

Setting out on a Synodal Pathway – A Message and Invitation from Bishop Denis to Take a First Step Together



In these days, the Catholic Church throughout the world and in Ireland is beginning a series of conversations about what God wants of his people at this time. These conversations, grounded in prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit, are often referred to as a Synodal Process. The term, “synodal”, comes from a Greek word which means “walking together”.

For the Irish Church, this universal synod with the title: *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*, coincides with its own synodal pathway towards a national synodal assembly in the next five years. The key question at the heart of our synodal pathway is: What does God want from the Church in Ireland at this time? This is a question being asked of all people, both within the Church and in society at large, to share their insights into the Catholic Church in Ireland – past, present and future – so that we can prepare for a National Synodal Assembly in the coming years.

In Kildare and Leighlin, as we begin this process of walking together as a diocese, we are going to give ourselves the time to do it as best we can, respectful of our local context and seeking to be inclusive of all voices. In the days, months and years ahead, as we walk together and seek out other companions on the road, may we learn from one another; may this journey plant God’s dream for our Church into our hearts so that together, as the People of God, we will be the Church we are called to be in these times and for all people.

We are at the beginning of a journey and the first step I am inviting you to take with me is a step of prayer. I invite you to pray the Synod prayer with your faith community and to take time to pray it at home. *As you pray I ask that you unite with the prayer of people from your parish and from your diocese who stand with you as companions on the journey.* May our prayers set us on the right course for authentic listening and discernment that is inclusive and respectful of all so that together we may discover the Church God wants us to be.

Our first step is a very small one but it is an important reminder that all we do and all we can accomplish together is through the grace and abundance of God who is with us always to guide us and lead us.

Yours in Christ,

+ Denis Nulty
Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin

The Prayer of the Synod

The following prayer has been offered by Rome for the Church's Synodal Journey. It is based on a prayer attributed to St Isidore of Seville (560-636) that has been traditionally used at Councils and Synods of the Church for hundreds of years.

**We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.**

**With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.**

**We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.**

**Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.**

**All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. Amen.**