

HOPE IN THE FUTURE

Legacy Booklet



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INTRODUCING HOPE IN THE FUTURE

Forming Missionary Disciples, Building Missionary Parishes

Hope in the Future is an invitation to every parish in the diocese to recognise and develop their missionary identity and their call to evangelise.

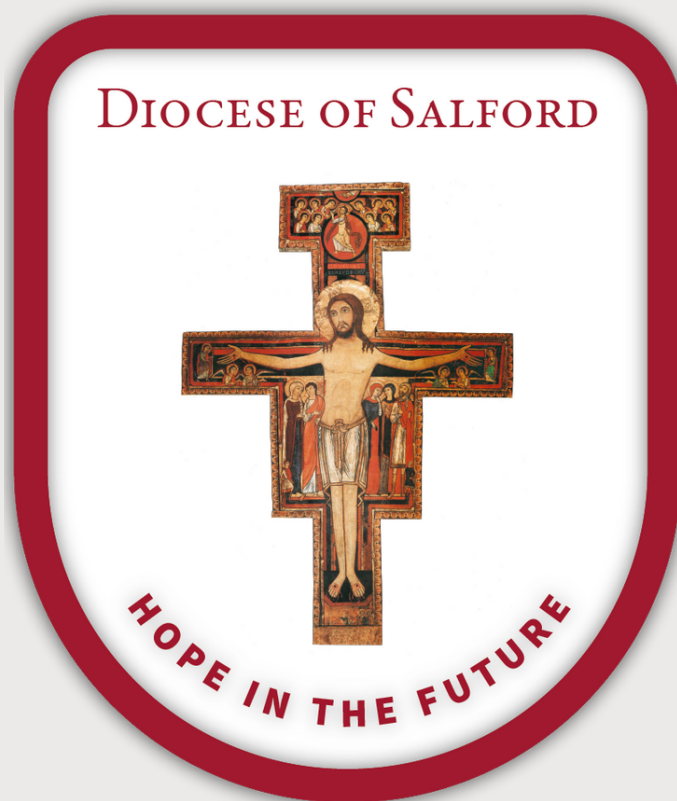
The programme was formally launched on the feast of St Francis on 4th October 2017 with a special service led by Bishop John at the cathedral.

During the service, Bishop John explored the theme of mission and evangelisation, calling each and every one of us to take up Pope Francis' call to missionary discipleship.

He continued to explain that programme is divided into five sections, each with its own focus. The sections can be explored in any order and in whatever timeframe that best suits the need of the parish or community.

The event saw each parish presented with a San Damiano cross to display in each of their churches as a reminder of Jesus' call to St Francis to 'Rebuild my Church'.

Taking this story as inspiration, our Hope in the Future programme invites us to take Jesus' call as our own, to transform our parishes and schools into vibrant hubs of prayer, mission, and evangelisation in order to share with all the joyful message of hope that is the very foundation of our faith.



Home - School - Parish

A key part of our Hope in the Future programme is to explore the interrelationship of parish, school, and home life.

Each of these aspects has a unique and important role to play in the development of our faith lives, but the combination of these strands working together can have a powerful and formative impact on the younger members of our community.

We invite you to consider all three components as we work through this document.

To find out more, please visit
<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/hope/home-school-parish/>

THE STORY OF THE SAN DAMIANO CROSS

The story of the San Damiano cross is a story of mission. Legend has it that St Francis of Assisi was praying before the cross at the church of San Damiano when he received the instruction from Christ to “Rebuild my Church.”

Initially, Francis took this as a literal request from Jesus to physically rebuild the dilapidated church of San Damiano.

However, the saint quickly realised that this task wasn’t simply about bricks and mortar, it was a challenge to rebuild his heart, his inner self, and his life in Jesus.

”

Rebuild my Church

”

The cross - and its message of mission - is one that provides great inspiration for our Church today.

In our own diocese, we’re taking the symbol of this beautiful cross as a reminder of our mission through this Hope in the Future programme, as we seek to breathe new life into our parish, school, and home communities over the coming years.



FOREWORD

FROM BISHOP JOHN ARNOLD

The world is changing - very quickly, and in a society that's becoming ever more secular, ever more caught up in the consumerism and materialism of our time, we need to think a little differently about how we present the joy of the Gospel in the modern age.

The joy of the Gospel - *Evangelii Gaudium*. In his papal exhortation of the same name, Pope Francis reminds us that it is precisely this joy that is at the very heart of our Catholic faith, a joy that provides hope and encouragement in a world that is facing so many different challenges. Our world is crying out for so many things, like the eradication of poverty, justice, dignity for everyone, enough to eat in a world where so many of us throw food away. So many challenges; so easy to lose hope.

But Pope Francis has given us a task - to restore that sense of hope and encouragement and to reflect the face of God in our world today by becoming "Missionary Disciples".

There are two very interesting words in that phrase, "missionary disciples". To be a disciple is rather a personal thing. It is about learning about the Lord, deepening our faith and love for the Lord, and being able to follow the Lord. And it is something that develops right through our lives according to our different circumstances and experiences. We see and understand the Lord in different ways as we grow and adapt in our faith. It is essentially quite personal to be a disciple, but then Pope Francis adds that other word, which is rather uncomfortable: missionary. He wants us to go out with what we believe and show what we believe by our actions and our choices to the world in which we live. We must be living our faith out there in the world and making sure that no-one is ever marginalised, isolated, and alone.



It was only a few months into his pontificate when Pope Francis visited South America and spoke to the bishops there. He can be pretty direct in the way he speaks to bishops and priests - and that's not a bad thing. But he was very clear with those bishops and he said: "There's no point you lot sitting in your cathedral with the doors open waiting for people to come in, do you have the courage to go out here and walk with people even as they're still walking away from the Church?". And that's the same question he puts to each and every one of us. Yes, it's all very well to be welcoming to those who feel drawn to their faith and the Church, and we make a good job of it too. But Pope Francis says that's just part of the story - do we have the courage to go out and walk with people even as they're walking away? We all know these people; they are our family, our colleagues, our friends.

People, who often through no great fault of their own, have just felt themselves distanced from the Church. They may have had a bad experience, or got distracted from an idea of faith and drifted away. And with that comes a distance from that great hallmark of our faith; that sense of hope and encouragement: the joy of the Gospel.

Pope Francis uses that wonderful text in Luke's Gospel, when the two disciples are walking away from Jerusalem, they think it is all over, Jesus has been crucified, whatever they thought was going to happen can't happen now, he is dead. And it is Jesus that walks with them. He doesn't stop them and say, "don't go a single inch further whilst I persuade you", he walks with them and explains to them for the rest of that day that this is all part of God's plan. And at the end of the day, through his patience, his explanation and his example, they recognise him and they go back to Jerusalem renewed in their sense of discipleship.

So Pope Francis wants each and every one of us, no matter who we are, our age, our skills, our experiences, he wants us to be Missionary Disciples. Missionary Disciples in Missionary Parishes.

And that is what Hope in the Future is all about. It is a challenge to echo Jesus' example in that Gospel passage; to walk alongside our brothers and sisters - even as they're walking away - to share with them the joy of the Gospel. It is an opportunity celebrate all that we already are and do, and then - over time - identify and develop ways in which we may grow in our missionary purpose. It is an invitation to be positive, bold, and imaginative.

Hope in the future is not a "one size fits all" programme. We have a great variety of parish communities, and no two of our parishes are the same. The programme is divided into five stages, which can be completed at any time and in any order that is best suited to that parish. The important thing is that we recognise and celebrate all that have to offer in our parishes - all the wonderful gifts and talents of people of all ages - and to have that sense of positivity to question what more we might be doing to improve the world in which we live.

We are most certainly in challenging times, but the challenges will not overwhelm us. Instead, we look to the future with that sense of hope and encouragement - with that joy in the Gospel message that is so central to our faith - and ask the Lord to walk with us as we step out on the road to missionary discipleship, as we pray: "Stay with us, Lord, on our journey."

Yours devotedly,

+John

Bishop of Salford



HOPE IN THE FUTURE

PRAYER

God, our loving Father,
We thank you for blessing our parish with all
that we need to respond to our vocation to be a
missionary community in our locality.

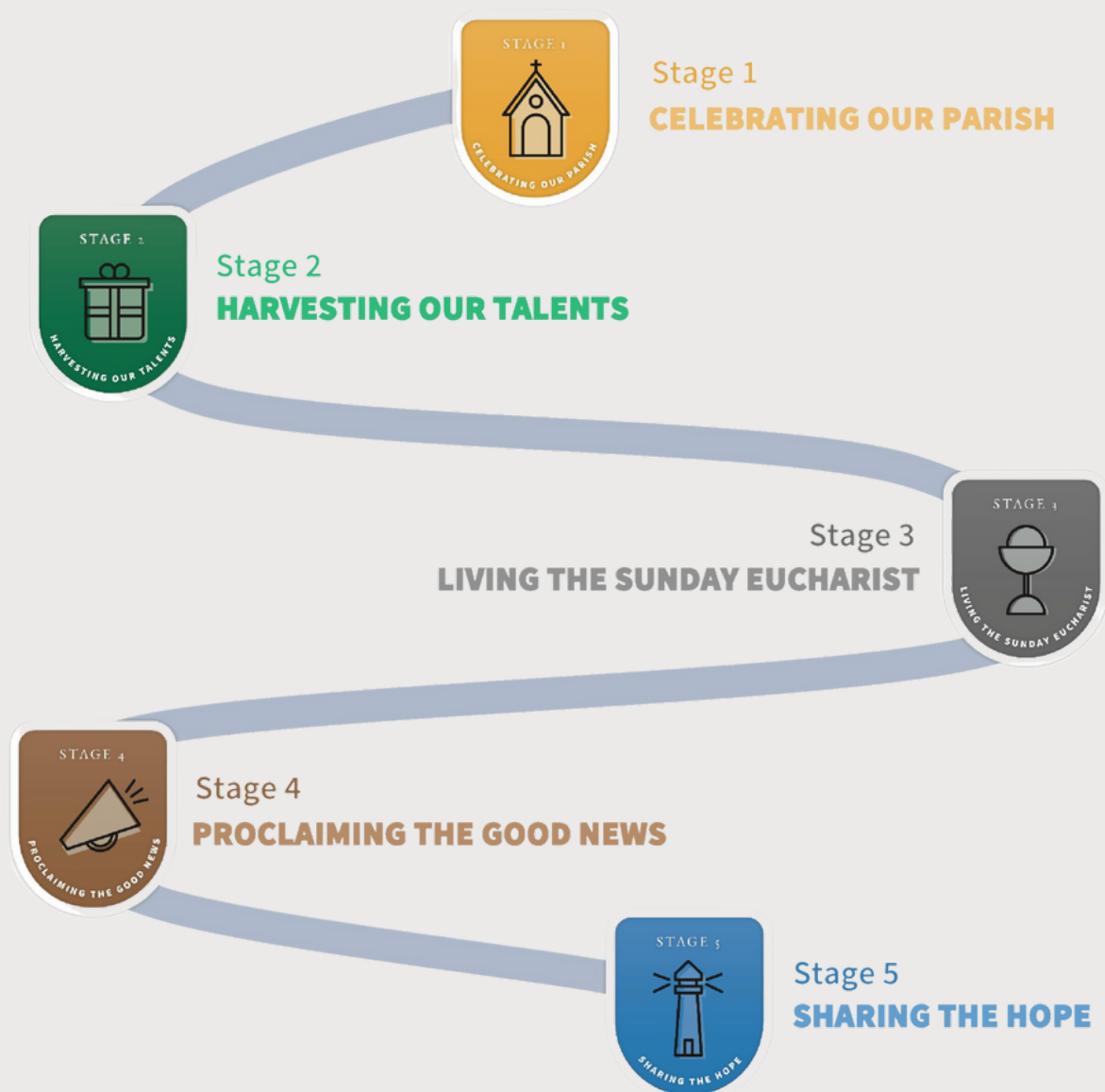
We thank you for all our parish members who,
in response to your call, give of themselves so
freely to enrich our parish life in the ways of
love and service.

We ask you now to pour out afresh the gifts of
your Spirit upon each one of us that we may be
inspired to serve you in new and creative ways
as missionary disciples, bringing your Light to
the world.

We ask your blessing upon us as we journey
together in hope, through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

THE FIVE STAGES

Our Hope in the Future programme is divided into five stages. Parishes and schools can join the programme at any stage and work through the sections in an order and timeframe to suit their individual needs. The stages are as follows:



STAGE ONE

CELEBRATING OUR PARISH

Overview

On Wednesday 4th October 2017, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, we launched 'Hope in the Future' at Salford Cathedral.

The launch evening was a great success, with clergy and parish representatives from across the diocese gathering together to celebrate and all left feeling enthusiastic for the task ahead.

At the launch Bishop John explained: "Pope Francis wants each and every one of us, no matter who we are, our age, our skills, our experiences; he wants each and every one of us to be Missionary Disciples. Missionary Disciples in Missionary Parishes."

"Hope in the Future aims to help provide each parish with the support, encouragement and resources to achieve this. It is an invitation to every parish in the Diocese to recognise and develop their missionary identity and their call to evangelise. It builds on the theme of Hope which is key to the catechesis of Pope Francis."

Every parish was presented with a blessed San Damiano Cross to display in their church and a resource pack to get their parish started on the process.

Bishop John continued to say: "Our parishes are so different, suburban, urban, rural parishes. Some of them are ancient, some of them are very new. And each in its own context has its work to do. We need to identify what that work is and respond in our own parish mission."

Recognising the uniqueness of each parish is key to the success of Hope in the Future. By the end of this journey, it is hoped that we will have a programme that has resources relevant for all parishes.

Whilst some parishes may have already completed the programme, others might be a little way behind - or some may just be at the very start. But every parish can find its own time to join the journey, to use the resources provided (available at the end of this booklet) and be guided by the experiences of parishes that have gone ahead.

Continue reading to find out more about our Hope in the Future programme and how you can get started in your parish.

FORMATION, MISSION, AND EVANGELISATION

Adapted from a talk by Fr Gerard Kelly

When we ponder on the meaning and purpose of Hope in the Future, here in the Diocese of Salford, we are not thinking, in the first place, of a directive from the Bishop; neither are we thinking primarily about a programme or a plan of action to be implemented in the Diocese - just another task to be accomplished. Rather, led by Bishop John, we are, as a diocese, engaging with the Universal Church in a deep-seated renewal of our fundamental identity as Catholic Christians, and awakening afresh to our God-given purpose and mission.

The roots of this awakening can be traced back to the turbulent years of the 1960s when Pope John XXIII inaugurated the Second Vatican Council announcing his hope that the Council would engage the Church more intimately with God's "inscrutable designs" for "the greater good of the Church."

Fast forward to today, Pope Francis - who radiates from his own person the joy of the Gospel - has called the whole Church—that's you and me!—to be missionary disciples. It is in this context that we can understand that Bishop John desires to see the development of Missionary Parishes, motivated by the Gospel, alive in the Spirit, and at the service of our local communities.

This joyful process is all about understanding the unique role we have to play in our Church and how our personal faith, skills, talents, and relationship with Christ can contribute to building up God's Kingdom on earth.

Developing a Missionary Parish

Key to this stage is to recognise and celebrate the Missionary Activity that already takes place in our parishes. Already, there is so much talent, enthusiasm, and generosity in our parish communities, and this primary stage of our Hope in the Future programme is all about coordinating our strengths to make our parish communities vibrant places of worship and beacons of hope in our local communities.

Continue reading over the page as we explore the different activities and ways our parishes can work to live out the Gospel message and share our faith with future generations and people beyond our pews.

DEVELOPING A MISSIONARY PARISH

Inspired by the teaching of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Bishop John desires to encourage the development of missionary parishes. A missionary parish will have a focus on evangelisation, deepening our relationship with Christ and inviting others to get to know Him through welcome, engagement, and outreach:

Welcome

- Creating a place of joyful welcome and belonging, accessible to all
- Building an active and inclusive Parish Shared Leadership Team
- Safeguarding all parishioners through implementation of proper procedures
- Meeting the needs of children and young people
- Encouraging participation in parish activities
- Keeping all parish buildings in good repair
- Providing a prayerful ambience through church decoration and cleaning

Engagement

- Celebrating well-planned and prayerful liturgies
- Providing opportunities for prayer and devotion outside of Mass
- Forming people for liturgical and catechetical ministries
- Catechising for Baptism and other Sacraments
- Engaging with schools and colleges within the parish
- Training in discipleship, including adult formation, RCIA and opportunities for growing in our Christian faith
- Preparing engaged couples for marriage and supporting those who are married
- Educating parishioners in the social teachings of the Church
- Overseeing parish finances with transparency
- Maintaining good collaboration across all parish activities

Outreach

- Communicating well through newsletters, websites and social media
- Serving the particular needs of the local community
- Creating social outreach groups open to all
- Linking with Caritas, CAFOD, SVP and similar organisations
- Caring for the local environment
- Caring for our common home
- Inviting participation in activities such as parish missions or Alpha courses
- Reaching out to parishioners who do not regularly attend church
- Participating in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and action

The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community.

While certainly not the only institution which evangelises, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”.

This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few.

The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.

In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers.

It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach.

We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 28

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AROUND THE DIOCESE Stage One

St Mary's, Bamber Bridge

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To begin its Hope in the Future journey, St Mary's parish in Bamber Bridge chose to focus on trees, which are very much part of the tradition of Bamber Bridge.

To celebrate the life of St Mary's they created "The Browndage Parish Tree". It followed the idea of the "Jesse Tree", a tree which grows in life during Advent until it flourishes into a Christmas tree.

The Browndage Tree is adorned with fifty small crosses, each labelled with a different group or aspect of parish life. Parishioners were asked to place the crosses onto the tree at Sunday Masses for the First Sunday of Advent.



St Charles Borromeo, Swinton

The parish of St Charles Borromeo, Swinton produced a fantastic Hope in the Future Parish Booklet, celebrating the wonderful gifts and talents shared by their parishioners through their Parish ministries.

The parish also celebrated the diversity of their parish with an International Mass. There were music, readings and dance from the many cultures. Following the Mass there was a ministry fair showcasing the parish groups with opportunity for new members to get involved. There was lots of fun too with a BBQ, games and a bouncy castle in the sun.

Sacred Heart and St Francis, Gorton

The Hope in the Future Team from the Parish of Sacred Heart and St Francis helped to organise a special liturgy and display celebrating the gifts of the Holy Spirit on the Feast of Pentecost.

The team also arranged a prayer vigil to remember those who lost their lives at the Manchester Arena attack. The Church was open until 10:30pm so members of the parish could light a candle and pray for the victims and their families. The youth music group 'ambition' also performed a song.



St. John Fisher, Kearsley

St John Fisher Parish in Kearsley launched Hope in the Future on the same day as their Christmas Fayre.

They also arranged events to reach out to others including a carol service at Forest Bank Prison.

Additionally, rather than sending Christmas cards, parishioners are asked to just send one to go on a publicly displayed tree, and have a donation box for the money saved on postage and cards.

The money saved will be donated to the Salvation Army to give a homeless person a meal and a bed for Christmas Day.

St Cuthbert's, Bolton

The parish has just started an Alpha group to introduce people to the Christian faith through hospitality, sharing, and open conversation.

The Hope in the Future launch at St Thomas of Canterbury church - in the parish of St Cuthbert in Bolton - took the format of a jigsaw that was created by pupils from the primary school. Each piece of the jigsaw represents one of the parish ministries. A representative from each ministry brought a piece of the jigsaw to the altar and placed it on the image of the San Damiano cross to symbolise the unity in the parish.



The Good Shepherd, Colne

Parishioners with friends from other local Christian churches, gathered on Palm Sunday in the local park to commemorate the Passion of Jesus. Young people from the 'Stage Door Theatre Group' created tableaux of the Stations of the Cross, whilst more than 60 followed the procession listening to readings and singing hymns as they made their way around the park. They were delighted to be joined by their MP Andrew Stephenson and local Councillor Joe Cooney. The Parish Craft group created an exhibition which was displayed in 'The Glass House' in the main street in Colne to bear witness of Holy Week and Easter to the local community.

St Marie & St Joseph, Bury

The Hope in the Future team started a 'Padre Pio Prayer Group'. The prayer time includes praise and worship, reading God's Word, Times of Silence and Individual and Group prayer. In August the prayer group attended a 'Padre Pio Retreat Day' at the Pantasaph Franciscan Friary in North Wales.

Mount Carmel with St John Bosco, Blackley

The Hope in the Future team started a 'Padre Pio Prayer Group'. The prayer time includes praise and worship, reading God's Word, Times of Silence and Individual and Group prayer. In August the prayer group attended a 'Padre Pio Retreat Day' at the Pantasaph Franciscan Friary in North Wales.

St John Henry Newman, Urmston

The parish of St John Henry Newman welcomed this first stage of Hope in the Future with the introduction of “Nightfever” to English Martyrs church in Urmston.

‘Nightfever’ is a gentle way of Evangelisation. The concept is simple, the church remains open from around 7pm - 10pm, bathed in just candlelight. On the altar is the exposed Blessed Sacrament with opportunity for confession. Live music is softly played in the background. The atmosphere is one of beauty and of peace.

Trained volunteers from the parish invited people to come into the church and light a candle. At the front of church was a basket with paper and pens so that anyone who wanted to could write down the name or a cause to be included as a special intention.

A number of regular parishioners volunteered to pray in the church for the street mission taking place outside. Over 30 new people were brought into the presence of Jesus that evening.

St John the Evangelist, Salford

The Cathedral parish displayed their many ministries and groups at the back of the Cathedral. Their Hope in the Future team decided to print enough copies of the Lent and Holy Week reflections for parishioners and visitors to the Cathedral to take away each week after Mass to reflect on. This has helped the parish’s prayer life throughout Lent and helped people discern how they can get involved with parish life.



Christ the Redeemer, Bolton

Hope in the Future was officially launched in the parish on the feast of Pentecost. A short liturgy was held to give thanks to God for the many groups and ministries in the parish. There was a stall at the back of Church with more information and all parishioners were given this reflection so they could prayerfully discern how they could contribute to the mission of the parish. After Mass the children received balloons with the word HOPE printed on them. In addition, a new shared leadership team was set up along with a parish directory and a new weekly prayer group.



Parish of the Holy Spirit, Manchester

During Lent the parish organised a retreat led by Fr Eamonn Mulcahy with the theme 'Journeying to Emmaus'. They marked Mothering Sunday remembering all the mothers in the parish who have died and a special blessing for all mothers in the parish, with the children's liturgy singing 'More than enough' after Mass. A group showed their support for International Women's Day by 'Pressing for Progress' promising to challenge stereotyping and bias in everyday life.

St Mary's, Oswaldtwistle

The parish held their annual Deanery Lenten Station Mass, attended by over 125 people from parishes within the Deanery area along with seven guest priests. Other parishes were invited to share their individual skills and experiences with a view to recognising new possibilities and needs, and to share best practice while forming joint projects in the future.



STAGE TWO

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HARVESTING OUR TALENTS

Overview

The Church teaches that it is the mission of all people to proclaim the Gospel. Stage Two looks to develop this mission.

During Stage Two, there will be an emphasis on encouraging all people in our parish to discern their gifts and put them at the service of the Church, including sharing in the leadership of the parish.

This formative stage encourages us to consider the skills, talents, and gifts we possess and consider how we might use them for the praise and glory of God within our parish communities.

Whether it's taking an active role in the celebration of Mass by becoming a reader, a Eucharistic minister, a musician, or leading the children's liturgy, or perhaps you're working behind the scenes to make our churches beautiful or are helping others to access the Sacraments as a catechist, there are numerous ways to serve God by making our parishes vibrant communities of worship.

During this next section, we explore more about how to make our different ministries thrive and how to coordinate our groups through parish leadership teams.

PARISH SHARED LEADERSHIP

Key to Stage 2 of Hope in the Future is the establishment of shared leadership within each parish.

Bishop John asks every parish to set up a Shared Leadership Team in the form that works best for them so that the priest(s) and laity can work together in the building up of the Missionary Parish.

A resource was distributed suggesting four models which have worked well in a variety of parish contexts. Parishes may wish to use one of these or a combination of the models whilst others may wish to give the Hope in the Future parish team the responsibility of the parish leadership.

On the next page, you find some suggested models which have worked well in a range of parishes in our diocese. Your parish may choose your own model or a combination of the suggested models. Some parishes may wish to give the Hope in the Future parish team the responsibility of the parish leadership whilst others may wish to create a separate group, or include other lay leaders. All teams are advisory to the Parish Priest.

Model	Membership	Meeting Frequency	Responsibilities
Model 1 - Parish Advisory & Coordination Team	Team of around 12 people responsible for different areas of parish life (e.g. buildings, liturgy, outreach, youth etc.)	Whole group meetings once every two months lasting two hours. Individual meetings half an hour each between parish priest and area lead, every other month.	To coordinate the people and activities in their particular area of parish life. Chaired by the parish priest or a lay member of the team. Each person feedback on their area of responsibility with time for general items. Communication and activity takes place between meetings.
Model 2 - Parish Leadership Team	6 lay leaders plus the parish clergy.	Every six weeks for two hours.	Finance & Administration, safeguarding (advisory role – not to share confidential information in this meeting), Outreach (youth, refugees, homeless etc), Formation (catechesis, sacramental programmes etc), Liturgy (readers & Eucharistic ministers training & rotas, music, liturgical calendar), Social Events, Communications (website, newsletter).
Model 3 - Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	Between 4 and 6 members plus the parish priest.	Weekly for around two hours.	Responsible for strategically driving forward the Parish Vision and empowering subgroups to thrive in their ministry. Main support group for the parish priest to help lead out of a team and discern. There may be a subgroup of ministry leads and a strategy group looking at long term planning (3-5 years).
Model 4 - Parish Council	Between 9 to 12 members. There must be a president (parish priest), chairperson (elected by the council) and secretary (responsible for minutes and agendas) plus additional committees.	Monthly or at least four times a year lasting between one and two hours.	Oversee work of the parish. Develops a parish plan and priorities to be mission orientated. Communicates regularly with the parish ensuring that all voices within the parish and the wider community are heard and respected.
Hope in the Future Mission Team	Co-exists with any of the above models made up of those with a missionary focus with communication between the two groups or this could become the Shared Leadership Team with a wider parish remit.	Monthly or bi-monthly for one to two hours.	Training and formation of missionary disciples. Coordinate parish outreach. To help develop and renew parish life in line with the Hope in the Future programme and resources. To foster Shared Leadership.
Finance Committee (Required by Canon Law)	Parish Priest with 5 lay members (knowledgeable & skilled in financial matters and known for their prudent judgement) invited and appointed by the Parish Priest.	Four times a year.	The Parish Priest presides over the meeting and receives the Committee's proposals. One person should be nominated as Secretary. Responsible for stewardship of parish accounts and buildings.



SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

GIFTS AND TALENTS

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone, it is the same God at work.

Now to each one, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”

1 Cor 12: 4-7

A key element of Stage 2 is encouraging all people in our parishes to discern their God-given Gifts, Talents and Charisms. Once this has been discerned, individuals and groups can seek out ongoing training and formation suited to their specific areas, and then use these skills and gifts at the service of the Church.

As we look to begin the process of building up the different ministries in our parishes, we take a moment to reflect on this passage from St Paul, to give thanks for the wonderful gifts and talents in our diocese, and to ask the Holy Spirit to inspire all people to respond generously in the service of God.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Stage Two



St John Fisher, Kearsley

In this second stage of our Hope in the Future programme, the parish of St John Fisher in Kearsley unveiled a striking stained-glass of its parish saint.

Designed by one of the parishioners, this beautiful depiction of St John Fisher was blessed by Bishop John, followed by a Blessed Sacrament procession.

The parish held a prayerful Quarant'ore, which was very well attended and ended with a wonderful youth celebration.

This busy parish has also been working hard to create an accessible sensory Garden named the Hope Garden to help people with dementia.

The Good Shepherd, Colne

Holy Week 2019 began on the afternoon of Palm Sunday with the enactment of Stephen Cottrell's "The Nail" (being part of the Passion).

This dramatic enactment by volunteer parishioners with the help of young people from the local Stage Door group, was a unique and innovative Holy Week Liturgy comprising of music, readings and drama.

Everyone left the church both moved and challenged by the liturgy and with a 6 inch nail to use as a focus for prayer throughout the week. The parish has also seen the newly formed SVP group go from strength to strength.

Our Lady and St Alphonsus, Moss Side and Old Trafford

The Hope in the Future team at Our Lady's and St Alphonsus organised and ran an Alpha Course in their parish. The six week course took a lot of organising and publicising, but their hard work paid off when on the first night over 40 members of the community attended.

Each week, the parish community shared a meal, watched videos and held engaging discussions about different aspects of our faith. From this experience, the team are hoping to run an Alpha course for the wider community.

St Mary and St John Fisher, Denton

This green-fingered parish teamed up with parish schools to kickstart projects to care for our common home. The group signed up to CAFOD'S Living Simply Award and drafted a consultation document. This was shared with parishioners, and the staff and pupils of our three schools. It ties in with action to counteract climate change and one of the big initiatives has been to turn the lawns at the front of St. John Fisher Church into a wildflower garden. Lots of hard work have produced great results.

The parish also tapped into its creative side by putting on a special production of the musical "Oliver" to celebrate the silver jubilee of former parish priest, Fr Peter Kinsella.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St John Bosco, Blackley

The parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St John Bosco organised Quarant'ore.

Quarant'ore is a special time of prayer in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which takes place over 40 hours. Parishioners purchased 100 candles, which were lit in remembrance of special intentions.

Children from the schools attended along with visitors from across the deanery.



The Good Samaritan, Burnley

The churches of Christ the King, St Mary of the Assumption and St John the Baptist, Burnley have been preparing for amalgamation into one parish.

This process has now been completed with the three churches uniting under the name of The Parish of the Good Samaritan.

To mark the formal coming together as one parish members of the Hope in the Future team together with Fr David Featherstone planned a celebration. There was a midday Mass at St Mary's followed by a social gathering at Turf Moor, Burnley Football Club's ground. The celebration encouraged families to meet and get to know fellow parishioners. Bishop John visited the newly amalgamated parish and the three churches.

St Teresa of Avila and St Joseph the Worker, Irlam

During the last year the parish have formed a Parish Council made up of groups who help to run the different aspects of Parish life.

They have continued to celebrate together during special Advent and Lent services, involving parishioners and children from both primary schools including an inspiring Lent retreat.

They hosted their third Reaching Out to Refugees Day, welcoming refugee families to share food, activities and support, bringing the parish community together in a most humbling and rewarding way.

They have worked hard to forge closer links between school and parish which has seen greater involvement of the children in daily Mass, a wonderful afternoon tea where children and parishioners met, chatted and were entertained and a very successful joint school and parish Summer Fair, which has strengthened our community and gives us great hope in our future.

St Gabriel and the Angels and St John the Baptist, Rochdale

The parish Social Group organised a 'Jacob's Feast' in September, where parishioners contributed food to celebrate the diverse cultures which make up our community. A 'RefuTea' was held in June to raise funds and awareness in support of the Refugee Council.

The parish is also working closely with Caritas and RADAR (a local interecumenical initiative to provide support for refugees and destitute asylum seekers), with the intention of utilising the empty presbytery at St John's as a pilot scheme to provide accommodation for those in need.

Members of the Legion of Mary continue to evangelise in Rochdale town centre on Saturdays



St Anne's, Crumpsall

The parish Hope in the Future Team have been forging greater links with their Primary School at St. Anne's. There were already strong links between school and parish but this year the congregation were invited into school to judge some of their Lent and Easter artwork. They had created Stations of the Cross and Easter eggs decorated to highlight environmental issues.

The group have taken on the Social and Outreach work for the Parish and have started an annual Macmillan Coffee Morning.



St Peter & St Thomas More, Middleton and Alkrington

The Hope in the Future Team at St Peter and St Thomas More organised a celebration of Quarant'ore. Jesus must be at the centre of all our mission and evangelisation efforts: we are introducing people to him, and he is the one who guides and inspires us in all we do. A very simple yet effective prayer suggestion is to pray as a parish team before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament for our missionary efforts.

St John Paul II, Eccles

The parish Hope in the Future team meet each month alternating with prayer and reflection and business and planning. The team includes representatives from their three Catholic schools who feedback and strengthen links with the schools. There is a notice board in the foyer of Holy Cross Church designed by the children of the schools which showcase how they have been Missionary Disciples.

An Advent Challenge was organised with the Church and school community raising £1700 to provide wells in Africa. The Lenten challenge raised £1500 for Mary's meals. Food and clothing are delivered each week by a committee member to Loaves and Fishes homeless centre. English classes support and encourage asylum seekers and refugees from within the area.

St Marie & St Joseph, Bury



At an international Mass at St Marie and Joseph's, Bury, nationalities and voices from around the world came together to highlight the culture and vibrancy of the parish.

The bidding and Eucharistic prayers were said in a variety of languages and children presented flags which represented their country of origin, illustrating a great way that a parish community used their gifts, talents and experiences to come together and celebrate their differences.

Corpus Christi, Bolton

The parish of Corpus Christi have a well established Shared Leadership Team with parishioners representing areas of finance, safeguarding and catechesis supporting their priests.

In addition more volunteers are supporting various areas of Parish Ministry. An already successful social calendar has been enhanced by including more family friendly, community focused events e.g. litter picks.

Regular coffee mornings and collections of items to support the Destitution Project.

A sponsored walk, led by the SVP, to raise funds for Mozambique and needy families in our locality was organised. There were a series of prayer and reflection sessions offered during Lent led by a parishioner. Christmas baubles were designed by children and families

St Vincent de Paul, Norden

To extend a warm welcome to parishioners and other visitors to the parish, the Hope in the Future team at St Vincent de Paul in Norden used their talents to produce a welcome booklet.

The booklet, designed and printed by parishioners, explained different terms about Mass and Catholicism simply so that those visiting the church for funerals, weddings and baptisms could learn about our faith.

St Michael & St Bernadette, Whitefield

The parish held a Community Summer Fun Day in June with attendees from the parish and local community.

Parish groups showcased their talents encouraging others to join with entertainment, a raffle and a cake baking competition.

There was also a bar, café and barbecue and the PTA ran fun activities for the children.





St Edward, Lees

The parish created a new directory with details of over 30 activities, encouraging greater involvement in the life and mission of the parish, opportunities for all parishioners to discern their gifts and talents.

The CAFOD group joined with the primary school's ECO group and the high school to organise an evening Mass, 'Care for our Common Home,' inspired by Pope Francis's Laudato Si'.

The 'Young Christian Workers' group organised and served a delicious 'Mothers' Day Afternoon Tea.'

St Edward's hopes for the future are encapsulated in enduring community, charity and spirituality.

The Holy Infant & St Anthony, Astley Bridge

To celebrate 140th anniversary of the founding of the parish, a special Mass and celebration was arranged. Bishop John celebrated the Mass along with a number of priests from across the diocese. There was a celebration at Holy Infant's School including a raffle, buffet and refreshments.

The celebrations included picture boards looking back over the years, Quarant'ore from Friday to Sunday and a coffee and cake morning raising £140.00 for charity.

St Cuthbert's, Bolton

The Christian outreach team at St Cuthbert's parish is based on sharing what unites rather than divides, working closely with other Churches and Faith groups in the parish and inviting each other to study groups, social events, shared worship and wider community projects.

An important event is the 'Party in the Park' celebration in Moss Bank Park, where they celebrated their Parish and developed links with others. Their aim as a Missionary Parish is to be out there: being who they are and inviting good contact with their spiritual neighbours.

For Stage 2 Resources,
visit <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faiht/hope/resources/stage-2/>

STAGE THREE

LIVING THE SUNDAY EUCHARIST

Overview

The weekend liturgy is, in a real sense, the shop window for the parish.

The Third Stage will provide an emphasis on how we can build on this Celebration to ensure that our parishes are mission oriented through our welcome, our liturgy and our hospitality.

In Stage 3 of our Hope in the Future journey we turn our hearts and minds to the Sunday Eucharist.

The Eucharist, a word meaning Thanksgiving, is often described as "the source and summit of the Christian life". It is where we encounter Jesus in Word, Sacrament and in each other. It is where we receive the strength to continue on our journey with the Lord as Missionary Disciples.

The Sunday Eucharist is often people's first (and sometimes only) experience of the Church. With this in mind it is important that parishes ensure the welcome, the various ministries in the liturgy, the accessibility and the hospitality offered after Mass are the very best they can be so people new to the Church want to come back, and bring a friend because they feel part of the community and have an encounter with God.

Every member of the congregation, whether ministers or not, has a responsibility to help make the celebration this personal encounter, both for themselves and for each other.

Throughout the Stage, we will examine Sunday Mass under four headings; Our Welcome, Our Listening, Our Offering and Our Mission.

Each theme will focus on a personal encounter with Jesus and how every part of the Mass must be seen in these terms, if it is to nourish and strengthen us as disciples.

Continue reading as we explore more of each of our four themes.

THE FOUR THEMES

OUR WELCOME, OUR LISTENING, OUR OFFERING, OUR MISSION

In this Stage we are reflecting on different aspects of the Sunday Eucharist, seeking to deepen our awareness of the personal encounter with Jesus, and the mission He entrusts to us as His disciples.

Welcome

Today we think about welcome—the welcome we give each other, the welcome God gives us when we come to His house, and the way we welcome Jesus into our lives in our Sunday Mass each week.

Bishop John writes: “This first focus is on meeting Jesus in our Welcome. This Welcome is expressed in various ways. We arrive at church and welcome one another as members together of our parish community and be sure that visitors feel welcomed as our guests. We have come from our busy lives to celebrate the family of our parish. We bring with us our intentions for ourselves, family and friends and our hopes and concerns. When we arrive at Church, we encounter Jesus in one another, the Body of Christ. We are also welcomed, in the opening prayers of our Mass, by Jesus himself who greets us with forgiveness and reconciliation.

Discussion and Reflection Questions:

Use these questions to guide your personal reflection, or any discussions either at Mass or in Parish groups:

- How do I prepare for Mass each Sunday?
- When I arrive at Church what is the first thing I do?
- Do I greet others? Do others greet me?
- How do I welcome the visitor or stranger?
- Is the Church conducive to prayer before Mass?
- Do I enter the Mass ready and looking forward to meeting Jesus?
- Do the Introductory rites get us into “the right place” for this celebration?

Practical Questions:

- Is our Church easy to find and access?
- Are people with limited mobility able to get in easily?
- Are welcomers (or apparitors) on duty at every Mass?
- Is there room for people to greet each other and chat before entering Church?
- Are people accommodating with regard to seating?
- Are there spaces for people with disabilities or in wheelchairs?
- What resources are there in Church to help take part in Mass? Are they effective?

Meeting Jesus in our listening

After we have gathered for Sunday Mass, we sit and listen—actually more than that, we open our hearts to the living Word of God proclaimed in the Scriptures! You will know the phrase “I’m all ears!” which we use when about to hear some juicy gossip or important news. How much more should we be “all ears” for what our God has to say to us. In the Catholic Church we have a wonderful, rich selection of Scripture, Sunday by Sunday, season by season, which unfolds to us the amazing story of God’s love, especially in the person of Jesus when he speaks to us in the Gospel. How is this a living Word for us?

Bishop John writes: “Our spoken words are an essential and vital part of our prayer in the Eucharistic celebration. We declare our Faith and give praise to God in the many familiar texts of the Mass, such as the Gloria, The Creed, the Our Father. We can also present our needs and concerns in the Prayers of the Faithful.

“But it is in listening to the readings from the Scriptures that we hear God Himself speaking to us. The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that “the Word of God is something alive and active” (Hebrews 4:12) which means that even the most familiar passages of the Scriptures can speak to us in different and new ways according to the circumstances of our lives, challenging and reassuring us, day by day. It is important that we continually investigate and pray with the Scriptures so that God can be made present in all our actions, choices and decisions.

“The project from the Bishops’ Conference, called “The God Who speaks”, will help us in our discovery of the power of God’s Word. While our reception of the Eucharist is our “nourishment for our Journey”, it is in our listening that we can best know how to direct our actions as “missionary disciples”.

“Let us ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds so that we can hear what God is saying to us today. ‘Speak Lord your servant is listening’ (1 Samuel 3:9). Our attentive listening to the Word of God, in the Scriptures, will help us to be all that God wants us to be in our mission.”

Discussion and Reflection Questions:

Use these questions to guide your personal reflection, or any discussions either at Mass or in Parish groups:

- How do I prepare to listen to God’s Word each Sunday?
- Do I ever look at the Scripture readings in the week before Mass?
- What aids help us listen attentively? Are ‘missalettes’ a distraction?
- Is there a real atmosphere of listening in the Liturgy of the Word?
- How effective is the Homily in “nurturing Christian life”?
- Is the Creed a powerful proclamation of faith or just words to be recited?

Practical Questions:

- Do we have enough readers to give variety in voices?
- Would introductions to the readings help our understanding?
- Do we have cantors to sing the Psalm? If not, how can we make the Psalm a reflective prayer?
- Are our microphones and amplification system effective? Is there a working loop system?
- How could our celebration of the Liturgy of the Word give us a better awareness of the presence of Jesus?
- Who writes the intercessions? Are they prayerful and universal?

Meeting Jesus in our offering

Every Mass is an invitation to every single participant to make a personal offering: this might be our gift in the collection, but should also be an offering of our heart, our life. This offering will be joined to the offering of Jesus on the altar, which becomes the sacrifice of the cross, which we receive again in Holy Communion. This holy “exchange” is at the centre of our meeting with Jesus—he receives what we offer, to offer us himself. And by the Church’s prayer of thanksgiving, remembering the Last Supper of the Lord, we believe that we are nourished with His very Body and Blood, the one sacrifice of Calvary where Christ made the supreme offering of Himself to the Father.

Bishop John writes: “A very real way that we meet Jesus during Sunday Mass is in the Liturgy of the Eucharist and in receiving the Eucharist itself where Jesus is truly present. When Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the last supper, he gave us a memorial of his Passion and fulfilled his promise to “be with us until the end of time” (Matthew 28:20). As the gifts of bread and wine are presented on the altar, we are invited to offer to God all our prayers, concerns and hopes, trusting that he will transform them just as he will transform the gifts of bread and wine into his very self. We are encouraged to join in praying the eucharistic prayer in our hearts as the priest offers the sacrifice of Jesus to the Father on behalf of the people. As we prepare to enter into this great mystery let us remember the words of Jesus in today’s Gospel, “I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, anyone who eats this bread will live forever” (John 6:51).

Discussion and Reflection Questions

Use these questions to guide your personal reflection, or any discussions either at Mass or in Parish groups:

- Do I feel a sense of preparing to “offer myself” with Jesus as the gifts are brought up?
- Is the Eucharistic Prayer truly the high point of the celebration?
- How do I join in with the Eucharistic Prayer even though the priest says the words?
- Do I feel the action of the Holy Spirit, of Jesus, of the Church in this prayer?
- Is Holy Communion rushed or chaotic? Could it be more reverent?

Practical Questions:

- Do we sing all the parts of the Liturgy of the Eucharist that we should?
- Is there a sense of reverence during the Eucharistic prayer and in preparation for Communion?
- Is there silence after communion?
- Are announcements made for the benefit of those not receiving communion?

Meeting Jesus in our mission

Having listened and prayed and eaten and drunk at the Lord's table, we are sent away. The very name of "the Mass" comes from the final words: "Ite, missa est!" ("Go, you are dismissed!") But in these words is contained something else: as Pope Emeritus Benedict said: "In antiquity, 'missa' simply meant 'dismissal'. In Christian usage, however, it gradually took on a deeper meaning. The word 'dismissal' has come to imply a 'mission'. These few words succinctly express "the missionary nature of the Church." (SC 51). Sunday Mass is the SOURCE of all our other activity as disciples of the Lord.

Bishop John writes: "Having encountered Jesus in each other, in his word and in his body and blood we are called to go out from our parish communities and be the living Church.

"When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, he lives in us and we live in him. This is the source for our Christian lives and the source of our strength for the mission that Jesus gave us "to make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19).

"We are called to become what we have received and to be Jesus to others. We must speak to others of his love and mercy, we must serve our brothers and sisters around us and we must care for his creation, our common home, as Missionary Disciples and ambassadors for Christ.

"The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9), underpins the Hope in the Future Programme. Our mission is to continue sowing seeds everywhere we go. Some seeds will fall on good soil and grow whilst others may not. If we continually share the Good News of Jesus with all those we meet - through our actions as well as words - we can leave the rest to God.

Discussion and Reflection Questions

Use these questions to guide your personal reflection, or any discussions either at Mass or in Parish groups:

- Do I feel nourished after holy communion? Do I feel a sense of relief that Mass is over?
- Has the Mass strengthened our identity as a community?
- Do people (do I) leave immediately after communion? Are there justifiable reason for this?
- Do I leave Mass feeling different from when I arrived?
- Do I take away a message, thought or prayer for the week?

Practical Questions:

- Is the Concluding Rite cluttered? Are there too many notices?
- How can we develop a sense of mission as we leave Mass on a Saturday/Sunday?
- Is our parish website/social media up-to-date with the latest newsletter and prayer resources?

A Tribute to our Parishes

Stage Three of our Hope in the Future programme launched in October 2019, with parishes across the diocese gathering in Salford Cathedral to celebrate the start of this most solemn part of our journey.

As hearts and minds turned to focus on the crucial importance of the Eucharist in our faith lives, startling reports of a new virus began to reach our diocese. In just a few months, our parishes shut their doors, Mass was observed through the cold glare of phone and laptop screens, and the graces of the Blessed Sacrament could only be received through the act of Spiritual Communion.

In the midst of a world that had changed beyond all imagination, our parishes offered a rare glimmer of light; demonstrating incredible resilience, faith, and love that gave our diocese the very thing this programme set out to portray: hope.

This key stage of our Hope in the Future journey is centred on the most beautiful part of our faith, the celebration of Mass and the Holy Eucharist, but it came at a time when that was not easily accessible for most of us.

Despite this sudden and unexpected change of course, the core message of this stage still rang clear as parishes rallied together, transforming the way they worked, to ensure this key aspect of our faith could still be accessed - in some way - throughout the restrictions.

Ever inventive, they found new ways to create communities of discipleship, to share the Gospel message, and to revere and adore the Blessed Sacrament, and in doing so - they highlighted the very point of this stage: that the celebration of Mass and the Holy Eucharist is and must be front and centre of our faith.

As we reflect on the work of parish communities in this third stage, we would like to say thank you to everyone who kept the flame of faith alive in these times. We owe so much to our parishioners, parish leadership teams, and clergy who gave our diocese so much hope during the dark days of the pandemic.

We pray that their remarkable spirit will sustain and inspire us as we continue on our journey of faith.

St Edward's, Lees

Since March 2020, Masses have been streamed each weekend. Twenty-five stewards supported Fr Callum at daily Mass. Fr John provided thought provoking weekly reflection on the Sunday readings and weekly prayer intentions were shared online.

An outdoor socially distanced Prayer Service for Year 6 pupils was led by Fr Callum followed by a blessing for all St Edward's pupils and staff.

Rainbow cards were sent from school to vulnerable parishioners. Families in need were supported by the priests of the parish, SVP, St Edward's PTA and the School Pastoral Lead.

Hope in the Future and CAFOD information was shared online with the parish community, e.g. coronavirus emergency appeal and online talks and discussion. Virtual meetings were held with Finance, Buildings & Maintenance, School Governors, Sacramental Programme, and YCW Teams.



Holy Trinity, Worsley

During the pandemic, the parish became experts in 'Zooming'! Since the early days of lockdown, Fr John Dale zoomed Masses daily, with Exposition for quiet prayer each evening. On Sundays, the Rosary and Benediction were zoomed also. Email has been a blessing with Fr John sending out a daily newsletter and a weekly parish bulletin with the 'Lords Day at Home'.

Parish groups continued to meet online including the Bereavement Group, SVP, Ecology Group, and the Poetry Group.

Christ the Redeemer, Bolton

During lockdown, the parish moved their weekly online prayer group virtually with praise and worship, scripture study and discussion. They also arranged an online Alpha course watching the weekly video together and going into breakout rooms to discuss. Each Saturday there was a virtual coffee morning followed by the Rosary on Zoom.



St Vincent de Paul, Bolton

Since lockdown, the parish has streamed Mass each day. Attendance has been great with a lively conversation taking place about the ongoing liturgy, its meaning and importance in this difficult time for many.

Parishioners were involved in preparing readings at home sending them in by video. Youth groups from local parishes joined in to read for a week. This gave a real feeling of being involved at home and not just watching. Parishioners from other parishes in the Deanery who had no live stream of their own joined the stream and this meant information could be passed on from other parishes. Key worker children from St Bernard's School also prepared stations of the cross and decorations for the May altar. Services were streamed over Holy Week involving different participants.

Children also had their children's liturgy online once a month. The parish ongoing formation programme did not stop with the CaFE programme "Let it be" being run online.

A small group was set up to gather names and contacts of people who did not have online access and through their families found ways to allow them to participate online. Where that was not possible, designated contacts rang each week to chat and keep parishioners up to date on developments from the Church. In this period of time, communication over Facebook and an email newsletter grew.

The parish also put on some social events via Zoom. A coffee morning and Afternoon Tea, as well as a talent competition were among the choices made. It's amazing that this time apart has brought the community closer together. A lot of the work during this lockdown will become a great platform for moving on in the community to a new normal.

St Mary & St Philip Neri, Radcliffe

The parish of St Mary and St Philip Neri made a display exploring the reflection questions on the first Pastoral Message & Worksheet on Meeting Jesus in our Welcome, encouraging the assembly to think about the Introductory Rites of Mass.

Our Lady & St Patrick's, Oldham

The parish of Our Lady & St. Patrick's, Oldham produced a 150 year anniversary booklet celebrating the wonderful history of the parish.

St Michael & St Bernadette, Whitefield

The parish has strengthened its online presence by developing a new parish website & Facebook page, both incorporating the Hope In The Future Initiative. The Parish Pastoral Team has been a beacon of hope through these troubled times by delivering newsletters to those who were shielding, organising virtual coffee mornings and stewarding for the reopening of church which gave parishioners the confidence in returning to Mass. They also arranged for the children of the parish to read the Sunday Gospel and to decorate the church doors for the Month of Mary and the Month of the Sacred Heart. Both churches also have a Hope in the future display to keep parishioners up to date with the programme.

St Mary's, Bamber Bridge

The mission team at St Mary's in Bamber Bridge asked parishioners to complete a questionnaire in response to the first pastoral message and worksheet on how we Meet Jesus in our Welcome. The responses were compiled and shared with the rest of the parish to help with planning to improve the parish's welcome. A similar process will be arranged for the other three pastoral messages.

St Margaret Clitherow, Rochdale

The parish was blessed to have an online presence with the livestreaming of Masses even before lockdown. This came into full use after churches needed to close with livestreaming Masses and other devotions.

During Vocations Week, together with Theo Sharrock, a seminarian for the diocese, the parish was able to broadcast a series of talks to encourage vocations. The webcam, coupled with the parish Facebook page, has helped to keep the community together in these difficult times.

Fr Francis Wadsworth also worked hard to keep spirits up with his fireside chats and cookery demonstrations.

During the Virtual Pilgrimage to Lourdes Theo and Fr Francis were able to bring the diocesan family together with recitations of the Rosary from the Grotto in the grounds of Holy Family Church.



Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St John Bosco, Manchester

From the beginning of the lockdown the parish has streamed Mass, Divine Mercy Prayers and Holy Hours through Facebook and YouTube. Fr Anthony used these opportunities to rally the parish and lift their spirits, giving hope in difficult times as well as updating viewers on important news about the life of the parish. A team of parishioners used their technical skills in setting up the live stream and uploading 'worship at home' resources.

Others ensured those in need had shopping, access to the Sunday scripture and someone to talk to.



Sacramental preparation continued through the excellent links with the schools and families with catechists providing materials online with accompaniment on the phone and on zoom. Children's worksheets were also available online for each Sunday.

A large team worked hard to ensure the parish could open again following all the safety regulations. Members of the prayer group prayed in their own homes, gathering at a distance at a set time each week, sharing scripture, hymns, and prayers. The 'Prayer for Healing in Uncertain times' was read at each Mass along with recorded hymns and readings. Fr Anthony encouraged families to pray together at home. The Pastoral Committee continued to meet on Zoom and socially distanced to help the parish adapt to the pandemic and find creative solutions to keeping everyone connected.

St Cuthbert's Bolton

During the lockdown, the parish continued to reach out with daily live streaming of Mass and Exposition; with an online presence offering An Ignatian Parish Retreat; three virtual Pilgrimages (Lourdes, Rome, The Holy Land) and daily prayers.

Through video they shone a Light of Hope by passing on a lighted candle from person to person. For the children they produced online readings, messages and building a home prayer corner. Fr Chris with Joshua and Woolly engaged with the younger ones. For the Youth there were online special messages and guided meditation.

Through Zoom there were coffee mornings, a Quiz Night and a Talent Show. Funds were raised for Bolton Hospice from a home sale of hanging baskets and food donations continued to be collected to support Urban Outreach. All this gave a strong link and a bond both within the parish and beyond.

The Good Samaritan, Burnley

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During these challenging times the Parish of the Good Samaritan, Burnley, has, through the leadership and ministry of their Parish Priest Fr David Featherstone, the service of the Assistant Priests and the commitment of many dedicated volunteers, enabled new ways of worship and faithful practice, bringing spiritual comfort and enrichment in a time of uncertainty.

The parish website posts 'The Lord's Day at Home', 'Thought for the Day', parish news, local and global appeals, information of community organisations set up to help the most vulnerable in our community and much more.

It is updated with new material every day and parishioners are encouraged to pass the news on to people who are not on the internet and to keep in touch with those who are socially isolating or living alone. In addition, the content online is mailed out or hand delivered to those who cannot access the internet.

A series of prayers and readings involving students from Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic College featured on the website throughout the Easter Season and leading up to Pentecost, three videos of prayers, scripture, reflections, music and hymns with a concluding blessing, produced by Fr David and seminarian Luke Bradbury, also involved the students.

A further video, in which families were central, was produced to mark the Feast of Corpus Christi, celebrating the great gift of the Eucharist. Live streaming of Sunday Mass (the team responsible evolved from nothing, before lockdown, and now comprises some reliable young people who are new to ministry in the Church) and the private daily Masses have enabled the sharing of 'Spiritual Communion'.

St James and All Souls, Salford

The parish of St James and All Souls moved the remainder of their Alpha course online which proved very successful. A team of 'Guardian Angels' provided practical and emotional support for vulnerable and shielding parishioners. The parish also streamed Masses, Holy Hours and are planning a virtual healing service. The parish have recently formed a Senior Leadership Team and are working closely with Divine Renovation on a journey of renewal trying to respond to Pope Francis' invitation to be missionary disciples in a missionary parish.

St John Fisher, Denton

As a way of improving the parish welcome, St John Fisher, Denton, purchased high chairs to allow some of their youngest Mass-goers to enjoy mid-morning snacks in the parish hall whilst parents have a cup of tea and a chat; a lovely welcome.

St Catherine of Siena & St Ambrose, Didsbury and Chorlton

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Once lockdown started, a team of parishioners stepped up to share their gifts to serve the community. A team of technical ‘experts’ helped in updating the website, managing social media accounts from scratch, and editing and uploading streamed Masses to YouTube on Sundays and other special occasions. It immediately became a whole parish effort, as the editing team were able to drop in readers, musicians, and the children’s liturgy group to each Mass. Mass was also offered for those without the internet via a phone number. The highlight of the contribution made by the children and families was a ‘Families Stations of the Cross’ video which was aired on Good Friday. The parish clergy also recorded videos regularly to provide some spiritual nourishment and formation, as well as to maintain contact with people. They ranged from ‘God in Culture’, ‘Grill the Priest’ and a series of catechesis about the Mass.

The parish also developed the links with their schools by streaming several Masses with St Catherine’s Primary, and a Year 11 Leavers’ Mass with the Barlow High. The Caritas Ambassadors at St Catherine’s also wrote letters to many parishioners to cheer them up. A team of parents from the primary school volunteered to be on standby to help anyone who requested help, as well as spreading the word about any projects that needed help, especially Cornerstone.

One of their most popular social media campaigns was to fill the church with ‘selfies.’ Parishioners were asked to send a ‘selfie’ which was printed and placed on each chair, filling the whole church with a ‘virtual congregation,’ which certainly helped the priests when celebrating Mass in an empty church.

All this was noticed by BBC North West Tonight, and that exposure helped to reach out to the wider community and be a beacon of hope. This was shown on an ecumenical and deanery level when several people from other local Christian and Catholic churches wrote to thank the parish for the hope offered in difficult times.

St Ambrose Barlow, Swinton and Pendlebury

During ‘liturgical lockdown’ the parish were keen to provide online Mass and reflections, whilst keeping a sense of community using video conferencing. This encouraged active participation so parishioners could join in with the responses, see each other and proclaim the Scriptures and Bidding Prayers. In less than 48 hours, one parishioner had contacted parish email subscribers and another was busy working out the technical bits and pieces. In that space of time they were able to gather a ‘congregation’ of over 60, some of those 60 representing whole families.

For Stage 3 Resources,
visit <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/hope/resources/stage-3/>

STAGE FOUR

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS

Overview

In October 2021, parishes across the diocese simultaneously held a Holy Hour to launch Stage 4 of our Hope in the Future Programme.

The Holy Hour provided a wonderful opportunity to renew our commitment to our relationship with the Lord, to give thanks for the generosity of the many volunteers who kept our churches safe during the pandemic, and to ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen our missionary endeavors.

Stage 4 of our Hope in the Future journey calls us to reflect on how we can develop links between our schools, parishes and families, and how we can help those who come into contact with our parishes through the celebrations of baptisms, weddings, funerals, RCIA, Christmas and Easter Liturgies, to experience the Good News of Jesus Christ.

This exciting stage invites us to consider and explore the many and diverse ways our parishes, schools and deaneries can respond to our great commission to “go out to the whole world and to proclaim the Good News” of Jesus.

Continue reading to discover more about this wonderful stage of our Hope in the Future programme and how parishes across the diocese chose to respond.

CALLED, FORMED, SENT

DISCOVERING THE HEART OF GOD

Mission

/ˈmɪʃn/

noun

1. *an important assignment given to a person or group of people, typically involving travel abroad.*
2. *the vocation or calling of a religious organization, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith.*

When we consider the word “mission”, we’re presented with three fundamental aspects that can help guide us on the path of missionary discipleship. Firstly, it’s a task that’s given. Jesus’ final words before His ascension into heaven were “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). We’re called by God Himself to take up this task, and to teach others to do so too.

Secondly, the word “mission” implies action: this isn’t something that can be achieved in our own circles; inside the house, inside our parish, or our school. Although these are fantastic places to start, it has to reach beyond - it involves travel, movement, and reaching new places and new people.

Finally - it’s important. No mission can bear fruit without the drive and determination of the one who is sent, and this drive comes from that person’s understanding of the importance of that mission. The word “mission” implies that the task is not an easy one, but the person who is sent is fuelled by that sense of importance to take on that mission.

So, as we embark on our mission, perhaps we need to “refuel” to get a better grasp of that importance. What is it that drives us? What is it we want people to know?

Inspiration for this Stage can be found in the story of the Rich Young Man (Mark 10:17-31). We hear how “Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him” (Mark 10:21). At the heart of all relationships with God is a personal encounter with him which can take many forms. For some it may be at a religious service, in prayer or during silence.

As evangelists and catechists, we need to first nurture our own personal relationship with Jesus. When Pope Francis met with catechists from around the world, he asked: “when was the last time you let the Lord gaze on you with love?”.

We could ask ourselves this same question and invite you to take up this opportunity to refuel and rediscover the importance of our mission as we begin this next stage.



SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

When we think about our mission to “proclaim the Good News”, it can be difficult to know where to begin, particularly in today’s society.

It can be easy to get swept up with the powerful language of “mission” and “evangelisation” - but what do we mean when we use these words? Is it as daunting as it sounds?

As always, Jesus shows us the way through his interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well. In the Gospel story presented in John 4:5-42, Jesus meets a woman (who is sometimes given the name Photina in Christian tradition) who is not even Jewish - yet in a short space of time, she is encouraging all her friends to “come and see” this amazing person who has transformed her life.

How does Jesus do this? Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus performing miracles, preaching to crowds of thousands, healing afflictions, and forgiving sins. But in this passage, we see none of that. He simply meets Photina where she is and talks to her, helping her to get a glimpse of the heart of God and His love for her.

Join us as we use explore how to echo Jesus’ approach to share the message of God’s love to all.

The following reflections are taken from Fr Gareth Leyshon's blog 'Catholic Preacher' (catholicpreacher.wordpress.com) and Sherry Weddell's Seven Thresholds of Discipleship (siena.org)

1) TRUST - 'Give me a drink.' (John 4:7)

The first threshold is TRUST. Without forming a trusting relationship, we have little hope of sharing the Gospel with anyone. Jesus wins this woman's trust by being humble enough to ask her for a drink of water. In the society of that time, he towered over her on three counts: He was a Jew, he was a man, and he was a righteous rabbi in the presence of someone with multiple partners - for who else would draw water in the heat of the noonday sun? But he enters into her world and grants her dignity, affirming that she has the power to do something to help even a Jewish rabbi.

- Action: Our first step is to consider our relationship with others and how our connections at church, school, or in our personal lives might lead to us to invite others to discover more about faith. Who is God drawing us to? How has He put us in a position to connect with them?

2) CURIOSITY - 'God would have given you living water.' (John 4:10)

The second threshold is one of passive CURIOSITY. Now that Jesus has entered a conversation, he drops in a fascinating but perplexing piece of information: 'God would have given you living water.' This is not a demand for the woman to change her behaviour - rather, it's a statement about God. The woman doesn't have to pursue this information - but she does. She even acknowledges that Jesus is not one of 'them' (a Jew) but one of us (a common heir of 'our father Jacob'.) The mission is afoot! She is interested! Yet at this stage she is behaving as a 'consumer' - she is not looking for God, but only the benefit that God can offer. Who wouldn't want their own source of water in a hot, dry, Middle Eastern climate?

- Action: Our next stage invites us to consider how we talk about faith and the language we use when talking about our faith to others. Jesus speaks in a way that piques the curiosity of the Samaritan woman by giving a glimpse at the blessings faith can bring. Do we go straight in for the hard sell? Or do we give a glimpse at the peace and happiness faith brings to our own lives, parishes, and schools? Does that glimpse stir up an appetite in others to taste that too?

3) OPENNESS - 'Go and call your husband.' (John 4:16)

The third threshold requires OPENNESS to change. The woman wants to take the message of Jesus seriously - she asks how she can receive the living water - but she is aware of problems in her life which could get in the way. She is living outside marriage. She knows her current relationship lacks the public commitment which brings God's blessing on a sexual partnership. How does Jesus deal with this? Does he tell her how to live her life? No. Does he condemn her lifestyle? No. Does he create an opening for her to speak about her lifestyle? Yes! 'Go and call your husband.' In this way, the woman is given permission to voice her doubts, and discovers that the door to God's blessing is not closed in her face.

- Action: Through His interaction with the Samaritan woman, Jesus shows us the importance of being open and non-judgmental in our conversations with others. It is not for us to pass comment on people's decisions or life choices, our role is simply to extend a welcome to all. How do we do this? Ensure our parish communities have easy-to-access information on Mass times, opening times, information on parish groups, information on becoming Catholic, perhaps even suggested readings, apps, or podcasts. We can make sure our parishes have a friendly team of welcomers who can recognise visitors, nurture new parishioners, and perhaps even accompany people new to our faith so they feel more confident joining in.

4) SEEKING - 'Should I worship on this mountain or in Jerusalem?' (John 4:20)

At the fourth threshold, Photina - now we can call her this, because the light is entering her life - begins SEEKING. She recognises that Jesus is a prophet - he is one who can speak to her with God's authority. She starts asking questions about how she can have a better relationship with God. Should I worship on this mountain or in Jerusalem? In reply, Jesus points her to a different kind of worship - but affirms she can be part of it!

- Action: This stage of the journey invites us to consider how our parish, school, and family lives can accompany others on our shared journey of faith. Of course, a strong catechesis and sacramental programme is key at this stage to help people enjoy the full grace of the Sacraments. How do we help people of all ages learn more about the Sacraments? Is the programme integrated enough into daily parish life to enlist the prayers and support of the whole parish?

5) INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP - 'Could this man be the Messiah?' (John 4:29)

Photina now recognises that Jesus is more than just a prophet - he is the Messiah, the Christ, the long-awaited messenger chosen and sent by God. But she doesn't just recognise this, she becomes an evangelist herself! She goes to the people of her village, with whom she already has some kind of trust, and starts stirring up curiosity in them. Could this man be the Messiah?

By asking the question, we understand that in her heart, Photina has already said 'Yes, he is!'.

- Action: This stage is all about developing our relationship with God throughout our faith lives. There are plenty of ways our parish communities can work together to provide opportunities to nurture our faith. Whether it's a regular prayer group, opportunities for Adoration or confession, or signposting to various spiritual resources for people to explore at home, there are plenty of ways for parishes to support people on their journey of faith.

6) MINISTRY - 'We no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.' (John 4:42)

The Christian life does not end with becoming an intentional disciple; indeed, this is just the beginning of an extraordinary adventure. A disciple will want to use his or her gifts to serve others, exercising some MINISTRY within or beyond the confines of the Christian community. It is clear that Photina has at least a ministry of preaching and enthusing others, for in a short time all the inhabitants of her village are able to say: "We no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world". They, too, have become intentional disciples!

- Action: Through this next step, we are invited to consider how we can proclaim the Gospel beyond the pews of our parishes. In this stage, we once again consider our role in the wider community, what connections and encounters we have, and how we live out and bear witness to our faith within this network.

7) VOCATION - Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Matthew 19:21)

The Gospel passage ends here, and it leaves us with so many questions. What happened to the people of the village? What happened to the woman herself? All disciples are called to use their gifts to minister and share the Gospel in the place where they are. Some have freedom to reshape their life to express that ministry - embracing a life-changing VOCATION.

- Action: Finally, we recognise that Jesus' invitation to "come, follow me" is offered to each of us as individuals: each one of us is called to respond in some definite way, to shape our lives to be a living testimony of our relationship with God. We end our reflection today by considering how we might respond, and what gifts, talents, and opportunities God has given to us to carry out this mission in our parishes and schools, or at home and in our communities.

St Cuthbert's Bolton

St Cuthbert's launched the fourth stage of the programme with a Holy Hour of prayer and Adoration.

The parish celebrated key feasts such as Christmas and Easter by bringing together the parish and school community to record passages of scripture, reflections, and hymns that were broadcast on Bolton FM on Sundays during Advent, Lent, and Easter Sunday.

Schoolchildren also prepared artwork to be displayed in church, while some made Easter baskets filled with chocolate, flowers and toiletries, to give to new neighbours and parishioners supported by Home Visiting Eucharistic Ministers.

The parish also held its third Night of Testimony and Praise Service, consisting of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament with music and prayer and testimonies from people whose lives have been touched and changed by the power of God.

At Pentecost, the parish celebrated, the vibrancy of its community by holding special Masses to reflect the different cultures that enrich the parish. Bidding prayers were read out in different languages; parishioners were a variety of different clothes reflective of their culture; a world map was put on display highlighting the different countries represented in the parish, and Masses were followed by a coffee morning with traditional cakes, biscuits and sweets from different countries.

Young people were also invited to help lead a special Youth Mass by providing music, readings, and prayers. At the Offertory, they brought up to the Altar baskets of donated food items for various outreach initiatives.

A new parish leadership team has been set up to keep the parish developing and moving forward, while a trial 12-week Alpha course was run to see how it might help support adult formation within the parish.



St Anne's, Crumpsall

For the first time in three years, St. Anne's parish in Crumpsall celebrated its patronal festival with a sung Mass and a party afterwards.

The church was beautifully decorated with flowers and the image of St. Anne (newly restored during the pandemic) was moved into the sanctuary.

Parishioners said: "It was good to be together for worship and was lovely to see some old friends again and welcome some new ones.

"The prayers of our patron gave us new courage in our parish life and new energy for the future.



St. Mary and St. Philip Neri, Radcliffe

One parish in Bury has been working hard to rebuild its community feel following the pandemic.

Over the past year, parishioners have been delighted to celebrate many baptisms and marriages, and schoolchildren were able to make their First Holy Communion in May.

Weekly coffee mornings have resumed after Mass, giving parishioners the opportunity to meet, socialise and build friendships. The Union of Catholic Mothers has commenced with their meetings, they held a social evening for the ladies of the parish, with a buffet and entertainment.

Several parishioners attended an evening at St. Dunstan's in Moston, to watch a show, they were there to support our Parish Priest (Fr. Brady) who had one of the lead parts.

Fr. Brady celebrated his Silver Jubilee in July. Mass was celebrated with the parishioners, children and staff from school, as well as family and friends.





Our Lady of Hope, Salford

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One Salford parish has been working hard to nurture a strong partnership between school and parish and to provide much needed support for families within the community.

A 'Hardship Fund' was established during the pandemic to support families in need. This was a collaborative venture between the parish and school which helped a number of families with uniform and other needs. An appeal went out to the parish for financial help and a fund was set up. This is administered by the school and parish priest, with confidentiality at its heart, in order to respond to needs identified as urgent by the school.

The parish held a joint Summer Fair this year at Ss Peter and Paul church, with the proceeds being shared between the St Luke's primary school and Our Lady of Hope parish. Pupils at the school look part in a competition to design the SummerFair logo and flyers and the winner of the competition will open the fair on the day.

More recently, the parish weekly newsletter has been sent out each week to parents of pupils in the school, for their information. This will hopefully encourage families to engage with events taking place in the parish.

St Clare, Blackley

This year saw the parish Sacramental Team coordinating the Sacramental Programme, in collaboration with the school, the children and their families.

This allowed greater involvement from the parents in helping their children learn about the faith.

This also gave opportunity for the parents to grow in their own faith and learn more about the parish and the wider Church.

Following a successful period of preparation, two classes received their First Holy Communion at a dedicated Mass, attended by their family and friends.



Parish of Our Lady of the Valley, Clitheroe, Sabden and Dunsop Bridge

One parish community has turned to nature to strengthen ties with their parish school.

Parishioners, school staff, parents and children have been working together on a garden project as part of a parish Laudato Si' group.

The Garden is a small area behind the church separated by a fence from the much larger school gardens and playing field.

The church plans are limited to rewilding and encouraging wildlife, coupled with the need for an attractive appearance.

The school plan is much more ambitious with the Forest Trained leader hoping to create a large Forest School area.

For updates on the parish Laudato Si' group, please visit www.olotv.org.uk/parish-groups/laudato-si

Holy Infants and St Anthony, Bolton

A social event was held in the school hall at Holy Infants & St Anthony's primary school in June 2022 to celebrate the platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II and the feast of the parish patron, Saint Anthony.

Parishioners gathered for a wonderful celebration complete with games for children, a tombola, raffle, and coffee morning, while the choir from Holy Infants primary school performed some beautiful songs.

It was a delight to welcome Fr Gerry and Fr Kieran, Salesian priests who have just joined the parish, to attend and enjoy the wonderful day too.





PARISH OF DIVINE MERCY

The Parish of Divine Mercy in Oldham has been working hard to develop links between home, school, and parish.

After launching Stage 4 with a Holy Hour, the parish Hope in the Future Rep met with both of the parish primary schools to discuss joint activities, and schools have also been represented at Hope in the Future parish meetings.

For Pentecost Sunday, a special Pentecost Liturgy was held at the Masses that weekend. Parishioners were asked to think about the contribution they could make and to consider how they could be more actively involved in the life of the parish.

A Family Mass was held at both Corpus Christi and St. Herbert's churches on Sunday 19th June to mark the end of the year for St. Joseph and the World Meeting of Families. The Family Mass built on home, school and parish links as parishioners were encouraged to attend as a family and the schoolchildren made a wonderful contribution.

On 15th November, the parish held a special Mass to celebrate the

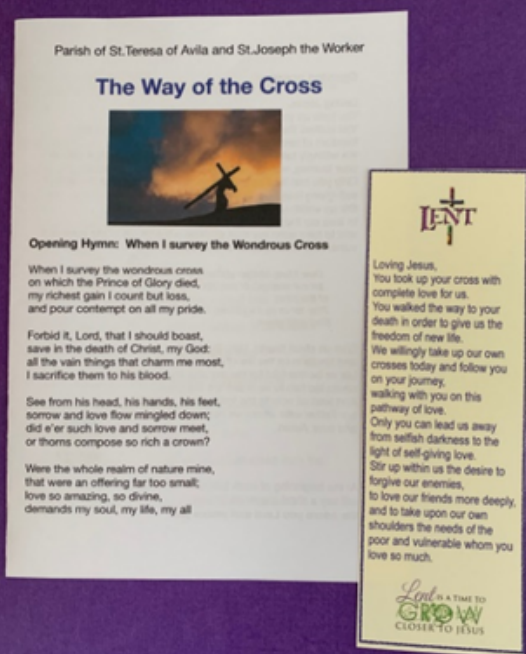
lives of those friends and family members who died during the COVID pandemic. During the Mass, a candle was lit in memory of each of the deceased.

Other activities which brought the parish together and strengthened the community include a parish lunch on the feast of St Herbert and a special BBQ at Corpus Christi to mark the platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

Also, coffee mornings at both churches after the Sunday Masses have been resumed following the pandemic.

Throughout the year, the parish worked to develop celebrations of Baptism, Sacramental preparation, weddings, funerals, Christmas and Easter Liturgies, with parish Hope in the Future members being involved with the Children's Liturgy programme at both churches and providing support for the Sacramental preparation programme.

The parish also now has a fully functioning Shared Leadership Team in place with representation from the various Parish Ministries and groups.



St Teresa of Avila and St Joseph the Worker, Irlam

Service and Prayer in the Community

In September 2021, the parish held a Welcome Refugee Day to build new relationships with families seeking sanctuary in our communities.

It took place in St. Teresa's primary School and involved a range of activities in the grounds such as football, archery, basketball, crafts and time to sit and chat.

The refugee families were welcomed with biscuits, drinks and a lunch of hot food and salads, followed by ice cream, which was enjoyed by all.

Guests were entertained by music and poetry and just before leaving, the adults were able to select gifts of toiletries (donated by the parish) and the children chose toys to take home (donated by the children at the schools in the parish).

Advent, Lent, and Easter Services

During Advent 2021, a service which involved parishioners and children from both the parish schools was arranged. A prayer card was given to all those who attended.

During Lent 2022, a Way of the Cross service which involved the parish and school children in prayer and reflection, was held, whilst a service on Good Friday was adapted to involve friends from the Church of England and Methodist churches in the area. Young people carried a large wooden cross in a procession, which was then erected on the main road for all to see over Easter Weekend.

Parish and School Summer Fayre

In July, the parish and school came together to hold a joint summer fayre in the grounds of St. Joseph the Worker Primary School, with support from the Polish Family Centre based in the parish. The day was a great success and helped strengthen the parish community.



Parish of The Good Samaritan, Burnley

During the past year, the Parish of the Good Samaritan in Burnley has experienced change, renewal, and celebration.

Under the leadership and guidance of parish priest, Fr David Featherstone - who has taken up the role of rural dean of St John Vianney deanery - and assistant priest, Fr Damien Loudon, the parish has been striving to promote deeper spiritual enrichment, increased involvement of the laity and an enhanced feeling of community belonging.

The preparation and celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation have been highly focused on throughout the year, involving the valuable support and commitment of lay persons in the parish, with the spiritual and practical direction of Fr David and Fr Damien.

A new programme to prepare parents for the Baptism of their child was introduced earlier in the year and the Sacramental Programme enabled children to celebrate their First Holy Communion in small numbers with the support of their families, the catechists and parishioners, at Masses.

In June, over 60 young people were confirmed by Bishop John, at St Mary of the Assumption Church, during a beautiful Mass, where all three churches in the parish took an active part in the celebration service.

Regular school Masses are held, with Mass celebrated at the Blessed Trinity High School for each year group during the season of Advent, and with a special Mass to commemorate the school's patronal feast day. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was also offered at Blessed Trinity; it involved 14 priests from the deanery over a two-day period, and over 600 students took part and received the Sacrament.

Parishioners who cannot get to Mass are now able once again to receive Holy Communion at home, bringing them much spiritual comfort. Also, home visits by the dedicated members of the SVP parish team have been able to recommence.

As well this year, we have welcomed the celebrations of a CAFOD Lenten Mass, Bereavement Mass, Deanery Station Masses.

The parish also welcomed Bishop John and 27 priests to concelebrate the Requiem Mass of Fr Francis Jennings in August, and paid tribute to 150 years of faithful and parochial service of The Sisters of Mercy in a wonderful celebration Mass.

Meanwhile the social side of the parish community is once again beginning to thrive following the pandemic, with a range of coffee morning, sponsored walks, and days out.

For Stage 4 Resources,
visit <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/hope/resources/stage-4/>

STAGE FIVE

SHARING THE HOPE

Overview

Throughout Stage 4 of our Hope in the Future journey, we have been reflecting on ‘Proclaiming the Good News’, reflecting on how we can develop links between our schools, parishes and families and how we can help those who come into contact with our parishes to experience the Good News of Jesus Christ.

As we embark on the fifth and final Stage of Hope in the Future, entitled ‘Sharing the Hope’, we turn our attention to putting our Faith into action through caring for those most in need in our local area and caring for our Common Home.

Our parishes already make an enormous contribution to the local community. The extent of this was shown greatly during the years of the pandemic, during which our parishes worked so hard to protect those most vulnerable and establish crucial connections with people who would otherwise have been isolated and alone. Huge thanks is owed to all those priests and people who have given so generously of their time in extra duties to the service of their parish and wider community.

The Fifth Stage will place an emphasis on building on this existing outreach and resourcing and providing new opportunities for the parish to be a beacon of hope within the local area.

When Jesus was asked which is the greatest of all the commandments, he replied, “you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength and you must love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31). Jesus makes it very clear that our faith and good works must go together.

Pope Francis reminds us that everything is inter-connected and as Missionary Disciples we have a duty to respond to the cry and the earth and the cry of the people. This Stage brings together the themes of Missionary Discipleship, Accompaniment and Synodality.

It is our hope that this final stage is an opportunity for individuals, parishes, schools and deaneries to learn more about the needs in their community and then to prayerfully discern how best to respond, with the resources available to them.



SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left.

'Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

'Next he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." 'And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.'

Matthew 25:31-46

Questions:

- Does my faith - individually or as part of a parish - have a practical element to it?
- How do the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and Works of Mercy govern the way I view and interact with the world and others?
- What opportunities are there in my parish, school, or home life to respond to the needs of others?

SUGGESTED APPROACH

STAGE 5 AIMS

Much inspiration for this stage of our Hope in the Future journey comes from the writings of Pope Benedict in *Deus Caritas Est*, 25:

“The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and exercising the ministry of charity. These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable.”

In his writings, Pope Benedict reminds us that our faith cannot be something that's private to us; it must be the foundation for how we live our everyday lives in relationship with each other and the world around us. Our faith must shape our hearts and minds so we can see the world as Christ would have us see it, and it must propel us to take concrete action for the good of others - to reflect God's love and goodness in the world around us.

Throughout this Stage and beyond, we would seek to equip and support parishes, deaneries and schools to:

- 1) Carry out a reflective process of listening to the needs of their local community.
- 2) Be formed in the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church and respond to it.
- 3) Be a beacon of Hope to their local community through prayer, financial giving, volunteering, advocacy and signposting to existing support.

Stage 5 will be based on the principles of See, Judge, Act and the Pastoral Cycle, which you can read about over the next few pages.



BACKGROUND TO “SEE, JUDGE, ACT”

The See, Judge, Act method was first developed by the Belgian priest, later Cardinal, Joseph Cardijn. He used the method with groups of young working women and men to help them bridge the contradiction between the truth of our faith and the harsh realities of working life.

This led to the formation of the Young Christian Workers movement. The method gained the recognition and attention of the wider Church in the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* when St. Pope John XXIII directly proposed the method as a pastoral approach for the Church to deal with the social issues of the time.

The method later gained popularity in the pastoral areas of theology where it became known as the pastoral cycle. This approach is deep rooted within the Latin American Church and has been proposed on numerous occasions by the Latin American bishops as an important pastoral method for the continent. It is no surprise therefore that Pope Francis, himself a former Archbishop of Buenos Aires has pointed towards See, Judge, Act as a method for the wider Church on many occasions. The encyclical *Laudato Si'* is framed by the method and his recent book, *Let Us Dream*, uses a version to look at ways forward for the Church and the world as it emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

See

The method is always rooted in the reality of what is happening around us. The See phase allows us to be more aware of what is going on around us in our parishes, schools, local communities, and places of work. You begin to look at some of the causes and consequences of situations that cause concern.

Judge

Once we have collated the facts, the Judge phase is an opportunity for us to make a judgement on that reality. We do this by applying the Word of God and the teachings of the Church to the situation. We reflect on the Scripture and how this speaks to the realities we have discussed in the See phase.

Act

The Act phase compels us to discuss and plan possible ways of responding to the situations described in the See phase. This action can be personal, or group based. You may wish to include others in the action in order to maximise its potential. This takes us beyond a charity approach and allows us to take on responsibility for effecting change.

Taking actions that are directly inspired by Scripture and Church teaching, we are living out the Gospel and sharing the good news of Christ to the world. In this way, the method is evangelistic by its very nature.

The process is always cyclical. The consequences and lessons learnt from actions taken feed into the See process the next time. It is meant to be used as a constant tool for living out the Christian faith in the world. It can be practised alone but is often more effective when used in a group setting so this should be encouraged.

The See, Judge, Act process directly connects with some of the key themes of Pope Francis' pontificate including missionary discipleship, accompaniment and synodality.

Communities are encouraged to foster a culture which does not separate these themes but sees them as a unified vision for discipleship and evangelisation. See, Judge, Act can be seen as a tool that enables us to be missionary disciples in a synodal Church.

These resources have been ordered in three sections to assist with your social activism planning. Section 1 is the 'See' section and includes resources to help you gain a greater understanding of the needs of your locality. Section 2 is the 'Judge' section and includes resources to help you discern the situation of your locality in the light of the Gospel. Section 3 is the 'Act' section and includes resources of possible ways to respond to the needs of a locality after careful discernment.

See

The first step is to consider the needs of your parish community. Does your area face any particular challenges or barriers? Or does it have any certain strengths or opportunities to make a real difference?

We have collated a number resources and helpful guides to assist you in carrying out a community audit to help you assess and identify any opportunity or needs specific to your parish.

These are available by visiting <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/hope/resources/stage-5/>

Judge

This second step is all about learning to judge situations and make decisions in the light of the Gospel. Catholic Social Teaching and the Works of Mercy are key to guiding us as we navigate this second stage of the process. Continue reading over the page to find out more.

Catholic Social Teaching (CTS)

Catholic Social Teaching has been referred to as “The Catholic Church’s best kept secret”. This treasure trove of wisdom and guidance, rooted in scripture and the Teaching of the Church, is our Catholic lens through which we make sense of and navigate our way through the many and often complex social issues of the world we live in.

1. The Dignity of the Human Person.

Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, every person’s life and dignity must be respected and supported from conception until the end of their natural life.

2. Family and Community

The human person is not only sacred but social. How society is organised socially, economically, legally or politically has a direct impact on the dignity and growth of every human person and community. Our policy making and structures must reflect a common good which enables human flourishing. The key to stability of society is the family which must be recognised, respected, supported, strengthened and given its deserved place in society. The Church teaches that everyone has the right to participation and play a full part in society.

3. Solidarity and the Common Good

We are all the People of God, one family, so what happens to one has an impact on all, locally, nationally and globally. At the heart of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Our love for all calls us to work for a peaceful and just society where everyone has a fair share of goods and resources needed for a sustainable life and opportunities for growth and development are offered equally.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

Every person has a fundamental right to life. It is this right that makes all other rights possible. Everyone has the right to food, healthcare, housing, education and employment. We all need to strive and take responsibility to secure and respect these rights for all others locally and globally.

5. Option for those facing challenging times

Society should be judged on how it cares for, stands with and accompanies those facing different challenge. Scripture tells us of God’s special concern for the oppressed, those suffering from poverty, those forced to live on the margins. The Church calls us to respond to the cry of the people and put their needs first. This “preferential option” must be in action in our daily lives and reflected in governmental policies.

6. The Dignity of Work

Work is a way in which we can continue to participate in God’s creation. Work gives dignity and purpose to life and must be carried out in such a way that the basic rights of workers are respected. Everyone has the right to productive work, a fair and living wage and to organise and join a union.

7. Stewardship.

The world that God created has been entrusted to everyone and we are responsible and accountable to God as stewards of the earth, His precious gift to us to enjoy and care for. It is in caring for creation that we show our love and respect for its Creator and for all our brothers and sisters. We must recognise the interdependence of all creation for the Common Good through global co-operation and the sharing of resources, to enable everyone to flourish.

Works of Mercy

The Works of Mercy are also key to guiding us in our everyday response to the needs of those around us. Rooted in the teachings of Jesus, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy provide a model for how treat others with the dignity they deserve as children of God.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

1. Feed the hungry.
2. Give drink to the thirsty.
3. Clothe the naked.
4. Visit the imprisoned.
5. Shelter the homeless.
6. Visit the sick.
7. Bury the dead.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. Admonish the sinner.
2. Instruct the ignorant.
3. Counsel the doubtful.
4. Comfort the sorrowful.
5. Bear wrongs patiently.
6. Forgive all injuries.
7. Pray for the living and the dead.

Act

The final stage of this process is to take practical action to make a real difference to the world around us. As daunting as this may seem, there are plenty of things we can do as parishes, families, or individuals to bring the love of Christ to others.

Prayer

Everything we do must be rooted in prayer. And so we invite you to pray for our leaders, charities, and organisations, and also for all those facing challenges at this time. . Let us ask God how he wants us to respond to those in need, both as individuals and as parishes.

Volunteering

There are so many fantastic charities and organisations across our diocese working hard to respond to a variety of different needs. From our own diocesan charity, Caritas Diocese of Salford, and our Laudato Si' Centre, to parish groups such as CAFOD, SVP, Missio, Mary's Meals, and more, there are plenty of ways to take practical action here in our diocese. Keep reading to see how parishes across the diocese have introduced their own projects in response to challenges locally and globally.

Supporting charities

Another way to respond to the needs of others is to support charities providing vital services to communities at home and around the world. From fundraising campaigns to regular giving, even the smallest contribution can go a long way to responding to Christ's call to love one another.

AROUND THE DIOCESE Stage Five

St Mary's, Horwich

A parish community has won special recognition after striving to respond to Christ's command to "love one another" in a very practical way.

This year, St Mary's Parish in Horwich received an award from Age UK after years of providing fraternity and companionship for the local community through its popular Lunch Club Service.

The parish Lunch Club began in 2016 after previous parish priest Fr Barry O'Sullivan spoke about Pope Francis' call for parishes to take on a spirit of mission to engage with and respond to the needs of their communities.

Over the years, the Lunch Club has grown and developed to welcome more than 30 guests each week to enjoy a two-course meal with tea and coffee, a raffle, a game of bingo, and a sing song. The club also has special celebrations for Christmas and various feasts, welcoming as many as 50 people from across the wider community on these wonderful occasions.

Another thriving parish initiative is one run by St Mary's YCW (Youth Catholic Workers) group, which is working hard to tackle social isolation in the local community. The group worked closely with diocesan charity Caritas Diocese of Salford to understand more about the challenges of social isolation in their parish community and how best to meet those needs.

In response, the group organised a parish walk earlier this year, inviting people to come together to socialise and enjoy the beautiful Horwich countryside, before returning to the parish centre for some well-deserved refreshments.

This winning combination of social connectedness, physical activity, and the great outdoors is a strategy praised by mental health experts, who champion each of these elements for their significant mental and emotional benefits.

Parish priest, Fr Richard Howard, was also quick to praise the efforts of both groups, admiring their practical response to Christ's call to "love one another."

He said: "When we reflect on the Gospel and the example Christ set us during His ministry, our mission becomes clear: we are called to love one another. Throughout His ministry, Jesus never stopped drawing people to Himself, building a community of people that extended outside the walls of the temple or the synagogue to show love and service in a very practical way. Here at St Mary's, I'm delighted to see how parish projects are responding to that command Christ gave by echoing His pattern of love and service in our own community."

St Cuthbert's, Bolton

One Bolton parish has been “sharing the hope” by putting their faith into action by caring for community and common home.

Teaming up with their schools, the parish organised their “Christmas Dinner on Jesus” initiative, which saw newly-confirmed young parishioners collecting items for hampers, which were put together by Urban Outreach, and shared with members of the Bolton community. The Parish Youth Leadership Team supported this by running a sweet stall after each Mass for the feast of St Nicholas to raise funds for the cause.

Meanwhile, students from Thornleigh College held a poinsettia sale at both parish churches to raise money for the annual Pensioners Christmas party.

The parish also linked up with Bolton at Home (a charitable community benefit society) to hold a pre-Christmas Treasure Hunt, which helped the parish get to know their neighbourhood better and for the children to join together for some fun.

In addition, the parish SVP Group has been hosting regular Afternoon Teas to raise funds, whilst Fr Chris’ Joshua and Wooley books were sold to fundraise for the Mother and Baby unit in Bolton.

This remarkable parish also turned its attention to our common home, as it began work creating a Laudato Si’ garden at St Joseph’s church. Parishioners have been working hard on the project, to enable people in the local community - of all faiths and none - to enjoy peace and beauty of the outdoors. The project has been particularly engaging for the parish schoolchildren, who have been involved in helping out with the project to learn more about caring for creation.



St James and All Souls, Salford

In November 2022, this Salford parish teamed up with Emmaus - the charity that works to tackle homelessness - to launch a Warm Wednesday Lunch. Served directly after Mass (but open to all), Emmaus companions produced hot food and made to order sandwiches, while the parish provided the warm space in our parish room, tea, coffee and cold drinks and homemade cakes - all delivered with attentive table service. A donation pot was put out and any donations were given to Emmaus to help cover the cost of the food.

The popular Wednesday lunches have gone from strength to strength, changing the name to Welcome Wednesday in the warmer months. A special lunch was held to celebrate the Coronation of the new King, and the initiative has now expanded to include additional activities after the food has been consumed. The first addition was a five week Tech & tea course, in collaboration with Inspiring Communities Together. This will be followed up with laptop troubleshooting session. Discussions are also in place to arrange an emergency first aid awareness session and a financial advice session.

The group started with around eight customers but now serves as many as 18 customers each week; the highest attendance has been 28 customers. Welcome Wednesday has brought people into the parish who did not even know the church existed; people of different faiths and of no faith. It's also an opportunity for people to speak to the parish priest, see the church, discover the Eucharistic adoration chapel, make connections and friends, ask for help and advice, or offer help.

St Teresa of Avila and St Joseph the Worker, Irlam

Another wonderful parish is putting outreach at the heart of its mission with a number of fantastic initiatives.

The church of St Joseph the Worker is now the hub of the local food bank, which is well supported with generous volunteers from the parish.

Meanwhile, the parish is continuing to reach out to refugees with its annual Welcome Refugee Day, held each September, to provide outreach and welcome to refugees, as well as strengthening the parish community. The parish has also begun a Community Sponsorship programme to help welcome a refugee family into our community.

Ever developing, the parish is just at the start of this exciting journey but it has reported remarkable results of increasing connectivity and community as a result of these projects.

For Stage 5 Resources,
visit <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/hope/resources/stage-5/>

A FUTURE OF HOPE

THE FIRST STEPS TO REBUILDING OUR DIOCESAN CHURCH

Six years have come and gone since we first began our Hope in the Future journey together and we have certainly seen a great number of changes in our diocese and in our world.

The first thing that comes to mind, of course, is the COVID pandemic - a time none of us could have ever predicted and one that drastically changed the way we lived, interacted with each other, and viewed the world around us.

As we emerged, somewhat shell-shocked, from lockdown and started to become accustomed to a new kind of normality, we were faced with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the terrible stories we hear from that conflict. More than one hundred million people across the world have been displaced due to war, poverty, violence, persecution, and - of course climate change. We constantly hear reports of devastating floods, fires, droughts, and more, destroying lives and livelihoods across the globe as well as the creation that has been entrusted to us. Added to all of that we have the cost-of-living crisis. Caritas Salford shared that staggering report, which revealed that more than 300,000 children were living in poverty here in our diocese.

So much difficult news in the last six years - enough to make even the greatest optimist feel overwhelmed - but our parishes and our schools have been extraordinary. From one crisis to another, our parishes, our schools, and organisations have responded with astounding resilience and great kindness. They have been resourceful, imaginative, and enthusiastic in the face of great challenges to show the work of the Spirit in our diocese and to proclaim the joy of the Gospel in times of true difficulty.

And it was that spirit, that zeal, and that joy anchored in faith that we set out to proclaim when we began this process. I give my heartfelt thanks to each and every person who has worked to achieve that.


But this isn't the end. We have spoken about the challenges we are facing, here in our diocese and on a global level. Now is the time to get to work. Equipped the knowledge and experiences we gained through our Hope in the Future programme, many of our parishes are now primed to continue their mission in the face of these challenges to make a difference, to bear witness to the joy of the Gospel, to leave this world perhaps a little better than we found it.

That is the vision for the next chapter for our diocese, as we seek to work together as missionary disciples, addressing the needs and challenges of our diocese - and our world - today, presenting our Church as a place of true joy and true hope.

I thank you all for the role you play in our parishes, our schools, and our diocesan community and I invite you to continue on this journey with us. With the help of this booklet, our online resources, and practical Hope in the Future experiences, let us encourage one another as we seek to be true "ambassadors for Christ" in our world today.

As ever, we pray the short but powerful prayer of our diocese: Stay with us, Lord, on our journey.

Yours devotedly,



Bishop John Arnold
Bishop of Salford

THE ROMERO PRAYER

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No programme accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something and to do it well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.

CONTACT US

For any additional resources for your parish or school, or to find out more about how you can get started in your parish, please contact our Department for Formation by emailing formation@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

