

## SYNOD RESOURCES - 2

### Selecting Parish Delegates

#### Introduction

The process of consultation for the 2023 Synod of Bishops begins on 17 October 2021 with a diocesan phase. This is an important opportunity for the people of the diocese (lay, religious and ordained, male and female, young and old) to share what it means when we speak about Communion, Participation and Mission. While this phase will feed into national and international discussions, what is shared at a parish level and via the online and postal submissions will be invaluable in seeing how we might 'journey together' as an Archdiocese in our discipleship of the Lord Jesus.

#### The Role of the Parish Delegate

To encourage all parishes to participate in the synodal process, our Archbishop has requested that each parish nominates two delegates. These chosen delegates will be tasked with facilitating parish listening and discernment consultations and participating in further diocesan listening meetings.

#### Selecting a Parish Delegate

We recognise that potential candidates may not be obvious. No candidate is perfect. To help you prayerfully discern suitable delegates from your parish, the Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis offers the acronym FACT (Faithful, Available, Contagious and Teachable).

These criteria are used in our selection of Deanery Mentors and are recommended for the selection of Parish Leads as part of the *Some Definite Service* missionary initiative.

As the Parish Priest, you may wish to apply the same criteria to your selection of delegates or nominate those within your parish who are already Deanery Mentors and Parish Leads (particularly for evangelisation) to undertake this task.

Below (overleaf) is a brief breakdown of all four categories using keywords to pinpoint the characteristics that describe each aspect.

F	<b>Faithful</b>	Seeking holiness, fully believing, prayerful, sacramental life
A	<b>Available</b>	Showing up, committed, initiates, invitational
C	<b>Contagious</b>	Approachable, open, joyful, authentic, witness
T	<b>Teachable</b>	Humble, listens, magnanimous, impactful

The key aspect is one of willingness and docility to the Holy Spirit. We listen first to the Holy Spirit and then we listen to each other. The experience of synodality should not focus first and foremost on structures, but on the experience of journeying together to discerning the path forward, inspired by the Holy Spirit (Vademecum, p.21).

The Appendix expands on the acronym FACT and describes the desired characteristics for nominees.

The Vademecum document (p.49) also highlights eight qualities of parish delegate which should prove useful to you:

- A **spiritually mature** person with a **living faith**.
- A natural **collaborator**.
- An effective **communicator**.
- The ability to **synthesise** a variety of information.
- The ability to **interact well** with people of diverse cultural, generational, and ecclesial backgrounds.
- **Familiarity** with diocesan structures and processes.
- **Prior experience** working in collaborative initiatives or synodal processes.
- **Humility** in working with a co-leader and/or team, graciously open to the insights and gifts of others as well as trying new ways of proceeding.

## Appendix: Selection Criteria for Synod Candidates - FACT

### **Faithful**

Suitable candidates are those who are faithful to Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Their witness to faith is evident through their personal relationship with Jesus, as they devote themselves to daily prayer and immerse themselves in the sacramental life of the Church, particularly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the celebration of Mass.

Pertinent candidates are those, together with the Holy Father, who are open to a lived synodality within their local parish, by facilitating parish consultation and fraternal collaboration.

### **Available**

In addition, potential candidates are those who would make themselves available for synodal events. They are faithful to the commitments expected of them as a delegate and ensure that they are attentive to the needs of their parish throughout the synodal process.

The following demonstrate signs of availability in potential candidates:

- They demonstrate a willingness to attend synodal online events, including the live-streamed Mass and introductory session on Sunday 17 October 2021 and further diocesan listening meetings.
- They would make time to accompany the parish in the listening phase, by facilitating online or in-person group discussions.
- They are reliable and would ensure that submissions to the Synod Listening Group are completed prior to the 7 January 2022.

## Contagious

A contagious candidate is someone who demonstrates influence. They have strong social skills and are joyful witnesses to the Gospel.

The following demonstrate signs of contagiousness in potential candidates:

- They would have the ability to lead and facilitate group discussions, ensuring communion, fraternity, and participation in their parish.
- They would be easily approachable and provide a space for all the baptised to participate in group discussions and be represented.

## Teachable

A teachable candidate is someone who embodies the virtue of humility and values the opportunity to learn from others. They are open to receiving constructive feedback and additional help when needed.

The following demonstrate signs of teachability in potential candidates:

- They would recognise other people's good ideas and promote the best suggestions in group discussions.
- They would show a willingness to learn from the wisdom of others and record this for submission to the Synod Listening Group.
- They would be docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit discerning, with others, what God is calling us to be.