

I conclude today my summary of the recent Synod proceedings, with a focus on the launch of the Vision and Directions of the Diocese 2017-2025 document.

For me, this presentation, and the attached document, was a highlight of the Synod proceedings. I was genuinely impressed by and excited by the four Strategic Directions that have been proposed, and the outcomes that flow from these. Of importance, in my opinion, were these two key aspects:

1. The period for which these vision and directions cover is 9 years – a long-term approach is vital, as so much of what we do is God’s “slow work”, where seeds are planted and growth is not seen quickly, or at least not as quickly as we might like! And;
2. The Fourth Strategic Direction includes “enablers” – the strategies designed to provide the systems, the people, and the “how” these outcomes are to be reached. So often in my experience it is this that is missed, and so strategic direction flounders, for lack of resources.

The four Strategic Directions are as follows:

1. Be a compelling and outward-looking Christian presence in our communities;
2. Reach across boundaries of human division to serve our communities and proclaim Christ;
3. Be open to the Holy Spirit in transforming lives to be mature in Christ. And;
4. Use all the energy that God powerfully inspires to better manage our human and capital resources.

The outcomes attached to each direction are all time-specific. For example, the outcome that “all Archdeacons will be missional leaders” (which comes under Strategic Direction 1), is due to be met by 2019, and includes strategies to meet this outcome including the resourcing and equipping of Archdeacons, and to advance the Mission Action Planning process. The outcome that the Diocese will “establish a culture of repentance and prayer” (under strategic direction 3), has a date of 2019, and includes strategies such as a year of prayer, and to create space for lamentation. The outcome “establish and/or integrate 10 new multicultural congregations is planned by 2022, and has strategies including establishing parish-to-parish links, and incumbency approach to multicultural ministry, and setting standard good governance and ministry that are culturally appropriate.

I hope you can sense my excitement in this, and I also hope that our parish Mission Action Plan (a priority for 2017) may link into the overarching Diocesan vision.

May Margaret of Scotland, Hilda of Whitby, Hugh of Lincoln, Elizabeth of Hungary, and all the Saints walk with you this week... *Sam*