

Scottish Laity Network Newsletter

Issue 3: November /December 2023



Welcome to the Advent and Christmas Edition of the SLN Newsletter!



SLN : Future Membership and Participation

Recently we updated our membership lists and also the format for joining SLN as a member. The link for the new form is readily available on the [SLN website](#) and there is also a direct link to the membership form [here](#)

We are entirely reliant on a very small group of volunteers to plan and organise the webinars that we present through the year. We are also entirely reliant on membership fees to provide the necessary money to fund the website, pay fees for zoom webinars and to make a small donation to our companions during our sessions.

Maybe you could consider joining [SLN](#) as a member, if you haven't already done so.

Also, could you consider becoming an active member of [SLN](#) yourself? We warmly welcome contributions and suggestions from our members; and our November meetings gave us a real insight into the views of people who are joining us regularly.

But we know that your insights and experience could strengthen and enhance our mission to provide a forum of respect and support for lay people.

Please think it over... We look forward to hearing from you.

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The Scottish Laity Network

Participation in the Synodal Journey, started by Pope Francis in 2020, has been a crucial part of the [Scottish Laity Network](#)'s mission since the very beginning of our Journey of Discernment in 2020. We have embraced dialogue and opportunities for discussion as part of a new way of **BEING CHURCH**.

Core Group member, Gemma Lamarra represented all of us in Rome in October, where she attended **Spirit Unbounded** and **We Are Church International** events parallel to the Synod events in the Vatican.

You can read Gemma's piece that she wrote afterwards for the online magazine, OPEN HOUSE Scotland [HERE](#)



How To Be A Synodal Church in Mission?

Key messages

On 14th December the General Secretariat for the Synod issued Guidelines for continuing work to prepare in parishes and dioceses for the 2024 Synod next October.

- **The Guidelines emphasise Pope Francis' advice** that "the Synod is about synodality and not about this or that theme... The important thing is how the reflection is done, that is, in a synodal way".
- The Guidelines recommend that, "The local Churches are asked to carry out a further **consultation**, involving people and groups (parish priests, participation bodies, synodal teams, etc.) who express a variety of experiences, skills, charisms, ministries within the People of God and whose point of view is of particular help in focusing on "how" to grow as a synodal Church." In order to achieve this, people with particular expertise may be called on to advise and recommend.
- **Outreach** is also encouraged "to continue or promote new initiatives to grow as a synodal church on mission, with training and listening experiences that also involve those who have not been touched by the process so far, groups living in conditions of poverty and social marginality as well as Christians of different denominations and people of other religions."
- The Guidelines also state that, "**The Bishops' Conferences** and the Oriental Hierarchical Structures are asked to accompany the work of the local Churches by offering them the indications regarding the ways and times of the in-depth study and work; to also **promote their reflection on differentiated co-responsibility** with regard to mission especially at the level of the groupings of Churches." The results of these consultations should be **sent to the General Secretariat of the Synod by 15th May**.
- The Guidelines also speak of '**Major Issues**' "that must be handled at the level of the whole Church and in collaboration with the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia. In the manner that is proper to Synodal Assemblies."

"The deepening of synodality in a missionary perspective and the broadening of experiences of synodality at the local level are the cornerstones on which the local communities are called to reflect."

The whole text of the Guidelines can be read [HERE](#)

SLN and Synod Participation

We would love to know about any follow up activities in your parish/diocese as a result of the Rome Synod 2023, resulting from Pope Francis call to parishes to continue to talk in a synodal

You can be assured that the [Scottish Laity Network](#) will be working throughout 2024 to **discern, reflect, facilitate and represent** your experience and contributions as we continue our Synodal Journey together...

The Scottish Laity Network



30th November **Waiting in Grief for Peace ~ The Power of Lament**
Companion ~ Alison Phipps

In the midst of suffering and desolation how do we manage to grieve and do justice to those we grieve for? The wisdom, insight and power of Lamentation.

7th December **Guilty Bystanders?**
Companion ~ Muriel Pearson

We begin with confession: We are all guilty bystanders; all implicated in systemic evil; all beneficiaries of unjust economic systems. Many of us live far from the epicentres of human suffering. We aspire to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, but none of us is guiltless.

~ Thomas Merton - The Gifts of a Guilty Bystander

14th December **Finding Light: Embracing Hope Amidst Grief and Lament**
Companion ~ Omar Haramy

Amidst Suffering: The Need and Power of Listening to Voices in Grief.

21st December **Liturgy of Lamentation**
Companions ~ Hyab Yohannes and friends

Through prayer, silence, song, story, and images we reimagine the gift of the Incarnation in 2023.

If you have missed any of these wonderful reflections, or would like to watch them again, remember you can always find them on our YouTube channel at this link [HERE](#).

Our Advent series was influenced and dominated by the suffering of so many people in Palestine/Israel, Ukraine and in Sudan and other places in the Horn of Africa. Our companions all have first hand experience of the devastation caused by conflict, dislocation and loss of family and friends. They have movingly guided us through the turmoil to stand alongside our sisters and brothers, through prayer, music, poetry and ...when words fail us ... in silence.



SLN Advent Journey

Thank you for your company in reading this newsletter.

Don't forget to keep in touch till we meet again in 2024.

Email :
info@scottishlaitynetwork.org.uk

And find us on
Facebook

The Scottish Laity Network



'A Drop In The Ocean'

SLN Core group member, Anne Dobbing, has collected discarded saplings from Galloway Forest and used them to display yellow labels showing details of unfortunate people who have sought a place of safety as refugees and died in the attempt over the last year. The Information came from the 'United against Refugee Deaths' charity, which kindly gave permission for their data to be used. They have so far documented 53,000 refugee fatalities worldwide. The trees have been displayed in local churches and also in the CatStrand Arts Centre in New Galloway. Hopefully the project will help to counter disinformation about refugees being 'scroungers' or 'criminals' and it will help to ensure that the lives of these people are not forgotten. Each person is loved as someone's son or daughter, husband or wife, father or mother...



Here you will find a little information about just a few of the people whose lives are remembered.

Maybe you could run a similar project in your own area...

There is a link to the United Against Refugee Deaths Website

[here:](#)

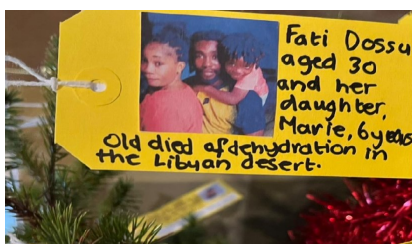
SLN

and 'A Drop in The Ocean'

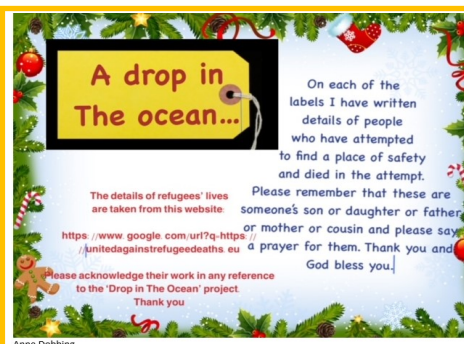
A Poem by Mahmoud Darwish 'The Earth is Closing on Us'

The Earth is closing on us,
Pushing us through the last passage;
And we tear off our limbs to pass through.
The Earth is squeezing us...
We will die here in the last passage.
Here and here, our blood will plant its olive tree.

(Shared with us at our final Advent session by Hyab Johannes)



"We will remember them..."



To all Scottish Laity Network members, companions and friends. We wish you all a very Happy Christmas. Thank you all so much for your ideas, support and encouragement during 2023. Do keep writing to us as we plan for the year ahead and try to reach even more people, both in Scotland and worldwide. God bless you and see you all again soon! With love from all the SLN Core Group. X