

6 *MAKE A PLEDGE TO PRAY*

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, Creator of the world and author of all that is good, we seek your guidance and inspiration as a Diocesan family. Give us missionary zeal in the renewal of our parish communities.

May the gifts of your Holy Spirit be the source of all formation. May our closeness to your Son Jesus, in prayer, in Scripture and in the Sacraments make us convincing heralds of the Good News. Bless our homes, families and schools with knowledge of your constant and compassionate presence.

As you shape our lives from the moment of our baptism, keep before our eyes the needs of our neighbour, and encourage us to know that your Kingdom is promised first to those who know their need for you, the ones Whom your Son chooses and calls by name. We make our prayer through the same Christ our Lord.

Amen

Prayerfully read and reflect on the passage...

Close with a simple prayer, concluding with an invocation of diocesan or parish patron saints.

'...pray for us.'

DIOCESAN VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision is to be a Catholic diocese which is faithful to the mission entrusted to us by Jesus Christ, full of missionary disciples who work together co-responsibly in vibrant communities of faith, joyful in their service of God and neighbour.

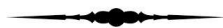
'And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him.'

- 1 John 5: 14-15

The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

WORDS FROM ARCHBISHOP BERNARD

Excerpt from the Diocesan Vision: *MAKE A PLEDGE TO PRAY...*



TO REFLECT ON

This is by far the most important thing every Catholic and every parish can do to make this vision a reality! The prayers for the Diocesan Vision can be useful for uniting a parish for this purpose, and we would encourage you to distribute them far and wide. Yet, while increasing prayer for the ministries God is calling us to is important, it is arguably just as important to deepen the quality of that prayer. To follow Jesus Christ as disciples means to know Him intimately through an ongoing conversion of heart, watered by a deepening life of prayer. Consider the following:

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- Can our parish make a 'pledge to pray' for the Vision?
- Can we establish prayer and Adoration for mission?
- Can we develop a catechesis of prayer to encourage those who struggle with this key part of Catholic life?
- How can we deepen the quality of our parish prayer?

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY

Look back over the notes you have made over these sessions and decide what actions you would like to take and perhaps what ministries you have identified as needing support, under those themes. Can a group come together to begin to think about these things further (perhaps a leadership group or pastoral council, if you haven't got one), or can the group you've established to look into the Diocesan Vision become tasked with caring for your parish mission?

"I will be sharing more about these plans and the part we will all play in the coming months. You can also find out more by going to our website.

For now, in preparation, I will be praying about all that is before us as we step out on this pilgrimage of faith. I ask you to pray the vision prayer with me as we plan the way ahead, to strengthen your faith with a new action. We will be supporting parishes with more training, resources and events to help us all take more steps towards our mission to serve God and to grow our Church."

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Hopefully, by doing some of the activities in these sessions and answering the questions you now have a clearer idea of:

- how recent past events have affected your parish and parishioners, and what they might need in order to deepen or renew their discipleship of faith;
- how our Diocesan Vision has helped you to 'unfold God's Plan', and whether the Vision is something which is understood and held by every Catholic;
- all those who volunteer or serve in your parish and how you encourage others, supporting them in their particular ministries into the future;
- the 'health' of your parish with regard to the 4 areas our Archbishop has identified;
- how our unseen culture can impede our mission, and what might need to change, in order for those things we desire to see flourish;
- how you might now go forward from a firmer foundation, and the things you need to establish, to become a 'vibrant community of faith, joyful in service of God and neighbour!'

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The **Office for Mission** has been established to help support parishes in seeing the Diocesan Vision bear fruit. We have some new web pages and a blog to help with resources and ideas for evangelisation and formation. Please visit:

www.vocations.org.uk/office-for-mission

THANK YOU

We appreciate you taking the time to consider the Diocesan Vision in more depth. For more information, please visit: **www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/vision**

The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

FOR PRAYER

What intentions for prayer have come from this week's discussion? Make a note of them. Perhaps pray for them here or use them during the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE VISION

S*pirit of God,
descend on me this day.
Grant me the Spirit of joy, to lift me,
the Spirit of hope to inspire me,
the Spirit of love to surround me and
the Spirit of truth to enlighten my path.*

*Holy Spirit,
I pray for a new outpouring of your grace,
so that I may grow in worship of your name
in love of you in my prayer
and in my actions towards others.*

*Come Holy Spirit into my life to guide me.
Strengthen and defend me,
so that I may be drawn ever closer to you.
Help me this day and always
to be a channel of grace
in all I say and do
and invite others into relationship with you.*

Amen

