

## CFP Lived Catholicism Conference 2025

*The Church's ordinary way: synodality, possibilities and tensions*

**We encourage papers from across the world. The conference will run 12noon – 8pm GMT 2<sup>nd</sup> December and 7-9am, 12noon to 7pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, with timings chosen to accommodate a range of time zones.**

### Call for Papers

The first two Lived Catholicism conferences opened up some of the pressing questions for the Catholic Church today: how to manage the tension between innovation and tradition; how to take seriously prophetic and paradoxical voices from the edges of our community; and how to make visible the complexities of power and powerlessness at all levels. Many of these questions are now being raised by the synod process, but remain underexplored.

Our 2025 online conference seeks to apply a Lived Catholicism lens to the synodal project. Papers are invited across three broad themes:

#### A. Concepts and practices of synodality, including for example:

1. How do we attend to those on “the margins” and the “peripheries”? How, in practice, shall we understand the concept of peripheries or the margins?
2. What have been barriers to the synodal process? What makes it difficult? Does “the synodal way” itself contain paradoxes and aporia?
3. What might be considered unsung sites of synodality (family, religious life, popular piety, LGBTQI+ groups etc)?
4. How should we understand the unevenness of local involvement in synodality?

#### B. Perspectives from wider contexts and disciplines

5. The historical and contemporary experience of community building and communal decision-making in the global church, and novel forms of mission and ministry in response to particular circumstances or problems
6. The possibilities and difficulties of making sense out of a multitude of different voices. How can the concept of *sensus fidei* be related to the practice of listening groups?
7. Different lay and clerical experiences of co-responsibility in decision-making and the exercise of power
8. The complexities of women's engagement and calling within the Catholic Church
9. The experiences of migration and diaspora among Catholic communities

#### C. Study of Lived Catholicism

10. The relationship between “Lived Catholicism” as a field of study/ intellectual programme on the one hand, and the way the synod has been conceived or experienced on the other
11. The methodological and epistemological underpinnings of Lived Catholicism

We are inviting short papers and poster presentations from across the disciplines, including practical theology, organisational studies, ecclesiology, sociology/anthropology, cultural studies/theory of change, community organising, ecclesial ethics, history of Catholicism, spirituality.

We also invite papers from practitioners, recounting local projects connected with our themes. These need not be academic papers, but should include some reflection on the outcomes of the project and the learning for the wider Church. There will be an online workshop for those who have had practitioner proposals accepted to explore how to shape their local experience into a conference paper.

These categories should not deter other proposals. This is an emerging field with immense potential and resonance in many places and with indeterminate boundaries and protocols. If you have a conceptual angle or proposal which would expand the horizon or help shape its contours, please offer a paper.

There will be two kinds of presentation:

**15 minute papers, given live.**

We aim to have several streams of short papers, of no longer than 15 minutes. Each session will have a facilitator to encourage conversation to develop themes emerging from across the papers.

**Pop-up Podium: 5 minute poster presentations, pre-recorded on video.**

Participants are invited to present 5 minute snapshots of research or potential research which you see as concerned with study of Lived Catholicism and synodality. There will be a facilitator and questions and other responses will be invited via chat. The Pop-up-Podium will run twice: at the end of the first day, and in a breakfast slot on the second day to enable more engagement from across time zones.

Pop-up podium speakers do not have to present completed or fully conceptualised work. It is envisaged as an exploratory session in which we gather diverse perspectives from ground level research.

**If you wish to propose a 15 minute paper or a 5 minute presentation, please complete the form [here](#) by 1<sup>st</sup> October.** We will confirm the programme by mid October.