

1

REFLECT WITH ME

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.

'Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still...'

- Luke 24: 13-17

The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

WORDS FROM ARCHBISHOP BERNARD

From the Diocesan Vision: *REFLECT WITH ME...*



TO REFLECT ON

To introduce his Vision for the future, the Archbishop first invites us to look back. How has the experience of the past few years affected our life of faith? Have we had the opportunity to share our story? Have we been able to *stop and think*? By doing this, we may discover how God has been present in our lives or shown us something of the plan He has for us and our communities. The Synod, which called us to a deeper listening to the Holy Spirit, taught us that God can use any member of the faithful to reveal something of His Will if we listen prayerfully. **Two options** are offered to help us respond to the Archbishop's invitation.

Option 1 Revisit the responses you collected from the Synod in your parish, and particularly the themes that presented themselves. Prayerfully consider...

- What might the **Holy Spirit** be saying to your parish?
- In what ways can your parish help parishioners to deepen their **Communion** with God and others?
- How can your parish encourage **Participation**?
- What opportunities for **Mission** present themselves?

Some of the questions in **Option 2** might also be useful. Note your thoughts & go to the 'CONCLUSION' below.

Option 2 If you don't have a record of your Synodal responses, consider the questions below, to build up a picture of your experiences in your parish/community. This may help you to see what God has been doing, how people may need support, and where God may

"I am delighted to welcome you, and to share our vision for the unfolding of God's plan in the Archdiocese. With all the hardships we have endured over [recent years], we are learning to deepen our trust in God's loving care and to respond in ways that show we care for each other. For many, it has also taught us to value things differently and to focus our minds on what really matters. We have had the opportunity to reflect on our faith and on the role our churches play in society. We are now making a fresh beginning in a very different setting, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us and inspire us as we rebuild our Church."

PART 1

The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

be calling your parish or deanery. The document in Appendix 1 - *'Living Our Faith Beyond the Pandemic'* - could help you to reflect in a more narrative form, for those that want to.

You may also consider asking the wider parish to reflect for themselves, if they haven't done so already, again using the same document. You do not need to use all the questions.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON AND DISCUSS

Past:

- *Did the pandemic help/hinder your faith?*
- *What did you learn about your parish/community?*
- *Which ministries continued/started during the pandemic?*

Present:

- *How does your parish help you to grow in your relationship with God and others? How might it encourage even more growth?*
- *How does your parish identify and use the gifts of its people? How do you participate in parish life?*

Future:

- *If you could describe your parish fulfilling its mission to spread the Good News (evangelise) and to Serve the community, what would it look like? Who is Jesus calling you to serve and reach out to today?*
- *What is your dream/hope for the future of your parish, and your role within it? What about fears?*

CONCLUSION

Armed with this information about your parish, and where the Holy Spirit might be leading you, the following sessions will help you to think about how you might go forward together. Your gifts and experiences will inform this process of discernment as you seek to see the Diocesan Vision fulfilled. We will begin looking at the Vision itself next time.

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.

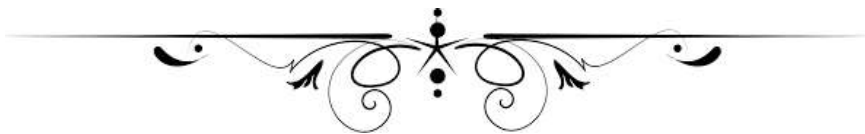
CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE VISION

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



The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

APPENDIX 1

LIVING OUR FAITH BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

It's been a challenging time for parishes over the past few years. In response to the Archbishop's invitation to 'reflect with him' as part of the Diocesan Vision, please think about your experiences and make some notes, which you might like to share with others, to assist your parish to discern the way forward. Some questions to help you write about your experiences may include:

Past:

- *Did the pandemic help/hinder your faith?*
- *What did you learn about your parish/community?*
- *Which ministries continued/started during the pandemic?*

Present

- *How does your parish help you to grow in your relationship with God and others? How might it encourage even more growth?*
- *How does your parish identify and use the gifts of its people? How do you participate in parish life?*

Future:

- *If you could describe your parish fulfilling its mission to spread the Good News (evangelise) and to Serve the community, what would it look like? Who is Jesus calling you to serve and reach out to today?*
- *What is your dream/hope for the future of your parish, and your role within it? What about fears?*

The Diocesan Vision: *UNFOLDING GOD'S PLAN*

To help identify the different experiences, tick any words that apply, or add your own.

Challenge Opportunity Growth Joy Increased Faith
Decreased Faith Renewal Suffering Beginning
Ending Fear Loneliness Community Isolation
Anger Consolation Desolation Hope Other _____

To write a more narrative record, use the space below. If you want to share some of these details more broadly, you might want to avoid identifying individuals, keeping your observations generic.

Write your reflection/thoughts/responses here:

If you would like to give a title to what you have written, please put that here: