

SCOTTISH LAITY NETWORK

RESPONSE TO THE WORKING DOCUMENT FOR THE CONTINENTAL STAGE



COMMUNION - PARTICIPATION -MISSION
SCOTTISH LAITY NETWORK
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“After having read and prayed with the DCS, which intuitions resonate most strongly with the lived experiences and realities of the Church in your continent? Which experiences are new, or illuminating to you?”

- Our experience of the practice of synodality resonates with the global feedback that the Synodal Way of being Church is the way that the Spirit is calling and empowering the Church to fidelity to its mission.
- The emphasis on listening to the People of God - their joys and sorrows, their hopes and aspirations - was a liberating experience for many and it is the sharing of their words that gives the DCS its authenticity and vitality.
- This listening is rooted in that ‘profound re-appropriation of the common dignity of all the baptised’ that is central to the Synodal Way: that through our baptism we are called into full participation in the life and the mission of the Church.
- The primacy of being open to the Spirit in our synodal conversations was liberating and fruitful. It led to an openness and freedom in discerning how we, as Church, need to grow to be faithful to our mission to Go Forth as Missionary Disciples.
- However, there was a strong sense that we can only authentically proclaim what we live and that the Church had to address its failings in this area:
 - the impact of abuse in all its forms and the fact that those abused are abused again by the failure of the Church to respond with truth, justice and compassion
 - the role of woman being limited by Church rules rather than an openness to the promptings of the Spirit;
 - the ‘exiled’ - remarried divorcees, single parents, LGBTQ people, etc
 - the ‘alienated’ - the young, the poor and marginalised;
 - the need for inclusion in language and practice.
- The scourge of clericalism is clearly identified as an obstacle in developing power and authority in a synodal way and sadly manifested in liturgies that are too concentrated on the celebrant.

“After having read and prayed with the DCS, what substantial tensions or divergences emerge as particularly important in your continent’s perspective? Consequently, what are the questions or issues that should be addressed and considered in the next steps of the process?”

- The tension between the vision and model of a Synodal Church and the lived experience of the People of God. Whilst the global participation ‘exceeded expectations’ there are many parishes in which there has been no reference to the Synodal Journey and dioceses in which the process adopted for the synodal conversations and the reporting of them has not been true to the synodal methodology.
- This seems to be rooted in a fear that the Synodal Way will lead to division and even schism.

- The uncertainty of where the synodal path will lead and its promptings for structures that reflect more our common baptism and the need to recognise and affirm the gifts and charisms of all the People of God is for some a step too far.
- How do we embrace change and journey together priests, religious and lay, listening and having the courage to fully embrace the promptings of the spirit.
- Ultimately the test for any commitment to being a Synodal Church can be judged by who will participate in the gatherings - the Continental phase meetings, and the October 2023 and October 2024 meetings.
 - Will there be balanced teams of laity and clergy representing each country and will the laity representatives reflect the plurality existing in the Church with respect to many important issues eg. the abused, Women, LGBTQ+ people, Care of Creation, etc.
 - Will they be fully and equally involved in decision consultation and decision making.

“Looking at what emerges from the previous two questions, what are the priorities, recurring themes and calls to action that can be shared with other local Churches around the world and discussed during the First Session of the Synodal Assembly in October 2023?”

- The need to fully embrace in word and deed the Synodal way as the way the Spirit is calling us to be a Church that focuses on Going Forth as Missionary Disciples empowered by the Spirit.
- Training in the Synodal Way of spiritual conversation to be supported and developed as the way in which we seek to read the signs of the times and discern how the Spirit is prompting us to respond as disciples of Jesus.
- To prioritise the reforming of the current hierarchical structure of governance to a synodal form that recognises the ‘gifts bestowed on all the faithful’.
- Linked to the above would be the need for a renewal of Canon Law to embrace the Synodal Way.
- A recognition that, as Church:
 - we have failed those who have been abused;
 - we have not fully recognised and affirmed the role of women;
 - we have ‘exiled’ many through our blindness - remarried divorcees, single parents, LGBTQ people, etc
 - we have ‘alienated’ many through our failure to truly preach, in word and deed, the Good News - the young, the poor and marginalised.
- Recognising the above we propose a ‘Year of Forgiveness and Welcome’ during which we reaffirm, in word and deed, that everyone is welcome to the table of the Lord - especially those who have been exiled or alienated by Church rules and laws that are not reconcilable with our loving and merciful God.