



Synod  
2021  
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For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

# The Road to Emmaus: Journeying Together



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

# Prayer for the Synod: Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before you, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go  
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;  
do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity  
so that we may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray away from the truth  
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,  
who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son  
forever and ever.

Amen.

# A Synodal Church

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”

**How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church?**

**What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together?” (Rome Synod Office)**

A most familiar journey for us is the Road to Emmaus which gives us the signposts on our Synod pilgrimage. We are invited to recall our experiences, re-read those experiences in greater depth, open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and gather the fruits to share. We are pilgrims ‘journeying together’ whose listening and speaking is that of those who seek and not that of those who believe they have found.

In recalling our most recent experiences, the world has come through a profound period with the Covid-19 pandemic,

**What strengths and weaknesses have emerged during this period as a faithful community?**

**What has been the experience of the touch of God in these times?**

**What challenges and vulnerabilities have been exposed in our lives, both individually and ecclesially, which need to be addressed?**

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The following questions are framed within the Road to Emmaus to help us see where the questions are pointing and where the Holy Spirit is guiding us as we reflect together on this pilgrimage.

## I The Journeying Companions

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognising him. (Luke 24)

Who walks with us on the path of our faith and life journey? Who can we see on the edge of the path? How might we walk with them? How do we meet, walk and welcome those curious about faith because of the pandemic?

communion



## II Listening

He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" (Luke 24)

How do we listen to each other in these post-pandemic days? What do we hear? How do we make our listening "a listening of the heart" and not just about hearing what's being said? How do we listen to the signs of the times outside the Church and respond to them?

### III Speaking Out

*They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. (Luke 24)*

How well do we communicate with each other in our groups, parish, partnership, diocese? Do we have the freedom, truth and charity to speak with candour, directness and sincerity (parrhesia) and prudence? How are we living out our prophetic vocation to speak the truth as revealed by Jesus, given at baptism?

participation



**Parrhesia** is a word often used by Pope Francis. It draws on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to speak with candour, directness and sincerity, and tempered with freedom, truth and charity in other words, prudence. Speaking with parrhesia and prudence needs the art of discernment. Discernment is standing in the light of the Holy Spirit, illumined and with the shadows behind us. We feel the Spirit's warmth and are drawn towards it as a source of good. Discernment means we are open to the Spirit's radiance which draws us into the heart of God, the source of light for the world.

## IV Celebrating

*As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognised him, but he vanished from their sight. (Luke 24)*

In what ways do the Mass and the Sacraments inspire us to a deeper encounter with Jesus? How does prayer change how we understand our involvement in the mission of the Church? What flows out from the Mass and the Sacraments to our local communities?

mission



## V Co-responsibility in the Mission

*Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them. (Luke 24)*

How does our identity and action as Church relate to the Great Commission of Jesus to make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28:18-20)? What formation do we need to be more committed to the mission of the Church? How are we having an impact and making a difference?

## VI Dialogue in Church and Society

In what ways does our Church community speak to society? How can we have further impact in this area? In what ways can we develop dialogue with those who hold different views?

## VII With the Other Christian Denominations

How are we as a community listening to and enriched by other faith traditions? In what ways can our faith be further enhanced by our other Christian brothers and sisters?

## VIII Authority and Participation

In what ways do we take collective responsibility for our community? How do the lay faithful collaborate effectively in the life of the local church? What are the fruits of this collaboration, and what are the obstacles and challenges?

## IX Discerning and Deciding

What are the opportunities in our community to be involved in decision making? When are there opportunities for communal discernment? In what ways is our local community accountable and transparent? How can we develop this co-responsibility further?

## X Forming Ourselves in Synodality

In what ways are we as a local community effective in passing on the faith? What support do we need to help us grow as a Church journeying together? What formation would assist our personal and community development? How do we continue the listening and dialogue beyond this process so that the Church has a “lived synodality” as the Holy Father asks?





DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**

email: [synod@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:synod@diocesehn.org.uk)

Contact Us:

Synod

Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle

St Cuthbert's House

West Road

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE15 7PY

E: [synod@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:synod@diocesehn.org.uk)

T: 0191 243 3316 / 07375 934713

Further information can be found on our Diocesan website