

ARCHBISHOP of CARDIFF-MENEVIA



ARCHESGOB CAERDYDD-MYNYW

‘Heart speaks to Heart’ - being a missionary and synodal diocese.

A Six-Week Course for the Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia

WEEK 6: A WORD ON METHOD

So, this is the vision, and these are the priorities which I see for our Archdiocese having been here for just over three years. But how do we go about it? Soon after I came, I brought together a ‘Mission Think Tank’, a group of priests, religious and lay faithful who meet with me regularly to help keep a focus on being a missionary and synodal diocese. For mission is the task of every baptised Catholic in the Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia. The synodal way of being in the Church is the way to go about it, and this pathway is renewed and refreshed by keeping its proper missionary dynamic. I hope this vision can help guide the renewal of the different organs of consultation and synodal listening at diocesan, deanery and local parish level. None of us in leadership can do everything by ourselves, nor should we. Working alone, it is hard to remain motivated. We run out of energy or focus. Different people bring different gifts. But together we can support and move things forward. As the Final Document of ‘For a Synodal Church’ reminds us, and it is true of me as Archbishop, too:

“Priests are called to live their service in a spirit of proximity to their people, to be welcoming and prepared to listen to all, opening themselves up to a synodal style.”⁵

I draw our attention, too, to the words of Pope Leo XIV regarding the intimate link between being missionary and being synodal in the way that we do things and again, I apply this as much to myself as brother priests:

“In order to implement an ecclesiology of communion ever more effectively, the ministry of the priest must move beyond the model of exclusive leadership, which leads to the centralisation of pastoral activities and the burden of all responsibilities entrusted to him alone. Instead, the ministry should move toward an increasingly collegial leadership, with cooperation between priests, deacons and the entire People of God resulting in mutual enrichment that is the fruit of the various charisms bestowed by the Holy Spirit.....In the Church, authority is exercised through service, modelling not the political realm, but the model of the Lord Himself, who ‘though he was God was humbler yet, even to accepting death on a Cross’ (Phil 2).”⁶

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There is an important sacramental complementarity here between the ordained and the baptised. I have been struck again and again by this as I have visited parishes, schools and different communities. People love their priest and know that his ministry is irreplaceable in order for them to develop and deepen their relationship with Jesus. At the same time, our priests experience their greatest happiness in seeing their people grow in holiness, and in deepening their discipleship. Priest and people live alongside one another and challenge and support one another to live the particularity of their vocation in fidelity and at depth. One cannot exist without the other.

When we generously embark on a life of seeking to share Jesus and our Catholic faith with others, it is important to remember that we are not the only ones concerned about disappearing Catholics, or where the young are going, or how we can grow in confidence to raise our voice in society. I have seen that many really want to be involved and do something but do not know how or have not been given the encouragement and permission to try. It is important that those of us involved in leadership in parishes, in schools, and in the Archdiocese, continue to provide opportunities for others to participate. The various 'organs' of dialogue at diocesan⁷, deanery and parish level are important for this, so that we can listen deeply and creatively to everyone, mindful that we do so in order to deepen our own love for Jesus and to bring more people to Him.

CONCLUSION

I conclude by saying this is what is on my heart.

I am breaking this message down into six pieces, with some reflection questions. I hope they can be used across the archdiocese, in the different communities, possibly during Lent or Eastertide, or at some other suitable period, so that as many as possible have the chance to participate. If you have any of your own reflections on what I have shared, or any other thoughts that you would like to add, then I would be delighted to hear from you.

I hope that we can each strengthen our love of Jesus and our desire to bring others to Him, and in this way deepen our sense that, "heart speaks to heart". Let us entrust our efforts to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the first missionary disciple to open her heart fully to Her Son, and the first to bring Him on mission to others. May she help each of us know more fully what it means to speak, "heart to heart".



For reflection (Week 6):

1. **'Vision without strategy is hallucination' – how does the conclusion of this document see the practical way forward for us as a Diocese, and what role can each of our parishes and communities have in this? What will we do here, and how can we make it happen?**
2. **Name three things we need to do as individuals and parishes as a consequence of this course of reflections – how can we together make a 'parish plan' to ensure these things happen?**
3. **The final reflections link synodality and mission, saying in effect that synodality, the 'walking together as disciples with our Lord' is the 'way' or 'means' to embark on mission. What does this need to look like here? How is it linked to the way in which we live as a community already – and what might need to change?**
4. **How can we contribute our insights to this process – and is anything else needed that we have not considered so far?**

⁵ 'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission - Final Document', par. 72).

⁶ Pope Leo XIV, "A fidelity that generates the future; Apostolic Letter on the 60th Anniversary of the Conciliar Decrees *Optatum Totius* and *Presbyterian Ordinis*," par 22, 8th December 2025.

⁷ I have been pleased to see the vibrant development of the Pastoral Councils at Diocesan and Deanery level, and grateful to those who participate in them, as also those who give so generously of their talents and baptismal gifts in Parish Pastoral Councils at local parish level. I am conscious that the latter need some refreshment and renewal in some parts of the Archdiocese