

As you know our Gathering on Saturday 7th November will be framed around the Emmaus Story and during the weeks of October we have invited you to, like those early disciples, 'remember' how Jesus, through the power of the Spirit, has been walking with us.

To help us in our 'remembering' of our journey we have shared with you messages from some of our companions who have accompanied us since May 2020 and we really value your insights on their messages.

For our gathering to be authentically synodal it requires the listening and participation of all our members. Even if you are not able to participate in the Gathering, either in person or online, your 'promptings of the Spirit' as you listen to the messages are part of what the Spirit is saying to all of us.

No one's feedback will cover all that the Spirit is saying to us, but every word, sentence or paragraph is part of the communal message and will provide the foundation for our discernment.

The messages are all on our YouTube channel and there is also a Feedback Form for the relevant week that we warmly invite you to complete.

If, however, you do not have the time to complete the Weekly Feedback Forms we invite you to give us feedback using the *SLN Promptings of the Spirit 2020 - 2026* Feedback Form.

See all the links below.

We really hope you will participate, in some way, in our Gathering.

Prayers and solidarity.
On behalf of SLN Core Group

Messages from our Companions

Week 4

Messages from: Fr Jim Martin; Cardinal Mario Grech; Bishop Brian McGee

YouTube Channel <https://youtu.be/3tdINiueCYQ>

Week 4 Feedback Form: <https://forms.gle/fFd4Uzg8azx4hYUh7>

Week 3

Messages from: Ben Wilson - SCIAF; Marian Pallister - Pax Christi Scotland; Gerard Swan - QUEST; Mary Varley - Root & Branch.

YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/5E-xxzrYWg0>

Week 3 Feedback Form: <https://forms.gle/j1dRh3ehY1QBi68N6>

Week 2

Messages from: Massimo Faggioli, Diarmuid O'Murchu, Phyllis Zagano, Tom O'Loughlin, Rafael Luciani and Tina Beattie.

YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/2JmiZBk21d8>

Week 2 Feedback Form: <https://forms.gle/RbSQJ7Q4F6Hw2WYq6>

Week 1

Messages from: Omar Haramy, Alison Phipps, Hyab Yohannes and Khawla Badwan.

YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/3VSTofmNtal>

Week 1 Feedback Form: <https://forms.gle/ejyNJtzzmaAKB3xi6>

SLN Promptings of the Spirit 2020 - 2026

Feedback Form: <https://forms.gle/mDVqzb19rvFvwqXc7>

If you wish to access a PDF of any of the messages they are available on our website <https://www.scottishlaitynetwork.org.uk>

SLN Gathering Registration

If you have not yet registered for OUR Gathering please do so at

<https://forms.gle/cwNfGMRV5UxWf7fp8>.

On the form you will see three options for participation: In Person; Online; Unable to attend either in person or online but would like to be involved in the discernment process.

SLN November 2026 Gathering

Message from Fr Jim Martin

Hey everyone. Its Father Jim Martin from America Media here in New York City.

First of all, I apologize for not being in my collar. I'm about to leave for a retreat but I wanted to record this for you as you begin your discernment with your wonderful organization.

I wanted to share something with you that we heard at the Synod during our Retreats, which were led by Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe, at the time, he wasn't a cardinal. And by the way, all of his retreat notes are found in his book *Listening Together* and also can be found online on YouTube, just look up by the Synod and Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe.

In any event before we began the Synod, at a retreat he quoted something from Saint John Paul II that really changed how I looked at the Synod and how I looked at group discernment which is what you're entering into. And it is this quote from St John Paul II who said 'Affective collegiality proceeds effective collegiality', I'll say that again 'Affective collegiality precedes effective collegiality'.

So what does that mean? That means that being friends is a necessary prerequisite for the kind of difficult conversations that we have around Church issues and around anything which leads to collegiality. So friendship, or let's just say a modicum of friendship, or friendly relations is really important before we tackle the difficult topics that lead to discussion dialogue and sometimes debate.

And when Cardinal Radcliffe framed it that way, it really changed the way I looked at synodality and it changed the way I looked at collegiality and really also discussions. And it was born out the first year that we met, there was a bit of I would say not exactly suspicions but caution, people were cautious to talk to one another.

By the second year we were sort of old friends and it was much more relaxed and you were able to speak to one another as friends. So I think that whatever you do in your discernment as you move ahead and think about the future under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, you might take a little time to become friends.

Now, obviously, you can't become friends overnight or in a few days but you know what I mean? I think just talking about where you are in your life. What's meaningful to you, a little bit about your hopes and your fears as well. Just getting to know one another. I think getting to know one another does help you with the dialogue, discernment and even debate, that you will enter into. And remember Jesus in a sense promotes his disciples 'I no longer call you disciples. I now call you friends'.

And so friendship is a really important part of the discernment process you're entering into.

So I pray for you that you might be able to effect this affective collegiality, which will lead to effective collegiality and you have all of my prayers and blessings.

Thanks very much for all the great work you do.

God bless you.



SECRETARIA GENERALIS
SYNODI

**MESSAGE OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL MARIO GRECH
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE SYNOD
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE ASSEMBLY
OF THE SCOTTISH LAITY NETWORK**

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” (*Ps* 133:1).

Dear brothers and sisters,

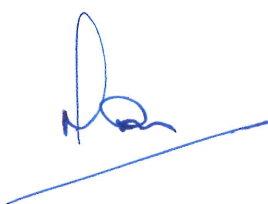
I greet you with these words of the Psalmist as you gather for the Assembly of the Scottish Laity Network. Psalm 133 is a “song of ascent”, accompanying the People of God on their journey towards the Temple of the Lord. Whenever we come together as disciples of Christ, members of the People of the New Covenant, we too give expression to this journeying together. We are not simply pursuing ideas or seeking consensus among ourselves; rather, we are gathered by the Lord, who calls us to dwell in Him. As Pope Leo XIV reminds us through his episcopal motto, *In Illo Uno Unum* – “In the One [Christ], we are one.” Indeed, Christ is “our peace”, who reconciles us to God in one body through the Cross (cf. *Eph* 2:14-16).

I pray that your gathering may be an experience of the goodness and joy of dwelling together in unity. Your active engagement in the synodal journey – recognised by the Synodal Office and the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland – has offered an opportunity to grow in participation and co-responsibility by virtue of Baptism. We have all received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who, through the diversity of ministries and charisms, enables the Church to grow in discernment. It is the Spirit “who ensures the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ” whenever Christians gather, whether in a Eucharistic or a synodal assembly (*Final Document* [FD], n. 13). Our Bishops, exercising their ministry “in, with and for the community”, have a particular responsibility to safeguard the authenticity of this discernment and to foster the unity of the gifts bestowed by the Spirit (cf. FD, n. 70). It is within this ecclesial communion that the synodal journey can continue to grow and bear fruit, allowing the diversity of gifts and voices to contribute to the building up of the one Body of Christ. As the *Final Document* reminds us, the fruits of a spirituality of synodality become visible when the daily life of the Church is marked by “unity and harmony in pluriformity” (FD, n. 43).

We are also encouraged by Pope Leo XIV’s invitation to persevere in synodal conversion. As he recently reminded the Cardinals gathered in Consistory: “It seems to me that the primary question of synodality is not: ‘Who has the power to decide?’ The question is a deeper one: ‘How do we treasure together the gift that the Lord has entrusted to his Church?’ When this becomes the heart of our discernment, questions of authority, co-responsibility and decision-making find their proper place in the light of mission and our common fidelity to the Gospel” (*Address at the Conclusion of the Extraordinary Consistory*, 27 June 2026).

The ultimate horizon, therefore, remains mission. As I recently recalled during the Consistory, “Synodality is not an end in itself. It exists so that the Church may proclaim the Gospel more effectively and serve the men and women of our time more faithfully” (*Introduction to the theme “The path of synod implementation”*, 27 June 2026)

I therefore encourage you to continue your mission with confidence. May the Holy Spirit, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, accompany you during this Assembly and show you the way forward, so that your communion and service within the Church may become a credible witness to the Good News that our fragmented and conflict-ridden world so greatly needs. In this way, may your gathering bear joyful witness to the words with which I began: “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” (*Ps 133:1*).


 Mario Card. GRECH
Secretary General


Vatican, 11 August 2026

SLN November 2026 Gathering

Message from Bishop Brian McGee

Well, first of all, thank you for inviting me to share a few thoughts with you, as you reflect on the future direction of the Scottish Laity Network.

First of all, with a few observations I've been thinking about over the last wee while. I think one of the things I want to commend you for, and to thank you for, is reaching out in a new way to the lay faithful of the church in Scotland. And I know that a number of people from our diocese have been involved in a few of your initiatives and have been very grateful for that and we enjoyed it. And I know as well, you've helped accompany a number of people who perhaps have a challenges with the church in the recent past and it's been difficult for them and their faith journey. So I hope for them you've been able to help people, I think you have actually been able to help people: well maybe not everything has been resolved for them but it still shows an eagerness to accompany, which is very much what the church is asking for today.

Also to thank you for the many different sessions that you've had, different topics that you've looked at, many of them have been very important, some of them at the sharp end of things, others certainly what people are reflecting on. I've admired not just the breath of the topics you've had, but the quality of speakers that you've got.

That's one of the things that's great about the digital age, is that we're able to get people from other continents without paying awesome money on the air fares. So you have got a lot of really top speakers to help you and others to reflect. Also to thank you for asking myself, I know that I'm not in that league where other people are, but you've asked me as well to come along to talk about a number of things and that's been also very, very good for me, very helpful for me. So just to thank you for that.

Another thing as well I've noticed is that although it's the Scottish Laity Network I know that a lot of people who look in, who participate from other parts of the world as well, so that's part of the wider church. And I know, I think I've heard you say before, that although there's maybe a good number of people participating in the sessions it seems to the same people all the time and maybe is not getting wider than here at home and just to encourage you in that.

That's something that really effects every walk of life certainly within the Church, every parish, every community will say the same thing and even in the secular of world as well, whether that be in politics or other endeavours, schools or whatever, people say it's always the same ones turning up. So it is a challenge, but it's something which is affecting every part of society.

Maybe then just to finish with something else I've been thinking about and that is the kind of relationships and I know that there have been tensions between, certainly some people within the Scottish Laity Network and with some figures in the authority of the church as well here in Scotland to and obviously that's not good and I'm not getting at anyone (glitch with network signal} here or anybody for that matter.

We should be reflecting because I think a lot of the problems in the church are to do with relationships and that relationships is probably down to kind of human weaknesses and maybe at times lack of maturity. So formation, human formation I think, I know the synod was calling for that a lot and that's something I believe a lot of our issues can be sorted by I suppose a greater maturity and that's on the part of everyone.

And certainly that's one of things I've enjoyed and benefited from personally through the Synodal Journey has been looking afresh and anew at other people. Particularly if I don't agree with all the views, I can see much better that they probably agree on most stuff and we know that other people are working from integrity and it's a case then also of re-evaluating my own position on certain things. Maybe I'm wrong. But it's also a case then of dialoguing and maybe sharing with others why I do think that way.

And I think that is a way forward, and I hope that over the last number of years that's been happening, you know, in the church in Scotland and further afield. But certainly we are on that journey.

So just to commend you for that and encourage you that this is an important part and today's Mission Sunday and I noticed that a very big theme of Pope Leo of course is Community and Union, very much rooted in the Gospel of Trinity first of all, but also in his own Augustinian way of life and even the Mission Sunday message today, *One in Christ United in Mission*, you know, it's just all about rooted in Christ, and then from that Unity with one another we're able to present, even to be more faithful to ourselves, but also a greater witness to Christ in the world. This is what everyone in the church is ultimately looking for.

So then just to thank you and I hope that your reflections go well and I'll certainly pray that you will be open to the Spirit and know that the Spirit will be there guiding you.

So thank you.