

## Guidance and Ground Rules for Walking together, Seeking All Views

Pope Francis has invited the entire Catholic Church across the world to take part in a listening journey. As a Church we are invited to reflect on how we respond to today's problems and needs and how we become a listening Church.

### Statement from Bishop Mark O'Toole

We are invited to become "experts in the art of encounter. We do so, not so much by organising events or theorising about problems, or planning strategies for pastoral reorganisation, but in taking time to encounter the Lord and one another. Time to devote to prayer and to adoration — that form of prayer that we so often neglect — and to hearing what the Spirit wants to say to us individually and to the Church."

**Confidentiality:** what is shared in this group is confidential and shouldn't be discussed outside the group without the permission of the person sharing. Everything recorded by the facilitators will remain anonymous.

**Timing:** we will ask you to keep to some time limits to make sure everyone has an equal chance of being heard. To keep this fair, we will use a timer to mark time for each person. This may feel awkward or difficult at first, it may cut you off before you have finished sharing everything you need to share, or it may feel like too much time, but the benefit of this method is that it gives each person an equal opportunity to speak.

**Silence:** The focus is on listening to others, rather than simply thinking about what you want to say. Participants are asked to open their heart and mind to listen to one another and themselves. We will pause for 30 second to reflect on what was said after each person speaks.

**Further opportunities for feedback:** what there isn't time for in the group can be shared in the next group, or in writing, or a meeting or phone call can be arranged with one of the facilitators. There is an online feedback form with questions from each of the weeks of Advent (details below). We are invited to return all feedback to the Diocese by the end of February 2022.

**Holy Spirit:** this is a spiritual process and one in which we are asked to listen to the Holy Spirit and to each other, and to ourselves. Speak boldly, from your heart: we want to hear from you.

**No debates:** this is a genuine listening process not a debate or forum – over the next hour or so everyone will have the opportunity to speak and be heard. No-one should respond to a particular contribution from anyone else. No one is obliged to speak.

**Listening without responding:** you are invited to listen to each other without response, comment or interruption to enable active listening of what others are called to share, to learn something new about reality with each new perspective that is shared.

**No quick fixes or solutions:** the facilitators are not here to answer questions nor resolve issues which may emerge but to enable people to feel comfortable to share their thoughts and to help record those thoughts and themes which may emerge for feedback into the Synodal process.

**Note taking:** facilitators will be taking notes. These are taken anonymously and will form part of the Diocesan response to the local listening phase of our Diocesan 'Walking Together'.

**Responding to what was shared:** In the second part of the session, you will be given an opportunity to respond to what was shared in the first half of the meeting. This is not a time for discussing or refuting what someone else has said, but an opportunity to ask questions like:

- How were you affected by what you heard?
- Is there a common thread in what was shared?
- Is there something missing?
- Did anything said have particular meaning for you?

The group is not required to agree on any particular points but to be **open listeners**.

**The future:** This listening process will become part of a longer term shift in the way we walk together as Christians and helps us grow in faith as individuals and as a Church. The feedback will be shared and reflected on at parish, Deanery and Diocesan level with emerging themes shared with the national Synodal working group.

### Your facilitators are:

#### **Penzance:**

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#### **Hayle:**

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During Advent, there will be groups in Hayle on Tuesdays after Mass and Penzance on Thursdays after Mass, and Monday evenings in Penzance at 7 p.m, at the church. The first 4 sessions will begin Monday 22nd November, led by lay facilitators. The meetings are time for prayer, reflection, listening to the Word of God, and to each other. Meetings will last an hour to an hour and a half.

Questions are available online and we can print these out for you if you need us to.

The Parish Synod feedback form: <https://www.penzancecatholicchurch.org/synod/feedback.htm>

## Synod prayer

**For the 2021-2023 Synod, the Holy Father is proposing that the entire People of God pray this simplified version of the Adsumus.**

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.

