

APPENDIX A

DIOCESAN MEMBERS OF SYNOD

Purpose

The purpose of the Synod is to:

- assist the Bishop in his office of teaching, sanctifying, and governing the diocesan community
- consult and collaborate with the diocesan community in order to discern the will of the Holy Spirit regarding pastoral activities and direction for the good of the whole diocese.
- foster a sense of community and renewal within the diocese.

Synod Membership

Nominations for delegates will be called from members of the diocese so that those who participate in the Synod are a true reflection of the entire portion of the people of God who constitute 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.

Delegates will then be appointed by the Bishop into one of the following categories as **members of Synod**:

Synod Member – Synod members will be required to sign the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity. They would be able **to speak** from the floor of Synod and **would have voting rights**.

Observers – according to Canon 463 §3 the bishop can invite ministers or members of other Christian Churches or ecclesial communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church, who have a close connection to the diocese, to be Synod observers. They may wish to contribute to the discussions of Synod but have **no voting rights**.

Synod Participant – Some of those who have been invited to be delegates may not be in a position to sign the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity. They have been invited because of their commitment to the vision of the diocese/parishes and their assistance in delivering the mission of the Church. Their knowledge and experience may contribute to the Synod discussions and so they have a voice but **no voting rights**.

Interested People - there may be people who wish to be invited because of their interest in the Catholic Church and the work of the Synod and/or who are unable to be Synod members because of the substantial commitment required. They may be present at sessions of Synod with **neither voice nor voting rights**.

Characteristics of Synod Members

As the Synod is a gathering of the Church, Synod Members are to be baptised Catholics or be people who have begun the RCIA process towards baptism. The Diocese and its ministries have other meetings and processes where they consult and engage with people who are not Catholic. The Synod has an agenda and process that makes it different from these broad consultation processes.

All Synod Members must see themselves, and be recognised by others, as having:

- active involvement in a parish, agency or ministry group within the diocese.
- a commitment to contributing to the Diocese becoming more Christ-like.

- a relationship with God and a commitment to discern prayerfully with others what God wants for the whole diocese.
- a striving to live the Gospel in their family, work, and community activities, i.e. being loving, forgiving, hospitable, compassionate, supportive of the poor, inclusive of all, ...
- a desire and ability to listen with an open mind and heart to, and weigh up, all that they hear especially within the parish or community they represent,
- an ability to fulfill the requirements of Synod Membership.

It is recognised that no one is perfect. Each one of us is on a life-long journey to be fully who God calls us to be. There are parts of our lives that, at times, are in need of conversion, just as there are parts of our Church that are in need of conversion and renewal.

Characteristics of Other Members of Synod (Observers and Participants)

Observers and Participants have been invited because of their commitment to the vision of the diocese/parishes and their assistance in delivering the mission of the Church. Their knowledge and experience may contribute to the Synod discussions

By being present at Synod and having a voice they should be recognized by others as having:

- active involvement in a parish, agency or ministry group within the diocese
- a commitment to contributing to the Diocese becoming more Christ-like
- a commitment to discern with others what God wants for the whole diocese
- a striving to live the gospel values in their family, work, and community activities, i.e. being loving, forgiving, hospitable, compassionate, supportive of the poor, inclusive of all
- a desire and ability to listen with an open mind and heart to, and weigh up, all that they hear especially within the community they represent

Requirements of Members of Synod

Members of Synod will be on a journey with each other and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit discern a future of the Church in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

All members of Synod need to commit to:

- being open to the Holy Spirit in their personal prayer and through the Synod
- reading Synod documents to learn more about the needs of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
- participating in formation and preparatory meetings
- attending a commissioning ceremony to take place at a Mass at the Sacred Heart Cathedral (unless COVID restrictions require alternative arrangements)
- listening to and respecting the views of others and weighing up all one hears in order to discern what God wants
- working with others to build understanding and positive outcomes for the whole Diocese
- meeting with those who have discerned their attendance at Synod – especially in the six weekly reflection opportunities during Feb-March 2021 on the themes of the Synod

- participating in both full day sessions of the Synod:
 - Session 2 - Saturday 22 May 2021 and
 - Session 3 – Saturday 20 November 2021
- reporting back to one's parish, agency or group after each session of the Synod

While not wishing to over-exaggerate the commitment, it is necessary to point out that those who become members of Synod will be expected to engage actively in processes leading up to, and during the Synod sessions.

All members of Synod have a right and duty to participate in the sessions of Synod. If they are unable to attend a proxy cannot be sent in their place.

It is very helpful but is not essential that members of Synod have an email address.

Process for Appointment of Members of Synod

While Bishop Bill Wright must approve the membership of each person coming to the Synod, membership will be selected as follows.

A letter from Bishop Bill Wright inviting applications for membership of the Synod will be sent to individuals, parishes, agencies, groups, and ministries. This letter will include:

- Bishop's Pastoral Letter on the Synod
- Composition of the Synod
- Characteristics of members of Synod
- Requirements of members of Synod
- Selection of Synod Members, Observers, Synod Participants, and Interested People
- Appointment of members of Synod

Applications must be returned by 31 March 2021.

The Bishop, upon advice of the Diocesan Synod Working Party, can accept late applications if these address under-representation from initial expressions of interest. Late applicants still need to complete formation and other requirements expected of all Delegates.

The Synod Working Party will check that application forms contain all the relevant information. They will contact applicants if clarification is needed. The Synod Working Party will then provide Bishop Bill Wright with the list of the people for him to consider appointing as members of Synod.

Selection of Members of Synod

The Instruction from Rome on Diocesan Synods *states that Canon 512 no 2 should be followed in so far as possible in the selection of members of the Synod.* Canon 512 no 2 states "The members of Christ's faithful assigned to the Pastoral Council are to be selected in such a way that the 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".

People who are discerned by a community service, educational ministry or other group may be current staff, volunteers, students, participants, service users, or parents.

The Bishop will issue invitations to complete the Expression of Interest Form to:

- All active clergy of the diocese;
- Two representatives from the retired clergy;

- All members of the Council for Mission;
- Lay people officially engaged as chaplains or pastoral ministers;
- Diocesan Councils to invite their membership to discern who will represent their Council;
- Religious Sisters/Brothers who will meet together to discern the required number of people;
- The parish leader who will invite parishioners to discern who will be invited to submit an application based on one person per 100 Mass attendance (2016 Mass Count).
If this is not possible the Parish Leader will invite any parishioner to submit their interest in participating in the Synod. They (preferably with the assistance of members of the Parish Pastoral Council) will discern equal numbers of men and women;
- Each primary school leadership team will invite their staff and parent body to discern the person/s to be invited (it is important that they be seen as part of the parish delegation);
- Each secondary school leadership team will invite their staff and parent body to discern the person/s to be invited;
- Each secondary school leadership team (preferably with the advice of the student leadership team) will be invited to discern one per 200 students comprising equal numbers of male and female students, from Years 10, 11 and 12 to be invited to complete an Expression of Interest Form together with their parent/guardian;
- With the advice of staff and parents/carers the leadership team of St Nicholas will discern up to 8 people who will hear the voice of their community;
- The leadership team of CatholicCare who will discern up to 8 people from staff and people they serve who will hear the voice of their community;
- The members of the Operations Management Group of the diocese;
- Each Catholic cultural group operating within the diocese will discern 1 man and 1 woman;
- The staff from Healing and Support (Zimmerman Service) will discern with their clients, people to be invited to attend the Synod;
- Each Catholic ministry operating in the Diocese but governed by other Church authorities, will discern representatives;
- Each Catholic movement operating in the Diocese will discern their representative.

It is understood that the majority of members of Synod will come from parishes, ministry groups and agencies, wearing more than one hat, in order to represent the many aspects of our diocese as a community of communities.

Role of a Member of Synod

While delegates represent their community or parish it is not in the sense of a “political liaison” between Synod and constituency. Their role is not to lobby for a geographic or interest group as in a political gathering, but to ensure that the concerns, observations and needs of the whole diocesan community are presented to the Synod, and to report back to the parish, agency or community that discerned their attendance. To assist with this each member of Synod is invited on a personal formation journey to ascertain a better understanding of the diocese and one’s own faith.

Appointment of Members of Synod

The official appointment and commissioning of members of Synod will take place at the Mass which forms part of Bishop's Reflection Days during April/May. Synod Members will be asked to recite and sign a Profession of Faith and an Oath of Fidelity. Synod Observers, Participants and Interested People will be asked to recite and sign Words of Commitment.

By May 2021, the Bishop will formally write to all those discerned to participate in the Synod. In that letter of appointment, he will inform them of the basis for their invitation.

All must respond in writing to inform the Bishop of their acceptance or rejection of this invitation.