

SYNODALITY

"Walking and growing together"- What does it mean for us and the Church today?



Presenter: Dr Sandie Cornish

When: Saturday 16th March 2024 at 2-4pm

Where: Redemptorist Retreat House, 190 Vincent St, North Perth, 6006

Cost: Free but Donation appreciated

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RSVP: Essential for registration and catering purposes.

For further details or to register your interest in attending this event please email: ignatianspiritwa@gmail.com

About the speaker:

Dr Sandie Cornish is a practitioner and academic in the field of Catholic Social Teaching. She is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Theology at the Australian Catholic University and a member of the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development. She was one of the periti for the Fifth Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia. Sandie holds a PhD in Practical Theology, a Licentiate in Catholic Social Doctrine and Ethics from the Pontifical Gregorian University, a Master of Public Policy, and a Bachelor of Economics.

What is Synodality?

During the pandemic, Pope Francis presented us with a new image of church: that, no matter who we were, we were together in the same boat. The worldwide Synod process came out of that desire to engage with our changing world and with those on the margins to regain a renewed sense of purpose and mission. However, putting this into practice is not so simple. As a Church, we don't necessarily have good ways of listening to voices on the margins and connecting to people's lives. We struggle to have difficult or creative conversations, and to step away from our own agendas. In many ways we have lost the habit of seeking the Holy Spirit, and we are often paralysed by indecision. Pope Francis challenges us to become a listening, engaged church, through becoming more synodal.

Specifically, this means:

- **Actively responding to our changing world – reading the signs of the times**
- **Learning how to hold prayerful, truthful and safe conversations which value gracious listening and courageous speaking**
- **Consciously seeking the Holy Spirit's inspiration**
- **Being compelled to action by the stories we've heard**

Although this sounds complicated, synodality is a way of being community which has been part of the Church since the very beginning (Council of Jerusalem, Acts 15). We have ancient tools of **lectio divina and spiritual conversation** which, when done well, can be transformative.

In the past year, as we have grown in confidence in this new way of being, synodality has been used to resolve contentious issues in parishes; to look for creative solutions to diocesan finances; and even to create safe listening spaces in response to clergy sex abuse. The result of becoming synodal, of truly encountering one another heart-to-heart, is a new sense of purpose. Grounded in the vocation of all the baptised, this purpose brings people together, helps prioritise finances and resources, allows people's gifts to flourish and enables us to take risks for the Kingdom.

In Pope Francis' words, we move from being "zombie Christians" to "a caravan of solidarity" (Evangeli Gaudium, 83, 87) where all are welcome, all loved, all known.