



You Will Be My Witnesses

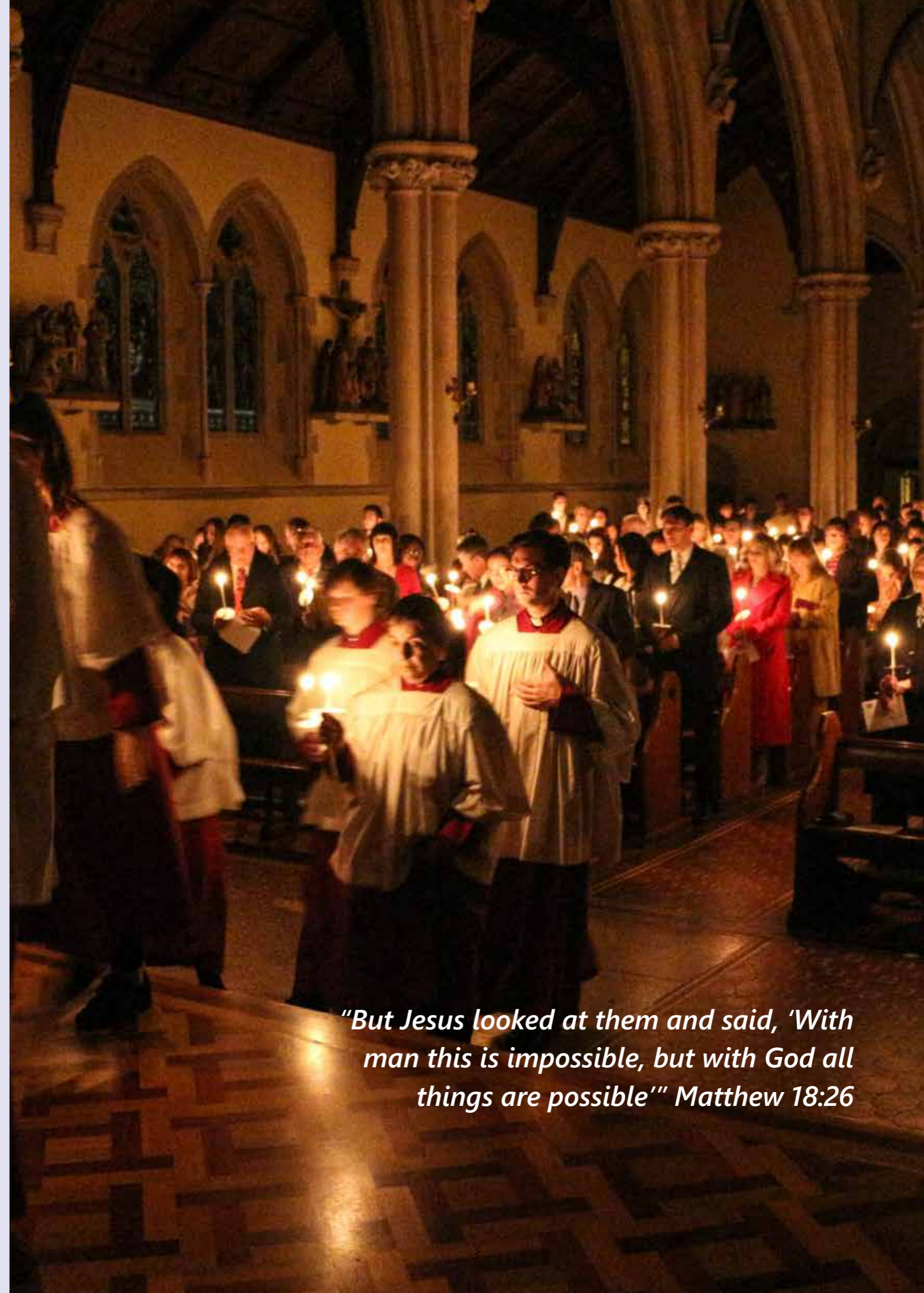
TEN-YEAR MISSION PLAN FOR THE
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH

DRAFT



Contents

A Theological Reflection	4
Diocesan Vision	12
The Journey So Far	14
Context	16
Introduction	20
Christ at the Centre	22
What We Heard	24
Overview	28
Mass and the Eucharist	30
People of God: Clergy	32
People of God: Lay Faithful	34
People of God: The Young Church	36
Missionary Communities	38
What We Heard	40
Overview	44
Church Beyond Walls	46
Responding to Laudato Si	48
Christian Voice	50
Stewardship	52
Pastoral Structures	54
Summary of Priorities	62
The Journey From Here	64
A Personal Call to You	66
Acknowledgements	68



"But Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible'" Matthew 18:26

WE HAVE A PLAN

A Theological Reflection

Rt. Rev. Philip A. Egan BA, STL, PhD
Bishop of Portsmouth

I place before you this plan. It is called *You Will Be My Witnesses*. It is a ten-year mission plan for our Diocese of Portsmouth, for our parishes and schools, clergy and people. It is a plan for the renewal of every aspect of our Christian lives and an invitation to join in a renewed missionary effort to bring the Gospel to all around us, especially people in their time of need.

I place this plan before you with great joy and confidence. The plan comes with my authority as the Shepherd of the Diocese, and it gives everyone a direction in which to travel. It is a plan that seeks to build on previous plans, including *Go Out and Bear Fruit* (2003) and the *Clergy Convocation* (2017). But it is a plan that essentially has come from you, the people and clergy of our Diocese, from listening to you and consulting you. It is the fruit of intensive prayer, reflection and discussion. Clergy have discussed the plan collectively, in their canonical gatherings and in local groupings. The laity have contributed to this

plan through 'road-shows' across the islands and the mainland. Many ideas have been added too from the extensive survey *A Thousand Voices* and the thousands who contributed to the synodal consultation. It is a plan, inspired by God's grace, that I hope and pray will unite us all in a common purpose.

You will be My Witnesses. Let me explain the background. The Church's fundamental purpose is to evangelise. As St. Paul VI once said: "[The Church] exists in order to evangelise, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace." (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*: 36) To evangelise means 'to proclaim the Good News' of Jesus Christ so that others might freely seek to become His disciples, within His Body the Church. In this way all can find salvation and be drawn into an eternal relationship with the Blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Every member of the Church is called to take part in this work: *bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church*.

Evangelisation is always a two-way activity: ad intra and ad extra. It is about ourselves being evangelised (ad intra) - a life-long effort - as well as about reaching out to others (ad extra) by our prayer, example, words and charitable deeds. There is no programme nor a silver bullet. As St. John Paul II said: "We are certainly not seduced by the naive expectation that, faced with the great challenges of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: I am with you!" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*: 29) Evangelisation is essentially about entering into a personal-passionate

relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, He the Master, we, His disciples. This is our religion: we are called by Him (vocation); we are formed by Him (formation), and we are sent by Him (apostolate). The immediate goal of this work is the individual, but the ultimate goal is to evangelise culture, so that the world we live in can be leavened and infused with the values of Christ and His Gospel. As Christians, we are called to change the world.

Over the centuries, the Church has had considerable success. Today, not to forget our one billion brothers and sisters in the other Christian communities, there are almost one and a half billion Catholics. 25% of these are in Europe and North America, 75% in Africa, India, Asia, South America and elsewhere. The peoples of Europe were gradually baptised over the centuries by many saints. In the late-seventeenth century, however, a massive shift in Western culture occurred with the Enlightenment. This ushered in new ways of thinking based on empirical science, technology and the industrial revolution, on national identity and on modern social and political philosophies. Since then, in our post-modern world, other forces have risen which are in opposition to the values of our Christian faith. It is no surprise that given the world we live in, the Church in recent times has lost much of her influence. There are now fewer and fewer Christians who practice their faith. What is more, in our own land, over the last 50 years a religious revolution has quietly occurred, by which Britain has become more secular. Whilst through immigration other religions now flourish, most notably Islam, millions of others have dropped their





“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” Matthew 28:20

Christian beliefs, church connections and religious practices. Surveys show that over half the population now say they are ‘nones,’ people of no religion. Most of us are all too familiar with this from our own families.

practice. Differing viewpoints within the Church have become hardened. The clergy abuse-crisis and the care of victims has been a cause of great scandal, undermining trust and sapping energy. Some Catholics are very traditional. Others demand change, not least in Church teachings on sexual morality, LGBTQi+ issues and the role of women. Many decry how new forms of clericalism are preventing lay involvement and responsibility.

How has the Church responded? A God-given help has been the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), called by St. John XXIII. The Council went back to basics in order to modernise every dimension of Christian life for the sake of evangelising the modern world. The Council, together with the movements of reform it released and the many liturgical, canonical and practical changes that have come in, has made the Church much more adaptable, fit for mission in this twenty-first century. Its task is still continuing, which is why the teaching of the Church and the direction set by the Second Vatican Council remain an ever-constant and ever-fresh point of reference for us today.

So external and internal factors impair the Church’s mission. Yet the words of Jesus still resound in our hearts: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (*Matthew 28:16-20*) These are words that speak powerfully. Surely, they speak powerfully to us? They tell us that it is our perennial task as members of Christ’s Body the Church to be evangelisers.

Yet if cultural shifts have impacted faith and practice, we must also acknowledge that the Church herself in her internal culture has often not responded adequately. Today some Catholics take their faith seriously, others less so: over 90% do not

In his book *Let us Dream (2020)*, Pope Francis speaks of the world and the Church as being at a kairos moment. In the New Testament, kairos means



the appointed time, the time when God acts, a time when conditions are right for the accomplishment of a crucial action, an opportune and decisive moment. I believe the Diocese of Portsmouth is at such a *kairos* moment. All the global trends are reflected at our local level and our local level has many particular challenges of its own.

One option would be to continue along the road we are on, doing what we do now, with more of the same, in the hope that somehow things will come right. Did not Jesus promise His Church would never fail? Yet Jesus never promised that the Church would not fail in this or that particular place. Think of North Africa. In the Early Church, this was the land of St. Cyprian, St. Augustine and the Church Fathers, yet by the seventh century, Christianity in those parts had been completely wiped out. It is possible that in the decades ahead the Church, continuing its slow decline, could vanish from Britain.

Yet, there is another option. Let us borrow and invert a phrase from St. Ignatius Loyola: "to work as if everything depended on God, and to pray as if everything depends on us" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2834*). In other words, we could recognise we are in a new apostolic age. We could try to turn the ship. We could seek to deepen faith in ourselves and to propose the faith more effectively and attractively to others. We could respond to St. John Paul II's call for a new evangelisation, an evangelisation "new in its ardour, new in its methods and new in its expression." Indeed, to communicate the Gospel more effectively in this new post-modern culture and to hand on Christ's message not least to the young, then we could try new methods, new expressions and new means. To do this, of course, we need to pray for enormous creativity. We need the creativity that comes from being faithful to Christ and led by the Holy Spirit. We need the creativity that comes from remaining absolutely faithful to our Catholic

Tradition, yet absolutely open to finding new ways of engaging with the people of today. The issue is not about a new religion, new doctrines or a different faith. No, the issue is about the Holy Spirit and creatively responding to God's grace in our own life and the challenges we face.

As Catholics, it is always tempting to focus on changing structures and institutions, changing parishes and schools, changing practices and even doctrines. We are experts at talking Church, property, money, structures. True, structural change, in particular the shift to a more 'synodal' way of working, especially in our parishes and communities, is crucial. We do need to change the way we collaborate, clergy and laity, and we do need to share responsibility more effectively for the mission of the Church. We need to heal and refresh the internal culture of our Diocese. So yes, to new ways of working. But what is really needed goes much deeper than this. This is not just about the Church of the Lord; it is about the Lord of the Church. This is really about our relationship with Jesus Christ. This is really about ourselves changing, changing ourselves, a deep, radical spiritual renewal as individuals, about how we think and live, about how we love others, how we collaborate with one together, and how to take responsibility. This is about the call to holiness and authenticity. We must put Christ at the centre of our lives, following his commandment: "Be holy, for I am holy." (*1 Peter 1:16*) This is how You will be my witnesses.

Our diocesan vision of *Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church* comes from the Lord's words: 'Go .. and make disciples of all nations.' It's about reaching in and reaching out – 'reaching in' to the many Catholics to fan into a flame the flickering wicks, and

'reaching out' to the millions around us, religiously adrift and unchurched. It's about seeking out those who have fallen away. It's about engaging everyone in church in the Lord's saving mission and making room for them to contribute their own charisms, gifts and talents. It's about becoming outward-facing servants and servant-parishes, welcoming the stranger and caring for the poor, the lonely and those on the margins. It's about respecting and nurturing God's creation and living more simply. It's about connecting with our young people, currently leaving the Church in droves, and finding ways to help them encounter the Person of Christ. It's about not spending all our time, money and energy on ecclesiastical buildings, plant and property, when, frankly, there are hardly many people within them, but on directing our resources more intentionally towards the mission.

My prayer, then, is for a deep spiritual renewal. I pray that every member of the Diocese will be passionately committed to the new evangelisation, to mission and service. I pray for transformational change, so that in ten years' time, we can hand on a wonderful legacy to the young currently in our schools, to the priests currently in formation, to our families growing up and to our vibrant parish communities. Catholicism is always a broad tent. Its walls are porous. It will always comprise a big range of people at all sorts of differing levels of conversion, faith and commitment. It will comprise people of different types, different tastes, different styles. Catholicism is never a "You are either in - or you are out" type of religion. It is a big ship, with a large range of seats and services. But if we collaborate with God's grace over these next years, we could imagine a deep renewal taking place, with a deeper engagement and a missionary awareness. I dream of a



Diocese in better shape, internally healed and renewed, with new faces, young families, more vocations and a harvest from ecclesial movements.

You will be my witnesses. We must not underestimate the difficulties and challenges. Evangelisation can seem an impossible ambition, like flogging a dead horse. Yet the issue of religion will never go away. Every human being wants to be happy, to be loved, to belong, to live forever. Humans are built for this, and none of this is possible without a relationship with God. Christianity responds to humanity's deepest longings. It gives friendship with Christ, immortality, a sense of belonging within His Body the Church. It gives the grace, energy and power to do the impossible, to bear sickness, suffering, sadness, death. It gives life meaning and purpose; it grounds ethics; it builds community; it encourages self-sacrifice and service of the poor. It offers the glue that fosters social cohesion. As Catholics, yes, we face many challenges. Yet this land is a fertile mission-field. Dig through the rocky ground and water wells up, even if dirty. There may be campaign-groups working against us, but it is rare to encounter direct hostility. It can be hard going, but there is no need for despondency. Christ is with us, and at this moment, the Holy Spirit is at work in hearts wooing them towards Him. It is

not the 'product' we offer that is defective but the ability of people within a busy, consumer culture, full of urgent demands, to hear God's inner voice and call.

We cannot be close to Christ without a deep and abiding reverence and love for Him in the Sacrifice of the Mass. The Holy Eucharist is "the source and summit" of the Church's life and mission, a Mystery to be believed, a Mystery to be celebrated and a Mystery to be lived. The transformative power of the Eucharist builds up the image of Christ implanted within us at Baptism, binding us together as the Body of Christ. Indeed, in receiving Christ in the Eucharist, we become what we eat. As St. Augustine once put it: "If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the Table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond 'Amen' ('yes, it is true!') and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, 'the Body of Christ' and respond 'Amen.' Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your 'Amen' may be true." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1396*) Spiritual renewal requires us to draw deeply from this inexhaustible wellspring of salvation. Each one of us is called personally to renew our relationship with Christ in the Eucharist, so that we can receive from Him the strength





“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and then you will be my witnesses [...] to the ends of the earth” Acts 1:8

to persevere in His mission.

Moreover, the Blessed Mother is our most powerful helper, the advocate before the throne of God, our protector and the most efficacious mediator of divine grace. Our Diocese of Portsmouth is dedicated to Mary Immaculate and so the Blessed Virgin Mary is in a special way our Mother, Mother of our clergy and our people, Mother of our schools and parishes. She, along with the wise Bishop St. Edmund of Abingdon, our Secondary Patron, and the inspiring patron of our youth, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, are even now earnestly praying for us. If we pray, if we remain faithful, if we lead by holy example, if we act wisely, enacting a thought-through strategy that seeks to bring people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church, then surely we can dare to hope that God will preserve us and, what is more, bless us with increase over the times ahead.

right to dream. It is right to hope. It is right to trust in God. In our Diocese there are already many signs of springtime, with a new energy, a new enthusiasm, a new willingness to change and collaborate, and a new desire to do things differently. So let us trust in God’s providence and resolve to do our best. Then indeed the words of the Lord will be fulfilled, words that inspire us and words that sum up this plan: You will be my witnesses.

In Corde Iesu,

+ Philip

Rt. Rev. Philip A. Egan BA, STL, PhD
Bishop of Portsmouth



So I commend this plan to each of you. I ask each and every one of you to study this plan and generously to respond to it. I ask you to respond to the challenge laid down by Christ to proclaim the Gospel. This is the kairos moment: let us be open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is

Diocesan Vision

The last mission plan for our Diocese, *Go Out and Bear Fruit*, was published in 2005 by Bishop Crispian Hollis, then Bishop of Portsmouth, after a long period of discernment. It gave a particular emphasis to the centrality of the Eucharist at the heart of our lives as Catholics and saw the development of pastoral areas.

This Ten-Year Mission Plan seeks new ways to build on what has gone before and fulfil our diocesan vision of ***bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church.***



1. TO GO OUT ON MISSION TO EVERYONE

That we enable many more to hear the Gospel and to come to know, serve and love Jesus Christ in the saving communion of His Catholic Church, so that, persevering in faith, hope and charity, they may one day reach the happiness of Heaven.

*"Go, make disciples of all nations"
Matthew 28: 19*

2. TO BE TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

That shifting from maintenance to mission, we trust more completely in God through prayer, imploring the Holy Spirit to inspire our clergy and our laity with constant joy and creativity to develop and realise new, innovative ministries and ways of Christian living.

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" Acts 1:8



3. TO CONVERT CATHOLICS

That we assist all Catholics, especially those who are not yet practicing, to reach a deeper personal relationship with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, to be more intentional disciples and, discerning their charisms, to become more actively engaged in the Church's mission.

*"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, lives in me, and I live in him"
John 6:55-56*

4. TO BECOME OUTWARD LOOKING SERVANTS

That all our parish and our school communities become ever more outward-facing service centres, brighter beacons of mission, dialogue and service to everyone around, especially to the poor, the homeless, those in need.

"In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me" Matthew 25:40



The Journey

So far...



The last two years of the covid-pandemic have been challenging. But, this has also been a time of opportunity and hope for our Diocese as we have trod the path of discernment to form our mission plan for the next ten years.

The development of a long-term plan for any organisation is a major undertaking. We have spent the last two years listening and talking with people across the Diocese; clergy, religious, and lay. We have been challenged and encouraged by what we have heard, it has helped us to discern "what the Spirit is saying to the church" (*Revelations 3:22*).

A *Thousand Voices*, the diocesan survey undertaken in December 2020, was graced with the participation of 1,775 people sharing over 40,000 comments and moments of personal insight.

Pastoral Area Reviews, in which clergy met together within their pastoral area to discuss the challenges and opportunities of their local context, provided a wealth of wisdom and insight from across the Diocese.

Over 90 priests and deacons attended the Clergy Gathering in November 2021. Two days were spent reflecting on the feedback from the *Pastoral Area Reviews*, discussing the emerging priorities and sharing thoughts, and praying.

Over the last few months, the emerging priorities for our mission plan have been reflected upon by a range of groups across the Diocese, including: our retired priests, our seminarians, our evangelisation, education and vocation vicariate committees, our board of trustees, our headteachers, our diocesan pastoral council, and our faithful generally at gatherings on the Isle of Wight, in Guernsey, Jersey and Basingstoke.

The Synod gave us a further opportunity to hear from over 5,000 people across the Diocese. All of the responses throughout this two-year discernment process have been reviewed, collated and reflected on. This has allowed us to be struck by what we have seen and heard, so that in turn we can choose what to do and how to act to heal, repair and grow over the next ten years.

We heard many and varied responses. There are many things of which we are justly proud and which we would like to see flourish further. We are also faced with challenges, and some of these are felt very deeply; there is a strong desire for change.

Some of what we have heard has called for wider reform of the Church, and some has called for a return to earlier traditions. Some of these issues, such as the ordination of women and married priests or the universal return to Latin Mass, are beyond the scope of our Diocese.

The time that people have taken to participate in this process is testimony to the desire to see the Church fulfil her mission in this age and we are grateful for the courtesy and generosity that has been shown.

The priorities that have emerged and which form our Ten-Year Mission Plan are a direct result of this process of discernment. We have now reached the final stage in this process of defining together what we need to do. We are presenting this document to you and asking each of you to meet in your local faith communities to discuss and discern what opportunities it could bring to your Diocese, your local community, and your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

In January 2023, Bishop Philip will commission the final document and designate a Year of Prayer to the Holy Spirit for our Diocese. This will mark the start of the implementation of our Ten-Year Mission Plan.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches"
Revelations 3:22

Context

This year we mark the 60th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II, called by Pope St John XXIII to address the drastic changes in western society.

Since the close of the Council, our society has seen a period of unprecedented change. An accelerating radical shift in cultural values has excluded God and community from our lives; people have become more individualistic and less connected with God and their neighbour.

These changes have had a far-reaching effect on the Church, which has sparked a great deal of debate and concern for our future.

There are many areas of vitality across our Diocese, along with the dedication of many priests, religious, and lay faithful to the life and mission of the Church, and we are rightly proud of these.

- The history of our Diocese is filled with women and men who have worked tirelessly and sacrificed much, even to martyrdom, to carry out the mission of Jesus and to hand on the faith.
- Today, many are working, in many varied ways, to keep our



faith alive across the Diocese. We are blessed with thousands of volunteers serving the Church in many diverse ways, for example in ministries, on parish councils, in choirs, catechesis and charitable community work.

- Our teachers, governors, school leaders and chaplains serve more than 31,000 children and their families through our schools.
- Our ministries in hospitals, prisons and universities and the many outreach programmes that are supported across the Diocese bring the Gospel alive through accompaniment, support and spiritual consolation.
- Our communities are increasingly multicultural, and the gift of that

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day” 2 Corinthians 4:16

diversity enriches us as it also challenges us to respond .

- We are currently supporting 10 men in seminaries discerning their vocation to the sacred priesthood and we pray that many more will come forward in future years.
- Our priests and religious work hard to bring together and lead communities of faith and to enable as many as possible celebrate the Eucharist as the source and summit of our lives.

However, the impact of an increasingly secular culture is felt deeply. We have heard that the loss of faith in our society, our struggles to retain the generations born after 1960, and our ever-shrinking Catholic communities are real areas

of concern.

The Church has been troubled by scandals and division and Covid and its shock waves have accelerated a change in society and the Church in a way that we never planned for. The challenges we are facing, reflect those experienced across the Western world.

In our Diocese in 1960, some 70,000 people were attending Mass and giving life and vibrancy to their communities. By 2019, a year before the covid-pandemic, this had halved to 32,000, and the most recent Mass count in 2021, albeit still in a time of restriction, was recorded at 17,000.

Over the last decade preceding the covid-pandemic, the number of marriages celebrated in our Diocese

“For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?”

Luke 14:28

decreased by 32%, baptisms fell by 35%, and confirmations fell by 40%. Our younger generations are not continuing to engage with the Church much beyond their First Holy Communion. As our congregations age they are missing the vitality support and activity of younger generations.

More priests are retiring than are being ordained to replace them and we are increasingly reliant on the generosity of overseas priests and religious to minister to our 87 parishes. Many priests support multi-church parishes and several support more than one parish. In addition to parish roles, some priests hold diocesan roles; six diocesan priests hold more than 5 roles each.

Our priests are pulled in many directions, stretching themselves and their schedules to live out their vocations, celebrate Masses, hear confessions, prepare the faithful for the sacraments, and undertake the many responsibilities of parish and diocesan life. Many do not take a day off and some delay their retirement. We are thankful for their generous effort and sacrifice, but this type of ministry is unsustainable and unhealthy in the long run. An over-stretched priest can quickly experience burnout, sickness and a strained relationship with God and His people.





Today, our Diocese is served by 70 diocesan priests, as well as those from religious communities, overseas and other dioceses.

As we look forward and estimate the number of priests we might have, there are several different factors we might consider; including for example the number of men coming forward for seminary formation and whether all our current priests will remain in good health until retirement. If we look forward to 2032, there could be as few as 43 diocesan priests, and by 2042 the number could reduce to only 26 diocesan priests.

The number of other priests is uncertain at present. We hope to still benefit from the ministry of non-diocesan priests; but the stability of these arrangements cannot be reliably estimated.

We earnestly pray for future vocations; however, it looks highly likely that in the coming years we will have ever fewer priests to support our parishes. If we try to sustain our current ways of working, the shortage of priests will have a significant effect on the health of our parishes, our priests, and our spiritual lives. We are at a critical juncture and there is no quick or easy solution.

Our Diocese is blessed with the service of 39 permanent deacons. However, two-thirds of our parishes do not have a deacon serving them while others have several.

Meeting the needs of parish life and bearing the responsibilities of diocesan leadership today is making ever greater demands on fewer and fewer priests and deacons and volunteers.

Our financial position is a symptom of wider challenges; few of our parishes are in a sustainable financial position. Many are in debt, many operate at a loss, and there is a complex web of virtual borrowing between parishes across the Diocese to maintain. Financial analysis and modelling highlight the financial risks in the majority of parishes:

- Between 2011 – 2021, income across all parishes fell by nearly £2million (16%).
- In 2021, 25 parishes operated at a financial loss and a further 11 generated a surplus of less than £5,000. At a time of rising costs and potentially falling income.
- If income falls by 3% and costs rise by 3%, we forecast that 50 parishes would be operating at a loss.

- If income does not fall but costs rise by 10% then 58 parishes are forecasted to operate at a loss.
- As at August 2021, 25 parishes were overdrawn on their current accounts (despite 13 of them operating at a surplus); 10 of these parishes also had loans from the Diocese. A further 11 parishes also have loans from the Diocese and 1 has a formal bank loan.

Our estate of 143 churches and related property costs around £3m a year simply to fund urgent maintenance and utilities. Initial estimates suggest that half of our properties will need major investment in the next 5 years to address fundamental structural issues identified in their latest five-yearly survey, and 10% require urgent work to keep wind and weathertight. If we keep going as we are, we will spend over £30million-£40million in estate support and utilities over the next decade.

That may be as much as £20 per week per Mass attender just to maintain our buildings, let alone all our other parish expenses, running costs, and the support and care for clergy. At the moment the average contribution per Mass-attender is £2.35 per week. We have a significant estate portfolio, but dwindling cash resources to maintain it and a key question for us to ask ourselves is whether we think maintaining property should be the primary focus of the Church's limited resources.

Facts & Figures

53% Fall in Mass attendance between 1960 and 2019, and a further 44% fall between 2019 and 2021.

35% Fall in the number of baptisms celebrated in our Diocese between 2010 and 2019.

40% Fall in the number of people being confirmed in our Diocese between 2010 and 2019.

32% Fall in the number of marriages celebrated in our Diocese between 2010 and 2019.

63% Fall in the number of diocesan priests between 2022 and 2042 [estimate].

29% Parishes did not make ends meet in 2021; the cost of running the parish exceeded income.

41% Parishes were in overdraft or had other debts on the 31 August 2021 [the end of the financial year].

44% Estate requires major investment to fulfill the recommendations of the latest quinquennial inspections.

One possible response to these challenges would be to attempt to muddle through the next few years, relying on short term expedients to preserve the current models of parish life whilst serving ever-fewer people. However, this is not a sustainable strategy. Not least because materially we cannot sustain the decline, but most importantly because this will not allow us to invest in realising our mission of bringing others to Christ.

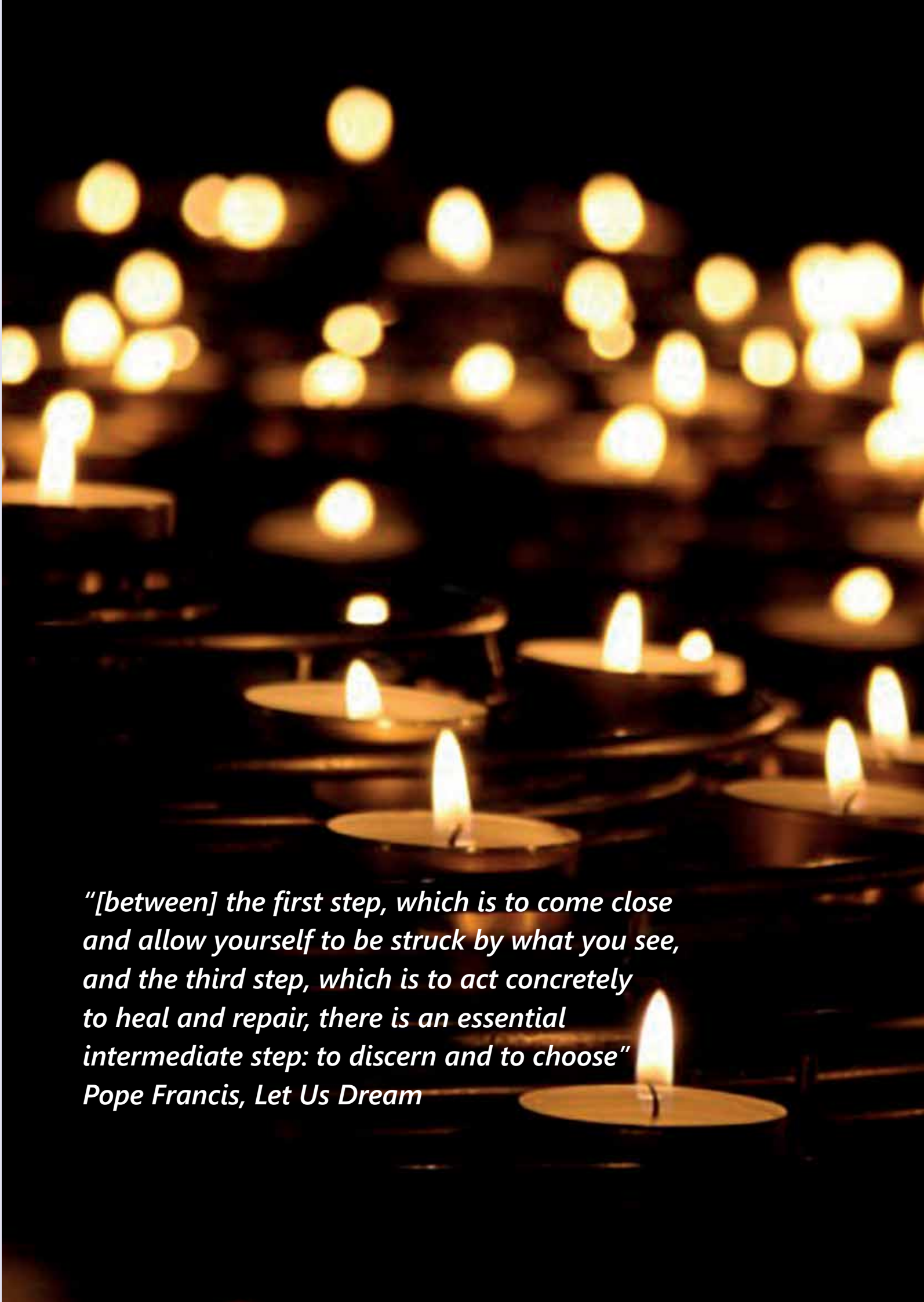
Therefore, faced with these challenges and looking ahead to the next ten years, we must turn again in confidence to our Saviour, who promises to remain with us always, *"to the end of the age."* *Matthew 28:20.*

We must give thanks for the hard work of our Catholic faithful and commit ourselves to preserve what is good and what is still working. We must also, however, address the challenges we face courageously. We must seek to revitalise our efforts to evangelise the world, to share the faith through catechesis and works of mercy, and to rebuild God's Church with the aid of the Holy Spirit. To do so, we will need to make some radical changes to the way we organise our parish life, re-examining our structures and works in the light of our reality today.

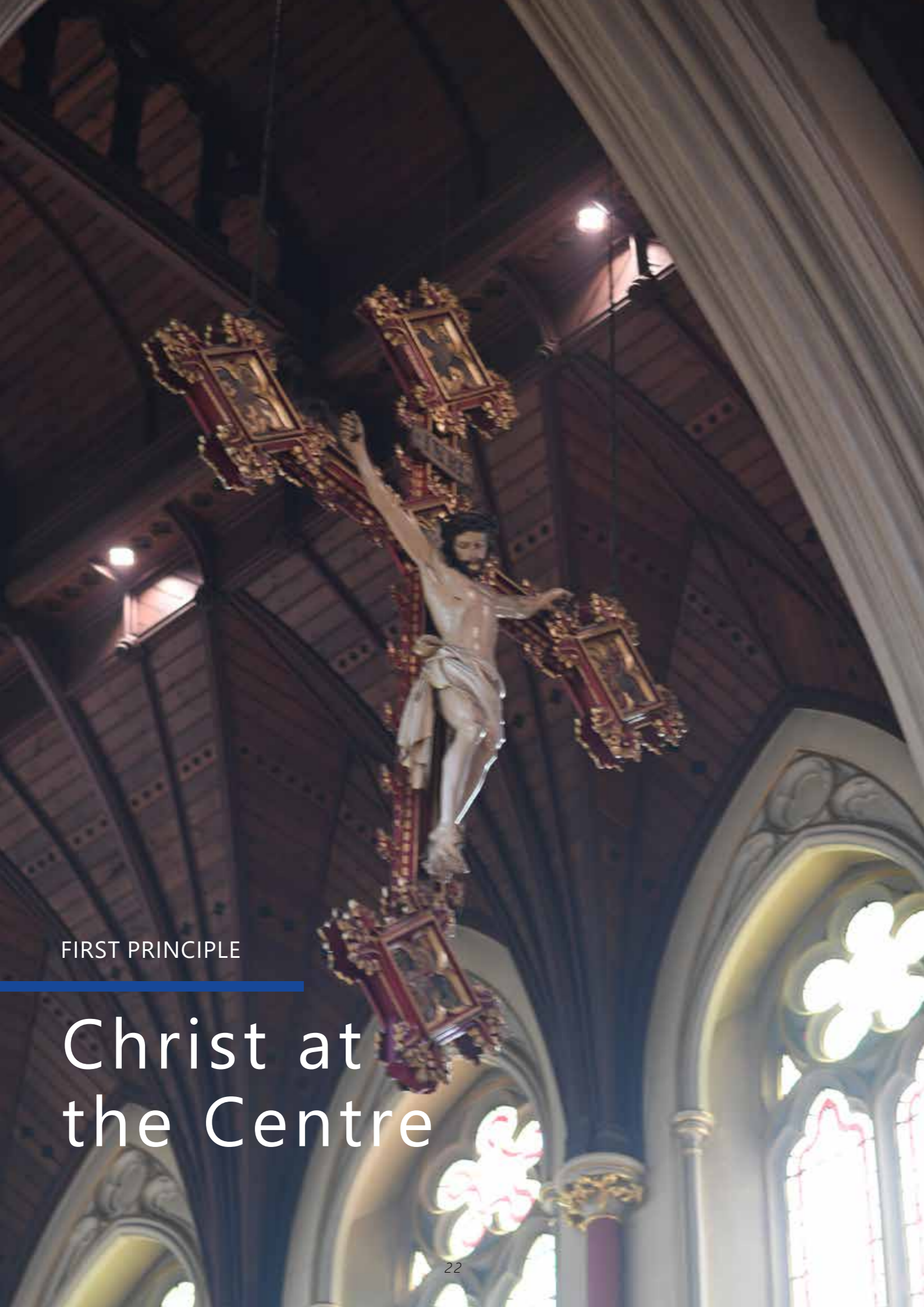
This Ten-Year Mission Plan sets out how we intend to go about rebuilding the Church over the next ten years. It is firmly rooted in what we have heard during our many consultations about our values and hopes for the future and in what we have seen looking at the data behind our current reality.

We envisage that this plan will set the direction of travel and that each local area and central function will then discern and choose how best to put it into action in their context by developing local plans. These plans will be received by Bishop Philip in the summer of 2023.

Change can be daunting, but our challenges can also present great moments of opportunity. We are at such a moment, and the success of our Ten-Year Mission Plan and the vibrant future of our Diocese rely on the courageous participation of each one of us.



"[between] the first step, which is to come close and allow yourself to be struck by what you see, and the third step, which is to act concretely to heal and repair, there is an essential intermediate step: to discern and to choose"
Pope Francis, Let Us Dream



FIRST PRINCIPLE

Christ at the Centre

“Thomas said to him ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” John 14:5-6

WHAT WE HEARD

Christ at the Centre

Importance of the Sacraments and Centrality of the Eucharist

There are many rich traditions in our Diocese and many personal preferences regarding liturgical style or approach, but the centrality of Mass and the Eucharist are at the heart of what we treasure.

Prayer and Devotions

Prayer is essential in our relationship with Jesus Christ and in underpinning transformational change. It is central in the lives of the faithful and many would like to see more intentional opportunities for prayer outside of the Mass.

Involvement of the Lay Faithful

Lay people want to be accepted as co-workers with clergy in this journey of renewal.

Concern for the Life of Faith of the Young

There is much anxiety around the future of Church, the absence of young people from our churches and the implications for the future of our parishes. Obstacles to the successful involvement of younger generations cited were the many competing choices that are seen as more attractive options, a Church that is not seen as inclusive and whose



good standing has been tarnished by scandal, as well as the gaps in formation of older adults who lacked confidence in sharing their faith.

Ongoing Formation, Teaching, and Catechesis

There is a thirst for faith formation, for a deepening conversion, and a desire to become missionary disciples. Many did not feel comfortable inviting others to come to Mass and lacked the confidence to talk to others about our faith.

The Central Role of the Priest in the Life of the Community

The relationship between the laity and priests is seen as central to parish life and to individuals' personal journey in faith. Love and gratitude

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” Acts 2:42

“All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus. and his brothers” Acts 1:14

were expressed for the service of our priests and the vocations to the priesthood which have been fostered in our Diocese were a source of joy.

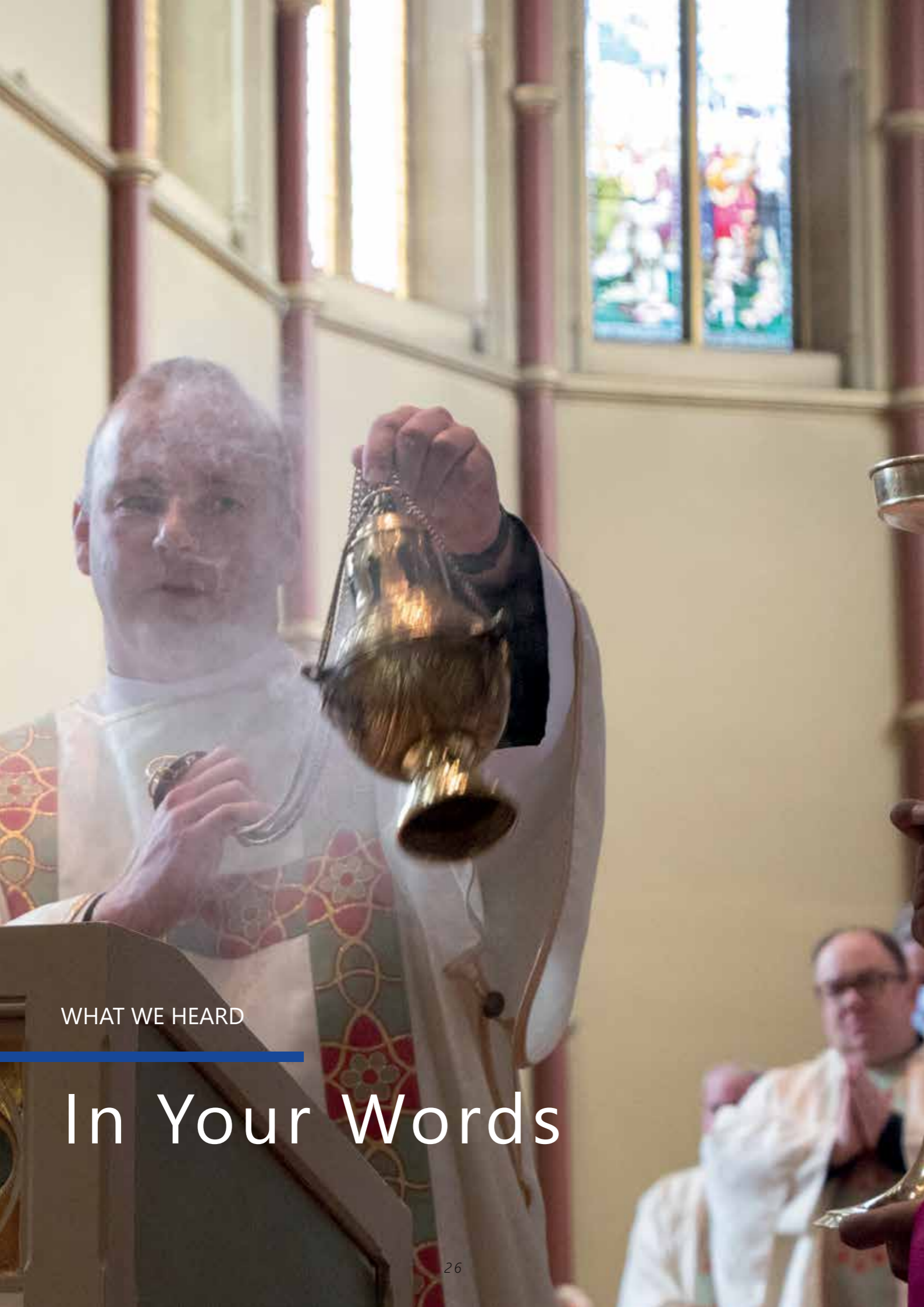
However, there were also concerns that priests were overstretched or poorly supported in their ministry. Negative encounters with priests had a long-term impact on the life and faith of individuals and the parish.

Liturgy

Enabling full participation in the liturgy of the Church was a priority in almost every response. Engaging families and young people in the liturgy were emphasized as needs for our parishes.

It was suggested that the quality of parish liturgies could be improved through better preparation, the provision of better training and formation for those with an active role in the Mass, and through the employment of professional singers or musicians.





WHAT WE HEARD

In Your Words

"The phrase 'we need to up our game' comes to mind so every weekend counts, with beautiful liturgy and music and a focus on community too. Jesus is worth more than we a collectively offering"

"I have young children and would welcome opportunities to embrace our faith in a fun and engaging way"

"Development of laity's potential. It is waiting to be released."

"Not to be afraid discussing taboo topics (such as family, euthanasia, etc.) in a Christian, loving fashion that is open to conversation."

"I no longer attend church due to a disappointing and despondent priest"

"I think the homily is so important as for many busy families, it is the only chance for them to stop for ten minutes and receive some sort of formation"

"[Proud of] Ordinariate use and traditional Latin Mass"

"[Parish] is led by an inspiring Spirit-filled Priest ... who welcomes everyone. Consequently, the whole atmosphere of our growing parish is friendly and welcoming. It has massively grown my faith"

"admiration for the stabilising factor of the diaconal ministry in [Pastoral Area] which is very visible and eases the load on the priests"

"When you see a church mostly empty of young people, children & families something is wrong"

"The world has moved drastically away from the faith, they want worldly things. We are generally irrelevant to them."

"Lack of engagement from priests with the people leads to lack of engagement from the people with the Church."

"Prayer is key"

"There is much that is good about my parish, but I find the liturgy more sacred in style and the sermons more inspiring in a neighbouring parish"

"The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the centre of my life"

"The most common concern expressed by Catholics is that we have no young people in our churches."

"I have recently resigned my duties, as I do not feel able to go back to the pre-Vatican 2 ethos, practices, and rituals favoured by our PP"

"The approach now is inclusive and must remain so"

"the laity need to be brought in to support the range of church activities with special emphasis on including women and ethnic minorities. We may need to adapt and change ways of doing things to enable this to happen."

"the parish priest...is brilliant and such a hard worker. A true disciple of Christ who practices what he preaches"

"Embrace the change of culture"

"There are many entrenched views and within one parish there may be three communities each at a different Mass."

"Failure to ask is a barrier to youth involvement"

"all [...] falls on our excellent but grossly overloaded parish priest"

"As a woman who has held positions of responsibility throughout my life, I have never felt included in the life of the church"

"Need to be playing to spiritual strengths of different ethnic communities in the parish"

"We must keep in touch with the current culture in which we live. Many people of a certain age think that 'what worked in the past will be still relevant today' and this is not the case."

"There is nothing for young children and it is mainly for older people in my view"

"I realise the importance of the Mass and the blessed sacrament in my life"

Christ at the Centre

Prayer and the breaking of bread were of central importance in the lives of the Apostles and the early Church. Similarly, prayer and the Eucharist remain central in our Christian lives in this, new, apostolic age.

The first principle of our Ten-Year Mission Plan is a renewal centred on the person of Jesus Christ. Our last plan, *Go Out and Bear Fruit*, also emphasised this, particularly the centrality of the Mass and the Eucharist. This aspect of our lives as Catholics underpins every other priority.

Our hopes for 2032 are that, throughout our Diocese, each of us will experience:

- True dependence on the Holy Spirit for our hope in the future and inspiration in all our work will require us to prioritise above all else.
- A radical recommitment to Our Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, without which none of our works and efforts will bear lasting fruit.
- A worthy participation and celebration of the Holy Mass reaffirming the source and summit of our lives.
- A renewal of our sacramental life, including reconciliation with the Lord, through inspiring catechesis.
- A nourishing devotional life so that we truly become a Church at prayer.

Our ambitions are that our lay faithful will be formed to foster a deep lasting personal relationship with Jesus Christ throughout their pilgrim journey. Inspired by the Mass and Sacraments of the Church, our faithful will grow in faith and be confident in evangelising others. Our priests and deacons will be supported in their vocation and enabled to minister effectively in this new age.

We hope to see full involvement in the life of the Church at all stages of life and faith, so that all can play an effective part of the missionary pulse of the Church.



"I can do all things through him who strengthens me" Philippians 4:13

Christ at the Centre

MASS AND THE EUCHARIST

“the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s supper.” Sacrosanctum Concilium:10

Christ is the foundation on which we build our Ten-Year Mission Plan. Prayer and the breaking of bread have always been central to the life of the Church and must remain so. Through our consultations over the last two years, we have heard that prayer and attending Mass are key aspects of our lives of faith. Focusing resources on prayer and the celebration of Mass is a key part of our Ten-Year Mission Plan.

By committing to placing the Lord at the centre, we will experience a reaffirmation of the Eucharist as the source and summit of our lives, we will see the renewal of sacramental life and our devotional life will be deepened. This will enable us to keep Christ at the Centre of all we do, allow us to be in communion with Him and each other, and underpin the success of all other aspects of the plan.

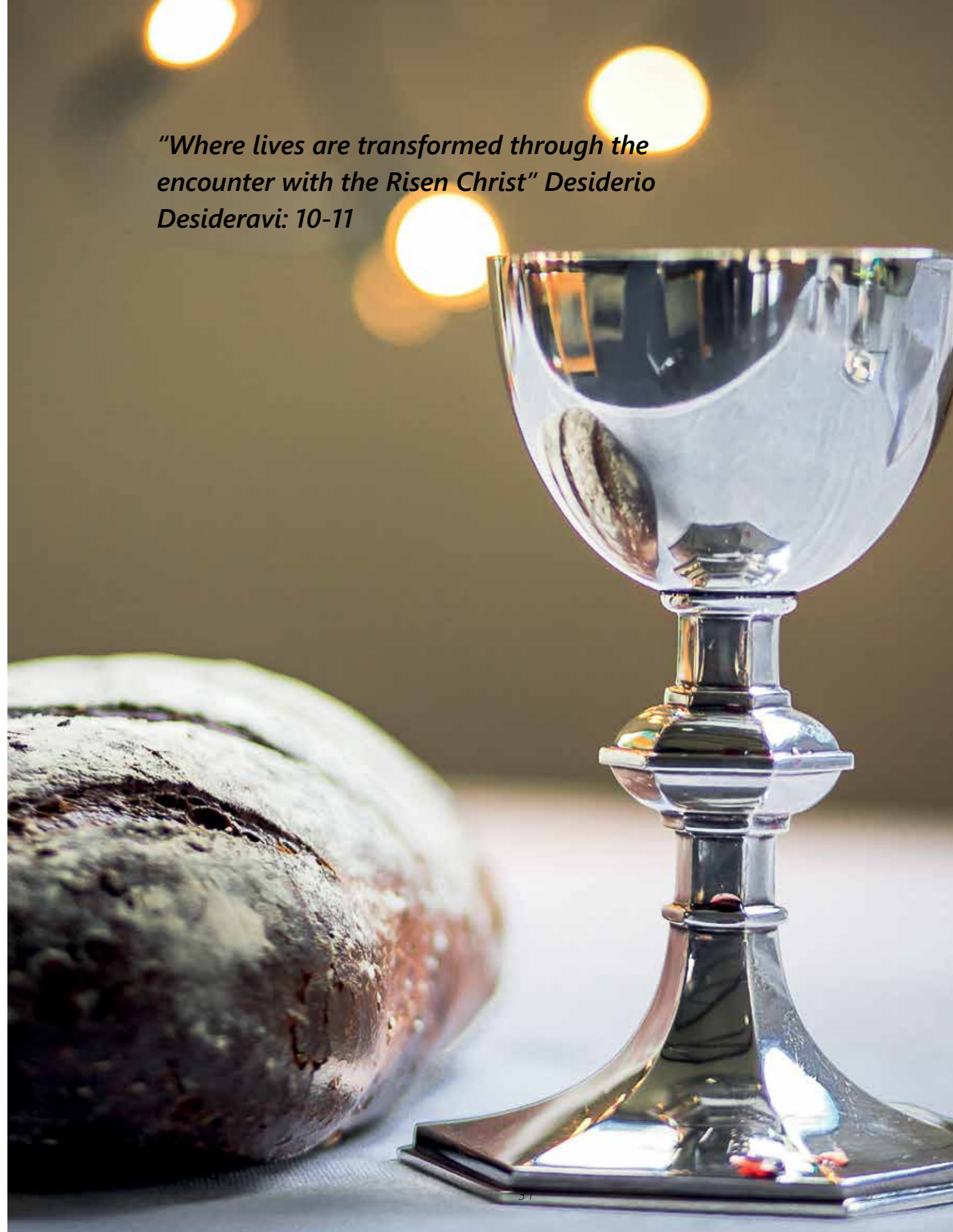
We must have true dependence on the Holy Spirit for our hope in the future and inspiration in all our work. This will require us to prioritise above all else a radical recommitment to Jesus Christ in prayer, without which none of our works and efforts will bear lasting fruit.

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

We will keep Christ at the Centre of all we do through:

- A year of prayer to the Holy Spirit for renewal to underpin the next phase in the development of our diocesan life.
- All who participate in Sunday Mass will be made to feel welcome for “everyone is invited to the supper of the wedding of the Lamb”. (*Desiderio Desideravi:5*). Our Masses and liturgies can be difficult to comprehend to anyone without any prior experience of the Catholic faith. Nevertheless, visitors, guests and those exploring should be made welcome and enabled to participate in a way that is appropriate to them.
- Resources developed and made available to accompany family and personal prayer.
- A Director of Liturgy to lead the development of resources to enhance liturgical life, including the ministry of music, preaching, and the formation of those who undertake liturgical ministries.
- Local plans to consider the overall provision of Mass and prayer opportunities to ensure a variety of preferences are accommodated.
- The provision of local opportunities to foster devotions, communal and personal prayer and locally coordinated pilgrimages to centres of popular devotion.

“Where lives are transformed through the encounter with the Risen Christ” Desiderio Desideravi: 10-11





“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” 1 Peter 2:9

Christ at the Centre

PEOPLE OF GOD: CLERGY

“The importance of continuing and deepening their priestly formation, even after ordination, needs to be impressed upon future priests while they are still in the seminary, so that as their institutional studies and community life come to a conclusion, their formation is not interrupted. Moreover, older priests need to cultivate the youthfulness of spirit that manifests itself in a lifelong interest in constant growth towards “the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13)” Apostolorum Succesores: 8.3

The ordained priesthood exists to enable the gifts of the baptised to flourish. All we have heard re-emphasises that priests and deacons are essential to the life and ministry of the Church, exercising the office of sanctifier, teacher, and leader in our communities as an alter Christus.

Our current culture demands courage and leadership from our clergy in a way that has not been asked of them in recent generations. The implementation of this plan will present the usual challenges that come with major change in addition to the many existing duties that cannot be put on hold.

Our hope is that by developing opportunities for support, personal development and appraisal our clergy will be supported to meet the challenges of our time.

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

We will enable our clergy to live out their vocation and minister effectively in this new apostolic age by:

- Developing an externally facilitated framework for support, ongoing development, formation and accompanied reflection to equip our clergy for the challenge of leading and serving contemporary missionary communities.
- Reviewing and adapting our clergy support function to provide a personalised approach to support, according to each stage of life and ministry.
- Agreeing and implementing tailored personal development plans for ongoing formation which reflect the requirements of leadership in contemporary ministry.
- Putting in place a simple form of appraisal (accompanied reflection) which is constructive and affirming and which fosters effective accountability.
- Embedding a structured onboarding and induction process for clergy from other dioceses, overseas, and religious orders.
- Developing the role of the permanent diaconate in partnership with priests so that their vocation in service of our communities can be fully realised.
- Fostering a culture of friendship and brotherhood through shared working, learning and social opportunities.

Christ at the Centre

PEOPLE OF GOD: LAY FAITHFUL

Young, Old, and Everyone in Between

"In catechesis too, we have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the centre of all evangelizing activity and all efforts at Church renewal. The kerygma is trinitarian. The fire of the Spirit is given in the form of tongues and leads us to believe in Jesus Christ who, by his death and resurrection, reveals and communicates to us the Father's infinite mercy. On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: 'Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.'" Evangelii Gaudium: 164

By prioritising Christ at the Centre, our aspiration is that the gifts of the lay faithful will flourish and personal growth in holiness will in its turn enable the mission of the Church to be realised.

If we commit ourselves to this priority the depth and meaning of the sacramental life of the Church will be understood and treasured and more people will experience the life changing knowledge of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

By focusing on formation, our key lay leaders, the teachers in our schools, and the faithful generally, will become confident missionary disciples, assured in their evangelisation of those outside, of those seeking, and of the young and their families. We hope to see new vocations, to the priesthood, religious life, family life or single life being nurtured through faithful people and families.

Today, our parishes are increasingly multi-cultural, blessed with faithful from all corners of the world. We need to respond with a wider embrace of our Catholic brothers and sisters who bring diverse expressions of Catholic life and devotions. We need to actively reflect the diversity in our pews and enable everybody to fully participate in the life of our missionary communities.

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

We will enable the people of God to participate in deep, transformative, formation by:

- Supporting parishes in developing a local *Missionary Discipleship Pathway* so that everyone might be supported on their own personal journey to becoming a Missionary Disciple as part of a community of faith.
- Providing formation for catechists, especially those leading the RCIA, outreach and Sacramental processes and developing all group opportunities for seekers wanting to know more.
- Appointing a lead catechist and provide a catechetical office for the Diocese whose role will be

to develop, coordinate and oversee catechetical activity across all our parishes and schools.

- Appointing and forming a minister of catechesis in each parish who will be responsible coordinating catechesis in the local area to form missionary disciples and future catechetical leaders.
- Providing guidance and training for music ministry, altar servers, readers, welcomers and the ministry of hospitality.
- Developing appropriate opportunities for participation and service at all stages of life and faith.
- Ensuring local plans consider the active participation, formation and development of the laity in the life of the parish.

"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love"
Ephesians 4:16



Christ at the Centre

PEOPLE OF GOD: THE YOUNG CHURCH

"The Synod recognised that the members of the Church do not always take the approach of Jesus. Rather than listening to young people attentively, 'all too often, there is a tendency to provide pre-packaged answers and ready-made solutions, without allowing their real questions to emerge and facing the challenges they pose'. Yet once the Church sets aside narrow preconceptions and listens carefully to the young, this empathy enriches her, for 'it allows young people to make their own contribution to the community, helping it to appreciate new sensitivities and to consider new questions'". Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit to Young People and to the Entire People of God 25 March 2019

Our younger faithful hold the key to our future; it is they who will, or may not, pass on the faith to future generations, to the Church of 2052, 2072, and beyond.

As a Diocese, we are graced with many young people at different stages of life and faith. However, a key concern raised throughout our consultations over the last two years is how to engage with young people and allow them to participate fully in the life of the Church; their presence is often felt to be missing from our churches.

We recognise that our opportunities to hear from our younger brothers and sisters over that last couple of years has been limited; only 10% of respondents to *A Thousand Voices* were under 40. A crucial question for us to consider is whether this perceived lack of engagement primarily results from wider social factors or is because the Church today no longer meets the needs and expectations of our younger faithful to orient them towards God.

Young people are not uniform. Youth spans many different stages of life, from early childhood to young adulthood and the world of work, study and sometimes starting a family. Young people begin their discipleship journey in baptism and continue on that journey when they come to love Christ and follow His ways. They become missionary disciples when they seek to witness and serve those most in need, beginning with those closest to them. We should help young disciples encounter Christ; through accompaniment, belonging in the parish community, and leadership to missionary witness.

A School Strategy has already been developed and is in place. A priority for the first phase of implementing this Ten-Year Mission Plan is to seek opportunities to listen to young people directly, and ask them how they see the Church, what opportunities they would like to see, and what would make them feel truly welcomed and actively involved in shaping the future of the Church.

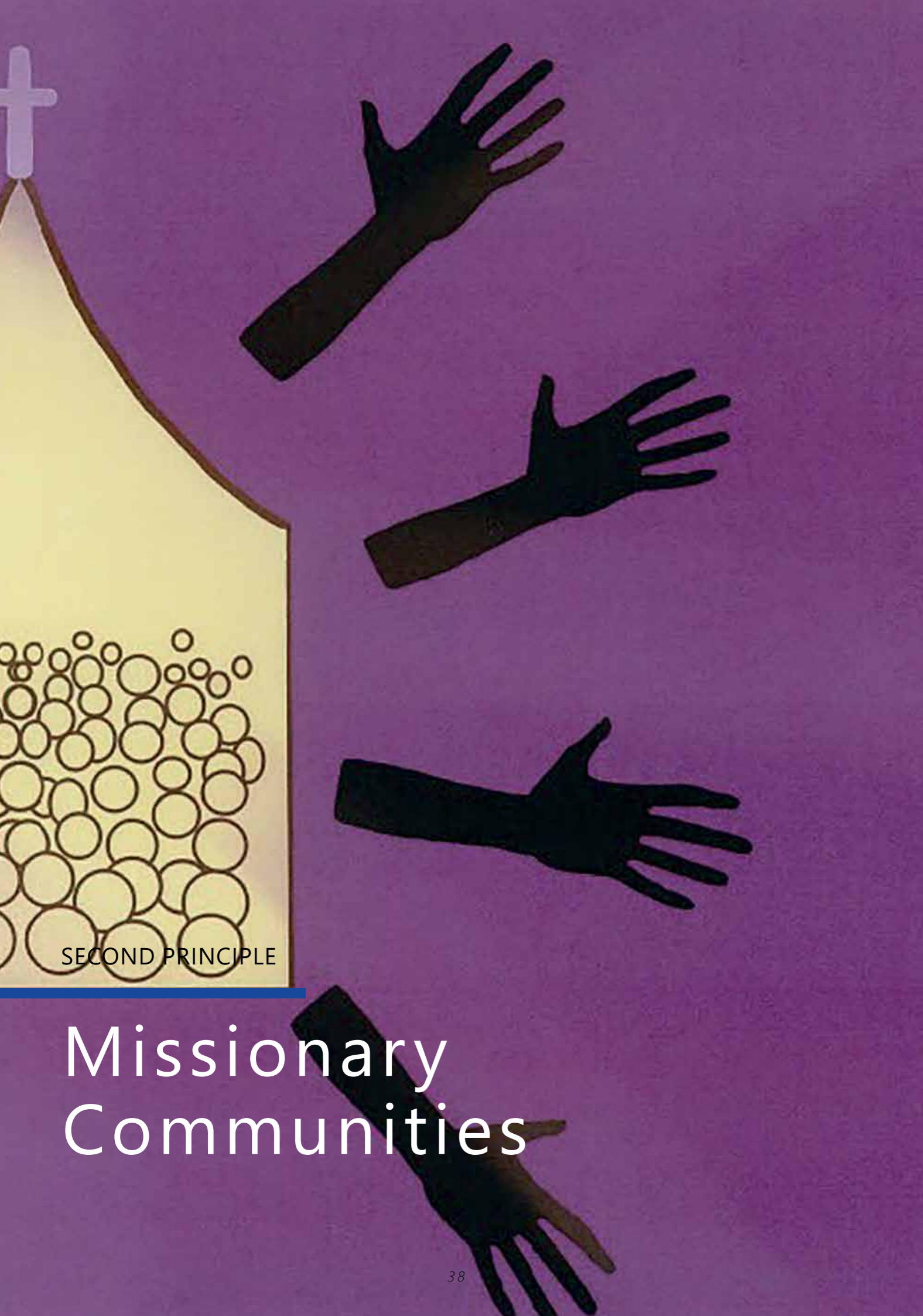
Our hope is that this consultation will answer how we will:

- Bring young people closer to Christ and enable them to deepen their faith and devotional life.
- Support young people to live as disciples of Christ in the world of today



- Empower our young people to serve those in need, to care for creation, to foster social changes to secure justice and equality for every human being, and to live a life of Christian service modelled on Jesus' life.
- Provide appropriate opportunities for involvement in the life of the parish and wider Church.
- Develop young leaders within the life of the local missionary community and Diocese.
- Develop University Chaplaincy so that young people can participate in the life of the wider Diocese.
- Develop plans for schools and parishes to work together to foster community and formation.
- Support young people to recognise their vocation in life.

***"But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak."
Jeremiah 1:7***



SECOND PRINCIPLE

Missionary Communities

"I dream of a 'missionary option', that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself." Evangelii Gaudium: 27

What We Heard Missionary Communities



Welcome and Belonging to a Community

There is a strong desire to belong and to truly welcome others; and recognition that much more can be done to be open and welcoming in our parishes.

The Church is not always seen as inclusive or able to meet people at the margins, with messy lives. Parishes were sometimes seen as inward looking, living in a bubble, and sometimes even hostile to seekers and strangers.

Diversity

Our diversity of culture, age, gender, ethnicity and much more is a great blessing and source of enormous potential; there is a desire to see it reflected beyond the pews into the decision-making structures of the Diocese.

Communication

Communication and transparency were frequently mentioned; there was a desire for more involvement and improved communication at all levels.

The use of technological advancement to enable us to reach out to others of faith and none and to enhance the visibility of the Catholic community was promoted as an area for development.

Catholic Schools

Our Catholic schools are a source of pride and give hope for the future. Schools, parishes and families are the building blocks of the faith community and should be working in unison.

Service to Others in Wider Community and Overseas

Where it is happening, outreach and charitable activities are a source of pride. Although some did not know if their parish was doing anything at all or felt it could do much more.

Working in partnership with others is seen as an important aspect of this particular mission

***“We hear them
telling in our own
tongues the mighty
works of God”
Acts 2:11***

***“Without counsel plans
fail, but with many
advisers they succeed”
Proverbs 15:22.***

Working with Other Christians

Many themes emerged that reflected hope for the future. This included commitment to working with other Christians, in supporting local communities, sharing our faith and speaking out on issues that really matter.

The Model of Parish Life

The current model of small local parishes was valued but many recognised the reality that we have too many churches with fewer people attending and supporting them.

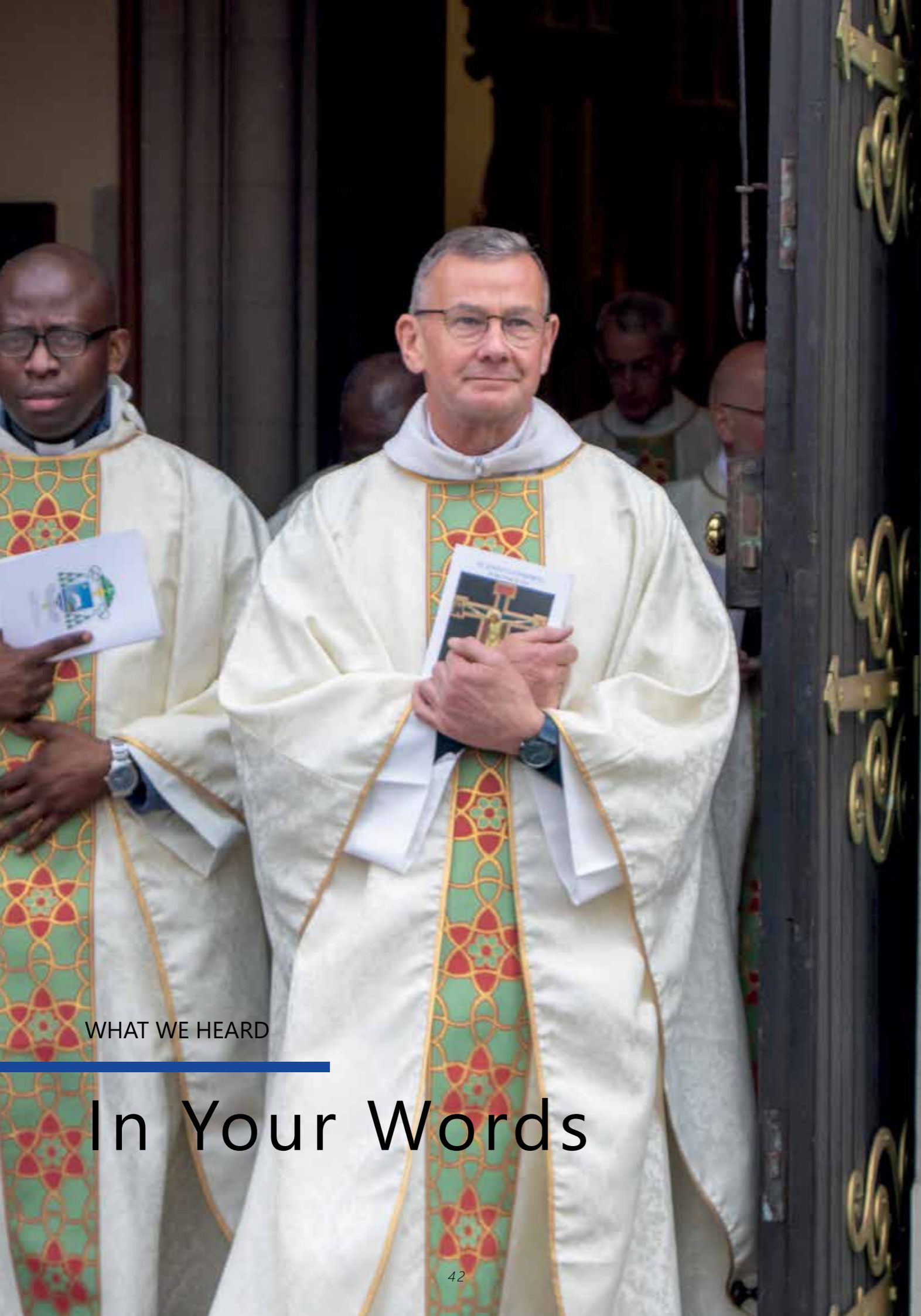
The careful pruning of our estate, including churches, would release resources and energy to better realise the mission of the Church. Again here, the notion of a missionary community comprising of parish, school, and family was a model that was emphasised.

Stewardship

Many were surprised by the financial position of the Diocese and how little understanding there was about the support required to maintain a healthy Church.

A Thousand Voices reflected the many ways people support their time and talents, some felt their contributions were undervalued or unwanted.





WHAT WE HEARD

In Your Words

"[we] need a more stable community, one priest comes and builds things up, another then knocks everything down and then we get one who doesn't know where to start"

"Church - Home - School working together more closely"

"People identify with the building rather than with the Lord = idolatry!"

"all have the same complaint: there are not enough numbers of this and that, of ministers, sacristans etc. yet it is not that there are not enough but because, the community is so spread out, thinned out over an area, parishioners cannot see who they amount to"

"It is clear that the Church is in decline but its institutions are not responding - it looks backwards and defensively"

"All our secondary school rolls exceed every parish weekend Mass attendance by a massive margin. Yet our secondary schools attract no full-time priest investment. If we had parishes of this size, several clergy would be assigned pro rata. Why is this? "

"There is so much need in our town, there is also great ecumenical opportunities"

"Time to rethink what we need and keep them usable"

"Churches should be oases of peace, always open to everyone"

"Day of the geographical parish is over"

"Why not sell both sites and look for a piece of land at [location] and build a modest Eco friendly church with parking"

"Duplication of effort when a single priest looks after more than one Parish"

"[Pastoral Area] to become one parish with one parish priest at [Location]"

"Focus on the parish mission, increasingly mission-focused budget"

"Working together needs to be the norm rather than an afterthought"

"People have been friendly, but I don't have the opportunity to engage or talk with anyone. I can't say I know anyone's name or that they know mine"

"How very important it is to actively live our faith in society. To always use our votes and our voice to support the poor, to preserve the planet, and... those who are suffering most"

"We could use ministry of teams of priests"

"As a parish we hardly get involved or lead any charitable work in the local community"

"Closing one of our churches can give us the opportunity not to spend all our money in maintenance. Having less churches can bring our parishioners together"

"A greater emphasis on working together."

"My home, my family, my identity, solace, refuge, reality"

[proud of] "Relationships with other faith communities" "Very active SVP" "Refugee family welcome" "food banks" "Churches Together" "Lent Renewal"

"An open church door"

"More to a possible North American model with more centralised, larger churches with disparate congregations coming together"

"I wish it were more"

"maybe what we need to consider is, not how many parishes can we provide, but how many parishes which are really equipped for purpose?"

"The Church has to change to suit the needs of a modern world. We are too complacent in that we have the deposit of faith and so do not need to make too much effort to change and adapt"

"Engagement through topics which matter to them e.g., climate change"

Missionary Communities

The Church exists to evangelise; to bring people closer to Jesus Christ. Our communities need to be welcoming to all, evangelistic, and understanding in their support for those who are seeking at the start of their pilgrim journey.

Being a Church that realises the commission to glorify the Lord by our lives means reaching out to people in their time of need at home and overseas, playing a full part in caring for our common home, witnessing to the secular world and in all these areas working with other Christians.

The Church welcomes everyone and our desire is that all will experience a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ through our Missionary Communities. Each will be expected to offer opportunities for all people, clergy and lay, to encounter Christ through his principal proclamation *"the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment."* *Evangelii Gaudium: 164*

Missionary Communities are not simply parishes, they are formed of parishes, schools, small groups, families and individuals all working together to grow in faith and reach out to others.

The diverse nature of our communities and recognising, discerning and embracing the gifts and talents of all is integral to this priority.

The structures supporting our missionary communities need to reflect the needs of the Church today; they should not be a drain on limited resources but rather enable us to best realise our mission.

Our ambitions for our Missionary Communities are that:

- First and foremost, they foster a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and become fertile soil for vocations and bringing Christ's love to the world.
- All will feel welcomed, known, cared for and part of the faith community.
- Strangers and seekers will feel at home in our churches.
- Our parishes and schools will be known as places of support and encouragement for the young, old, and everyone in between.
- All will be valued for the varied gifts, talents, and experiences they bring.
- The social life of the community will nurture positive relationships with Jesus Christ and with each other.
- We will be visible in the wider community, reaching out to others beyond our walls.
- Our resources will be valued, carefully stewarded and deployed effectively for mission and service.
- A cohesive structure will meet the local needs of a missionary Church through a well-maintained, fit-for-purpose estate which is welcoming, inspiring and sustainable.



*"So we, though many, are on body in Christ,
and individually members one of another"*
Romans 12:5

Missionary Communities

CHURCH BEYOND WALLS

"In each of these 'little ones,' Christ himself is present. His flesh becomes visible in the flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled... to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us. Let us not forget the words of Saint John of the Cross: 'as we prepare to leave this life, we will be judged on the basis of love'" Misericordiae Vultus: 15

The Mission of the Church is never insular or self-centred, but always seeks to go out to those on the margins and share the Good News with them. Our parishes, together with our schools and families, are the building blocks of our faith communities. By working in unison our communities become both welcoming and truly missionary. This also means recognising, enabling and celebrating the gifts of a diverse and multicultural community of faith.

A Church that realises the commission to "glorify the Lord by our lives" is a Church who reaches out to people in their time of need, at home and overseas. There are many examples to inspire us throughout the Gospels, the history of the Church, and indeed our Diocese today. Our hope is that outreach will be a cornerstone of each missionary community in our Diocese.

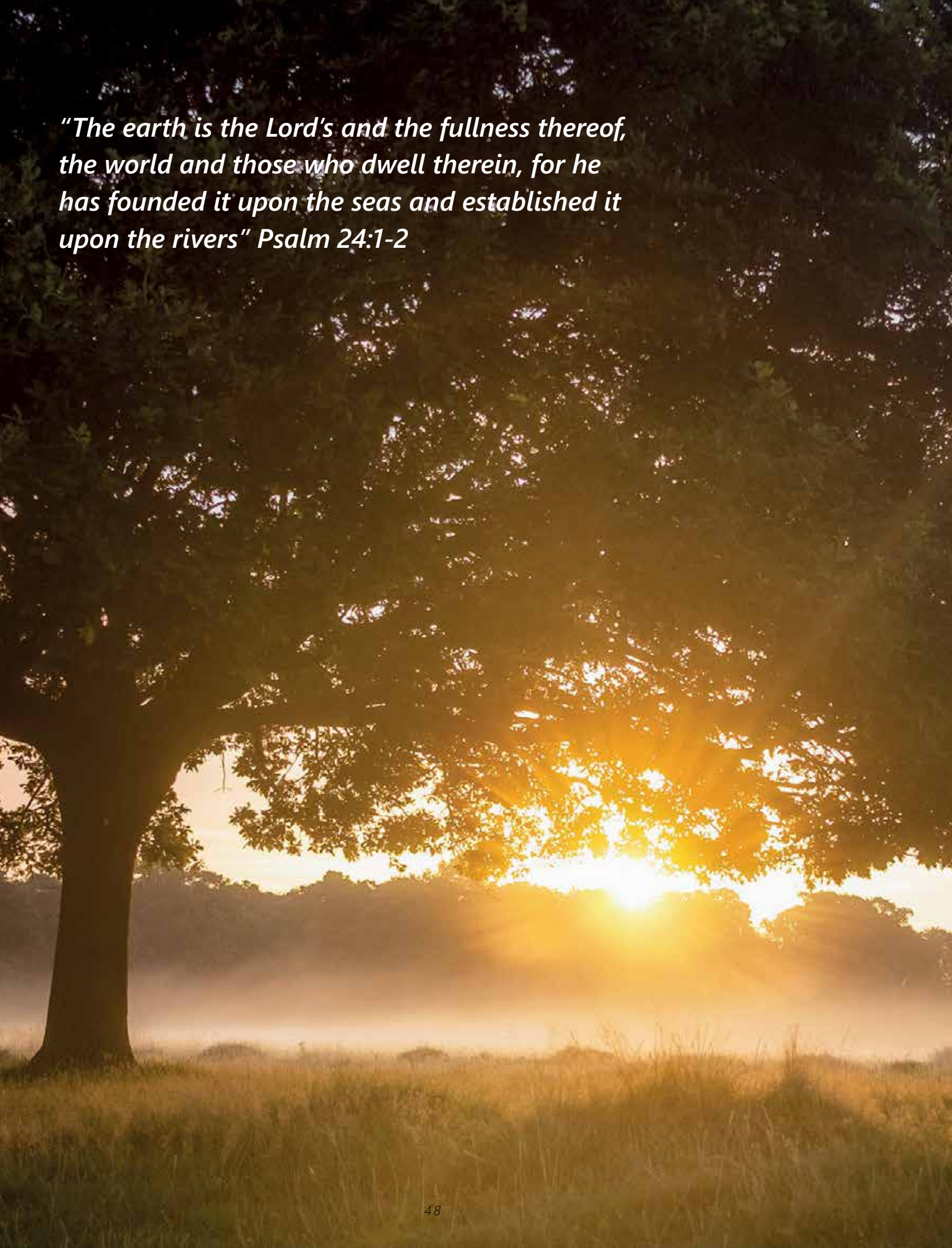
HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

We will be witnesses beyond our walls by:

- Forming local plans to consider ways in which we can go out to the margins and share the love and mercy of God with the wider world in practical ways.
- Establishing a Youth Social Action Enterprise, under the Caritas umbrella, to enable young people in our parishes, schools and university chaplaincies to engage in outreach.
- Enabling and supporting local faith communities to develop appropriate projects in their response to the needs within their area through the work of Caritas.
- Participating in collaborative projects with other agencies with whom we have shared values.
- Continuing to support the work of other Catholic agencies.
- Further developing our partnership with the Archdiocese of Bamenda.
- Developing our voice as advocates for social justice through Caritas.
- Developing and implementing a programme for chaplaincy ministry to prisons, hospitals, and universities with input from both clergy and lay faithful.



"Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."
Matthew 25:34-36



“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers” Psalm 24:1-2

Missionary Communities

RESPONDING TO LAUDATO SI

“The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: ‘Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest’”. Laudato Si: 48

Stewardship for our common home and responding to the call of *Laudato Si* is a priority for us all. As well as caring for the world God gave us, tackling environmental concerns provides new opportunities for engagement and enables us to be visible in the wider world.

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

We will encourage care for creation and realise the challenge of *Laudato Si* by:

- Bringing to the fore the concept of “care for our common home”; through lived faith, through liturgy and prayer, and through our actions within and outside the Church.
- Promoting the Live Simply message.
- Supporting an integrated response to the related crises of social injustice and environment injustice.
- Analysing the effect we have on the rest of creation by considering our carbon footprint and what we use and what we throw away.
- Developing plans to reduce our environmental impact based on our analysis.
- Considering environmental concerns in all aspects of our decision making including a review of how we manage our investments.
- Working with fund managers we will divest of investments in fossil fuels by 2025.
- Seeking opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of our estate and improve energy efficiency.

Missionary Communities

CHRISTIAN VOICE

"Commitment to ecumenism responds to the prayer of the Lord Jesus that 'they may all be one' (Jn 17:21). The credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christians could overcome their divisions and the Church could realize 'the fullness of catholicity proper to her in those of her children who, though joined to her by baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her' We must never forget that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another. This means that we must have sincere trust in our fellow pilgrims, putting aside all suspicion or mistrust, and turn our gaze to what we are all seeking: the radiant peace of God's face."
Evangelii Gaudium 244

Society is increasingly secular, and more and more people have no faith at all. The Church is seen as increasingly irrelevant, and many do not understand our values or know the love of God.

The benefits and positive experience of working with other Christians was a theme throughout our consultations. Many other Christians are facing similar challenges and working together will enable us to share experiences, learn from each other and better reach to world beyond the Church to share the Gospel Message.

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

We will be witnesses through our Christian voice by:

- Proactively working with others on areas of shared interest and foster mutual understanding and respect between our communities.
- Playing our part in influencing the secular culture by actively working with other religious groups, agencies, or organisations with shared values to co-ordinate a faith response on key issues, for example on the sanctity of human life and the being the voice of the voiceless.
- Working in partnership with other Christians to remind the secular world of the Gospel Message and the person of Jesus Christ through witness and works.
- Initiating groups for ecumenical dialogue to identify key opportunities for working together on areas of shared priority; at diocesan and parish level.



"If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave us when he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" Acts 11:17

Missionary Communities

STEWARDSHIP

[The call to mission] "demands that the historical parish institution not remain a prisoner of immobility or of a worrisome pastoral repetition but rather it should put into action that outgoing dynamism that through collaboration among different parish communities and a reinforced communion among clergy and laity will orient itself effectively towards and evangelising mission..." The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelising Mission of the Church, 2020

Prudent stewardship of our resources, time, talent and treasure, is needed to ensure that our Ten-Year Mission Plan is effectively resourced and brings the Church in our Diocese to a sustainable position for a vibrant future.

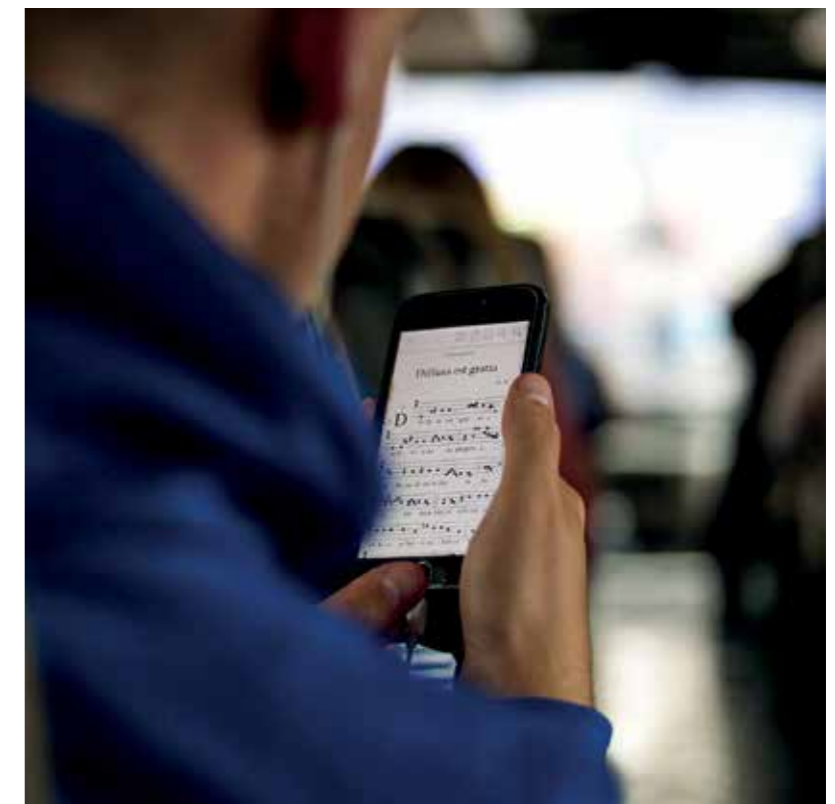
HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

We will prudently steward our resources by:

- Developing a financial plan to underpin the delivery of our Ten-Year Mission Plan, including the allocation of resources to our priorities and the path to return our Diocese to financial good health.
- Easing the financial burden across the Diocese, both centrally and in all parishes, by releasing some resources from our estate, encouraging committed giving and through wise investments, creative fundraising and the prudent allocation of budgets.
- Structuring a volunteer engagement and development plan, in collaboration with parishes, to properly support and recognise our many dedicated volunteers.
- Shaping our paid workforce, centrally and in parishes, to effectively support missionary communities to flourish.
- Reshaping the diocesan levy to reflect the different resourcing capacities in each of our parishes and to cover the core costs associated with running a compliant and well-stewarded charity.
- Establishing an investment committee to oversee our long-term investments, including our property.
- Establishing a shared fund to generate support for parishes who cannot fund urgent capital work.
- Raising resources for clergy training, formation and retirement through the Closer to Christ fundraising campaign.
- Ensuring the way in which we are governed is fit for the future by becoming an incorporated charity over the next two years.
- Securing funds from grant and trust making bodies to support our historic heritage and develop our charitable and outreach activities.

- Reviewing the way in which we share information about our use and stewardship of resources to ensure it is transparent and accessible, and supporting parishes to do the same.
- Investing in new technology to enable wider participation in our Catholic life and mission; for example through livestreaming, online groups, contactless giving, social media, and sharing information and resources online.
- Ensuring that our online activities are as safe and well supported as possible.
- Ensuring our employees, volunteers and supporters are able to work in a safe and healthy environment.
- Continuing to embed a culture of safeguarding to ensure that the Church is a safe place for all.

"There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need" Acts 4:35





Missionary Communities

PASTORAL STRUCTURES

"Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: 'We have always done it this way'...I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelisation in their respective communities." Evangelii Gaudium 33

The world around us has changed drastically in recent decades and we are in a new apostolic age. Our Ten-Year Mission Plan seeks to revitalise our mission to meet the needs of our Church today.

We need to be bold, we need to be creative, and we need to consider how best to remodel our current structure to meet our current needs and priorities.

The Diocese's last plan, *Go Out and Bear Fruit*, saw the establishment of pastoral areas; units of parishes working together with the aim of eventually becoming one. Today, our parishes are at many different stages of the journey. Some are still working as isolated units; others are working together in certain respects, and a few have reached the stage of becoming a single parish.

Throughout the consultation process there has been a recognition that our current structures are no longer effective, and in many cases have become a burden. There is a desire to reconsider how our structures can be reshaped so that energy is focused, not on buildings, but on building the life of the Church. This is our opportunity to redefine how we are structured and carefully consider what we keep, and what we prune.

We have considered a number of options recognising that structures are not the end in themselves but must be enablers of mission. We recognise that the parishes who completed the path envisaged in *Go Out and Bear Fruit* are among our most sustainable today, and we have discerned that we need to take this further. We need to fully realise the vision set out in *Go Out and Bear Fruit* so that our pastoral areas can mature into single parishes while also honouring and nurturing the smaller communities that form them.

If we are successful, we will have the right resources in the right places to support flourishing missionary parishes. Our estate will have been carefully pruned to enable resources to be used for mission and service appropriate to local circumstances long into the future. We will also be able to invest in inspiring liturgical churches, welcoming halls and our presbyteries will offer good standard of accommodation to our priests.

Working on a larger scale at parish level will enable our parishes to benefit from the ministry of a team of priests and deacons, draw from a larger pool of volunteers sharing their gifts and talents, efficiencies arising from shared resources and less repeated bureaucracy, and most importantly release time and talents for wider ministry across the parish communities, schools, universities, prisons, and hospitals.

Missionary Communities

PASTORAL STRUCTURES

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

Together, we will build a sustainable, cohesive, and effective structure for mission by:

- Designating 24, newly defined, pastoral areas from our existing parishes. These areas will work together to form single parishes over the next 3 to 5 years. The approach will be locally led, with central support.
- Defining 6 Deaneries as part of the new structure; Deans will be responsible for accompanying the clergy leading the transition.
- Developing local plans as a pastoral area to be approved by the Bishop in September 2023. These plans will establish how each area will deliver all the elements of our Ten-Year Mission Plan and the resources and structures it needs to become truly missionary.
- Reshaping and rationalising our estate to most appropriately meet local needs. This will enable us to release resources to invest for the future and provide for the churches, presbyteries and halls we choose keep so that they are fit for the future.
- Paying attention to local communities where people live, work, and worship together. Small groups and opportunities for fostering social life and collaboration in service will be crucial in realising the fruits of this model.
- Designating a diocesan leadership team to support the delivery of our Ten-Year Mission Plan.
- Implementing our Ten-Year Mission Plan in three phases so that we are able to build on the benefits of our newly structured missionary communities.

Consultation Phase: July 2022 - December 2022

Will be a consultation phase prior to the publication of the final Ten-Year Mission Plan.



Phase 1: January 2023 - September 2023

Phase 1 will be a preparatory phase which will focus on discernment and the development of local plans at pastoral area level. It will also be the time to establish the foundations needed to support clergy and lay leaders for the next two phases.

The 24 new pastoral area co-ordinators will be mandated to lead the process of consolidation and rationalisation of parishes, working with the laity and clergy in those areas.

Each pastoral area, including parishes, schools and chaplaincies in that area, will follow a process of discernment to consider how to work as a cohesive missionary community and develop their local plans.

Each pastoral area will establish a shared finance council and evangelisation strategy team, members should be drawn from across the collaborating parishes.

Local plans will be drafted to cover each aspect of our Ten-Year Mission Plan and shape how the local area will be structured and resourced to carry out these priorities. Resources should include the employed and volunteer workforce as well as financial and materials assets.

Any buildings which are currently vacant in the pastoral area will be identified and a plan for disposal or repurpose implemented.

At the conclusion of the first phase. Bishop Philip and his strategy team will meet with each lead pastor and representatives of each pastoral area leadership team to discuss and approve plans ready for phase 2.

Phase 2: October 2023 - TBC

Phase 2 will see the pastoral areas move to form single parishes supported by the correct canonical procedures for establishing new structures. Each of these new parishes will develop a rolling 5-year strategy for becoming a joyful and welcoming Missionary Community, with support offered where needed.

There will be a particular focus on evangelisation, welcome, and the fostering of faith-based friendships. Parishes will be supported in developing systems to ensure all are valued for the varied spiritual gifts, talents and experiences they bring and empowered to use those gifts.

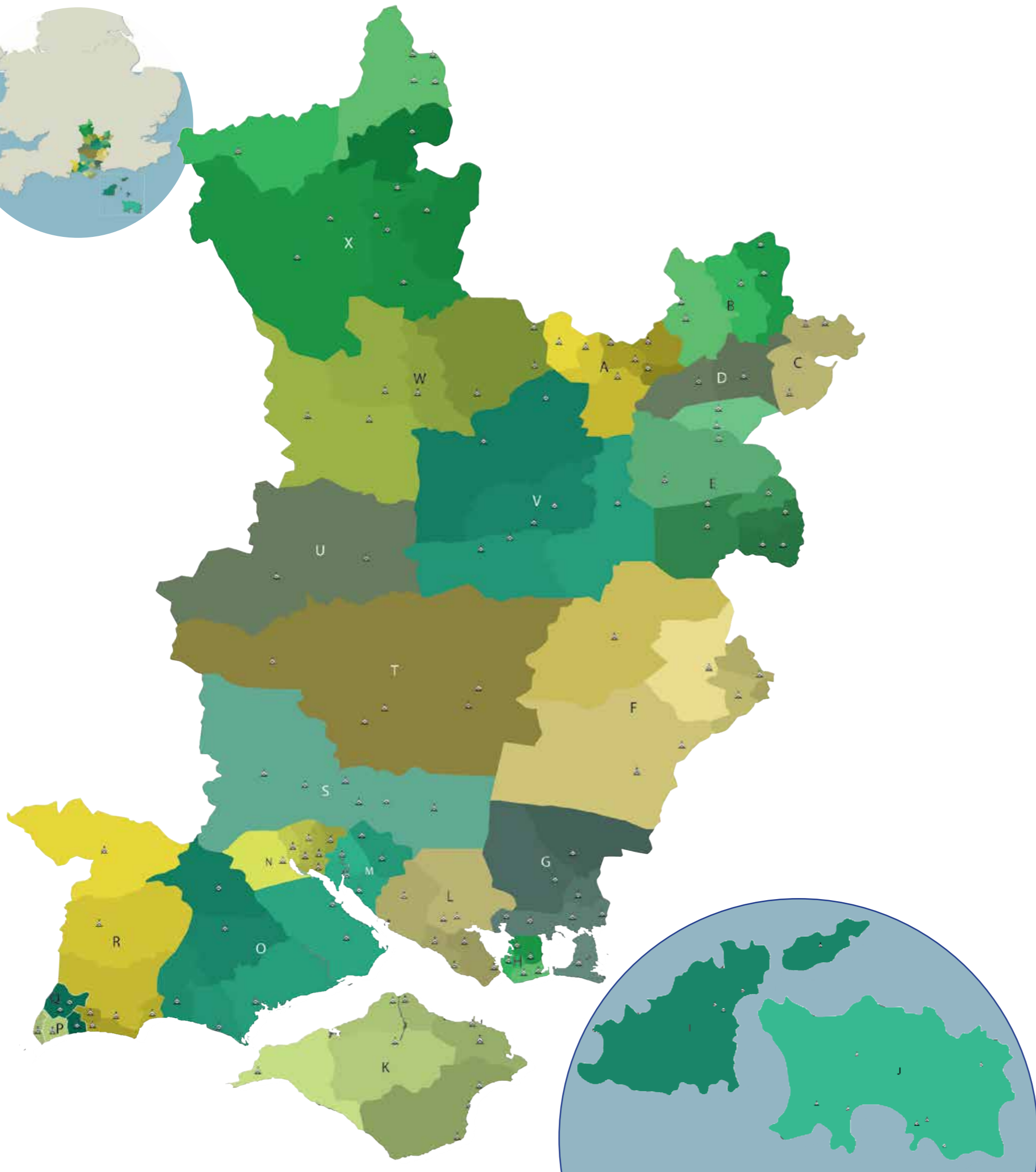
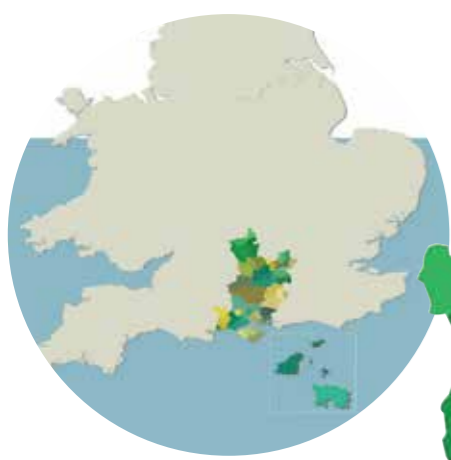
Consultation about estate which may be rationalised as part of the process will take place, and be concluded, in this phase.

Phase 3: 2028 Onwards

Evaluation will be formally undertaken in 2028 to reflect on whether the fruits from our Ten-Year Mission Plan are evident or whether any areas need to be refocused.

Phase 3 will be a time of consolidation for the new parishes and a refocus on embedding all other priorities in our Ten-Year Mission Plan.

“Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, so that it may bear more fruit” John 15:2



A	Earley; Reading Christ the King; Reading English Martyrs; Reading St James and St William; Reading St Joseph; Woodley
B	Maidenhead St Edmund Campion; Maidenhead St Joseph; Maidenhead St Joseph; Twyford St Thomas More; Twyford Our Lady of Peace
C	Windsor St Edward; Windsor St Mark; Ascot St Francis
D	Bracknell St Joseph; Wokingham Corpus Christi
E	Aldershot St Joseph; Aldershot St Mary; Farnborough Our Lady and St Dominic; Farnborough Our Lady Help of Christians; Fleet Our Lady; Church Crookham Holy Trinity; Yateley St Swithun; Hartley Wintney St Thomas More; Crowthorne Holy Ghost; Sandhurst Immaculate Conception
F	Alton St Mary; Bordon Sacred Heart; Grayshott St Joseph; Liphook Immaculate Conception; Petersfield St Laurence; Petersfield St Agnes
G	Havant St Joseph; Hayling Island St Patrick; Horndean St Edmund; Leigh Park St Michael, Waterlooville Sacred Heart; Portsmouth St Colman; Portsmouth St Paul; Emsworth St Thomas of Canterbury
H	Portsmouth St John's Cathedral; Portsmouth Corpus Christi ; Portsmouth St Joseph; Portsmouth Our Lady of Lourdes and Portsmouth St Swithun
I	Guernsey Notre Dame Du Rosaire; Guernsey Our Lady; Guernsey St Joseph and St Mary; Alderney St Anne
J	Jersey Our Lady of the Annunciation; Jersey Sacred Heart; Jersey St Bernadette; Jersey St Mary and St Peter; Jersey St Matthieu; Jersey St Patrick; Jersey St Thomas
K	Cowes St Thomas of Canterbury; East Cowes St David; Newport St Thomas of Canterbury; Totland Bay St Saviour; Ryde St Mary; Bembridge St Michael; Ventnor Our Lady and St Wilfrid; Shanklin Sacred Heart, Sandown St Patrick
L	Fareham Sacred Heart; Fareham St Philip Howard; Gosport St Mary; Gosport St Columba; Park Gate St Margaret Mary; Stubbington Immaculate Conception and Lee On Solent St John the Evangelist
M	Hedge End Our Lady; West End St Brigid; Netley Annunciation; Southampton Christ the King and St Colman; Southampton St Patrick
N	Southampton Immaculate Conception; Southampton Holy Family; Southampton St Boniface; Southampton St Joseph; Southampton St Edmund; Southampton St Vincent de Paul; Totton St Theresa
O	Brockenhurst St Anne; Lymington Our Lady; Lyndhurst Our Lady; Milford-on-Sea St Francis; New Milton Our Lady; Holbury St Bernard; Hythe St Michael
P	Bournemouth Sacred Heart; Westbourne Our Lady Immaculate
Q	Bournemouth The Annunciation; Bournemouth St Edmund Campion; Bournemouth Corpus Christi
R	Ringwood Sacred Heart; Highcliffe Holy Redeemer; Fordingbridge St Mary and St Philip; Iford St Thomas More; Christchurch Immaculate Conception; Southbourne Our Lady Queen of Peace
S	Eastleigh Holy Cross; Bishop's Waltham Our Lady; North Baddesley St Andrew; Chandlers Ford St Edward, Romsey St Joseph, Allington Lane St Swithun Wells
T	Winchester St Peter; Alresford St Gregory; Alresford St Margaret; Winchester St Stephen; Stockbridge St Thomas More
U	Andover St John the Baptist; Whitchurch St John Fisher
V	Basingstoke Holy Ghost; Basingstoke St Joseph; Basingstoke St Bede; East Oakley; Hook Sacred Heart; Tadley St Michael and Burghfield Common St Oswald
W	Newbury St Francis; Newbury St Joseph; Hungerford Our Lady; Thatcham Our Lady; Woolhampton St Mary; Theale St Luke; Pangbourne Our Lady and St Bernadette
X	Abingdon St Edmund; Buckland and Faringdon St George; Didcot English Martyrs; Wallingford St John; East Hendred St Mary; East Hendred St Amand; East Ilsley St Patrick; Milton Chapel; Botley Our Lady; Oxford Holy Rood; Boars Hill St Thomas More; Wantage St John Vianney; Lambourn Sacred Heart

Missionary Communities

PASTORAL STRUCTURES

*Figures do not include data for Woolhampton which is not currently available

**Holy Cross, Sea View and St Joseph, Gosport are not included as places of worship but are owned by the Diocese.

***St Margaret of Scotland, Alresford; St Joseph, Romsey and St Mary, East Hendred are included as places of worship but are not owned by the Diocese

New Parish	Current Churches	2021 Mass Count	Income (Ave 2019-21)	Current Reserves (Spring 2022)	Mean Mass Count per Church	Income per Church	Staff Hours per Week (June 2022)	Presbyteries	Schools	Other Chaplaincies	Religious Houses/Groups
A	7	1,801	£843,367	£781,664	257	£120,481	169	6	6	2	4
B	5	1,041	£372,771	£739,646	208	£74,554	118	3	2	3	2
C	3	616	£475,900	£34,386	205	£158,633	54.4	2	5	4	4
D	2	529	£311,195	£213,591	264	£155,597	72.5	2	3	1	1
E	10	920	£661,711	£226,150	92	£66,171	168.95	8	7	3	2
F	6	491	£348,992	£568,411	82	£58,165	71.9	5	1	3	3
G	8	953	£637,373	-£2,370,554	119	£79,672	165.5	7	4	2	1
H	5	806	£565,422	£990,774	161	£113,084	163.5	5	4	4	3
I	4	528	£378,401	£2,084,670	132	£94,600	76	2	3	5	2
J	7	538	£864,257	-£19,023	77	£123,465	95	5	3	5	1
K	9	529	£497,689	-£1,593,274	59	£71,098	61	8	6	4	4
L	7	805	£447,249	£207,771	115	£63,893	60	6	3	1	2

New Parish	Current Churches	2021 Mass Count	Income (Ave 2019-21)	Current Reserves (Spring 2022)	Mean Mass Count per Church	Income per Church	Staff Hours per Week (June 2022)	Presbyteries	Schools	Other Chaplaincies	Religious Houses/Groups
M	5	372	£220,926	£265,721	74	£44,185	42	4	1	1	1
N	7	1,584	£969,742	£923,277	226	£138,535	105	6	5	6	3
O	7	441	£325,090	£1,638,856	63	£46,441	32.53	6	1	6	1
P	2	127	£251,885	-£947,112	63	£125,943	46	2	0	1	1
Q	3	408	£343,655	£305,737	136	£114,552	89	3	2	1	2
R	6	620	£455,782	£133,442	103	£75,964	92.6	6	2	4	0
S	6	669	£368,885	£1,861,933	111	£61,481	61	4	1	2	1
T	5	312	£618,922	£463,925	62	£123,784	191	2	1	3	1
U	2	354	£229,776	£289,035	177	£114,888	37.5	1	2	2	0
V	7	875	£504,387	£1,028,808	125	£84,064	140	6	3	4	0
W*	7	458	£237,341	£293,814	65	£59,335	18	4	2	1	1
X	13	1,052	£555,787	£949,229	75	£46,316	116.92	8	3	3	1

Summary of Priorities

CHRIST AT THE CENTRE

MASS & THE EUCHARIST

A reaffirmation of the Eucharist as the source and summit of our lives, and a radical recommitment to Jesus Christ in prayer.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life." John 14:6

PEOPLE OF GOD: CLERGY

Supporting our clergy to meet the challenges of our time by developing opportunities for support, personal development and appraisal.

"proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness"
1 Peter 2:9

PEOPLE OF GOD: LAY FAITHFUL

Enabling the gifts of our lay faithful to flourish; for personal growth in holiness and to realise the mission of the Church.

"speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way"
Ephesians 4:16

PEOPLE OF GOD: THE YOUNG CHURCH

Helping young disciples encounter Christ; through accompaniment, belonging, and leadership.

"for to all to whom I send you, you shall go" Jeremiah 1:7

Summary of Priorities

MISSIONARY COMMUNITIES

CHURCH BEYOND WALLS

Welcoming missionary communities reaching out to others in their time of need, embracing everyone, and welcoming seekers and strangers.

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me" Matthew 25:35

RESPONDING TO LAUDATO SI

Stewardship of our common home and responding to the call of *Laudato Si*.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" Psalm 24:1

CHRISTIAN VOICE

Working with others to foster mutual understanding, carry out our mission, and remind the world of the Gospel Message.

"Who was I that I could stand in God's way?" Acts 11:17

STEWARDSHIP

Prudent stewardship of all our resources; time, talent and treasure, to ensure our sustainable and vibrant future.

"It was distributed to each as any had need" Acts 4:35

PASTORAL STRUCTURES

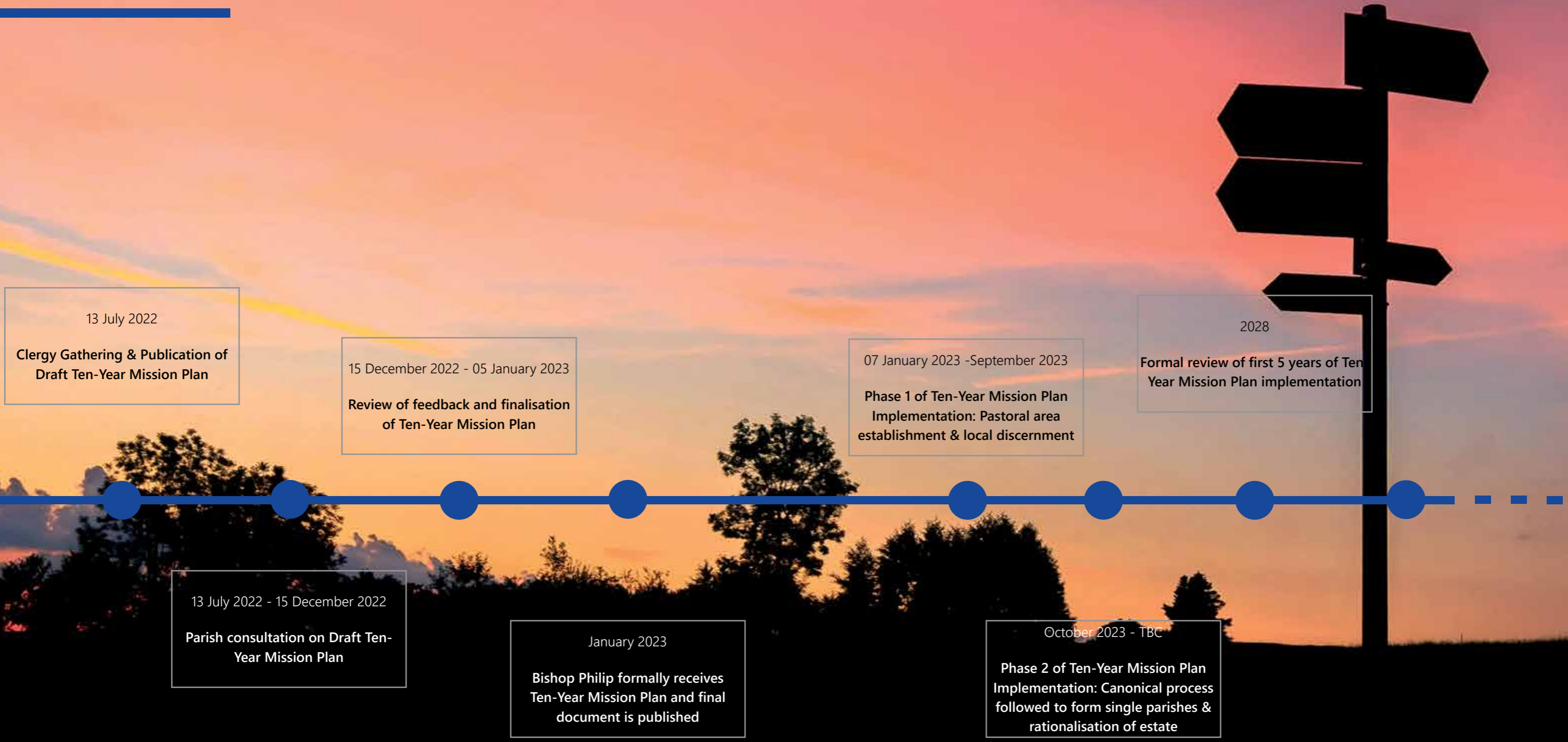
Ensuring we have enough of right resources in the right places to support flourishing missionary communities.

"he prunes, so that it may bear more fruit" John 15:2



The Journey

From here...





YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

A Personal Call to YOU

It would be easy to think that this is the work of the Diocese as an organisation or the Parish Priest and a few stalwarts. The work of renewal is carried out by missionary disciples who are on fire with the Holy Spirit, collaborating with the clergy in inviting others to a life of faith, building up the parish community and in serving others. Parish renewal depends on each of us taking up the call with generosity and love.

Each and every one of us is needed. The renewal of our Church so that we can realise the vision of Jesus himself. You Will Be My Witnesses is an invitation for every person and every parish across the Diocese to come together on this journey.

YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

Acknowledgements

Developing this Ten-Year Mission Plan for the Diocese would not have been possible without the much-valued input from so many of you. I would like to thank each of you for your time, participation, and wisdom; it is much appreciated. I would like to extend my particular thanks to:

- The respondents to our diocesan survey *A Thousand Voices* and to Professor Tim Cain and members of the curia team who reviewed and collated all the responses and comments.
- The priests and deacons who reflected on the *Pastoral Area Reviews* and shared their wisdom at our clergy gatherings.
- The many people, clergy, religious and lay, who took part in the consultations on the emerging priorities for this plan and considered how it could be put into action.
- The talented pupils in our Catholic schools who took part in our art competition to provide illustrations for this document.
- All the teams in the Framework for Collaboration, the DSAS team, Committees and Trustee Board for helping to bring together the detailed shape of this Ten-Year Mission Plan.
- The Cathedral Chapter, Council of Priests, and Deans and Co-Ordinating Pastors for reflecting on the plan as it emerged.
- All those who engaged in the Diocesan Synod, and Fr John Chandler and his team of helpers for collating our diocesan response.
- Heather Hauschild and Eleanor Belton for guiding us all through this process, facilitating the journey of discernment, reviewing all the feedback received, and bringing together this Ten-Year Mission Plan.
- My Council for their support in discerning the priorities for our Diocese over the next ten years, and their wise guidance throughout this process.
- And finally, a special thank you to all of you who have kept our diocesan mission in your prayers and asked the Lord to guide us to a hopeful and vibrant future.

I now invite you all to receive this document with an open heart and consider how we can all bring this Ten-Year Mission Plan to life and work for a bright and fruitful future for our Diocese and mission of *bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church*.

In Corde Iesu,

+ Philip





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