

UPDATE ON “WALKING TOGETHER” – PREPARING FOR OCTOBER 2023

Let's start with a question! What do these cities have in common:

Orlando, Prague, Bangkok, Beirut, Bogota, Addis Ababa and Suva ?

And the answer is....

....these are the meeting places for the 'Continental Stage' of the *“Walking Together”* preparations. These special gatherings for prayer and reflection across the world are happening this month to discern what will be said on behalf of the Churches in: North America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America & Caribbean, Africa and Madagascar and Oceania.

Just to recap on the process so far, the call went out from Pope Francis in the autumn of 2021 to all Bishops worldwide to start a period of discernment across their Dioceses. This started what is still an ongoing period of attentive listening, prayer and reflection on the future of the Church involving as many people and viewpoints as possible. This especially includes trying to hear the concerns of those at the margins of society and those disaffected by the Church. The intention has always been a call to pray, and to work towards what Pope Francis hopes will be a significant moment in the life of the Church. We should also be considering what we have learnt from this experience so far ourselves, at a Parish level, and how the spirit of *Walking Together* might affect what we do at St Ambrose Barlow as a parish community.

You will recall from previous updates that our Parish *Walking Together* submission fed into the Birmingham Archdiocesan reflections. That then contributed to the submission made by England & Wales last summer. The meetings now happening in Prague with representatives from all countries involved will generate a submission, called a “Synthesis for Europe”, by the end of March. The same is happening for all the other continents and all these Continental contributions will be at the heart of what is explored in Rome in October.

There is an excellent source of regular updates on the Vatican's special “Walking Together” portal. Here is the link:

<https://synod2023.org>

You will find information on each Continent's thoughts to date as well as a frequently updated 'news feed' as things develop further.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- It is well worth looking at the portal to see what you might find of interest!
- Please continue to pray for the success of this work in the life of Church – both at local, national and international levels
- If you feel there is something else we might do at a Parish level in the spirit of *Walking Together* then please let Father Paul know

