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MAKE A POWERFUL CHANGE

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.

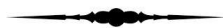
'But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.'

- 1 Corinthians 12: 24-27

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WORDS FROM ARCHBISHOP BERNARD

From the Diocesan Vision: *MAKE A POWERFUL CHANGE...*



TO REFLECT ON

Some of the things we reflected on in the first session will help us, but here the Archbishop's words are particularly challenging us to consider how we might deepen our own discipleship. And implicit in that, is another question: *how might we encourage others to look with new eyes at their discipleship too?* This question has change at its heart.

Change is not something our parishes may be good at. You might recall a time in your parish, that whenever someone either moved on or 'retired' from a ministry, it was left to the parish priest or other busy parishioner to take it up. In the past you may have made an appeal from the pulpit or in the newsletter for someone to take on a particular role, only to be left with nothing to show for your efforts.

During the pandemic, many parishes saw something they had not experienced in previous years: significant numbers of people coming forward to offer support for the various ministries required to keep churches open and safe – such as cleaners, stewards or administrators. They responded with generosity when our Church was in need. In one parish 40 volunteers came forward during the pandemic to take on these new roles. If you replicate even a fraction of those numbers across our parishes, we potentially have hundreds more people volunteering in our diocese who may not have done so in previous years.

“I believe that this is an opportunity to focus on renewal here in our Archdiocese – being open to change. I am excited about helping to create a future full of missionary disciples, with clergy and lay faithful working together to create vibrant and joyful communities serving God and neighbour. I want us to look at how we will individually respond to God's call to be missionary disciples in the Church and in our local communities, working joyfully to spread the Word and the work of God. In essence, how will we unfold God's plan for our Church.”

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QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

If a similar thing happened in your parish, that is something to be thankful for! But a question we might now ask is: **what is the future for those, and other, key volunteers?**

- *Have we been able to encourage them, to be purposeful in asking what the next step on their journey of discipleship is?*
- *How can our parish support them to continue with the ministries* they began, or to equip them for other important ministries that our parish needs?*

Take some time to discuss who God has sent to help you over this past few years, and what their gifts are.

For various reasons, you may not have seen this happen at your church. But this is not a reason for discouragement – this time has offered us an opportunity to look with new eyes at how we call, support and equip people for ministries.

A WAY FORWARD

We suggest that you conclude this session by filling in the document in Appendix 3 about your experiences and participation in the parish, and taking time to discuss what you find.

You can also offer this survey to parishioners and parish volunteers to find out how the parish can support their faith as disciples and in their ministries, and what formation might help them to grow more deeply in their faith.

It is hoped that you will begin to get an overview of parishioners' gifts, which ministries are healthy or in need of help, and how you can support individuals.

**'Ministry', in the sense used here, refers to the committed service of a lay person, exercised on behalf of the parish.*

'The fundamental objective of the formation of the lay faithful is an ever-clearer discovery of one's vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfil one's mission.'

*- St John Paul II,
Christifidelis Laici 58*

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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.

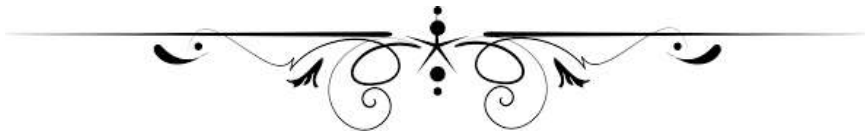
CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE VISION

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



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APPENDIX 3

PARISH FEEDBACK FORM

Over the past few years our parish has faced many challenges, not least closed churches and subsequent social distancing at mass. Access to the sacraments was difficult and relationships in the parish may have been affected, with some choosing to change how they participated in parish life.

Due to the generosity of many, our parish has been able to continue to offer support to those who would otherwise have been left out or been alone. We are grateful for the roles people have taken on, or indeed continued, and we would like to ensure that you remain equipped for these ministries, as well as offering ongoing resources for your spiritual well-being and growth in faith.

Therefore, we'd like to take this opportunity to ask you to complete the attached form and return it to us. Your responses will help us step into the future with more confidence, and to support you to live out your Catholic faith in the places where you live, work and worship.

Name:

Contact number & email:

Please indicate your current ministry/ministries:

Ministry (eg welcomer, reader, SVP etc)	Started since pandemic? ✓

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We believe it is important that volunteers/ministers in our parish are commissioned and supported in their work. We've suggested some ways that we'd like to do that. Please indicate which of the following might help you:

Please indicate any that apply...	Tick ✓
Further formation, reading or creative ideas for your area of ministry	
Further formation on your Catholic faith	
Talks on the Catholic faith at Church or online	
Prayer Groups/Bible Studies/Home groups	
Video Courses or Discussion groups	
Academic study in the faith	
Opportunities for service at Church or in the community...	
- eg SVP, Legion of Mary, Parish Catechesis, Reader, Server, Choir etc	
Regular contact/support from a member of the parish	
Someone to talk to about your vocation or challenges of being Catholic	
Formation to grow as a leader at church or in your area of ministry	
RCIA or other instruction on the sacraments or becoming a Catholic	
Other...	

Can you tell us about other ways you think we can support your faith?

Are there any ways we can improve communications here? Do you know what is going on in the parish and are you aware of useful contacts/support?

Which other groups would you like to see have opportunities to deepen their faith and grow as Catholic disciples? What would benefit them?

Thank you for filling in this survey!