

# Scottish Laity Network Newsletter

## Issue 1 Pentecost 2023



## Welcome to the new Quarterly Scottish Laity Network newsletter!

Thank you for your interest in our group,

which has been evolving since August 2017, responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and listening to the voices of Catholic Christians calling for inspiration, guidance, and opportunities for dialogue, even during the Covid Pandemic.

Since this beginning, the group has hosted events concerned with the future of our church and the future of our world.

We have been fortunate to have had inspirational companions from the start of our

*Journey of Discernment in May 2020*

right up to our recent *Lenten Journey 2023*



### Our Lenten Journey 2023

began with a question from Core Group member **Rosa Murray**, introducing our first session. What exactly do we mean by the **Common Good**? She invited us to reflect on this in the context of our discipleship. She reminded us of Pope Francis' *focus on the significance of the Gospel of the Transfiguration of Jesus to his Apostles*, who did not understand him; and also how this event challenges us to authentically follow him in Word and Deed. We were invited to "*ascend a high mountain in the company of Jesus and to live a particular experience of discipline as God's holy people.*"

The first path would enable us to listen to Jesus during this time of grace, both through the scriptures and through our sisters and brothers, especially in the faces and stories of those who are in need. The second path challenges us to rise and not to be afraid, resisting the temptation to cling to religiosity.

You can view the entire SLN Lenten journey videos at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5K6Rwhd7ZKWJx3INe2rOzA>



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# The Scottish Laity Network



## Origins of the Scottish Laity Network:

*This group began because we had an idea whose time had come. We are part of a worldwide rising. The laity of the Catholic Church want the equal respect, dignity and co-responsibility promised us by Vatican II. From open letters to the Pope in Germany complaining that Catholics don't feel heard or understood by their bishop, to lay people in Togo demanding the laity be taken more seriously and be better supported, we too want the voice of our lay people to be listened to and welcomed. This is a space for laity to share honestly about issues in the Catholic Church. This should be used positively with clear focus on addressing issues and providing solutions to help us move forwards.*

## Origins and

## Vision



The Mission of the Laity – May 2018

“Lay people are on the front line of the life of the Church. We need their testimony regarding the truth of the Gospel and their example of expressing their faith by practising solidarity.”

Let us give thanks for the lay people who take risks, who are not afraid and who offer reasons for hope to the poorest, to the excluded, to the marginalized.

## And so we formulated our **Vision**:

The Scottish Laity Network (SLN) seeks to enable Scottish laity to come together as disciples of Jesus and through prayer, dialogue and discernment to find ‘new ways’ of being Church in Scotland in the 21st Century.

We are rooted above all in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Gospel.

We are inspired by the principles of Vatican II seeking to make the gospel values a lived reality in the world today, and by the encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, the vision of Pope Francis to listen and respond to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth.

We trust the Holy Spirit to guide us as we make this journey.

What do you want to find out?  
Email us at:  
[slaitynetwork@gmail.com](mailto:slaitynetwork@gmail.com)

# The Scottish Laity Network

## DISCERNMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

In April 2020 as Scotland experienced the first COVID-19 lockdown the **Core Group of the SLN** began reflecting on the Future of the Church After a Time of Pandemic and how that related to our vision and mission.

*Reflecting on Pope Francis' leadership we saw clearly the centrality of discernment in his life, and in his papacy, and his hope for a discerning Church.*

The question was: *how during this time of Pandemic could we come together and pray, dialogue and discern new ways of being Church?*

Through prayer and discernment, we felt prompted to embark on an **online Journey of Discernment**. A journey that would seek to enable us to become a discerning community - a community that engaged in a process of mutual

## REFLECTING ON THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Reflecting on the feedback from all who had journeyed with us we felt prompted to continue this process of prayer, dialogue and discernment on the 'signs of the times' with the aim of discerning how the Spirit was prompting us to respond individually and as community.

*This led us to address a range of issues that had emerged during the course of our sessions or were issues that we as followers of Jesus had to address. Some of the issues were internal Church issues - power and authority, governance, ministry etc and others related to how we as followers of Jesus respond to the **cry of the poor and the cry of the earth***

## Milestones

- **March 27th 2020** -The **Extraordinary Moment of Prayer**, led by Pope Francis at the beginning of the pandemic in St Peter's Square
- **28th May to 2nd July 2020** -**SLN Journey of Discernment** with Companions Jim Martin, Massimo Faggioli, Austen Ivereigh, Mary McAleese, Lorna Gold and Jim Wallis
- **July 2020** – **SLN Assembly**
- **November 2020**—**Cop 26**
- **August to September 2021**—**Towards a Synodal Church** with companions Massimo Faggioli, Brian Grogan, Phyllis Zagano and Sean McDonagh
- **January 2022** –**Synodal Conversation** with companion Rafael Luciani

The SLN Core Group collated the responses to each of the sessions and produced a Synodal Response as a result, which you can read at:

[https://irp.cdn-website.com/b84bc034/files/uploaded/SLN%](https://irp.cdn-website.com/b84bc034/files/uploaded/SLN%20Synodal%20Response.pdf)



## SLN Synod Journey

### 2020 –2023

Thanks for your company in reading our first newsletter. We look forward to meeting you at one of our planned events soon.

# The Scottish Laity Network

## Our Yearly Events

SLN has organised many events using Zoom over the past three years. These usually happen on Thursday evenings and follow a theme for each season. This is roughly how the shape of the year has evolved:

- **Advent** -4 sessions in November /December
- **Lent** - usually 6 sessions, this year based on a theme of The Common Good
- **Laudato Sii Week** -May 21st to 28th this year
- **Towards Pentecost** -usually 4 sessions-this year 4th to 20th May
- **SLN Assembly** -June- gathering and reflecting on our journey together through the year
- **Season of Creation** -September 1st to October 4th
- **Synod Response** - leading up to Pope Francis' Synod in Rome

- We may also plan extra sessions in response to the needs of people and events at particular times.
- We also cooperate with other groups in co-badging sessions with them and so please check our website for extra events by other partner groups at:

<https://www.scottishlaitynetwork.org.uk/>

## What do we talk about?

Our sessions have included discussion about :

- Faith Formation
- Faith in Action
- Making Connections
- Catholic Social Teaching in the context of our Faith
- Being the Church we want to see
- The role of Women in leadership
- Welcome and inclusion of LGBT+ and trans people
- The Synod Process
- The experiences of Refugees



## SLN Calendar and Topics

# The Scottish Laity Network



## Our Mission

### Find out more about SLN?

We would love to hear from you!  
Email SLN at  
[slaitynetwork@gmail.com](mailto:slaitynetwork@gmail.com)

## Our Mission

We aim to provide a forum of support and respect for lay people to:

- discern the 'signs of the times' in responding to, and engaging with, the challenges we all face in the world today to bring about the kingdom of God on earth
- give a voice to and dialogue with, in a spirit of love and respect, those who have been marginalised, whether in the Church or in civil society
- work to become, in the words of Pope Francis, 'a church that is poor and is for the poor'
- try to live simply and sustainably as envisioned in Laudato Si'
- share pastoral, theological and liturgical practice and resources
- encourage dialogue, transparency and accountability in all aspects of local Church governance and to raise issues, if necessary, with the relevant ecclesial bodies

Lay people are on the front line of the life of the Church and we affirm and respect our right to fulfil our specific mission that we received in Baptism.

## Want to know more?

**Scottish Laity Network** is completely run by volunteers and we make everyone welcome, inclusive of faith, gender, or sexual orientation.

You can also join the SLN as a member on our website: waged members £20 annually and unwaged £5. To enable you to find out more about The SLN, please feel free to view all of our past sessions on our

**You Tube** at [www.youtube.com/channel/UC5K6Rwh](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5K6Rwh)  
You can also keep up to date with current events through our Website at:  
<https://www.scottishlaitynetwork.org.uk/>



"Through the SLN I have 'woken up' to issues of Climate Change and Economic Disparity in a way that I probably would never have had the opportunity to experience otherwise. I have met and talked with people all over the world, including hearing first hand testimony from people experiencing the effects of Climate Change and Economic catastrophe.

I have also listened to the heart-rending testimony of victims of clerical abuse, which absolutely confirms my own family's experience of its devastating life-long consequences."

Anne Dobbing,  
Core Group member

"It would not be an exaggeration to say that SLN has kept me hanging on to the church.

Like many others at times I despair at the state our institutional church is in. Through SLN I see where the Spirit is moving in our church and in society at large, through organisations that tackle poverty, climate change, refugees, and more. I knew about Catholic Social Teaching and through SLN I see many examples of it being put into practice. I have listened to theologians, priests and experts give inspiring and thought provoking talks on many topics. I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of discussions in breakout rooms where it feels safe to express doubts, despair hopes and fears.

SLN has been a life line for me. At times when I despair at yet another mishandling of an abuse case and wonder again why I am still here I attend another SLN session and am reminded about all the good people doing amazing things despite the mess of the system. I am encouraged to be the church I would like to see. We are the church and we can take responsibility for our own faith formation, and for our own spiritual growth and nourishment. Where two or three are gathered in Jesus' name we are promised he will be there. In the SLN his presence for me is certainly felt."

Gemma Lamarra, Core Group Member

We welcome feedback from everyone who joins our SLN Sessions. You can email us at or add comments to the chat during sessions or you can comment on the SLN Facebook page. All comments are read and considered.

Here are some of the remarks from people after the recent session with our Companion Tom O'Loughlin about Liturgy and the Common Good:

"Thank you Tom for this wonderful evening that is so life-giving."

"Excellent talk– thought provoking. "

"You are certainly no lone voice."



## FEEDBACK

### What does the SLN mean to YOU?

### How does the SLN help?