

ARCHDIOCESAN SYNODAL COUNCIL 2025 | SUMMARY REPORT

On November 1st 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

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