



ECHO

21ST OCTOBER 2021

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE
www.ourchurch.fr

MATTERS OF FAITH - MEETINGS OF SYNODS

The word "Synod" comes from the Greek word "Synodos" which means "assembly" or "meeting".

The origins of Synod are to be found in Acts 15 which tells of how "the Apostles and the Elders met together to consider this matter".

Because of the way in which most Protestant Churches are jointly governed by Clergy and laity, they nearly all hold regular Synods - at least once each year. These Synods can make decisions which are binding on their Churches.

The UK Methodist Church held its annual Synod in Birmingham in June 2021 and made some major decisions about cohabitation and same-sex marriages.

In a few weeks' time, the Church of England's governing body, the General Synod, will meet in London for the first time since its new representatives were elected and will begin to consider a wide range of topics relating to both theological and administrative matters. There are many controversial topics ahead.

It is less frequent, however, because of differences in the nature of its governance structure, for the Catholic Church to hold Synods, although Councils of Bishops are regularly summoned to advise the Pope. Their decisions are advisory and not binding on the Pope.

On 10 October, however, Pope Francis launched a 2-year Synod entitled 'For A Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission'. The purpose is for the Bishops of the Catholic Church to listen a wide range of people and to consider what Synodal Government should look like. The first phase has already begun and will continue until April 2022 in each Catholic Diocese. This will be followed by a "Continental Phase" and then a "Universal Phase" in October 2023 at the Vatican.



All issues, however, contentious, are open to examination, from the role of women in the Catholic Church to the issue of married priests as well divorce and contraception.

Please pray over the next few months for all those members of different denominations that they may be granted wisdom and understanding to enable them to discern God's will for His people and to speak with truth and integrity.



Meanwhile, the epic battle between
Good and Evil continued in
Reverend Jones' kitchen



NEXT WEEK'S WORSHIP AT

ECO

We have set out below our programme of worship for next week. For all details of our latest worship, always go to the Home Page of our website:

www.ourchurch.fr

Sunday October 24th

10:30 am Communion Service for Bible Sunday
This Sunday is the last Sunday after Trinity and is traditionally celebrated as Bible Sunday. Our Communion Service will be led by Bob and Deb Carr. Clive Billenness will be reflecting on the Bible and its power in our lives. As usual, our virtual Coffee Bar on Zoom will be open after the service.

Tuesday October 26th

19:00 - An Iona Service of Evening Prayer

This is a short service of prayer and readings from the Bible which is available as a video and also as a Podcast to download and listen to at the close of the day. We also provide the order of service in .PDF for you to download and keep so that you can follow it on your smartphone, tablet or computer if you wish.

Thursday October 28th

19:00 - A Service of Prayer for Healing

Each week, we come together to pray by name for God's healing touch for those who are in special need at this time. We are happy to include anyone known to you in our prayers (we only refer to people by their first names)

Please send any names of people whom you would like to be included to

healing@ourchurch.fr
by Wednesday evening 27th October please.

This Sunday is the Feast Day of Saint Felix of Thibiuca

Bible Sunday is a highly appropriate Feast Day for Saint Felix, who was martyred for refusing to surrender copies of the Bible to be destroyed.

In the year 303, Diocletian was Roman Emperor, and had decided to try to eradicate Christianity. He therefore issued an order that all Christian Bibles and other writings be surrendered and burnt.

The persecution began in Rome. By June of that year, the edict had reached North Africa, and Thibiuca, where Felix was bishop. Felix was arrested and interrogated. Yes, he said, he did have a copy of the Scriptures. No, he said, he would not hand them over.

Felix was a highly respected bishop, and even the authorities were loath to take immediate action against him. So they gave him three days' grace to see sense, and back down. But Felix prayed and became only more certain that this was a conflict between the commandments of God and the commandments of men.

At the end of the three days Felix was referred to the proconsul. He still refused to hand over his Scriptures. His last words in public were memorable "God, I thank you. I have passed 56 years in this world. I have preserved my chastity; I have observed the Gospels; I have preached the faith and the truth. Lord God of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, I bend my neck as a sacrifice for you, who abides for ever."

He was condemned to be beheaded at Carthage, and became one of the first martyrs to die under Diocletian.



Worship for the Young and the Young At Heart

If you are joining us for worship with younger members of your family, each Sunday we are now also broadcasting a short video reflection on the readings for the day from our colleague and friend Margaret Pritchard Houston, who is a member of the Children's Ministry Team in the Diocese of St Albans. This Sunday's video tells the story of Jesus' meeting with the blind man Bartimaeus