

# ARCHDIOCESAN SYNODAL COUNCIL 2025 | SUMMARY REPORT

On November 1<sup>st</sup> 2025, Archbishop John Sherrington, at the opening of the Archdiocesan Synodal Council expressed gratitude for the synodal process initiated by Archbishop Malcolm and emphasised its alignment with the global Church's mission of synodality.

## Archbishop John's address

Archbishop John affirmed that synodality is integral to the Church's mission, reminding us that we are called to bear witness to Christ and proclaim the Gospel. This mission requires a continual process of conversion and formation within the life of the Church. He strongly affirmed the practice of "Conversations in the Spirit" as a vital means of fostering deeper spiritual renewal, encouraging openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and enabling authentic discernment of God's will. In his address, Archbishop John echoed a comment made earlier in the day that we must not forget the poor, and he also highlighted encouraging signs of hope and emerging seeds of renewal, pointing to the Spirit's active presence in the Church today.

## Feedback about the day

The day was marked by strong participation and a positive reception of the Archbishop's presentation. Mixed-group discussions proved valuable in fostering a broader understanding of the archdiocese and promoting cross-deanery awareness. Participants affirmed that "Conversations in the Spirit" provided a fruitful framework for sharing, listening, and learning together. The overall ethos reflected unity, shared purpose, hope, and mutual commitment to listening and learning. These conversations enabled the identification of areas of progress already achieved, as well as priorities that remain to be addressed.

## Conversations in the Spirit

Participants acknowledged both the opportunities and challenges inherent in fostering synodality across the archdiocese. A recurring concern was the need to engage a **wider range of voices**, ensuring inclusivity and representation, particularly among young people both within and beyond school communities. There was a strong call to maintain focus on the Church's vision and mission, **prioritising relationships** over structural or property-related issues. The discussions affirmed that the Holy Spirit is actively at work within diverse groups and highlighted the importance of promoting a deeper understanding of **our baptismal calling** and shared responsibility for the Church's mission. Improved communication at every level—diocesan, parish, and local—was identified as essential. Participants stressed the need for the Church to adopt a more **outward-facing posture**, reaching out to those in need, listening to voices at the margins, and collaborating with other Christians and people of goodwill. Suggestions included enlisting young people to help develop a confident online presence and ensuring that the Church's language remains relevant to everyday experience. Finally, **prayer** was recognized as a foundational source of guidance for discernment and a driving force for action, alongside a **renewed commitment to serving the poor**.

The ASC Executive, considering keynote speakers and feedback from Conversations in the Spirit, has discerned four priority areas for our attention over the next twelve months:

- Formation, with a particular emphasis on prayer and lay leadership
- Co-responsibility – amongst all, ensuring that we are being transparent, accountable and participatory
- Renewed Mission of the Church - proclaiming the Gospel and witness to Christ, especially listening to, serving, and empowering those who are poor in any way
- The promotion and use of 'Conversations in the Spirit' as a means for discernment at all levels—this requires time, patience, and openness to the Holy Spirit. For further details, resources and training please see: [www.schoolforsynodality.co.uk](http://www.schoolforsynodality.co.uk)

**The Archdiocesan Synodal Council next year  
will take place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2026**

## Walking and Meditating in Lent

During Lent especially, we remember Jesus meditating and praying to God the Father, for forty days in the Judean desert before he began his ministry. During Lent we are called to refresh and rededicate ourselves to our Christian faith and finally at Easter to renew our baptismal vows.

Medieval monks had a tradition of walking and meditating especially during Lent. They would focus on a particular line of gospel, a phrase Jesus said, or even a repetition of the name of Jesus.

Many people walked on pilgrimage at this time and thousands visited the Augustinian monastery at our local Norton Priory where Knight Dutton brought a piece of the Holy Cross back from the crusades in the Holy Land.



Jesus praying in the desert

## A Lenten Walk and Pray

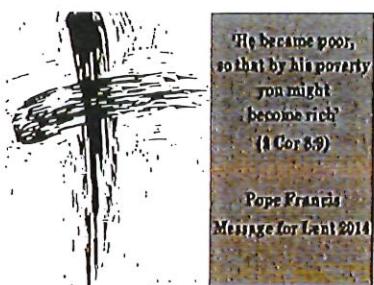
During Lent why not spend some time each day walking and praying.

You could visit one of our special places in and around Widnes, Victoria Park, Spike Island, or Norton Priory.

Find a part of the gospel, or a prayer you especially like, or a Taizé chant to focus your attention on God while you walk.

Try breathing in to the count of 6 and out to the count of 4. Breath slowly and gently.

You could sit down somewhere quiet when you are there, and reflect on all the blessings in your life and the people that you know. Thank God quietly within you for all you have and for the people who are special to you.



### Taizé Chants

Bless the Lord my soul and bless his holy name

Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom

Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray watch and pray

### Gospel Quotations to pray

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13)

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Whatever you ask for in prayer believe that you have received it and it will be yours (Mark 11:24)

Pope Francis on Lent. "Fast from hurting words and say kind words. Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude. Fast from anger and be filled with patience."