

Weekly Message from Fr William for Second Sunday of Advent 2021

Dear People of St Mary's, this Wednesday 8th December at 7pm the parish will be coming together in church, as many of you as can make it, for a new kind of meeting, just as many thousands of parishes have met in recent weeks and just as thousands more parishes around the world will be meeting in the weeks to come. We'll be joined by our facilitators: Alicia, Anne and Liz. This is the Synod, the two year consultation that Pope Francis has initiated. And he wants to involve everybody.

Two important observations about the Synod I relayed to you at Mass last Sunday from Tablet contributor Clare Watkins. First, when it comes to Synod, the consultation is not 'linear'. What you say in Synod on Wednesday does not go only in a straight line from you > to the facilitators > to the bishops > to the Pope. As members of the Church we are more interconnected than this. What you say will also be heard by others in the parish. Synod is when we are listening to each other, finding our way forward together as the Church. The word Synod literally means 'walking the road together'.

What you personally say in Synod on Wednesday might not change anything this time round, maybe not even in your lifetime. But if your words are the Spirit speaking in you, and there's every reason to believe this once we've prayed for this at the outset, then your words might sow a seed, might start a ripple, might be taken up by others in years to come, and nudge the church in its course. In my message to you last Sunday I compared the Church to a gigantic ship that takes a long time to turn. But each little nudge from each member can make a difference to the direction of the ship, even if it takes a long time to turn, and even if that turn is small. We each influence the onward voyage of the Church, because we influence each other.

The second important observation Clare makes in her article is this: that the Synod is not just for regular practising Catholics. It's for the widest possible participation, perhaps especially for those on the margins, or those who might feel themselves to be on the margins. Jesus was often surrounded by a crowd. But it was so often those on the edge of the crowd that he wanted to hear from. He wanted to hear their needs. He wanted to hear their pain. He wanted to hear their concerns and their struggles.

So please come next Wednesday if you can. We need to hear your voice. And if you know of anybody that might have been out of touch with the Church for while, maybe someone who has fallen out with the Church, please tell them about this Synod, and please tell them that we need to hear their voice.

Please confirm, eg by email to pp.stmary.knaresborough@dioceseofleeds.org.uk if you are able to make it on Wednesday, to give me an idea of numbers. Thanks!



Second Sunday of Advent 5th December 2021