

The Parish of St. Joseph in Malvern

Pope Francis has invited us to join on a 'synodal journey'. A 'synod' is a "walking together" under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Now, this is not something new; it is something that we have all been engaged on since our Baptism. Our faith journey is not a solitary undertaking; it is something we have always done in the company of others, and at each stage of the journey we have followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

We "walk together" when we join in the Sunday or weekday Eucharist, we "walk together" in the various groups we belong to - whether it be church cleaning and stewarding, flower arranging, making music, engaging in the GospelShare Group or the Thursday Group, or the One World Group, or serving at the altar or engaging in liturgical ministry as Readers or Ministers of Holy Communion, or praying before the Blessed Sacrament, or joining in the Youth Group or working together as pupils and teachers in our Catholic school.

So if we are already engaged on our 'synodal journey', what is it that we are being encouraged to do?

What I think it is, is that we are being asked to invoke the power of the Holy Spirit to intensify our faith experience, to reflect on it more deeply and to share our experiences with others and to listen to the promptings of the Spirit through them.

As a first step towards facilitating this process, a small working group has devised a questionnaire to help us in the process of reflection and sharing. It is hoped that this will encourage us to think more deeply about our faith and to exchange with others, perhaps in the groups we belong to, with our families, with friends we have made among our fellow parishioners, with fellow parishioners who live near us over a cup of tea.

At a later stage, we will be organising a number of Parish meetings where we can come together and discern what it is the Holy Spirit is saying to us.

And finally, if you are willing to return completed questionnaires, this will be a great help for Fr Naz as he seeks to discern the sense of Faith in our Parish.

Thank you very much for listening and for engaging in this deeper 'journey together'.

Please take a questionnaire and a cover sheet with you as you leave.

It is perhaps appropriate to finish with the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester (who actually came from Droitwich):

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits thou hast given me,
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.
Amen.