

Diocese of Westminster

Bishops' Reflection on the Continental Stage of the Synodal Process

Having received the response of the Discernment Group of the Diocese of Westminster for the Continental Stage of the Synodal Process, the Bishops of the Diocese have identified the following priorities and directions which emerge at this time.

We discern that:

1. The 'mission' received by Christ from the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, is the foundation and source of the Church's mission. The wellspring of all mission activity is the mystery of God. All are incorporated into this mission through baptism, which binds together the Body of Christ and imparts the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The desire for a deepening formation for mission as witnesses of Christ has resonated across this process. Each of the baptised is called to a deeper relationship with Christ and to the holiness this can bring about in accord with their way of life and to develop a spirituality to sustain this calling (LG 11).
2. Accompaniment (which needs greater precision) of another person through a process of prayer, listening and reflection, is a means by which the disciple of Christ grows into conformity with the Truth of the Word. The gift of God's mercy and the call to live the Truth are held together in a creative tension in the life of each person. Pastors, and those called to assist them, will benefit from further formation in understanding the dynamics of accompaniment and the discernment it requires.
3. The desire to invite everyone into the tent of God's mercy is echoed across the peoples of the continents. The Church is called to be a 'community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach.' (EG 28) The obstacles to participation and communion have been identified during the synodal process.
4. Synodality calls for recognition of and a deep listening to the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of all people, especially those who are 'on the edge'. It also calls for a clarification about the discernment of the bishop of the diocese, and priest in a parish, who acts in persona Christi capitis, Head of the Body, and are called to shepherd the mission of the particular Church, in communion with the college of bishops and Peter. This also refers to the pattern of voting in the forthcoming Synod of Bishops.
5. The call of God's holy people to be close to and serve the poor of this world is a priority of Jesus and the proclamation of the kingdom of God.