

Appendix 2: Our Mission – What is the Lord calling us to do?

Our Synodal Hexham & Newcastle Diocesan Mission Commitments

As disciples of Jesus in the Church of Hexham and Newcastle, listening to His invitation, we are being called and challenged to make the following commitments:

Commitment 1: *Walking with Jesus and Enabling Encounters with Him.*

“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?

... and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.” (Luke 24:32,35)

We have confidence that the Spirit is at work in our Diocese and that the encounter with the Risen Lord is the heart of our life together. As we receive God's saving love in our lives, we offer that love to others through:

- Continually renewing and nourishing ourselves through Jesus' gift of Himself in scriptures, sacraments, and the richness and diversity of the Church's liturgy, including:
 - Participating joyfully in the Eucharist particularly when the whole community gathers.
 - Seeking the Lord's will in personal and communal prayer both before the Blessed Sacrament, and in our homes and schools.
 - Receiving with joy the gift of the Lord's forgiveness and mercy, particularly through the sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Being intentional in reaching out and welcoming all into our communities.
- Accompanying one another with compassion, especially in times of suffering.
- Growing in confidence as witnesses to the Gospel in daily life.
- Working and praying with other Christian communities in shared witness and friendship.

For holiness and sharing Christ with others, St Aidan, pray for us.

Commitment 2: *Living Justly and Caring for Our Common Home.*

“...what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

Jesus identified himself with the poor and those rejected by society. He came to proclaim good news to the poor and commands the Church to continue His Mission through:

- Seeing Christ in the poor and marginalised; listening to them, being changed by them, and enabling their voices to be heard.
- Responding to the cry of the earth and caring for our common home. Living and ministering sustainably, including being good stewards of our physical and financial resources and working for climate and biodiversity justice.
- Being advocates for social justice and human rights, living and ministering in concrete ways in accordance with Catholic Social Teaching.
- Working against racism, misogyny, homophobia, and all other prejudices which attack human dignity and weaken the Body of Christ.
- Working with our sisters and brothers of all faiths and none to live justly and care for our common home.

For justice and care for our common home, St Cuthbert, pray for us.

Commitment 3: *Growing as One Diocesan Family*

"... that they may all be one" (John 17:21) "Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind." (1 Peter 3:8)

To be the Lord's missionary disciples, we must be disciples in communion with Christ and one another. Discerning new, collaborative ways to walk together is vital to the life and Mission of our Diocese through:

- Growing as one diocesan family, increasing our understanding of each other's lives, faith, and vocations.
- Deepening trust by listening to the Holy Spirit in prayer, accompaniment, and discernment.
- Being generous in offering our gifts and talents in fulfilling our calling to serve our local communities and the wider diocesan family.
- Working together to foster a culture in which our churches are safe, especially for children and all who are vulnerable, ensuring safeguarding is the responsibility of all.
- Recognising the need to attend to the voices of those most marginalised and wounded by the Church.
- Becoming more of a Church where our wounds and struggles are acknowledged, our concerns explored, and our voices listened to with respect.
- Resolving differences through just processes in keeping with Gospel values.
- Honouring our priests' lifelong service, committing to their well-being throughout ministry, especially in sickness and old age.

For wisdom, unity and discernment, St Hilda, pray for us.

Commitment 4: *Being Formed by Christ for Mission*

"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go... Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest." (Luke 10:1,2)

As a Diocese, we are committed to offering lifelong formation for all. We are called to grow together in our shared vocation to holiness and evangelisation through:

- Being open, as lay and ordained people, to being formed by the Lord and one another as we discern new ways to be co-responsible for Mission in structure and practice.
- Rejoicing in the accompaniment, education and formation of our children and their families.
- Allowing our communities to be guided by the momentum and intuition of our young people.
- Valuing, supporting, and developing the active service and leadership of the laity, by strengthening the opportunities for formation and the use of their gifts.
- Working together co-responsibly with our Bishop, priests, and deacons to be faithful to our callings from the Lord.
- Building ever closer connections between home, parish, schools, chaplaincies, and our youth services, and sharing resources and expertise.

For knowledge, understanding and evangelisation, St Bede, pray for us.

These priorities are interwoven and interconnected. There is no true formation without encounter, no growth in communion without justice, and no healing of relationships which does not also draw us closer to the Lord.

We entrust the future of our diocesan family to our patron, Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, pray for us.