

On 28th August, 1963, during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, the American civil rights activist and Baptist minister, Dr Martin Luther King jr, spoke to the masses who had gathered a powerful and pivotal speech that most of us recall began with the words, “I Have a **Dream...**”.

In more recent times Pope Francis, in collaboration with his biographer Austen Ivereigh, had published an uplifting and practical book in which the Holy Father explains why we must-and how we can-make the world safer, fairer, and healthier for all people now. It's title? Known simply as “Let us **Dream**” but with the additional subtitle “The path to a Better Future” (to give the book its full title)

I feel certain that currently we all now have an opportunity to **Dream...** we're not talking here about that which may be a part of your sleep pattern, but about something which calls for reflection, hope and indeed HOPE.

You may recall how many weeks ago now (see above) we participated in the launch of the diocesan Synod process. Although the actual Synod itself won't take place until 2023, we're being asked to participate in what Pope Francis said at the worldwide launch: “The Spirit asks us to listen to the questions, concerns and hopes of every Church, people and nation. And to listen to the world, to the challenges and changes that it sets before us... Let us listen to one another.” This process, which the Holy Father hopes will be an ongoing process, is not simply a means to “... produce more documents. Rather, it is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be.” That last sentence is important: ... **it is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be! WOW!**

I am aware that some people have already immersed themselves in this Process, either independently, or with others elsewhere, but this is too significant a moment in the life of our Parish, the Diocese, and the universal Church, for as to simply miss out and pass over: Every person's “Dream” counts!

Accompanying this update is a Questionnaire. It succinctly provides a framework and an opportunity for everyone to *prayerfully* reflect upon just four questions. I use the word “prayerfully” with great emphasis. This is not about simply about reacting to things, but in a way which allows the Holy Spirit to permeate our thoughts, and responses to the questions, and for all of us to be gracious in our listening and in our speaking to others who do likewise. I do encourage everyone to participate:

To help in understanding and participating this Process

1. Interesting YouTube Clip: [Austen Ivereigh, on Pope Francis' vision for a synodal church](#)
2. There will be two sessions at St Thomas More RC church for people to choose from - come together with others to prayerfully and graciously speak and listen to peoples' response: Thursday, 17th February at 7pm OR after the Mass on Friday, 18th February – c.10am. Each session will last *about* 1 hour...
3. From later on this coming week, a ‘postal box’ will be available in the church to post your responses: all responses are anonymous! Please either post your response to The Presbytery, 1 Meeting Lane, Towcester, NN12 6JX, or ask someone to drop off your response to the church. Please respond by **Sunday, 20th** February. I'm hoping to gather a small team of like-minded people who may be willing to distil from that submitted, feedback to the Pastoral Area (deanery), they will feed back to the diocese, the diocese will feed back to the Bishop's

Conference and so on!

As a parish, we will feed back to you the responses, which will in turn and prayerfully become a part of our own local reflections and missionary preparations and endeavours to be a light and beacon of Christ's presence in the months and years ahead.

“Why bother? It won't make a difference!” I can understand where this viewpoint may come from, but you don't respond, your dream most definitely won't make a difference. I truly believe we must allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through the Church in its ongoing Life and Mission.

Let us keep this process in our prayers – pray for the Parish and for our Diocese!

Thank you!

Fr James