

# The Vision:

## A Church that goes out

I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 27).

In his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), Pope Francis offers us a vision for the Church; a Church that is missionary-oriented, that goes out and proclaims the Good News in word and deed.



### A Missionary Parish:

**Reaches out** to all and shares with them the Good News. By its love it invites and accompanies all to encounter Jesus. It welcomes all.

**Educates and forms** those who have embraced the Gospel so that they can live as disciples of Jesus, preparing all to celebrate the sacraments fully and fruitfully. It offers on-going evangelization and catechesis, and prepares people for leadership roles in the Church.

**Exercises** a ministry of love, strengthening its parishioners to live their faith boldly and to share it through witness and outreach to others. Its missionary spirit is made visible and lasting through involvement in social projects, particularly those that serve our brothers and sisters who are poor and marginalized. It promotes everyone’s right to life and the blessings due to every human person.

**The missionary mandate of Jesus to evangelize has various aspects, all of which however, are closely connected with each other. They proclaim the Good News in word and action:**

- ✓ **Call others to discipleship and teach**
- ✓ **Witness**
- ✓ **Baptize**
- ✓ **Celebrate the Eucharist**
- ✓ **Love one another**

**“Proclamation, witness, teaching, sacraments, love of neighbour: all of these aspects are the means by which the one Gospel is transmitted and they constitute the essential elements of evangelization itself” (Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 46).**

Called by Jesus through baptism into his passion, death and resurrection and anointed by the Spirit, we, the people of God in the Diocese of London, are to be living signs of Christ's presence in the world today. United in Christ, the Bread of Life, we commit ourselves to carrying out the mission of proclaiming the coming of the kingdom of God in our time. We embrace the Gospel – believing what we read, preaching what we believe, and practicing what we preach. (Bishop Ronald Fabbro)

To be missionary-oriented means we must be rooted in the Good News of Jesus Christ, renewed by the Holy Spirit, refreshed by prayer, and radiating joy as we serve others. This is our hope for all our parishes and our vision for the Families of Parishes. We pray that, filled with the Holy Spirit, we may begin to proclaim the Good News, in word and in action, and that the Lord would send out the Holy Spirit and renew the face of the earth!



Bishop Fabbro in his Pastoral Plan of the Diocese of London, *Embracing a Future Full of Hope*, identifies several key priorities which focus the energies of the diocese so that the Gospel would take root in the life of the Church. The Pastoral Plan affirms much that is already being done in parishes. Its six goal statements establish a clear focus for us as we continue to grow as missionary-oriented parishes.

The six goal statements of the Pastoral Plan call for:

- Goal 1 ***Spiritual Renewal and Personal Holiness***
- Goal 2 ***Evangelizing and Teaching***
- Goal 3 ***Ministering with Justice and Compassion***
- Goal 4 ***Meaningful Liturgical Celebration***
- Goal 5 ***Support ongoing Formation***
- Goal 6 ***Christ-like Servant leadership***

**The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. 24).**

**This is the first in a series of five information pieces introducing the plan for the Future Care of Parishes. Watch for part 2 coming soon: “Equipping the Saints”**