

Bishop Marcus Stock  
Bishop's House  
13 North Grange Road,  
Leeds LS6 2BR

3rd November 2021

**FROM ACTA LEEDS – WELCOMING THE SYNODAL PROCESS.**

Dear Bishop Marcus,

We write as members of ACTA (A Call to Action or Dialogue) in the diocese warmly to welcome and encourage the fullest support for your initiative to conduct a 'listening exercise' in the diocese and for aligning our local with the global Church synodal process.

Our mission statement reads that *'brought together by our love of Christ's Church and inspired by the Second Vatican Council, we want to contribute fully to the life of our Church so that we may be a more effective sign of the Kingdom of God. We desire to help create a climate of trust and respect for all where this dialogue may be fostered.'*

We pray and have every hope that this Synodal Process will fulfil that heartfelt ambition - encompassing now all the People of God in our diocese – to provide 'channels of free and frank communication'.... Marked by 'trust and respect for all where dialogue may be fostered'. We expect (they need little encouragement!) our members to support our priests, to engage fully with the diocesan 'Parish to Mission' process precisely since it is to be marked by those qualities of 'dialogue, listening and discernment' which ACTA has stumbled to embody since 2012. Many of us have volunteered to be facilitators and so value your words, quoting St Augustine at the Mass of commissioning in the cathedral on October 17<sup>th</sup>: *'As a Bishop I am for you, as a Christian I am with you'*,

You remind us, in the words of Pope Francis that the purpose of any synod is: *'To plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish. Inspire trust. Bind up wounds. Weave together relationships. Awaken a dawn of hope. Learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts and give strength to our hands'*. (Synod of Bishops on Young People 2018)

In that spirit, be assured of our prayers for yourself, for the success of the work of synodality you have initiated and for the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit – so that as the People of God we may continue to walk together, under the Spirit's inspiration. *'We search for a simpler, poorer Church, one not afraid of risk-taking, with greater mutuality, wider participation, empowerment of and responsibility given to laity and greater accountability from our leaders, a Church which reflects a Christian community of sisters and brothers and one which prioritises the Word of God.'* (Carol Dorgan in *Spirituality* 2013).

We welcome the recent news that the deadline for the first phase of the synodal process has been extended by four months, in order to *'provide a greater opportunity for the people of God to have an authentic experience of listening and dialogue.'* We hope that it will prove possible to align the diocesan process with this extension.

Yours in Christ,

David Jackson ( On behalf of ACTA supporters in the Diocese of Leeds)