



## Root & Branch Inclusive Synod, Bristol 5 - 12 September 2021

A synod that starts with women and does not end there

### INTRODUCTION

If we bring the love of God to every human being, in every nation, the rest follows.

We believe in modelling Catholicism on the messages of the Gospel and we address this document to everyone who believes Root & Branch reform is needed. This is a synodal movement underpinned by Canon Law 212: "(the faithful) have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful".

**‘A Church that teaches must be firstly a Church that listens...what affects all should be discussed by all.’**

Pope Francis in *Let us Dream*, 2021

**‘This institution is worth fighting for, especially at a time when the future of the human species itself is threatened with self-extinction - through technology, weapons, and the corruption of the climate. Humanity is desperately in need of a reformed, pluralistic, justice-minded Catholic Church, if only because of its scale - a billion people crossing every boundary on the planet. Their commonwealth - their community - could be a transforming force for good, as the human species confronts the future.’**

James Carroll, author of *The Truth at the Heart of the Lie*

**‘Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire ...We’ve had enough of exhortations to be silent! Cry out with a hundred thousand tongues. The world is rotten because of silence.’**

- Saint & Doctor of the Church, Catherine of Siena, 1378

We recognise, love and value all that is precious in the Church.

We are inspired by Pope Francis's prophetic lead on climate change, modern-day slavery, economic intervention for the poor, his emphasis on Mercy and steadfast opposition to the death penalty. We honour the total self-giving of celibate priests and of religious. However, corruption, clericalism, censorship and exclusion, and the silencing of women is inflicting such damage on individuals that the Church is haemorrhaging both priests and parishioners. Where is the prophetic voice of the Catholic in the pew?

The lay-led Root & Branch inclusive Synod began in October 2020:

<https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org/>

The good news is that caring Catholics, lay and religious, are meeting online, sharing their concerns, their disillusionment, and their love for the Church. It's a worldwide movement for renewal. Tinkering with the top-heavy system we have inherited is not enough. Root and Branch reform is needed, now.

We are seizing THIS MOMENT confident that:

The Holy Spirit is uncontained [Isaiah 55:10-11]; the Holy Spirit reveals the truth and is available to all [Hebrews 4:12]; all discussions are possible in the Spirit. There is no place for censorship, or intimidation; individuals and communities have a right to social and civil freedom in the practice of their religion. [Dignitatis Humanae, Vatican II] We will not stand idly by as our church diminishes.

After a year-long phase of Discernment we believe the following must be explored:

- 1.The redefining & reclaiming of ministry
- 2.The embracing of diversity
- 3.A rethink of moral theology
- 4.The sharing of authority

**STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS FOR MINISTRY, DIVERSITY, MORAL THEOLOGY AND AUTHORITY TO BE FOUND SEPARATELY ON THIS WEBSITE**