



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat
Pre-Synodal Celebration
Synod of Bishops 2021 - 2023

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, BALLARAT
SUNDAY, MAY 15, 2022
10.30AM

Synod of Bishops 2021 - 2023

As the first phase of the Synodal Process, 'Listening and Discernment in the Local Churches', concludes, this Mass celebrated by Fr Kevin Maloney, Vicar General, with wide representation from across the Local Church, is a celebration of the Ballarat Diocesan response. Through prayer, listening, reflection and discernment, this Diocesan Mass looked to the synodal path along which God's Spirit is calling the Local Church.



On Sunday, October 10, 2021 Pope Francis celebrated Mass to mark the global launch of the Synod of Bishops with the theme **For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission**. In dioceses around the world, local launches took place on the weekend after, ushering in a period of local consultation that will assist with the two-year process that will culminate in the Synod of Bishops gathering in Rome in October 2023.

By convoking this Synod, Pope Francis invited the entire Church to participate in this Synodal Process that began at the diocesan level, to reflect on this theme that is decisive for the Church's life and mission: Synodality denotes the particular style that qualifies the life and mission of the Church, expressing her nature as the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel.

In Australia the diocesan phase has culminated after we focussed on the theme "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission" at a local level. All were invited to reflect on how we are united with one another in the communion of one people of God. We were asked to consider how each member of the Church can participate in the life of the Church. We were encouraged to think about how each one of us has a role in the Church's mission to share the Good News of Christ in what we say and in the way we live. We were invited to share our reflections with others and listen to others as they share their reflections with us.

The Synod will be articulated in four phases (diocesan, national, continental and universal) through consultations and discernment; concluding with the October 2023 Assembly in Rome. We continue to pray that God will grant us listening hearts as we share in the process of our Australian Plenary Council and the worldwide Synod over the next couple of years. May we have the grace to listen carefully to each person we meet along the way. Being good listeners will help us to be good servants.

Fr Kevin introduced the Celebration with words about the Synodal Process, *"Today, we gather in the Pre-Synodal Meeting of our diocesan family, to listen to the Word of God, to listen to each other, to reflect upon what we hear, and to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to us. Today we place ourselves humbly in the*



presence of God, who gathers us as one, that we might together step forward on the synodal path along which God's Spirit is calling us. Our walking together, our praying, listening, reflecting and discerning, all help us to become the Church Jesus wants us to be.

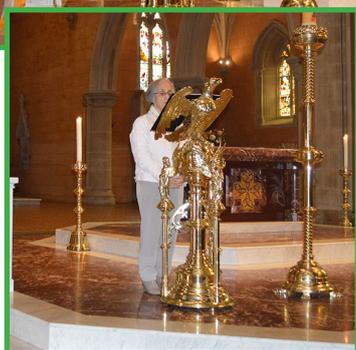


The readings were proclaimed by Cathy Prunty and Simone Kyatt. A litany took place to help the diocesan community in their prayer, listening and reflection. Fr Kevin introduced the Litany with the following words:

Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops, the Holy Father Pope Francis said: The world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission. It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium. ...

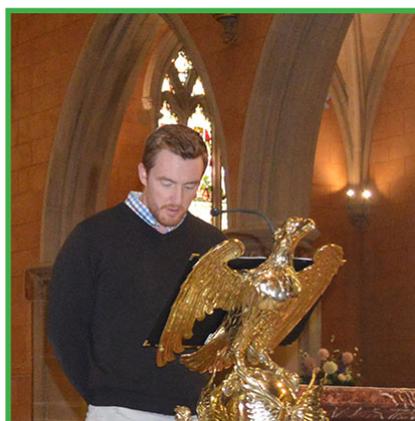
A synodal Church is a Church which listens, which realises that listening "is more than simply hearing". It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:17), in order to know what he "says to the Churches" (Rev 2:7). ...

Let us listen attentively to the words of our sisters and brothers from throughout our diocese, that we might come to understand what the Holy Spirit is teaching us, where the Holy Spirit is leading us as we seek to journey together.



The Litany was read by Cathy Prunty, Patrick Kennedy and Bernadette Lynch and included submitted responses from people around the diocese such as:

- Every baptised person is called to give as well as receive. When baptised we become a part of "God's family" and as with any family have rights and responsibilities. We focus on what we receive but are often unaware of the part we should be playing in the missionary activity of the Church, especially our local church.
- Honest, critical and collective self-reflection is necessary so that clergy and laity can work together towards renewed institutional processes, practices and structures that can more reflect both the Church and the changing world.
- Embrace diversity in Ministry. Women welcomed into all levels of Ministry. People who are celebrants within a local community to be called on to be lay preachers and offer from the Word strength and encouragement to all.
- Allow and support diverse models of Catholic community to emerge as possible ways in which the Gospel might light the spark of faith within people.
- The need to acknowledge the current context of our young people and what reaches them. We could show far greater sensitivity in the areas of culture, music, leadership, language and technology.
- Give particular emphasis to and promote integral ecology and ecological conversion, place importance on care of the earth.



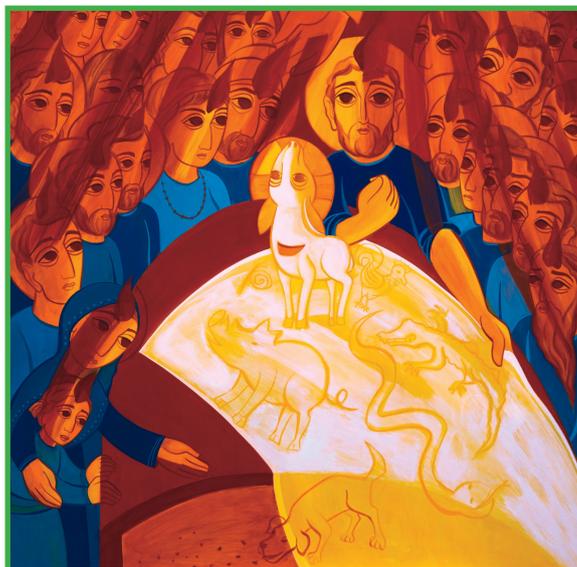
Also included in the Mass were dimissals for children celebrating their sacraments and two children presenting for baptism. As Fr Kevin said a great celebration of synodality and welcoming to the local church.

Exhortations to the ongoing work of discerning the synodal path were read by Patrick Kennedy and Bernadette Lynch as part of the celebration:

The Exhortations reflected key elements of the Diocesan synthesis submitted and called all to listen to each other with hearts and minds that are open; look for the signs of where the Holy Spirit is drawing us, leading us; set aside our own wish-lists for the Church so that we can become the Church Jesus wants us to be and make sure everyone is included and no-one is left out, making room especially for people who struggle to accept the Church or to find acceptance in the Church.

Another element of the Exhortations was the hope that the power of the Synod and the Plenary Council will support the diocese in taking steps to make concrete changes towards synodality which may include but not be restricted to: a new governance structure that could involve a renewed diocesan pastoral council and renewed parish pastoral councils; women in leadership on the different governing bodies; diversity in ministry; parishes that are proactive rather than reactive in their decision making; formation for all that reflects the signs of the times; a focus on ecology and environment; more ways to respond to young people's involvement; and so many more important points that have been recognised as the call of the Holy Spirit in the Diocese of Ballarat.

Peter Morris issued a warm welcome to all joining in the celebration and the Cathedral Choir sang beautifully. Thank you to all who participated in the Mass.



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 from the way of 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.