

Dear Bishop .....

Greetings to you as we continue in this synodal process begun by Pope Francis. It is our understanding that the Document for the Continental Stage (DCS) has been sent out to every bishop throughout the world on 27th October. You have been asked by Cardinal Grech and the Synod office to convene your Church to read this document to determine if we approve it and/or if we discern that there are things to add.

However, the majority of dioceses in England and Wales do not have the diocesan pastoral council structures or dissemination structures that Cardinal Grech expects to comment on the DCS. How therefore is the process of responding to the DCS to be properly and transparently managed?

*Delete the following paragraph if not relevant to you:*

(As someone who has participated in the synodal journey so far with prayer and dedication, I am interested in being a part of your consulting team. *Or, insert name & email of someone else, obviously with their permission*).

REPRESENTATION: We look forward to your confirmation

1. that the mechanism to choose a balanced group of lay people to represent our diocese be transparently disclosed, including the selection criteria.
2. that Pope Francis' instruction regarding the Consultation phase to include people of all genders and sexual orientations, survivors of clerical sexual and other violence/abuse, lay theologians, lay contributors in parish ministries, those estranged from the church, and those excluded through Canon law from the Sacraments, be fully represented, and
3. that you publish the names and means of contacting all the members (within the provisions of the GDPR) who have been selected for your Continental Assembly well ahead of your first meeting in January 2023.
4. that we urgently address the key issues of the DCS: the unacceptable absence of women from leadership at all levels within the institutional Church, the global loss of trust in Church hierarchy over abuse in all its forms, and the full inclusion of marginalised groups in terms of gender, race, sexual orientation and disability. In short, full inclusion, transparency and co-responsibility.

CONTENT ANALYSIS of the EW NATIONAL SYNTHESIS

The England and Wales National Synthesis does not reflect the strength of the people's voice for reform. We know this based upon the findings of Root & Branch's Content Analysis of all 22 diocesan syntheses. Please see the attached infographic and explanatory page: [www.rootandbranchsynod.org/synod-watch](http://www.rootandbranchsynod.org/synod-watch)

Finally, we look forward to your making these public: the first draft Document for the Continental Stage (DCS), our revisions to the DCS and the January DCS, as well as the documents coming from the Continental Assembly in March 2023.

With many blessings as you undertake your sacred duty in this process and take this exciting and challenging stage forward,

(Signed / on behalf of)

# Diocesan Synodal Reports

## What We Say

**Root & Branch** have carried out extensive Content Analysis on each one of our 22 England and Wales Diocesan Synodal Reports.



### **Not rules, but ways of thinking**

95% want holistic vision - inclusivity and equality of all.



### **What touches all must be discussed and approved by all**

95% want accountable, elected leaders and reformed Canon Law.



### **Ministry open to all, as in the Early Church**

77% want married priests, 91% ordination of women.



### **The dignity and sanctity of all**

100% want full equality and inclusion of women and LGBTQ+ people.



### **Safeguarding, reparation & true penitence**

95% want an end to clericalism. 100% see abuse & cover-up as a betrayal of the People of God. We want true penitence, and transparent, collaborative governance and safeguarding.

**Root & Branch** mapped our countrywide Synod responses against our **Bristol Text**.

**Reform is needed in our Catholic Church!**  
[www.rootandbranchsynod.org/synod-watch](http://www.rootandbranchsynod.org/synod-watch)



## **ROOT & BRANCH CONTENT ANALYSIS**

### **22 Diocesan Syntheses England and Wales**

Root & Branch have carried out an extensive Content Analysis of the 22 Diocesan Syntheses submitted for the National Synthesis - which, disappointingly, failed to reflect the findings below in their full strength. Likewise the Bishops' Reflection, Seeking Our Hearts' Desire. [www.rootandbranchsynod.org/synod-watch](http://www.rootandbranchsynod.org/synod-watch) As R&B checked and categorised every single reference to the issues below, the following picture emerged as to what the People of God actually desire:

#### **REFORM OF MORAL THEOLOGY = 92% (Overall)**

- *Theology/teachings - continually evolving = 86%*
- *Subsidiarity laity/clergy/hierarchy = 95%*
- *Inclusivity/equality of all = 95%*

#### **REFORM OF CHURCH AUTHORITY = 95%**

- *Equality and justice for all - Reform of Canon Law = 95%*
- *Agreed by All - What touches all must be discussed and agreed by all = 95%*
- *Elected by All - Catholics' right to have their leaders render an account to them = 95%*

#### **REDEFINING AND RECLAIMING LITURGICAL MINISTRY = 84%**

- *Support for Ordination of women = 91%*
- *Support for Married priests = 77%*

#### **EMBRACING DIVERSITY = 91%** (91% Overall Groups Identified as Experiencing Inequality/Exclusion)

- *Women = 100%*
- *LGBTQ+ = 100%*
- *Race/ethnicity/migrants = 77%*
- *Disability/deaf/mental health/learning disability = 77%*
- *Young people = 95%*
- *Ecumenism/other faiths = 95%*

#### **CLERICAL ABUSE - THE VOICE OF THE LAITY - 90%** (90% references/statements captured in Diocesan Reports)

- *\*Clerical Abuse - nullifies hierarchy's authority as arbiter in moral affairs. Betrayal of the People. = 100%*
- *Hierarchy to apologise/seek forgiveness/show compassion/respond appropriately (with action) for harm caused to victims, their families and wider community. = 82%*
- *Damage to perception of RC due to cover-up/dishonesty and failure to tackle abuse. Loss of trust. = 73%*
- *Clericalism: - ensured protection of reputation above well-being & dignity of those abused = 95%*
- *Collaborative governance: - transparent systems of safeguarding /audit/scrutiny. = 100%*

*\* Clerical abuse refers to Clerical Sexual Abuse of Children - girls and boys - Financial abuse. Other abuse for which the Vatican has acknowledged wrong-doing by the hierarchy such as the sexual abuse and servitude of nuns in religious communities and the historic abuse (including forced adoption) of vulnerable women and children in Mother & Baby homes - are not typically referred to within the diocesan syntheses.*