal process: communion, participation, and mission. Put simply: What does it mean for us to belong to Christ and be in relationship with His Church? What does it mean for us to be engaged and involved with Christ in His Church? What does it mean for us to be sent out, in proclamation and service, by Christ and His Church? We are being asked to rediscover together - laity, clergy, and religious - what it means to be a servant-Church, rooted in Christ who came 'not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'² The Synod is an opportunity for everyone baptised into Christ to consider what it means to be a missionary disciple. It begins at the grassroots and leads, through a national and continental phase, to a gathering in Rome in 2023.

¹ Cf. John 14:6

² Mk 10:45