

ARCHDIOCESE OF ADELAIDE

# SYNOD DIRECTORY

**“As the Father Sent Me, So I Am Sending You”** (John 20: 21-22)



# NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE SYNOD

The Archdiocesan Synod in 2026 is the next step in the ongoing process of Church renewal.

The Synod provides assistance to the Archbishop in his ministry and leadership for the good of the whole Archdiocesan community. This is achieved by the participation of representatives of the faithful, lay and ordained, of the Archdiocese of Adelaide in ecclesial discernment of communion, participation and mission, to progress the pastoral priorities identified in recent Diocesan Assemblies.

The requirement for a Diocesan Synod was a decree of the Plenary Council that all diocese hold a synod within 5 years of the close of the Plenary Council.

## OVERALL THEME

Through consultation with the Bishop’s Council of Priests and the Diocesan Pastoral Council the theme of “becoming a synodal church on mission” has been chosen, which represents much of the work being done in the Archdiocese at this time. It is also inspired by the Final Document from the Synod on Synodality: Final Document of the XVI Assembly.

The Diocesan Synod gives an opportunity to further reflection on our journey so far through the Diocesan Assemblies, Regional Assemblies, Plenary Council and the Global Synod. Most importantly it helps us pave the way forward through concrete proposal and actions.

## HOW IS A SYNOD DIFFERENT TO AN ASSEMBLY?

Like a Diocesan assembly, a Synod is convoked to discern the pastoral activities for ‘the good of the diocesan community’. This is the final object of the Synod.

The Synod aims to build up and foster ecclesial community and ongoing unity in the declarations and decrees. As such, the synodal documents should accurately reflect the universal Magisterium of the Church and apply common canonical discipline to the circumstances in the diocese.

The following documents will be helpful reference documents for the Diocesan Synod:

- Diocesan Synods:**  
[Instruction on Diocesan Synods, 1997 \(vatican.va\)](#)
- Code of Canon Law in relation to Diocesan Synods:**  
[Code of Canon Law - Book II - The People of God - Liber II. De Populo Dei - Part II. \(Cann. 460-572\)](#)

PREPARATION GATHERING FOR DELEGATE MEMBERS	SESSION ONE	SESSION TWO
Saturday, 14th March 2026 10:00am-4:00pm	<b>Archdiocese Opening Mass</b> Friday, 29th May 6:00pm <b>Full Delegate Day</b> Saturday, 30th May 10:00am-4:00pm	<b>Full Delegate Day</b> Saturday, 27th June 10:00am-4:00pm

29<sup>th</sup> April 2025  
20250429:001:L:POR

Re: Letter of Convocation, Diocesan Synod 2026

The Synod and preparation for the Synod delegates will take place at the following times:

- 1. Preparation gathering** for delegate members  
Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 10:00am-4:00pm
- 2. Session One**  
Archdiocese opening Mass                      Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 6:00pm  
Full delegate day                                  Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 10:00am-4:00pm
- 3. Session Two**  
Full delegate day                                  Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2026 at 10:00am-4:00pm

As we journey towards this Synod, I ask you to pray for the Synod and its preparation and encourage you all to be involved where you are able. Updates and information will be located at the Diocesan Synod website <http://togetherontheway.au>

+ Pat O'Regan

+Patrick O'Regan  
**Archbishop of Adelaide**

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GPO Box 1364, Adelaide SA 5001 | (08) 8210 8210 | E: [archbishop@adelaide.catholic.org.au](mailto:archbishop@adelaide.catholic.org.au)

# SYNOD MEMBERSHIP

The Diocesan Bishop presides over the Diocesan Synod. The Code of Canon Law (Can. §463) sets out those persons who are obliged to attend the Synod. The law provides also that other members are to be elected in such a way that the membership, like the membership of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, 'truly reflects the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the Diocese, taking account of the different regions of the diocese, of social conditions and professions, and of the part played in the apostolate by the members, whether individually or in association with others.' (Can. §512.2)

As indicated by Canon §462.5, lay members of the Christian faithful, including members of institutes of consecrated life, are chosen by the Bishop's Council of Priests and Diocesan Pastoral Council, in a manner and number to be determined by the Diocesan Bishop. Information about the process will be released in due course.

The Diocesan Bishop shall communicate in writing to members, their designation as members and likewise, members, not bound ex officio and de jure, shall communicate their acceptance in writing.

Synodal members once lawfully designated, have a right and duty to participate in the sessions of Synod. If they are unable to attend a proxy cannot be sent in his or her place.

One may lose one's membership by reason of loss of title - that which qualified one to become a member - or by removal by the Bishop for a lawful reason. (e.g. change of Vicar General)

As provided in Can. §833, before commencing the Synodal discussions, the members of the Synod shall make the Profession of Faith and an Oath of Fidelity.

The Diocesan Bishop may invite to the Diocesan Synod as observers some ministers or members of Churches or ecclesial communities which are not in full communion with the Catholic Church, but who can play an important role.

# PREPARATION

Preparation for the Synod will be offered for Synod Participants as well as for all of the faithful in the Archdiocese.

Synod Participants are expected to participate in mandatory training and formation prior to the Synod. This will include:

- Introduction to the Synod documents and processes.
- Online learning and formation materials for synodality and the key themes.
- Practicing the discernment models to be utilised in at the Synod.
- Process for voting to be utilised at the Synod.

The faithful of the Archdiocese of Adelaide will also be invited to participate to prepare for the Synod through a formation and education process. This will include a variety of formation resources to be made available in parishes, schools and communities. This formation is intended to move the whole of the Archdiocese toward the Synod as well as deepen our sense of shared mission.





# OFFICERS OF THE SYNOD

## PRESIDENT

Archbishop Patrick O'Regan will preside over the Diocesan Synod. He may however, delegate the Vicar General to fulfil this office at individual sessions of the Synod. (Can. 462.2)

## MODERATOR

The Diocesan Bishop appoints a Moderator to oversee the preparatory stages of the Synod and to coordinate the offices and commissions of the Synod and to moderate the sessions of the Synod. (Instruction on Diocesan Synods, III. B. 2.3)

Archbishop Patrick O'Regan, in consultation with the Executive of the Curia has appointed Sarah Moffatt, as Moderator.

## SECRETARIAT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Archbishop makes provision for the establishment of a Synodal Secretariat which shall be directed by a member of the Preparatory Commission. 'The function of such a secretariat is to assist the Synod as far as organisational matters are concerned: transmission and archiving of documentation, drawing up minutes, direction of logistical matters, as well as matters relating to finances and accounting.' (Instruction on Diocesan Synods. III, B, 1)

Information concerning the Synod is disseminated to the media by means of press-releases, website material, supplements and social media. 'All should be informed with regard to the nature and purpose of the Synod and the scope of its deliberations'. (Instruction on Diocesan Synods III, C, 1)

A website has been set up: **togetherontheway.au**

SECRETARIAT	
<b>Sarah Moffatt</b>	Executive Director, Pastoral Life and Mission
<b>Peter Bierer</b>	Assistant Director, Pastoral Life and Mission
<b>Leanne Savill</b>	Coordinator, Events and Resources
<b>Leanne Heffernan</b>	Manager, Archbishop's Office
<b>Sue Rivett</b>	Director, Interdiocesan Tribunal
<b>Simone Brosig</b>	Pastoral Leader, Community Life and Worship

The Pastoral Services Team will assist in the work in the Preparatory stages leading towards and during the Synod.



# PREPARATORY COMMISSION

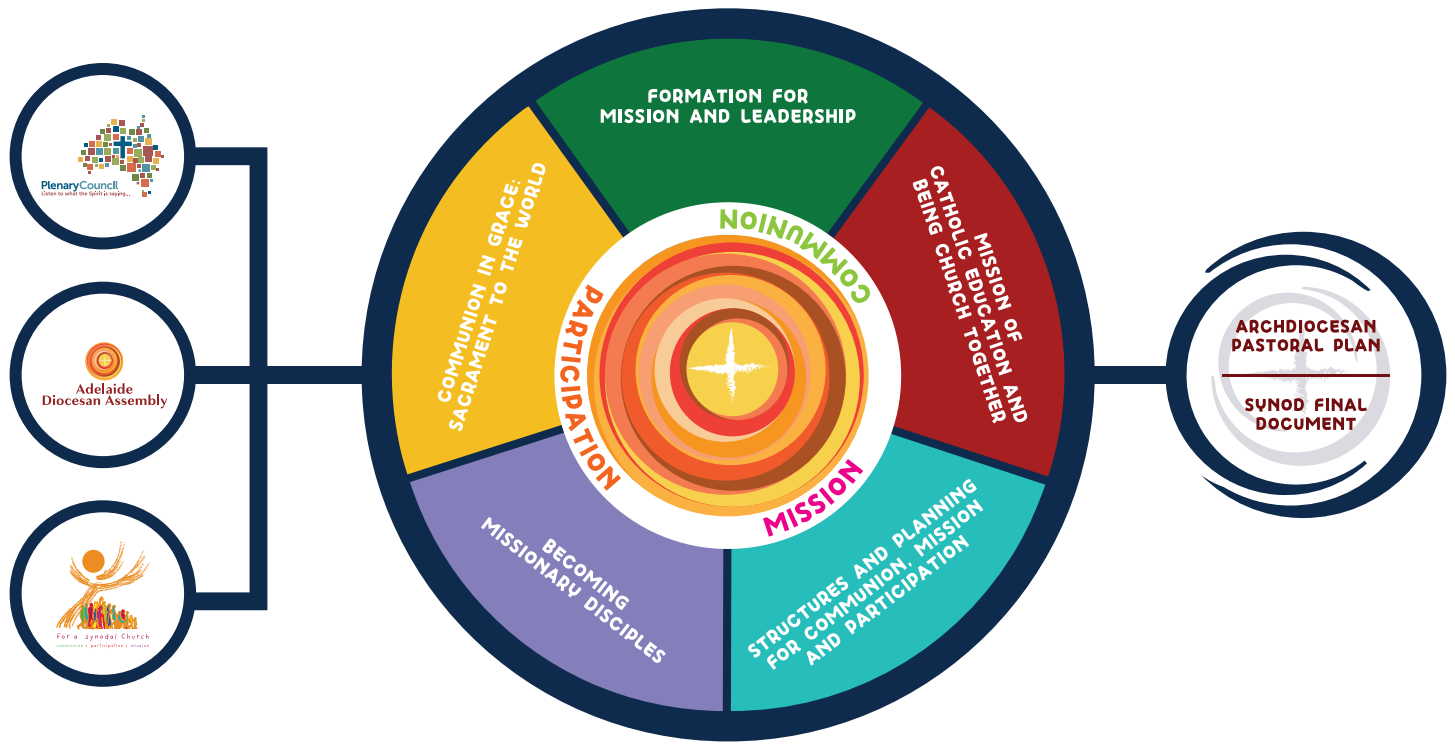
The Bishop is obliged to constitute a Preparatory Commission. 'The members of this preparatory commission are chosen by the Bishop from amongst the clergy and other faithful who are distinguished by their pastoral prudence and by their professional competence and who, in so far as possible, reflect the various charisms and ministries of the People of God. Some members should be expert in the disciplines of Canon Law and Sacred Liturgy.' (Instruction on Diocesan Synods III, B, 1)

Its tasks are principally; to assist the Bishop in matters pertaining to the organisation and preparation of the Synod; in drawing up and publishing the Synodal Directory; in the designation of the synodal members, with the Bishop's Council of Priests and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, and in his determining the questions to be proposed for synodal deliberation.

The Diocesan Bishop presides over the meetings of the preparatory commission. If he is unable to preside, his delegate does so.

PREPARATORY COMMISSION	
<b>Fr Dean Marin</b>	Chair of Preparatory Commission, Vicar General
<b>Sarah Moffatt</b>	Lead Facilitator and Moderator, Diocesan Synod
<b>Peter Bierer</b>	Lead Facilitator, Diocesan Synod
<b>Fr James McEvoy</b>	Theological Adviser, Archdiocese of Adelaide
<b>Richard Evans</b>	Senior Journalist, Catholic Communications
<b>James Ellery</b>	Member, Dernancourt Parish
<b>Savio Carvahlo</b>	Member, Adelaide Cathedral Parish
<b>Andrea Bassan</b>	South Australian Catholics for an Evolving Church
<b>Monica Conway</b>	Chairperson, Diocesan Pastoral Council
<b>Fr Mark Sexton</b>	Chair, Bishop's Council of Priests
<b>Fr Denis Ssemuju</b>	Chair, Diocesan Liturgical Commission
<b>Dr Neil McGoran</b>	Executive Director, Catholic Education
<b>James Lloyd</b>	Pastoral Leader, Justice Healing and Inclusion
	Multicultural Community Representative

The Diocesan Synod gives an opportunity to further reflection on our journey so far through the Diocesan Assemblies, Regional Assemblies, Plenary Council and the Global Synod. Most importantly it helps us pave the way forward through concrete proposal and actions.



## SYNOD THEMES AND WRITING & DISCERNMENT PROCESS

SYNOD THEME	SCRIPTURAL THEME
<i>The synod theme and scriptural theme set the overall tone and direction of the Synod.</i>	
<b>"A SYNODAL CHURCH ON MISSION"</b>	<b>"AS THE FATHER SENT ME, SO I AM SENDING YOU"</b>
	(JOHN 20:21-22)

### KEY THEMES

The key themes have been drawn from the consultations and recommendations from the Adelaide Diocesan Assemblies, Australian Plenary Council and Global Synod on Synodality.

FORMATION FOR MISSION AND LEADERSHIP	MISSION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND BEING CHURCH TOGETHER	STRUCTURES AND PLANNING FOR COMMUNION, MISSION AND PARTICIPATION	BECOMING MISSIONARY DISCIPLES	COMMUNION IN GRACE: SACRAMENT TO THE WORLD
How will the Archdiocese engage in formation for mission and leadership at every level, families and households, parishes, schools, communities, diocesan entities? The vision presented in <i>Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel</i> (2023) initiates this work, but the Synod provides an opportunity to explore further possibilities and recommendations for implementation and ongoing commitment.	How will we bring about the vision set out in <i>Being Church Together: A Theology, Vision and Guiding Principles for the Parish-School Relationship</i> (2023) as well as the mission of Catholic education within Catholic schools and in the broader life of the Church?	How will we approach the pastoral planning of the Archdiocese, especially regarding parishes, schools, communities and diocesan agencies? The various structures (leadership, governance, decision-making, properties, etc.) exist to support communion, participation and mission, this theme also discerns what structures are needed for the future of the Archdiocese.	How will each baptised person in the Archdiocese of Adelaide be able to grow and participate as missionary disciples in their own locale and context, responding to the needs and realities of the world while bearing witness to the joy of the Gospel?	How will the Archdiocese express our faith and life in Christ Jesus in communion with one another and as a 'sacrament to the world' ( <i>Lumen Gentium</i> , 1) as a synodal church on mission? This theme takes into consideration the diversity of the People of God, liturgical expression, spirituality and community life, as well as the roles needed to support these areas in the life of the Archdiocese.

### WRITING GROUPS

Writing groups will develop the initial draft of the Synod Papers which explore the key themes, theological statements, vision and motions which will be discerned and voted on at the Synod in 2026. These documents will be developed in consultation with key groups and eventually broader feedback across the Archdiocese.

### CONSULTATIONS

People in the Archdiocese, including key groups and individuals, are invited to provide consultation to the writing of the Synod Papers.

### SYNOD OUTCOMES

The synod will result in a final document which will provide the groundwork for the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan.

SYNOD FINAL DOCUMENT	ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN
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# CONSULTATIVE ELEMENT

The recent Diocesan Assemblies, Regional Assemblies, Australia Plenary Council and the Roman Synod on Synodality have provided a platform to launch this Diocesan Synod. This synod proposes to offer a series of papers around key themes that have emerged through this consultation and offer proposals and concrete actions.

## FORMATION FOR MISSION AND LEADERSHIP

How will the Archdiocese engage in formation for mission and leadership at every level, families and households, parishes, schools, communities, diocesan entities? The vision presented in *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel* (2023) initiates this work, but the Synod provides an opportunity to explore further possibilities and recommendations for implementation and ongoing commitment.

**Writing Group Lead:**  
Peter Bierer

## MISSION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND BEING CHURCH TOGETHER

How will we bring about the vision set out in *Being Church Together: A Theology, Vision and Guiding Principles for the Parish-School Relationship* (2023) as well as the mission of Catholic education within Catholic schools and in the broader life of the Church?

**Writing Group Lead:**  
Sarah Moffatt

## STRUCTURES AND PLANNING FOR COMMUNION, MISSION AND PARTICIPATION

How will we approach the pastoral planning of the Archdiocese, especially regarding parishes, schools, communities and diocesan agencies? The various structures (leadership, governance, decision-making, properties, etc.) exist to support communion, participation and mission, this theme also discerns what structures are needed for the future of the Archdiocese.

**Writing Group Lead:**  
Sarah Moffatt

## BECOMING MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

How will each baptised person in the Archdiocese of Adelaide be able to grow and participate as missionary disciples in their own locale and context, responding to the needs and realities of the world while bearing witness to the joy of the Gospel?

**Writing Group Lead:**  
Sarah Moffatt

## COMMUNION IN GRACE: SACRAMENT TO THE WORLD

How will the Archdiocese express our faith and life in Christ Jesus in communion with one another and as a 'sacrament to the world' (*Lumen Gentium*, 1) as a synodal church on mission? This theme takes into consideration the diversity of the People of God, liturgical expression, spirituality and community life, as well as the roles needed to support these areas in the life of the Archdiocese.

**Writing Group Lead:**  
Peter Bierer



## DEVELOPMENT OF SYNOD PAPERS

### a. Overall paper:

- i. Acknowledge journey to this point, introduction from Archbishop.
- ii. Overview of the Archdiocese: people, parishes, current context (2 pages)
- iii. Overarching theme: Being a synodal church on mission
- iv. Thematic papers (4 pages each, 6 themes)
- v. Summary

### b. Thematic papers structure:

- i. Introduction of the theme (1 paragraph)
- ii. *SEE* - Synopsis of the situation including input from consultations input, current and contemporary challenges and realities (ecclesial and social)
- iii. *JUDGE* - Theological vision
- iv. *ACT* - Name the vision and future actions
- v. Conclusion (1 paragraph)

- Writing groups to be established for each key themes and involve consultation (where necessary) around the themes.
- These papers will be a maximum of 4 pages per key theme with key recommendations. Renaming of the key themes may be necessary to reflect writing. All people in the Archdiocese will be provided with an opportunity for feedback around these keys documents.



# FORMATIONAL PREPARATION OUTLINE

Two concurrent streams of formational preparation are planned: 1) Specific formation and preparation for Synod participants, and 2) general formation for people in parishes, schools and communities in the Archdiocese of Adelaide.

## SYNOD PARTICIPANTS:

Formational preparation for Synod Participants will take place over the 12 months between the synod convocation and synod gathering.

- Monthly sessions will be offered to Synod participants with an online and in-person option. These sessions will include:
  - a presentation that explores key synodal concepts and the Synod themes (to be recorded and made available for public viewing).
  - engagement in prayer, scripture and theological concepts.
  - practice the listening and discernment process to be used at the Synod.
- Digital resources, videos and reading materials to be curated for the Synod website.
- Retreat for synod participants.

The preparation gathering for delegate members on **14th March 2026** will include formational and practical training for discernment and decision-making (i.e. formalities and voting).

## FORMATION AND PREPARATION THEMES:

- Prayer – the heart of the Synodality
- The People of God – identity and responsibility
- Synodality – meaning and practice
- Listening to the Spirit – discernment and decision-making
- 5 Synod Themes

## GENERAL FORMATION FOR PEOPLE IN THE ARCHDIOCESE:

Opportunities and resources for formational preparation will be offered to those in parishes, schools and communities which mirror the formation of Synod participants.

- Viewing capability of the monthly online gatherings (see above)
- Monthly prayer intention (following the monthly formation theme)
- PPC Formational resource which follows the monthly theme
- Bulletin/ newsletter/ website articles
- Listening and Dialogue process for each theme
- Advent small group prayer resource
- Lenten discussion resource exploring synodality

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

will aid both participants and the general public:

- Informational videos and reading materials will be available for self-study on the Synod website.
  - Synod explainer (What is a Diocesan Synod?)
  - The Archdiocese of Adelaide – Context and Pastoral Realities
  - Our Journey of Synodality
  - 5 Synod Themes – 1 minute explainer for each theme

The existing Diocesan Assembly website will serve as a repository for Synod information and resources for participants and general public.

# LEGAL COMMISSION

The Legal Commission shall have the function of ensuring conformity, in all things pertaining to the Synod, with the Law of the Church, avoiding matters which are ultra vires, and shall, with others expert in ecclesiastical disciplines, assist the Bishop in Drafting the Decrees and Declarations of the Synod.

# LITURGICAL COMMISSION

The Diocesan Liturgy Commission and Diocesan Liturgy Office shall oversee the preparation of the Liturgies associated with the Synod and promote prayer for the success of the Synod.

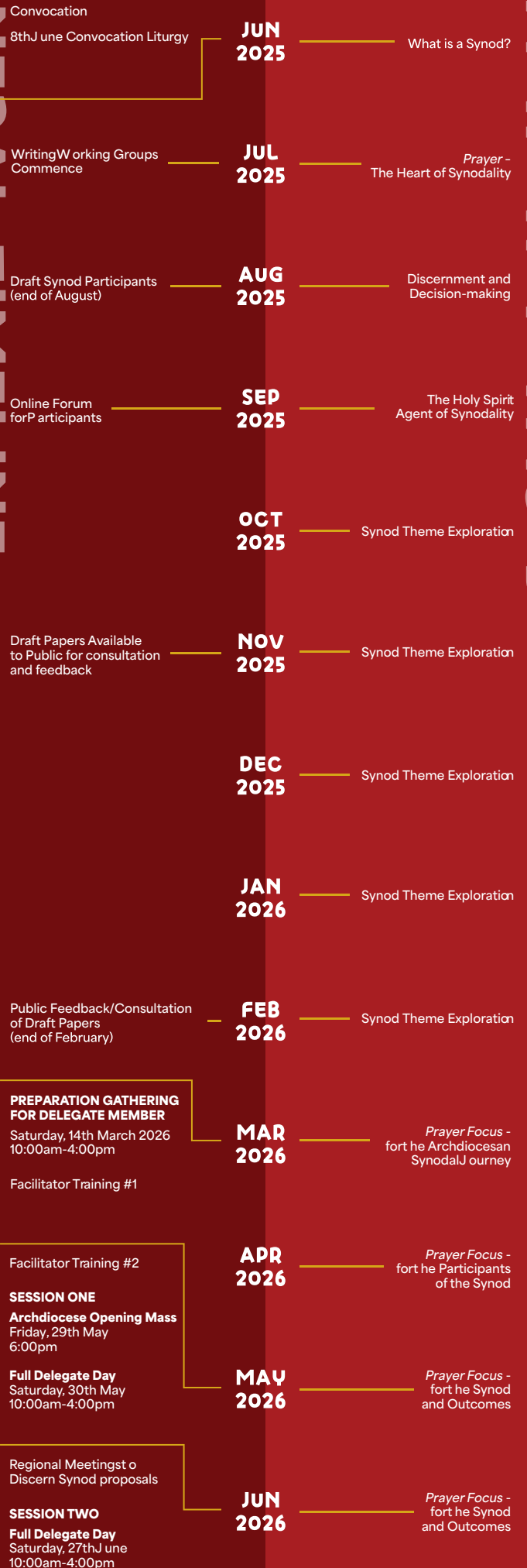
Liturgies associated with the Synod include:

- Convocation Liturgy
- Opening Liturgy
- Daily Mass during the Diocesan Synod
- Closing Liturgy

Prayer promoting the success of the Synod shall include:

- a Synod Prayer
- a selection of petitions for inclusion in the Universal Prayer at Sunday mass and other occasions as appropriate leading up to the Synod
- a resource encouraging weekly prayer with the Sunday Gospel for the period determined by the Preparatory Commission

## GENERAL TIMELINE



## FORMATION THEMES





# DECREES AND DECLARATIONS

There will be voting on a variety of Proposals for Action at the Synod. These Proposals, if adopted, then become recommendations to the Bishop for his consideration as possible actions appropriate to the needs of the Diocese. The Bishop then has responsibility to draw up decrees and statutes based on these recommendations. He does this, conscious of the needs, wishes and desires of the People of God but also of the general law of the Church.

The Diocesan Bishop alone signs the synodal declarations and decrees, by which means he promotes and fosters the pastoral norms for diocesan life.

**Acknowledgement:** *Diocese of Paramatta for the beginning structure and formation of this document.*



# DRAFT SYNOD MEMBERSHIP

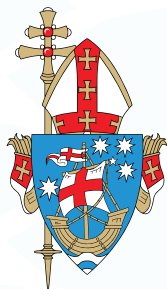
MEMBERS		RELEVANT CANON
Archbishop	<b>1</b>	<p>Can. 463 §1.</p> <p><i>The following must be called to a Diocesan Synod as members of the synod and are obliged to participate in it:</i></p> <p>§2. <i>The Diocesan Bishop can also call others to a diocesan synod as members of the synod; they can be clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life, or lay members of the Christian faithful.</i></p>
Vicar General	<b>1</b>	<p>Can. 463 §1. 2/</p> <p><i>Vicars General, Episcopal Vicars, and the Judicial Vicar;</i></p>
Judicial Vicar	<b>1</b>	
Vicar for Religious	<b>1</b>	
Administrator of the Cathedral	<b>1</b>	<p>Can. 463 §1. 3/</p> <p><i>canons of the cathedral church;</i></p>
Council of Priests	<b>7</b>	<p>Can. 463 §1. 4/</p> <p><i>members of the presbyteral council;</i></p>
Diocesan Pastoral Council	<b>12</b>	<p>Can. 463 §1. 5/</p> <p><i>lay members of the Christian faithful, even members of institutes of consecrated life, chosen by the pastoral council in a manner and number to be determined by the diocesan bishop or, where this council does not exist, in a manner determined by the diocesan bishop;</i></p>
Executive of the Curia	<b>6</b>	<p>Can. 463 §1. 5/</p> <p><i>lay members of the Christian faithful, even members of institutes of consecrated life, chosen by the pastoral council in a manner and number to be determined by the diocesan bishop or, where this council does not exist, in a manner determined by the Diocesan Bishop;</i></p>
Deans	<b>7</b>	<p>Can. 463 §1. 7/</p> <p><i>Vicars Forane;</i></p>
Priests from the 7 Deaneries (other than deans)	<b>7</b>	<p>Can. 463 §1. 8/</p> <p><i>at least one presbyter from each Vicariate Forane, chosen by all those who have the care of souls there; also another presbyter must be chosen who, if the first is impeded, is to take his place;</i></p>
Deacons	<b>2</b>	
Regional Lay Representatives (10 each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laity</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Religious</li> <li>• Community Services</li> <li>• Multicultural Communities</li> <li>• Ecclesial Movements</li> </ul>	<b>60</b>	<p>Can. 463 §1. 5/</p> <p><i>lay members of the Christian faithful, even members of institutes of consecrated life, chosen by the pastoral council in a manner and number to be determined by the Diocesan Bishop or, where this council does not exist, in a manner determined by the Diocesan Bishop;</i></p>

MEMBERS		RELEVANT CANON
Superiors/Leaders of Religious Cong.	<b>4</b>	<i>Can. 463 §1. 9/ some superiors of religious institutes and of societies of apostolic life which have a house in the diocese, chosen in a number and manner determined by the Diocesan Bishop.</i>
<b>TOTAL VOTING MEMBERS</b>	<b>110</b>	
<b>NON-MEMBERS</b>		
Pastoral Services Team – Events and Logistics	<b>5</b>	
Moderator	<b>1</b>	
Canon Lawyer	<b>1</b>	
Theologian	<b>1</b>	
Table Facilitators	<b>14</b>	
Adjudicator	<b>1</b>	
Ecumenical Observers	<b>2</b>	<i>§3. If the Diocesan Bishop has judged it opportune, he can invite as observers to the Diocesan Synod other ministers or members of Churches or ecclesial communities which are not in full communion with the Catholic Church.</i>
Other Observers (other Dioceses)	<b>2</b>	

*\*The Archbishop may choose to appoint additional members if needed.*

ARCHDIOCESE OF ADELAIDE

# SYNOD 2026



Catholic  
Archdiocese  
of Adelaide

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