

What happens next?

The Archbishop will prepare a Pastoral Plan in the light of all that the Synod has said. This will be announced on the 1st Sunday of Advent 2021. He will not be doing this on his own. He has set up a Pastoral Plan Group who, with others, will work with him in doing this. In his Synod Pastoral Letter Archbishop Malcolm has said this:

“Each of these voted on Recommendations will open for us a more committed and sometimes different way of being a disciple of Jesus. All the recommendations will give shape to how we act as good stewards of our resources and how we focus our energies.”

“There is much work to be done analysing the full experience of the Synod, but this is my initial reaction. In the first place, we care about our children and young people, whether it is in our schools or later as they make their journeys through life as young adults.

My second reaction is that the priorities which have been identified suggest that being an outward-looking church is essential – evangelisation, love of neighbour and inclusivity all go together. Indeed, our journey as God’s pilgrim people is undertaken in the midst of humanity, and you have reminded us of the need to be alert to the joys and hopes, the griefs and sorrows of all humanity, and to be, each in our own lives, ministers of God’s mercy, love and healing.

I was reminded that synodality is not just a one-off event but is part of the DNA of the church. The synod members asked that we continue to journey together and embrace the rich gifts of ministry that the Holy Spirit has poured out upon all the baptised – some to ordination, some to consecrated life, but also to all the lay faithful who have an important part to play.”



On Saturday June 19th 2021 420 people gathered for a zoom meeting. This was the meeting of the Synod of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

The 420 people were:

- Synod Members: Lay people: one from each parish and eight from each Deanery. Priests with an appointment in the Diocese.
- Members chosen from the Religious and seminarians and retired priests of the Diocese
- Observers – Ecumenical (including local church leaders)
- Other Dioceses: Bishops of the Northern Province
- Special invites – those who have journeyed with us since the start of Synod 2020.

The main talk of the meeting was, after months of discernment, to make know through the voting the way forward for the Archdiocese.

The voting took place on the 19 Recommendations (29 votes).

Each member had to make a choice of one of the 4 options below on the Recommendations:

A: This is a high priority which the Archdiocese should enact soon

B: This is an excellent idea but not at the top of my list

C: This doesn't strike me as vitally important

D: This is not the right way forward for us in the Archdiocese.

All 19 Recommendations received overwhelming support.

There were 7 Recommendations that received the most votes:

Evangelisation

We, the people of the Archdiocese, recommend that the pastoral plan heed the call of the Church to be courageous in guiding all Catholics to deepen their relationship with Jesus, and to engage in our mission to help make Jesus known and loved in our world.

Lay Ministry

We, the people of the Archdiocese, recommend that the pastoral plan must include honouring the many vocations of all the baptised, women and men alike. This will also include a strong commitment to lay ministry including training employed ministers, supporting volunteer ministers, and coordinating their work alongside the clergy.

A More Inclusive Church

We, the people of the Archdiocese, recommend that the pastoral plan include dialogue with those who feel excluded, in order to develop initiatives so that the whole Church can reflect on what it means to be more inclusive.

Young People and Young Adults

We, the people of the Archdiocese, recommend that the pastoral plan include a plan to assist parishes in understanding, meeting, forming and welcoming young people and young adults, and developing locally employed and volunteer youth ministers to work with young people and young adults.

Catholic Schools

We, the people of the Archdiocese, recommend that the pastoral plan include a comprehensive review of how we hand on and nurture the Catholic faith within the school context.

Love of Neighbour

We, the people of the Archdiocese, recommend that the pastoral plan include training for parish volunteers who can accompany those most in need; giving special attention to those who are housebound, sick, or immigrants, and to those who are members of cultural and ethnic minorities.

Governance and Synodality

We, the people of the Archdiocese, recommend that the pastoral plan as part of our growing commitment to synodality, develop a process that ensures women are equal, valued, visible and heard.

It would have been possible for any of the 19 Recommendations to be given a vote which said: "this is not the right way forward for the Archdiocese." **This did not happen.** This indicates that the 4 years of our Synod journey, where we have listened and then tried to discern what has been said, has been in the right direction. This surely is the path of synodality where every voice has a place.

Synod Members were also invited to say which of all the Recommendations were most important: This is what they said:

Evangelisation, Lay Ministry, Young People.

The full results can be found in the July edition of the Catholic Pic and at synod2020recommendations.org.uk