



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM  
OFFICE *for* MISSION

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”*



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



6 SESSIONS TO HELP PARISHES RESPOND TO  
THE ARCHBISHOP'S INVITATION TO  
UNFOLD GOD'S PLAN.

# Introduction

In July and August 2021, Archbishop Bernard called us together in prayer to consider the future of our Archdiocese. He did this by issuing 'An Invitation' to reflect with him on a new Diocesan Vision designed to help us **unfold God's plan**.

The recent Synod encouraged us to look anew at our Church, in a spirit of discernment, with every Catholic being co-responsible with the clergy for the depth of our *Communion, Participation and Mission*. This meant a prayerful examination of our own discipleship, with the aim of us working together to become missionary parishes, and therefore a missionary Church.

The following contains suggestions for six sessions that break the Archbishop's vision into bite size chunks - looking at what it means for individuals and parishes, and offering ideas that can help us to respond to his invitation. The hope is to provide an opportunity to reflect on our own recent experiences, so that we can begin to discern God's will in our place. This resource also aims to encourage those on the margins to take hold of what our Archbishop, and, most importantly, our Lord Jesus Christ are calling us to do.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

It is envisaged that a small group, or groups, in a parish would work together with their priest, deacon or other parish leaders in order to discern how the Diocesan Vision might be used to help renew or refocus their mission, using the themes the Archbishop offers.

This can only be done prayerfully, which is why the diocesan prayers are suggested for use at each

*'We are making a fresh beginning in a different setting, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us and inspire us as we rebuild our Church.'*

*- Archbishop Bernard Longley. "An Invitation" Diocesan Vision.*

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meeting. Parishes could also be encouraged to pray them regularly using the copies sent out in 2021 along with the Archbishop's Invitation.

The general structure for each meeting will be:

- Opening Prayer & Scripture
- Excerpt from the Diocesan Vision document
- Short reflection and questions/activity
- Conclusion and closing prayer

Groups can be flexible in how they use the sessions, allowing more time to cover the material or to adapt resources, to make them as useful as possible for their context. In addition, parishes may have already looked at some of these themes during the Synod. At least 90 mins is recommended to cover the subject matter in each session and we suggest you take notes of what you discuss and discern.

By the end we hope that you will have been able to:

- *get to know your parish better;*
- *become familiar with the Diocesan Vision and share it with others;*
- *discern where your parishioners need formation, and appreciate the gifts they bring to the parish;*
- *consider where your parish ministries fit into the 4 Themes of the Diocesan Vision;*
- *see how your parish serves families and young people.*

The Synod provided us with a reflective model for how best to approach these issues, so do see that process as a template for getting the most out of this resource.

We hope that you find these sessions useful. Contact Paul for more information in using these sessions: [paul.northam@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:paul.northam@rcaob.org.uk)

### SUGGESTED TIMINGS

*Prayer & Bible Reflection*  
*20mins*

*Excerpt from Vision*  
*10mins*

*Questions or Activity*  
*50mins*

*Conclusion & Prayer*  
*10mins*

**INTRO**

