

## Executive Summary

The draft *You Will Be My Witnesses* was published in the summer of 2022. The priorities outlined in the Ten-Year Mission Plan are a direct result of the last two years spent talking and listening to people across the Diocese.

We are grateful for all the time that has been taken to give this feedback which reflects all the consultation that has been done over the last two years through surveys and discussions.

The feedback received in the final stage of consultation will inform the development of the final document. We heard from 65 parishes and received 51 other responses, mostly from individuals. The feedback was given in a variety of formats and was varied with some responses being very detailed and others brief.

Views were given on the format and publication of the document, however for the most part feedback focused on the plan, citing missing elements, commenting on the proposed priorities and sharing ideas for realising the plan. The views expressed were also often contradictory. This reflected the feedback we received from our survey of the laity in 2021 "*A Thousand Voices*" and the feedback from the *Synodal* process.

Certain themes recurred across the feedback, for example lay leadership, a call for transparency and better communication, and the provision of Mass and other activities at times to suit working people.

What was envisaged by some of the themes in the feedback varied between submissions. In the case of ecumenism for example, this ranged from learning more about other denominations, to participating in local ecumenical groups and initiatives, learning from the experience of others, taking a leadership role in ecumenical activities, to sharing resources and churches.

The quality of the liturgy was generally felt to be an area for improvement. However, how to address this revealed many tensions. From some there was a call for it to be modernised and more participative, from others more devout, more beautiful more "traditional".

Many submissions stressed the importance of lay involvement and leadership. It was generally recognised that the lay faithful and clergy would need to work together collaboratively to implement significant changes set out in the plan. Several submissions highlighted that without clergy engagement and leadership the ambitions in this plan would not be realised.

Several submissions reflected that the change management process must include effective communication, clear aims, local planning, and realistic timelines. A key theme was that the pace of change in relation to structural change was felt to be too ambitious although the urgency of the need for evangelisation and reaching out to our young people was also recognised.

Feedback was received from a few areas regarding the proposed future parish boundaries. A small number of respondents gave general views on the proposed boundaries (e.g., the geographical spread) Others submitted proposals relating to specific areas.

Careful consideration was given to the proposed boundaries in light of the comments received; consequently, the shape of some parishes will be amended in the final publication of the Ten-Year Mission Plan.

There was a call for more detail and direction for each the priority areas. The document was described by some as more of a vision document than a plan. Further detail will be provided in the final publication informed by the suggestions proposed within the submissions received.

Approximately 40% of parish responses included issues which are beyond the scope of the Diocese. Those most frequently mentioned were the ordination of women as priests and deacons and the matter of priestly celibacy and married priests. However, it would be disingenuous to suggest that these views reflected

agreement about the solutions. These same themes and the tension surrounding them also came through the *Synodal feedback* and 1000 voices.

Responses included a wide variety of questions; these will be reviewed, and an updated FAQ will be published to support the final publication of *You Will Be My Witnesses*. We expect to publish the final draft of this plan at the end March.

Finally, this is a mission plan intended to reach out to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. This brings the challenge of change and requires commitment and energy. That commitment is evident in the detail of the responses received and we know some of our pastoral areas are already beginning to work together to realise the future and their mission at this time. The Vision "Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through his Church" is core to the plan. It is a call to personal holiness first and foremost, so that in charity and love we can achieve this vision.