

What is the Synod on Synodality?

From Rome, Courtney Mares, a Rome Correspondent for Catholic News Agency writes on the synod. A graduate of Harvard University, she has reported from news bureaus on three continents and was awarded the Gardner Fellowship for her work with North Korean refugees. In the next newsletters, we shall follow her reporting on the synod

The first Vatican assembly for the global Synod on Synodality will kick off in October bringing together clerics and laity alike for nearly one month of discussions. Here is what you need to know:

What is the Synod on Synodality?

The Synod on Synodality, initiated by Pope Francis in October 2021, is a multiyear, worldwide undertaking during which Catholics were asked to submit feedback to their local dioceses on the question “What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our ‘journeying together?’”

The Catholic Church’s massive synodal process has already undergone diocesan, national, and continental stages. It will culminate in two global assemblies at the Vatican. The first will take place Oct. 4–28 and the second in October 2024 to advise the pope on the topic “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.”

What does synodality mean?

Synodality was defined by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s International Theological Commission in 2018 as “the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the people of God.”

The 2021 synod preparatory document described synodality as “the form, the style, and the structure of the Church.”

The latest document published by the Vatican adds that synodality can also be understood as something that “does not derive from the enunciation of a principle, a theory, or a formula but develops from a readiness to enter into a dynamic of constructive, respectful, and prayerful speaking, listening, and dialogue.”

“At the root of this process is the acceptance, both personal and communal, of something that is both a gift and a challenge: to be a Church of sisters and brothers in Christ who listen to one another and who, in so doing, are gradually transformed by the Spirit,” it says.

Pope Francis has said that he envisions the Synod on Synodality as “a journey in accordance with the Spirit, not a parliament for demanding rights and claiming needs in accordance with the agenda of the world, nor an occasion for following wherever the wind is blowing, but the opportunity to be docile to the breath of the Holy Spirit.”

What are the main questions that the Synod on Synodality will try to answer?

- There are three overarching questions for the upcoming synod assembly as defined by the 2023 synod assembly’s guiding document called the Instrumentum Laboris:
1. How can we be more fully a sign and instrument of union with God and of the unity of all humanity?
 2. How can we better share gifts and tasks in the service of the Gospel?
 3. What processes, structures, and institutions are needed in a missionary synodal Church?

The main objective of the first session in October will be to design a plan of study in a “synodal style” and to indicate who will be involved in those discussions, according to the Instrumentum Laboris. Discernment will be “completed” in the 2024 session of the synod. What are some of the topics that could be addressed in the synod assembly?

The Instrumentum Laboris document guiding the discussions at the October synod assembly suggests discernment on questions regarding some hot-button topics, including women deacons, priestly celibacy, and LGBTQ outreach.

The document also highlights a desire for new institutional bodies to allow for greater participation in decision-making by the “people of God.” One of the proposed questions for discernment for the synod of bishops asks: “What can we learn about the exercise of authority and responsibility from other Churches and ecclesial communities?”

To be continued

The Debt We Owe

Mercy and forgiveness should be at the heart of the Christian life. Yet, as today’s First Reading wisely reminds us, often we cherish our wrath, nourish our anger, and refuse mercy to those who have done us wrong. Jesus, too, strikes close to home in today’s Gospel with His realistic portrayal of the wicked servant who won’t forgive a fellow servant’s debt, even though his own slate has just been wiped clean by their master.

It can’t be this way in the kingdom, the Church. In the Old Testament, seven is frequently a number associated with mercy and the forgiveness of sins.



The just man sins seven times daily; there is a seven-fold sprinkling of blood for atonement of sins (see Proverbs 24:6; Leviticus 16). But Jesus tells Peter today that we must forgive not seven times, but seventy times seven times. That means: every time.

We are to be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful (see Luke 6:36; Matthew 5:48). But why? Why does Jesus repeatedly warn that we can’t expect forgiveness for our trespasses unless we’re willing to forgive others their trespasses against us?

Because, as Paul reminds us in today’s Epistle, we are the Lord’s. Each of us has been purchased by the blood of Christ shed for us on the Cross (see Revelation 5:9). As we sing in today’s Psalm, though we deserved to die for our sins, He doesn’t deal with us according to our crimes. The mercy and forgiveness we show to others should be the heartfelt expression of our gratitude for the mercy and forgiveness shown to us.

This is why we should remember our last days, set our enmities aside, and stop judging others. We know that one day we will stand before the judgment seat and give account for what we’ve done with the new life given to us by Christ (see Romans 14:10, 12).

So we forgive each other from the heart, overlook each other’s faults, and await the crown of His kindness and compassion. **Scott Hahn**



English Martyrs
Vale of The White
Horse Pastoral Area

PARISHES OF THE ENGLISH MARTYRS, Didcot and ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, Wallingford

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24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A (WK IV)

Entrance Antiphon: Si 36:18

Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you, that your prophets be found true. Hear the prayers of your servant, and of your people Israel.

First Reading: Book of Eccl. 27:30–28:7

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 102

The Lord is compassion and love,

slow to anger and rich in mercy.

Second Reading: Rom 14:7-9

Gospel Acclamation: Cf. 1.S:9; Jn 6:68

Alleluia, alleluia!!

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life **Alleluia, alleluia!!**

Gospel: Matt. 18:21-35

Communion Antiphon: Cf. Ps 35:8

How precious is your mercy, O God! The children of men seek shelter in the shadow of your wings.

SATURDAY 16th September -

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot.....Jane Kimotho RIP (Ivy Ng’iru)

4:30pm Adoration & Confessions will take place prior to the Vigil Mass at St John’s Wallingford

5.00pm Vigil Mass St John’s ...Noel Clifford’s Private Intention

5.50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot...

6.30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot....Anthony Onyeli Ugwo (RIP) Thanksgiving for the interment.

SUNDAY... 17th September....24th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

One Mass Sunday 11:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot....People of the Parish

Our Parish Celebration Day!!



MONDAY 18th September - NO MASS

TUESDAY 19th SeptemberSt. Januarius or St Theodore of Canterbury

12noon Mass at St John’s Wallingford...Fr John Dwyer RIP (Michael Terney).....Rosary for Peace

WEDNESDAY 20th September - Ss Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang & Companions

9:30am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot.. James Trainor RIP

THURSDAY 21st SeptemberSt Matthew

9:30am —Mass St John’s Wallingford...Maureen D’Souza (Alison Richards) Good Estate

FRIDAY 22nd September ...

9.30.a.m Mass at the English Martyrs, Didcot...Jane Kimotho RIP (Ivy Ng’iru)

SATURDAY 23rd September - St Pio of Pietrelcina

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot.....

4:30pm Adoration & Confessions will take place prior to the Vigil Mass at St John’s Wallingford

5.00pm Vigil Mass St John’s ...

5.50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot...

6.30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot....

SUNDAY... 24th September....25th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

9:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot- Eleanor Mary Wells (RIP) 1st anniversary

11:00noon Mass St John’s Wallingford - Anthony Onyeli Ugwo (RIP) Thanksgiving for journey

In your prayers, please remember: Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, John Logan, Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Terry Appleyard, Joan Russell, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Jidechi Ejiogor, Pat McLoughlin, Margaret Healy, Barry Molloy, David Woodley, Annie Furlong, Fr Philip Harris, all the sick and housebound.



DEATH/FUNERAL NOTICE

Maureen Logan (96)...Requiem Mass in Abingdon, October 3rd @ 11am



First Inter-Religious Dialogue Conference

Our recently formed diocesan Inter-religious Dialogue Team, set up at the request by Bishop Philip, will be holding a conference on Saturday, 4th November. Anyone with an interest in the Catholic Church's relationship with non-Christian faiths is invited to attend.



A team of expert speakers, some of whom are internationally recognised, is lined up for the conference, which will be held at St. Bede's Church, Basingstoke, on Saturday, 4th November, from 10am to 3.30pm. A team of experts have been pulled together for the day. The theme of the conference echoes the teaching document Meeting God in Friend and Stranger, written by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and published in 2010 by the Catholic Truth Society, London. To register for the event or for more information about the conference, contact Yvette Harrington on 01329 832781.

Home Mission Sunday

Today is Home Mission Sunday in England and Wales. Home Mission Sunday provides us with the opportunity to focus on spreading the Gospel in our local areas. At the same time, the second collection for this Sunday supports the work of the Home Mission Office. Consider our activities today as celebrating and encourage missions amongst us. Our young people going to the universities and colleges are our target mission. This mission is in prayer and goodwill. It is a recognition of the fertile minds of our young people and how we can support them. Contributing to this collection is one way to play your part in our vision to help the local Church make the Joy of the Gospel a reality across England and Wales.



Facebook QR Code

Have you noticed our parish presence in the social media? Facebook is one our parish desires to use as a medium to reach out to as many as possible. Since Vince revamped the present one, not much activity from us. Kindly use this QR code to subscribe, share and help spread the spirit of the parish.



It is Senior's Lunch Again

This is to thank Jacquie, David, Kim and Douglas for the excellent lunch they have prepared and provided for free to our parish seniors. The Seniors' Lunch at English Martyrs Didcot takes place one in a month on **Thursdays** in the Tea Room at 12:00 noon. This attracts parishioners from Didcot and Wallingford. The menu and sign-up sheet are always on the board outside the tearoom. To sustain this wonderful initiative, consider bringing in someone who is on his or her own. A shared meal, laughter and space is a communion with Christ and His Church. Please book **September 21st, 2023** as the next lunch day.

World Reading and meditation with Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face (Saint Thérèse of Lisieux)

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 27 September, 9:30 to 10:30 am, in the hall at St John's (access from the back of the Church in Wood Street). Everyone is welcome. If you are unable to join us but would like to take a look, the readings can be found here: Study guide 6 – Reading of the writings of Therese of the Child Jesus - CARMELITANI SCALZI

Parish Day Music

If you enjoy singing or play a musical instrument the parish music groups would love you to join them for an informal session or "jam" in the church during the Parish Day picnic. We will be playing some of our favourite hymns – why not shake the dust off your violin or bongos and come and join us for some fun making music together? Many thanks. Carolyn.



Our Church, the English Martyrs Didcot is open daily for private prayers between 8am and 6pm.

Update on Railings and the Church Garden.

The railings should be installed this coming week! With a gate at the entrance of the courtyard, they should look very smart and importantly identify the boundary of our little church keeping it a special place. We hope to place a plant container / urn at the front door and maybe a hanging basket too which will enhance the entrance to the church.

The back garden is progressing with much debris cleared by Sam - thanks you so much Sam. Steppingstones have been laid with a few strategic shrubs planted. If you are splitting plants at home, please save some for the garden. Put them in water on the decking and I will plant a.s.a.p. There is a watering can on the decking so if you are passing by, please water the plants! Many thanks...Sue



SVP Annual Report

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) will be giving its annual report on its activities at the Sunday and vigil masses on the 9th and 10th of September. Dominic Knight will also announce (spoiler alert!) that the SVP will be holding another Quiz Night on Friday 13 October. The SVP number remains 07516 701917, for those who need it.



50 Years Ago, He Stepped Forward to Serve and He is still Serving

During the week, we celebrated 50th anniversary of Noel Clifford as an altar server in our parish of St. John the Evangelist. He recalls how just a week after his wedding in 1973, the parish priest asked if anyone knows how to serve at mass. He put himself forward. Since then, he is still counting.

Noel began serving at mass, age 7 in Market Harborough, Leicestershire. In September 1959, he was enrolled in the Guild of St. Stephen and was given the medal of St Christopher. Work-related move brought him to Reading where he lived and practiced his faith but did not do much serving until he moved to Wallingford. Noel has been decorated with all the medals known to the Guild, other medals of honors and commendation letters.

We, as a family rejoice and celebrate Noel for his commitment, dedication of service to the Church. In the photo, is his supportive lovely wife, Maureen at the thanksgiving mass.



University and College Map

Today, we celebrate our young people and commit their future into the secure loving hands of God. Please if you are going to the university or to any college, visit the notice board and indicate where. We shall adopt names on the board for individual and special prayers. Now and again, we shall be offering the Holy Mass for those whose names are on the board while they are away. We hope and pray you will return at festive times and remain visible and active in the parish.

I wish to thank Jacquie and David for designing the board and making it so easy to plot. May the Lord bless this initiative and all behind it.



September 22 Is World Car Free Day

Weren't born with four wheels and a tin roof, and yet living for a day without our cars fills us with consternation! Doing without our cars has all sorts of benefits for our wellbeing, for our bank balances and for our planet. Start to think about the journeys for which we genuinely need our cars, and the shorter journeys for which we most definitely don't. Think before you drive!



As an adult is there any of the 7 sacraments you have missed out on, or

considering? Have you been considering when to take the step forward to ask for the sacraments? Are you new to the Catholic environment and want to be in full communion with the Church. The options are all out here. At the moment, we are running the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Come along and explore. We meet virtually, fortnightly. The experience has been great.

Are you "married" but in the eyes of the Church not? Or is your marriage not sacramentalised? Come speak to Father Dominic. Their are options available or pathways to arriving at a sacramental marriage.

You may visit this website if you desire to explore the Catholic Culture <https://www.catholicculture.org/promotions/tour/>. It is a good resource for deepening the faith.



New to CatholicCulture.org?

Take the Tour

