

Spring Synod Gatherings, 2025

Archdiocese of Dublin

In March 2025, synod gatherings took place across the 5 pastoral areas of the Archdiocese, along with a 6th youth synod gathering. Clergy, chairs of Pastoral Councils, Parish Synod Animators, and pastoral staff were invited, with around 300 people from the Diocese present at the gatherings. The National Synod Team provided 17 topics for discussion that had emerged from the first synod gatherings in 2022. The aim of the spring gatherings was to prioritise the topics that should be a focus from the Pre-National Synod gatherings, beginning in October 2025. The 'Conversations in the Spirit' method was used to discern on 3 aspects: what the 3 priorities are out of the list of 17 topics? where there were noticeable differences? and what are the priorities that the Holy Spirit is prompting us to recommend to the Pre-Synodal Assembly in October 2025?

The Dublin Diocesan report which were submitted to the National Synod Team is set out below and on the following pages.

1

Top 3 Priorities:

- Belonging
- Faith Formation
- Co-Responsibility & Lay Ministry

2

Some minority interests were expressed without great disagreement.

These included:

- Culture
- Liturgy and Baptism
- Sexuality

3

Out of the 17 topics provided, what are the priorities that the Holy Spirit is prompting us to recommend to the Pre-Synodal Assembly in October 2025?

- Belonging
- Faith Formation
- Co-responsibility
- Women
- Youth

Top 3 Priorities

Archdiocese of Dublin
Spring Synod Gatherings, 2025

Belonging



This is a crucial priority because if people feel they belong, they will want to continue on a faith journey. Fostering a sense of community is seen as fundamental because it helps people to take responsibility, links to engagement and active membership, and is key to people being open to a journey of faith. Young people specifically express a desire to belong, to have a home. Addressing judgmental attitudes is essential to create a culture of inclusion and welcome. Belonging is fundamental to being Church. In a time of increasing isolation, belonging is considered counter-cultural and necessary to transform the reality of the Church to make it attractive. Ensuring people feel welcome and wanted is vital to achieving the Church's goals together.

Faith Formation

This is a top priority because it is foundational for enabling people to share their faith with joy. Many feel their faith formation ended prematurely and desire a deeper understanding. Addressing lost generations due to school-based formation and igniting a passion around faith are key reasons for its importance. Unless there is faith formation, all other aspects cannot be addressed. It is considered essential for a mature faith beyond school, involving a personal encounter with the risen Jesus. Parents need to be formed to effectively pass on the faith. Furthermore, young people need to be confident in their faith, requiring proper education. Faith formation brings us into personal contact with Jesus and is essential because the Church is the community of faith.



Co-Responsibility and Lay Ministry



This is a priority as lay ministry and co-responsibility are needed in building up the Church community. It is seen as a missionary challenge and a way to work together effectively, as working together helps everyone. The Church must not depend on priests alone; both laity and clergy are needed. This collaborative approach, where lay and clergy work together, is essential in order to address the missionary challenges and opportunities. It is a priority rooted in our Baptism and empowers people to contribute their gifts. Without co-responsibility, it is believed that the Church would collapse. Encouraging lay involvement helps avoid over-reliance on single individuals and allows the many to find their place. Seeing others involved, including young people, can inspire further participation.

Notable Differences in Emphasis

Archdiocese of Dublin

Some minority interests were expressed without great disagreement.

These included:

- **Culture**
- **Liturgy and Baptism**
- **Sexuality**

These Diocesan Synodal gatherings reveal a Church reflecting on its current state and future direction. The overwhelming sentiment points towards a need for greater inclusivity, shared responsibility between clergy and laity, revitalised faith formation for all ages, and meaningful engagement with the complexities of contemporary culture. The voices from these gatherings express a desire for a Church that fosters a strong sense of belonging, empowers its members, and actively lives out the Gospel in the modern world.

- **Baptism:** People emphasised the significance of Baptism as the foundation of Christian life and the need for deeper reflection and understanding of its implications, connecting Baptism and belonging, faith formation and liturgy.
- **Liturgy:** Exclusive language in the liturgy and prayers is an issue. The beauty and delivery of the liturgy, as well as making the Word of God more engaging in proclamation and preaching.
- **Family:** The family is central to passing on faith and is referred to as the domestic Church. Accompanying families, keeping in mind the changing nature of family structures, is a priority.
- **LGBTQ+/Sexuality:** The inclusion and respect of LGBTQ+ individuals are a significant concern. There is a need for a ministry to support marginalised groups, including those feeling abandoned due to sexuality issues.
- **Culture:** Engaging with the ever-changing cultural reality in creative and transformative ways includes understanding the culture, welcoming diverse groups, and addressing issues arising from the modern world.
- **Abuse:** The issue of abuse, particularly abuse of power and roles, is mentioned in some gatherings as not being adequately dealt with.

Suggested Priorities for the pre-National Assembly

Archdiocese of Dublin

Belonging

Belonging is fundamental to being Church. It is essential for fostering a sense of community and helps people to take responsibility. Being part of a welcoming community is counter-cultural and necessary to transform the reality of the Church to make it attractive to all those who feel a sense of isolation. Belonging leads to engagement and active membership, a crucial factor for young people.

Faith Formation

Personal encounter with the risen Jesus is foundational. Faith formation brings together so many of the themes: sharing our faith with joy and passion, and developing a confident adult faith. The challenge is to enable adults to talk about, pass on their faith, and address the lost generations as well as engaging intentionally with young people.

Co-Responsibility / Lay Ministry

The Parish must not depend solely on priests. We need both laity and clergy working together to build up the Church community. We are all in this together as baptised members. This calls for the recognition and acceptance of lay leadership. A renewed structure of Church would empower people to contribute their gifts, thus enabling them to fulfil their baptismal missionary calling. Without co-responsibility and lay leadership the Church will collapse.

Women

Currently, women make a vital contribution in their roles in the Church, but are often not fully recognised. The Spirit is indicating that change is required regarding the injustice of how women are treated. Recognising the gifts and ministries of women is an on-going challenge and this structural inequality needs to be addressed. Empowering women in their roles will enable them to enrich the life of the Church.

Youth

'You can't just say 'there are no young people', you have to do something about it.' Parishes experience major challenge in engaging with young people after Confirmation. Without the presence and participation of the next generation, the Church has no future. Young people need accompaniment as they are the today and tomorrow of the Church.