



Synod Update

Delegates: Sophia White and John-Paul Riordan
19th March 2022

On the Feast of St Patrick, Sophia and John-Paul attended the Diocese's presentation of their summary on Zoom. You can find the full draft summary document here: <https://stthomasofcanterbury.com/synod-updates/> As it is currently 16 pages, the summary document will need to be shortened before being sent to the Bishops' Conference on 8th April.

We have until 24th March to receive further feedback and comments on the document. You can send your feedback to us at SynodStThomas@gmail.com, and if you have anything that you feel that has not been covered in the document and which the Diocese should be aware of, they are still receiving submissions at <https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/get-involved/synod/online-submissions/>

Below you can find a summary of the summary.

As parish delegates, we will be handing over our synod responsibilities to the Parish Synod Working Group after 25th March, when we will have submitted our final feedback to the Diocese. We (Sophia and John-Paul) feel honoured to have been able to represent you as delegates and it has been a great pleasure to have met and heard from so many of you. We would also like to thank Fr Anthony and Fr John for their support, and we can already see that we are becoming a more synodal parish. We have also found the Diocese's engagement with the process to be positive, and our hope is that this synodality will be part of the life of the Church from now on. Please do keep the synod and the Universal Church in your prayers.

The Diocese received 137 parish submissions (78% of all parishes in the Diocese), 134 online individual submissions, 12 group submissions, 68 postal or email submissions, and a handful of art and music submissions.

The overview of key themes which have been identified by the Diocese are:

COMMUNION

- Eucharist at the heart of the Communion and Community
- Role of parish (relationship with priest)
- Role of priest (relationship with parish)
- Relationship with Jesus and the Church
- Language

PARTICIPATION

- COVID-19 and the pandemic
- Creating and sustaining community
- Distance between the Bishop and the people
- Diversity in Southwark
- Role of women
- A place for all
- Using and identifying the skills and gifts of parishioners
- Schools, families, and young people
- Youth and young people
- Governance and co-operation (relationship between clergy and laity)
- Understanding the lay vocation
- Vehicles for collaboration (pastoral councils)

MISSION

- To learn and to love: formation and charitable action
- The missional community
- Formation for mission (study, prayer, Scripture)
- Barriers to mission: confidence, abuse, pandemic, motivation
- Working with other churches and ecclesial movements: apostolates, cooperation, ecumenism.

It was also noted that there is a desire to reconsider some of the Church's teachings, particularly surrounding sexuality, contraception and gender, and a real call to repentance and accepting the Gospel challenge.

Again, the document can be found here <https://stthomasofcanterbury.com/synod-updates/> and please submit any further feedback to SynodStThomas@gmail.com by 24th March.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”
(John 14:1-2)

God bless,

Sophia and John-Paul