

Background to the Synod Parish Gathering

Pope Francis invited all Catholics, the baptised and anyone of good faith all across the world to take part in a prayerful reflection, listening and sharing, so that we can better hear the voice of God's Spirit to help direct the Church into the future. This listening phase will lead to a meeting of Church Leaders for a Synod in Rome in 2023.

Synod simply means 'journeying together' and there have been many synods since the time of the early Church. The Universal Synod next year will focus on how we can journey together more, or be more synodal, as a Church going forward .

Each parish was asked to invite people to a Gathering. The Synod Gathering for St Patrick's Church took place on Thursday 3rd March 2022. At the Gathering, those attending were invited to share their responses in small groups to **4** questions as follows:

- **When you think of your experience of Church, what brings joy?**
- **When you think of your experience of Church, what brings sorrow?**
- **When you think of your experience of Church, what brings hope?**
- **When you think of your experience of Church, what brings fear or anxiety?**

After the gathering all responses were collated into themes which showed a convergence (where a lot of people shared the same thoughts) and themes which showed divergence (where only a few shared that theme), and the attached feedback form was completed. The feedback form was submitted to the Diocese just before Easter and fed into the overall Diocese report which is also now available on our Parish website.