

# PRAYING WITH MARY FOR THE SYNOD

**Dear Principals and Teachers,**

Thank you for taking the time to join us in prayer on Wednesday, 31st May.

## **Some Background on the Universal Synod (2021 - 2024)**

In March 2020, Pope Francis announced his intention to hold a Synod (normally an official gathering of Bishops) on the theme of synodality. From October 2021 to May 2022, parishes and dioceses participated in the first stage of the Synod where listening sessions and consultations were held across the world. Following these sessions, a national document was prepared, which summarised the responses received. You can find the Irish National Synthesis online at [www.synod.ie](http://www.synod.ie). 112 countries around the world sent their national document to Rome where a single document was then prepared and sent back to local churches for further discussion. Seven continental assemblies were then held between February and March this year. The European Assembly was held in Prague with 14 delegates from Ireland present. The next stage of the Synod is taking place in Rome this October. Pope Francis has introduced a new component to this universal meeting. Historically, only bishops have voted at Synods, but, for the first time, 70 non-bishop members will be attending the Synod and will have a vote. The non-bishop members will include lay men, women, religious brothers and sisters, and priests.

## **Praying with Mary for the Synod**

The Holy Father has continually encouraged everyone to pray for the Synod. However, on Wednesday, 31st May (the feast of the Visitation and the last day of the Marian month of May) he is inviting everyone to seek the interceding presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary for she is also 'Mother of the Church' (*Mater Ecclesiae*); mother of all those who are companions and disciples of her Son.

A national day of prayer has been organised on 31st May at Knock Shrine. As this is a school day, we have prepared two prayer resources so you can join us from your own classrooms. The first resource is for older classes which includes the Angelus, hymns, a reading from the Gospel of Luke about the Visitation, and a decade of the rosary. The second resource is for younger classes and includes hymns and a Hail Mary. Both resources include a moment of prayer to place the work of the Synod under the protection of Our Lady.

Regardless of where you are on the day, we invite you and the children of your school to be part of this uplifting celebration. The most important thing is, of course, encouraging our youngest Christians to pray!

kindest regards,  
Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church in Ireland





## **PRAYING WITH MARY FOR THE SYNOD SENIOR CLASSES / P5, P6 & P7**

### **Some Information to Share with Your Class**

Do you know what word is trending in relation to the Catholic Church right now? It's "synod." The word synod is a very old word which is made up of two Greek words. These two words are *syn* meaning "together" and *hodos* meaning "the way." So, synod means "on the way together" and, if you look up the Acts of the Apostles in the Bible, you will see that the early followers of Jesus were once called followers of the Way because Jesus said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (in the Gospel of John).

Did you know that the Church is over 2,000 years old? After Jesus died and rose from the dead, and before he went up to heaven to be with God the Father, he sent his Holy Spirit to help the Apostles share the Good News that He was risen from the dead. This was called Pentecost and it marks the beginning of the Church in the world.

Sometimes, the Apostles and the other disciples needed help from the Holy Spirit to guide them with big decisions they were making, so they would gather together, listen to each other, pray, listen to what the Holy Spirit was saying to them in their hearts, and then make these decisions. These meetings were called synods (also known as councils) and the first one can be found in the Bible too in the Acts of the Apostles 15:1-29. So, a synod is a big meeting or assembly of the Church where Church leaders gather together in the same way the Apostles did. They listen to each other, listen to the Word of God in the Bible, pray together, and listen to the Holy Spirit. They then make decisions to share with everyone else in the Church around the world.

### **PRAYER RESOURCES**

**FOR CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS,  
PLACING THE CHURCH'S  
ENTIRE SYNODAL PROCESS  
UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MARY,  
MOTHER OF THE CHURCH.**

**WEDNESDAY  
31 MAY 2023**



Pope Francis has held three big synods since he became Pope, one of which was about young people just like you. In October 2021, he announced another synod but this time he wanted everyone to get involved, not just Church leaders. So, all around the world, people came together to listen to each other, to pray, and to listen to the Holy Spirit. Since then we have been learning how to do synods, how to be better at really listening to other people, how to be more welcoming, how to be more prayerful, and how to listen to what the Holy Spirit is telling us. In October this year Pope Francis is gathering hundreds of people in Rome for a synod meeting and they will be making some decisions to help us all become better at being followers of Jesus. This synod meeting will last 4 weeks.

Pope Francis has asked everyone around the world to pray for this synod meeting. But, today, in a special way, he would like us to ask Holy Mary, Mother of God, to pray for everyone involved, placing it all under her protection and care, because she was there with the Apostles at the beginning of the Church. She walked with them and helped them through her prayers (Acts 1:14). Let us now join with everyone else around the world today on this special day of prayer to ask Mary, Mother of God, to pray for the synod in October and for everyone who will be working together there.

We will begin our prayers with the sign of the cross.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit, **Amen.**

## THE ANGELUS

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,  
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.  
Hail Mary...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord,  
Be it done unto me according to your Word.  
Hail Mary...

And the Word was made flesh,  
And dwelt among us.  
Hail Mary...

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,  
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray,  
Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord.  
**Amen.**



**IF YOU HOLD THE PRAYER SERVICE  
JUST BEFORE MIDDAY, YOU COULD  
BEGIN BY PRAYING THE ANGELUS!**

You could explain to the children that it was because of Mary's 'yes' to God that Jesus came into the world. Even though Mary was concerned by the message the Angel Gabriel brought to her (see Luke 1:26-38) she trusted God and declared herself the servant (handmaid) of the Lord, and we honour this great act of faith and love from Mary when we pray the 'Angelus.'

## Opening Hymn

As I kneel before you  
As I bow my head in prayer  
Take this day, make it yours  
And fill me with your love

*Ave Maria, Gratia plena  
Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu*

All I have I give you  
Every dream and wish are yours  
Mother of Christ  
Mother of mine, present them to my Lord

*Ave Maria, Gratia plena  
Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu*

As I kneel before you  
And I see your smiling face  
Every thought, every word  
Is lost in your embrace

*Ave Maria, Gratia plena  
Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu*



## The Visitation

Today is also the feast of the visitation. This is the day that commemorates Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth who was also expecting a baby. Elizabeth's baby is John the Baptist who will later baptise Jesus in the river Jordan when they are both grown men.

In today's reading from the Gospel of Luke we will hear how Elizabeth and her unborn baby both recognise that Mary's unborn baby is Jesus and the sign that they recognise this wonderful miracle is the fact that Elizabeth's baby leaps for joy in her womb.

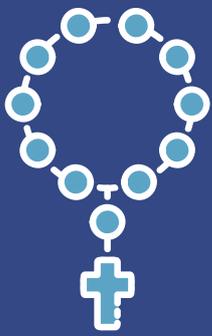
## Reading from the Gospel of Luke (1:39-45)

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!



The Rosary is an ancient prayer. It reflects on twenty moments in the life and events of Jesus. These moments are called mysteries of the rosary. When we pray any part of the Rosary, Mary accompanies us in the mystery that we are reflecting upon. A mystery of the rosary includes one Our Father, ten Hail Marys, and one Glory be to the Father. This is called a decade of the rosary. Today we are going to pray one of those mysteries, which is the Joyful Mystery of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, which is the story we have just listened to.

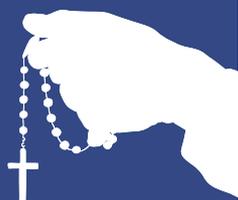
## THE SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY – THE VISITATION

As we pray this decade of the rosary, let us remember how Mary visited her cousin and how Elizabeth's words are not simply a greeting between cousins. Her words let us know that Elizabeth and her unborn baby recognise that Mary is about to become the Mother of God, Jesus Christ.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done  
on earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

Glory be to the Father  
and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning  
is now, and ever shall be  
world without end. Amen.



### Final Prayer

Holy Mary Mother of God,  
Help those working at the synod to listen  
to the Holy Spirit and guide their steps  
along the right path. Direct them towards  
your Son, Jesus Christ, and help us all  
to follow Him faithfully.

**Amen.**

### Closing Hymn

When creation was begun,  
God had chosen you to be  
Mother of his blessed Son,  
Holy Mary, full of grace.  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*

When creation was restored,  
You were there beside the Lord  
Whom you cherished and adored,  
Holy Mary, full of grace.  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*

All of us are children too,  
often doubtful what to do,  
Needing to confide in you,  
Holy Mary, full of grace.  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria*  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria*





## **PRAYING WITH MARY FOR THE SYNOD JUNIOR CLASSES / P3 & P4**

### **Some Information to Share with Your Class**

Did you know that the Church is over 2,000 years old? That after Jesus died and rose from the dead, and before he went up to heaven to be with God the Father, he sent his Holy Spirit to help the Apostles share the Good News that He was risen from the dead. This was called Pentecost. That's a very long time ago and lots of things have changed since then but one thing that hasn't changed is praying to God and asking the Holy Spirit to help us when we need to make big decisions.

Pope Francis is holding a very special meeting in Rome in October this year. It will be a meeting where the Pope, some bishops, and other men and women will come together to pray to God and ask the Holy Spirit to help them make some big decisions. This special meeting is called a Synod.

Pope Francis has asked everyone around the world to pray for the success of this very important meeting but today, in a special way, he has asked us to ask Holy Mary to pray for it too, placing it all under her protection and care, because she was the Mother of Jesus, she was there with the Apostles after Jesus died and rose from the dead, and she helped the Apostles share this Good News.

### **PRAYER RESOURCES**

**FOR CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS,  
PLACING THE CHURCH'S  
ENTIRE SYNODAL PROCESS  
UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MARY,  
MOTHER OF THE CHURCH.**

**WEDNESDAY  
31 MAY 2023**



## Sign of the Cross

We will begin our prayers today by making the sign of the cross.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,  
Amen.



## Opening Hymn

As I kneel before you  
As I bow my head in prayer  
Take this day, make it yours  
And fill me with your love  
*Ave Maria, Gratia plena  
Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu*

All I have I give you  
Every dream and wish are yours  
Mother of Christ  
Mother of mine, present them to my Lord  
*Ave Maria, Gratia plena  
Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu*

## Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou amongst women  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

Let us now ask Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
to pray for everyone who will be gathered  
together for the Synod meeting later this  
year; that they will be guided by the Holy  
Spirit in all their work.

**1st Prayer:** Holy Mary, Mother of God, help  
those working at the Synod meeting to listen  
to the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**2nd Prayer:** Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
guide those working at the Synod meeting  
along the right path.

**Amen.**

**3rd Prayer:** Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
direct those working at the Synod meeting  
towards your Son, Jesus Christ, and help all  
of us to follow Him faithfully.

**Amen.**

## Closing Hymn

When creation was begun,  
God had chosen you to be  
Mother of his blessed Son,  
Holy Mary, full of grace.  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*

When creation was restored,  
You were there beside the Lord  
Whom you cherished and adored,  
Holy Mary, full of grace.  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.  
Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*



We end our prayers by making the sign of  
the cross again.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit, **Amen.**