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Letter about the Synod and the Revised Synodal Process in the Archdiocese of Southwark

To the Clergy of the Archdiocese

5 November 2021

Dear Brothers in Christ

Grace and peace to you in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As you will be aware, the Synod of Bishops Office in Rome, responding to petitions from across the world, has extended the time available to dioceses for their local processes of listening and discernment. The deadline by which diocesan submissions in England and Wales now have to be sent to the Bishops' Conference has moved from the end of February to 8 April 2022. This allows for a more extensive period of listening and encounter.

I wish to acknowledge the tremendous work already undertaken by parishes in appointing delegates and facilitating a series of listening gatherings in such short order. One hundred and eighteen parishes have submitted details of their delegates to the Synod team and a mixture of online and in-person meetings are exploring the three principal themes of Communion, Participation and Mission.

I acknowledge that many delegates agreed to participate thanks to the short time period involved, however, the extension provides us with an opportunity to revisit and more deeply explore what has already been articulated in the current series of meetings.

To this end, please find below a revised Southwark Synodal Timetable

1. From 18 October 2021 to 21 January 2022 – local listening phase (i.e. parishes, and including schools where possible) which can comprise online or in-person gatherings as the organisers see fit. Resources for these meetings, including the questions for discussion, are available on the new diocesan website (<https://rcaos.org.uk/synod>).

2. **From 24 January to 18 February 2022** – three meetings with me (online) one for each area of the diocese to which parish delegates and clergy will be invited to contribute what has been heard in the local listening phase.

3. **18 February 2022** – Deadline for online submissions via the diocesan website which will contribute to the diocesan ‘synthetic’ document.

4. Between **21 February and 11 March 2022** – A representative group of clergy, religious and lay people will meet to prayerfully distil the contents of the local meetings and the postal and online submissions to the Synod process into a ‘synthetic’ document.

5. **Between 14 and 25 March 2022** – a further meeting will be convened to share the draft ‘synthetic’ document with participants in the process; inaccuracies in the document will be amended in advance of its submission for the next stage of the Synod process. Delegates will also be invited to a special event exploring the theme of the call to mission in mid-March 2022

6. **8 April 2022** – Submission of the diocesan ‘synthetic’ document to the Bishops’ Conference.

7. **May 2022** – Event to mark the conclusion of the diocesan phase.

The online ‘portal’ for submissions will remain open until the summer (though submissions after 18 February will not feature in the document offered to the Bishops’ Conference). Postal submissions, likewise, will continue to be welcomed. The website will also feature any further documents, so that people can follow something of the process in the coming months.

Please do all you can to support this process as we ‘journey together’, respectfully hearing and exploring how the perennial teaching of the Church can be applied and lived today.

Please keep the Synodal process in your prayers.

With every blessing and the assurance of prayers

Yours sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a cross symbol followed by a stylized, cursive name that appears to be 'John Wilson'. The signature is written on a white background.

The Most Rev John Wilson
Archbishop of Southwark