

# 2

## OUR DIOCESAN VISION

### OPENING PRAYER

**L**ord 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.'**

*'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord'*

*- Jeremiah 29: 11-14*

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**Important Note:** ask the group to fill in the first part of Appendix 2a (on the Vision Statement) **BEFORE** the session. The responses will help this first discussion.

# The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

## WORDS FROM ARCHBISHOP BERNARD

From the Diocesan Vision: *OUR DIOCESAN VISION...*



### TO REFLECT ON

**A** 'vision', as opposed to a 'strategy' or 'action-plan', has been described as: **a God-given picture of the future which produces passion in you.** Taking up the Archbishop's invitation, consider our Vision Statement using the 'QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS'.

*"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."*

To reiterate, a Vision is not a detailed roadmap of the way ahead but simply describes a desired destination.

### QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

Having considered these questions prior to this session, using Appendix 2a, discuss and note your responses:  
*What are your first impressions of this Vision statement? What excites you most about it? Is this your dream for your parish too? What could be added? Is it reflective of your own parish vision statement (if you have one)?*

### WHY IS VISION IMPORTANT?

Vision causes us to reflect on our inmost desires and dreams. It returns us to contemplating Christ's promises for us, the hopeful future He has for each person and for His whole Body. But what *difference* can that make to parish life? A good vision can help to...

*"We know that together we can overcome any challenges and continue to support the Church's mission in the months ahead, working with God as our guide. We must take this opportunity to do all we can to make sure the Gospel is seen and heard through the example of our daily Christian lives."*

*[Read the Vision Statement]*

*I invite you to talk to your family, friends, teachers, fellow parishioners and parish priest about what the words mean to you and how they may help to shape your individual and collective choices and decisions"*

**PART 2**

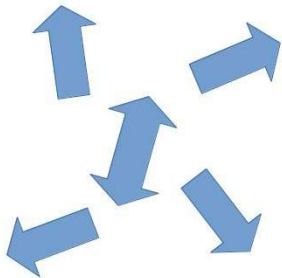
## The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

- Unite us;
- Renew us;
- Empower us;
- Direct us;
- Involve us.

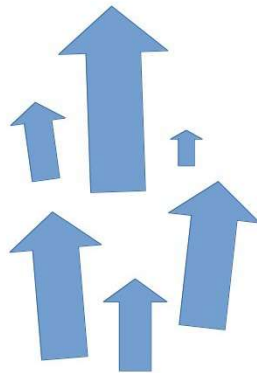
*'A vision without a plan is a pipe dream; a plan without a vision is a nightmare!'*

A vision has the potential to release people's gifts and generate resources, as well as unite groups to pull together. But communicating vision is a process and requires perseverance. A compelling vision can encourage people to invest both time and money in seeing aspects of that vision fulfilled. Think about your parish - which image does it most closely represent, or is it a mixture?

### VISIONS



### VISION



#### FURTHER QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

We will look in a little more detail at the words of the Vision. Using Appendix 2b, reflect on these questions:

- What does it mean to be a Catholic diocese?*
- What is the mission that Jesus Christ entrusted to us/me?*
- How can we/I be faithful to that mission?*
- What is a missionary disciple? Am I a missionary disciple?*
- What is co-responsibility?*
- Our parish/school/family is a "vibrant community of faith, joyful in our service of God and neighbour." Discuss.*

**PART 2**

## The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

### IN CONCLUSION

Our Vision describes the mission Christ has for His Church, which is to be a disciple-making 'movement' of the Holy Spirit in every time and place. Think about how to make this Vision known in your parish, to cover it in homilies and to encourage discussion around it. Not all the concepts will be familiar or immediately understood, so it may take time explaining or 'translating' it so that every Catholic can capture it for themselves. As other parishes have done, can you begin to formulate a particular vision for your parish?

### 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.*

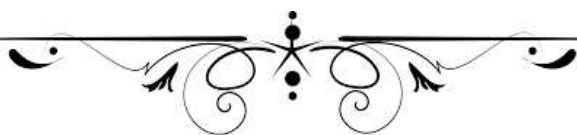
*Holy Spirit,  
I pray for a new outpouring of your grace,  
so that I may grow in worship of your name  
in love of you in my prayer  
and in my actions towards others.*

*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**

### 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.



# The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

## APPENDIX 2a

### DIOCESAN VISION: QUESTIONS AND NOTES

***“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.”***

**Please fill this section in BEFORE the session.**

<p><i>What are your first impressions of this Vision statement?</i></p>	<p><i>What excites you most about it?</i></p>
<p><i>Is this your dream for your parish too?</i></p>	<p><i>What could be added? Is it reflective of your own parish vision statement (if you have one)?</i></p>

## The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

### APPENDIX 2b

Some prompts/definitions are offered in Appendix 2c if you need them.

i) *What does it mean to be a Catholic diocese?*

ii) *What is the mission that Jesus Christ entrusted to us/me?*

iii) *How can we/I be faithful to that mission?*

iv) *What is a missionary disciple? Am I a missionary disciple?*

v) *What is co-responsibility?*

vi) *Our parish/school/family is a “vibrant community of faith, joyful in our service of God and neighbour.” Discuss.*

## The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

### APPENDIX 2c

The following may help you to reflect on the questions in Appendix 2b

i) The **Archdiocese of Birmingham** *"is a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to [our Archbishop] for him to shepherd with the cooperation of [the priests] adhering to its pastor and gathered by him in the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist it constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is truly present and operative"* (Can. 369)

ii) **Mission** doesn't necessarily mean being a *missionary*, but is about discovering our purpose and call. Perhaps Jesus' words may help us here:

*'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'* (Luke 4:17-19)

*'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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'* (Matthew 28:19-20)

iii & iv) *"The first proclamation, the task of every Christian, is based on that 'go' (Mark 16:15; Matt 28:19) which Jesus gave as an instruction to his disciples and which implies going out, making haste, accompanying, thus becoming **true missionary disciples**."* (Directory for Catechesis 69)

If we follow Christ, we WILL be missionary! 'Missionary' denotes that we are both *called* and *sent*. So the straightforward question is, 'am I a disciple of Jesus Christ – following him and learning from him?'

v) **Co-responsibility** recognises that *each of us has a mission* which is complementary, not in competition, with another's, and which God asks us to exercise in the Body (1 Corinthians 12: 12-27). Co-responsibility is not optional, but is necessary for the mission of the Church.

vi) Discussion. *(The activity in Part 4 will also help us to think about this further.)*