



**CATHOLIC YOUTH
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Catholic Youth Assembly 2025

Delegate Pre-Reading Material



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Overview

In 2022 at the request of Archbishop Timothy Costello SDB there was a review on youth in the Archdiocese of Perth. The outcome of this review led to a new mandate for Catholic Youth Ministry (CYM). A key focus for the new mandate was to review and rebuild the Catholic Youth Network, which had ceased operating during Covid.

With Pope Francis calling us to become a more synodal Church and our recent Archdiocesan Assembly to discern the formation of a Diocesan Pastoral Council, it was clear from the review, that there was a need to establish a council for the youth of our archdiocese in a synodal way.

As an agency, it is very difficult for CYM to provide support when the people and groups we serve, are spread so widely across our archdiocese, many of them working in silos, disconnected, and without a voice. For CYM to be effective in its mandate we need to provide those we serve with a voice, to listen and discern how we are to support them in youth ministry.

“There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.” *1 Corinthians 12:12,27*

Catholic Youth Assembly

The Catholic Youth Assembly (CYA) follows the Perth Archdiocesan Assembly 2023-2024. The purpose of the CYA is to focus on the establishment of a Catholic Youth Council (CYC) for the Archdiocese of Perth, whilst reflecting on the process of synodality asked for by Pope Francis.

Those participating in the CYA will be called to journey together through deep listening, prayer and discernment, guided by the Holy Spirit, to determine how the youth council should be formed. Through using a synodal process and participating in the assembly, our conversations in the Spirit with one another will ensure that synodality becomes part of the lived experience for each one of us in the life of the Church.



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Catholic Youth Council

The CYC aims to provide a voice for youth in our archdiocese, to empower those engaged in youth ministry by fostering a network for collaboration and mutual support. It will provide a space for deep listening, prayer and discernment, to facilitate discussion, address significant challenges, make recommendations, and evaluate initiatives with those engaged in youth ministry.

The CYC aims to break down silos, creating greater opportunities for sharing resources and delivery of larger scale events, through better collaboration and support. Through working together, we can share a unified vision and mission for youth ministry in our archdiocese.

The CYC will actively contribute to the revitalisation and engagement of our youth spaces, to foster a vibrant and welcoming community within the Perth Archdiocese and support places for our youth to belong.

Expectations and Role of the Assembly Participants

Purpose: At the assembly, we will gather to listen, pray and discern the Holy Spirit's guidance; to find the best way a council could be established for the youth in our archdiocese.

Preparation: Before participants come together to discern, they will undergo formation on synodality and the listening and discernment process, through the launch event session videos and additional resources. We recommend that all participants read the resources and watch the two brief videos featuring an interview with synodality expert, Professor Eamonn Conway, who will offer more clarity on these topics.

What is Synodality?

"In its broadest sense, synodality can be understood as Christians walking in communion with Christ toward the Kingdom along with the whole of humanity.

- Its orientation is towards mission
- Its practice involves gathering in assembly at each level of ecclesial life
- It involves reciprocal listening, dialogue, community discernment, and creation of consensus as an expression that renders Christ present in the Holy Spirit, each taking decisions in accordance with their responsibilities."

(XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: First Session. A Synodal Church in Mission: Synthesis Report (October 2023), Part I, 1h)



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Synodality invites us to **listen together to the Word of God in Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church**. Literally, 'synod' means "being on the path together." Together, we enter into a dialogue with the Word of God and put it into practice guided by the Holy Spirit.



The Gift of the Spirit in the Baptised

The gift of the Holy Spirit, which is **one and the same in all who have been baptised**, is manifested in many forms:

- the equal dignity of the baptised
- the universal call to holiness
- the participation of all the faithful in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Jesus Christ
- the richness of hierarchical and charismatic gifts
- the life and mission of each local Church.

(International Theological Commission, Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church, 2018, 46)

What Synodality needs and involves

- Prayerfulness and a desire for conversion of the heart and mind
- Discernment in freedom
- Co-responsibility and accountability
- Humility, and the readiness to listen
- Gratitude and consolation
- Honest and reflective conversations
- Discernment needs time

(Cf. General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, Towards a Spirituality of Synodality, 25-43)



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Listening and Discernment

The process of synodality used at the Catholic Youth Assembly mirrors the method that was used at the Perth Archdiocesan Assembly. The 'communal discernment' process will be Conversations in the Spirit. It is a process that derives from the Ignatian tradition of the Spiritual Exercises.

We are invited to come to communal discernment with open minds. When we really listen, we feel different, noticing what gets in the way - our own priorities, our needs, and anxieties. Inevitably, we will bring these things to the discerning process but are encouraged to acknowledge them and let them go.

We are invited to be open-minded, honest with ourselves and with others, ready to let go of any of our own ideas, take people seriously, affirm their value and dignity, value who they are, and be prepared to rejoice in the other having a sense of the other's gifts.

The qualities for communal discernment are thus:

- Solidarity
- Admiration
- Gratitude
- Humility

Discernment means to think through our decisions and actions, not just by rational calculation but by listening for His Spirit, recognising in prayer God's motives, invitations and will.

Pope Francis, Let Us Dream, 2020, p.2

The Conversations in the Spirit process is outlined in "The conversation in the Spirit" graphic on the following page.



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The conversation in the Spirit

A dynamic of discernment in the synodal Church



Let's Gather and Pray

We begin by entrusting ourselves to the Father, conversing in prayer with the Lord Jesus and listening to the Holy Spirit. Together we are invited to pray the Adsumus Prayer.

Listening to the Word of God and Silence

The Word of God is proclaimed. How is God speaking to you in this Scripture and all that you have heard? What words or phrases are you being drawn to and why?

Sharing and Listening (Individual)

Each person takes turns speaking from his or her own experience and prayer, and listens carefully to the contribution of others. The following lead-in statements may be used: "In my prayer today..." "And I feel..."

Silence and Prayer



Sharing and Listening (Group)

From what the others have said, each one shares what has resonated most with him or her or what has aroused the most resistance in him or her, allowing himself or herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit: "When, listening, did my heart burn within me?"

The following lead-in statements may be used: "Listening to the Holy Spirit through the voices of this group, I have heard..." "And it leaves me feeling..."

Silence and Prayer

Building Together (Conversation)

Together we dialogue on the basis of what emerged earlier in order to discern and gather the fruit of the conversation in the Spirit to recognise intuitions and convergences; to identify discordances, obstacles and new questions; to allow prophetic voices to emerge. It is important that everyone can feel represented by the outcome of the work. "to what steps is the Holy Spirit calling us together?"



Let's Respond

The group's response is captured in a short summary. The scribe will make 5-7 key points that capture the important parts of the discussion.

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Professor Eamon Conway Videos

Please watch the two videos provided below for a greater understanding on Listening and Discernment, and Synodality.

Video 1: Listening and Discernment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uqsfCguG7o&t=38s>

Video 2: Synodality and What is a Diocesan Pastoral Council

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZDE3BwohSo>

Further resources on Synodality, Listening and Discernment are available below.

Dei Verbum / Word of God: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation:

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html

Archdiocesan Assembly Resources, Final Report and Synthesis:

https://www.perthcatholic.org.au/Our_Archdiocese-Archdiocesan_Assembly_202324.htm



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Listening and Discernment Sessions

The three listening and discernment sessions for Communion, Participation and Mission are interrelated. They are the vital pillars of a Synodal Church. There is no hierarchy between them. Each pillar enriches and orients the other two. There is a dynamic relationship between the three that must be articulated with all three in mind. We highly recommend that all delegates of the Youth Assembly Day attend at least two of the three sessions.

Communion:

God gathers us together as diverse peoples of one faith. The communion we share finds its deepest roots in the love and unity of the Trinity. Together, we listen to the Word of God, and grounded in the *sensu fidei*, the sense of the faithful, that we share, we all have a role to play in discerning and living out God's call for his people.

Participation:

All who belong to the People of God are to engage in deep and respectful listening to one another. This creates space for us to hear the Holy Spirit together and guides our aspirations for the Church. All the faithful are qualified and called to serve. Efforts must be made to ensure the inclusion of those at the margins don't feel excluded.

Mission:

The Church exists to evangelise. We can never be centred on ourselves. Our mission is to witness the love of God. This missionary dimension is intended to enable the Church to better witness to the Gospel, especially with those who live on the spiritual, social, political, economic, and existential peripheries of our world.



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