

The President's Address to the Synod
of the
Diocese of Melbourne

Wednesday 7 October 2009

*The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier
Archbishop of Melbourne*

I welcome you to the October 2009 Session of the 49th Synod of the Diocese of Melbourne and in so doing I acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations, the traditional owners of these lands on which stands St Paul's Cathedral.

If any year has ever shown us better the fragility of our human existence, few have been closer to home for us in this diocese than this year. The devastation of the bushfires in February, the continued effects of the drought and natural disasters in our region all point to our rather less secure grasp on the world than most Australians had come to expect. Yet the level of destruction of human life that we have witnessed this year from natural events still seems small in comparison with the future predictions as a result of natural disasters arising from climate change and rising sea levels. If natural events have not impressed on us the folly of seeking security in the physical rather than the spiritual, surely the continuation of the global financial crisis brings us to this insight from another angle.

As I sit here in the cathedral during times of prayer throughout the week I am aware that this very building is constructed of rocks from great antiquity within the earth, formed by the same natural forces that are still at work in our world. Even the youngest of the rocks - the Waurin Ponds limestone - is 23 million years old. Go back to 140 million years ago for the formation of the Barrabool Sandstones. These are times beyond our imagining, yet were times of God's creative power at work without any human to witness it. God's creative power at work in living things that saw the emergence of human life and the spread of modern humans across the face of the world. Forty thousand years of Aboriginal history in Australia helps put a frame around the time spans that we celebrate as culturally significant in our own era, the passing of 150 years, a centenary, or something less.

Let us have eyes that look beyond our own horizons and a heart of hope that expects God's hand to be present in all that is "*imprisoned under the power of sin*" Gal 3:22. Let us look for all that '*was promised through faith in Jesus Christ*' to be given to those who believe, and have the love of neighbour that shares this promise freely.

Psalm 139 verse 14 comes to mind, '*I praise you (O LORD) for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*' For me, the fact of our mutual existence at this point in the long span of geological time as self reflective beings is truly remarkable. Even more remarkable is the fact of the events two thousand years ago, when our Lord Jesus Christ brought the message of the kingdom of God to humanity. '*Almighty God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of our human nature...*' as the collect for the Sunday after Christmas reads.

It is in the promise of our redemption in Christ that we find the deepest purpose of God who calls us into being and maintains our hope even in the midst of a world with forces that have the power to crush us. Even humanity's greatest attempts at ensuring permanence here on earth must contend with the mighty forces of the natural world. As Saint Augustine observed, 'we are a tiny part of creation', yet still are drawn to give God praise because God stirs that desire within us.

Theologians and scholars over many years have properly explored the interpretation of the gospel of Christ. They have, however, in recent years mainly done that from the perspective of ill in the world coming from human evil. The wars of the Twentieth Century gave every reason to think that the decisions of humans and the actions of nation states posed the greatest threat to God's kingdom. They must now contend with the forces of nature unleashed by human action even if these are unexpected, such as we see resulting from the burning of fossil fuels.

We will need to return to the simplicity of the message of our Lord in the years ahead, as entirely new dimensions of threat to human life and dignity emerge. "*Do not fear those who kill a body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body*", Matthew 10:28 are Jesus' words that call us to move from the paralysis of fear and helplessness to a reliance on God.

Our focus needs to be not on what we want but the destiny God has shown us, through his Son, that awaits us in his love. "*For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.*" 1 Corinthians 8:6 This is foundational to who we are as members of the body of Christ.

It is tempting for any of us to say that what we think is the proper vision for the Church. After all we hear great oratory in the political sphere in terms of such language. Great oratory excites us to hope and action. But the domestication of visionary language in the commonplace debates of our society has emptied that language of its original power and made us all wary, as much as we might admire it, of yet another sales pitch. Joel 2:28 points us to the Spirit as the source of vision;

*Then afterwards
I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.*

We must be careful not to reduce the Church of Jesus Christ to a place where slogans for one view or another are traded for actually living as the body of Christ. I say all of this because I want to use visionary language in what I say to you tonight. Not in the manner of a slogan or a sales pitch but instead as Colossians 3:10 puts it from '*the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator*' so that the reality '*Christ is all, and is in all*' might be more fully expressed amongst us.

The Father's vision of a world and its people made new in Christ ought to be our vision. Our mission is to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and action. I present you tonight with how I see the future of the Diocese of Melbourne and a scheme for the next twelve months, with the goal of bringing to the 2010 October Synod our path for the next five years and beyond.

Let me insert three qualifications. Firstly, that I give you my vision conscious that what we can ever only seek is God's vision for us, for the Church and for the world. Successful apprehension of God's vision is owned not just by the leader but by the whole Church. No imposed structure of initiatives that is not in accord with what God wants will be successful for long.

Secondly, my aim is for translating our vision into a succinct document. We should not undervalue the importance of things being uncomplicated. Finally, our planning must always be consistent with the character of who we are, that is so clearly set out in the Fundamental Declarations of the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia. The Scriptures and the Creeds provide the parameters within which *'This Church will ever obey the commands of Christ, teach His doctrine, administer His sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, follow and uphold His discipline and preserve the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons in the sacred ministry,'*

Before expanding on my vision for the diocese, let us reflect on the last twelve months. An annual Synod gathering is a time for celebrating the achievements of the past year in the Diocese and its engagement with the cities of Geelong and Melbourne. The conspicuous issues have been:

- **Fresh Connections**, our Ministry and Mission focus for the year, Open Church Week and Back to Church Sunday;
- the development of a **three year budget** which will return the diocese to a position of net surplus, and the appropriate infrastructure to support this;
- the **tragedy of Saturday 7 February** and the Bushfire Appeal and recovery program put in place;
- the progress made in respect to **Indigenous Outreach and Ministry**;
- the publishing of the **General Synod study of Reported Child Sexual Abuse** in the Anglican Church; and
- the **Diocesan Ministry Conference** for the clergy.

I will talk to each of these important themes. Under the leadership of Bishop Paul White the Year of Fresh Connections has seen a variety of parish events aimed to connect within and beyond parishes and schools. From the February launch to the journey of the Fresh Connections candles around the regions, the focus on deepening faith and bringing people to Christ has been evident. More than a hundred parishes participated with another hundred sharing in last month's Back to Church Sunday. Nationally Back to Church Sunday has been very effective and it has been agreed to be continued in 2010. Through personal invitations to those who no longer attend a church, the September Sunday was a significant outreach.

From the sixty responses received to date the average number of people who responded to invitations to join in worship on 'Back to Church Sunday' was twenty five per parish. But averages, being as they are at the middle of all the responses, indicate that for the places which experienced twice the attendance there were also some who, despite their efforts, received a disappointing response. We need to firm our resolve to make invitation, welcome and Christian formation a normal part of all our church life.

The 2009 budget adopted at the May Synod was the response to the fallout from the global financial crisis and its effects on investment returns. Laid before you at this Synod is the 2010 budget, the next stage in the plan to achieve surpluses.

The Synod's wish for this budget to be set against strategy is on the one hand met but within the tight financial constraints which have existed in the diocese over ten or more years, the opportunity for flexibility is limited. It is important to realise that the annual budget at Synod is operational and strategic initiatives are more usually funded from capital.

You will remember last year's Synod when I launched the appeal for the Network 1:28 tax deductible fund for theological education. You will also recall, and indeed see reinforced in the budget parameters reported this Synod, that Archbishop in Council regards theological education as a very high strategic priority. I am grateful for the eight donors who have responded and for the total giving to date of \$19,700 to the Network 1:28 appeal. I bring to your attention, however, and draw the obvious conclusion, that the shift from an opinion of support, to the costly commitment of enabling a priority to be achieved, is still a challenge for us.

The General Manager (Business Services) Mr Ken Spackman, will outline the detail of the Council's approved budget for 2010 together with our work to restore the investment corpus of the diocese. I congratulate the Business Services team and Council Committees on their commitment and achievement in this regard. The ad hoc Governance & Budget Committee has overseen the restructure of the Business Services department where we now have a tighter and more effective structure for the future.

The terrible bushfires of 7 February called for a significant response from the church, both the immediate, when clergy and parishes sprang into action and volunteers sought to assist, and the long term. The Diocese of Melbourne Bushfire Appeal raised over \$450,000 from individuals and dioceses within Australia and from overseas. The Bushfire Recovery Committee, chaired by Bishop Stephen Hale and coordinated by the Reverend Graeme Sells, has organised the on going support for the clergy and parishes most impacted by the fires. History suggests that the recovery will take years, in the rebuilding of people and communities.

I hope that the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, along with our service agencies, will be active in this for the long haul, as we were after the 1983 fires. We will hear a presentation about some of the work later in this Synod. I thank all who have given, in donating goods, services, money or time.

I am pleased to report to the Synod the progress in Indigenous outreach and ministry. A committee of interested people was established a year ago, particularly to focus on coordinating the support in this diocese for Nungalinya College in Darwin, the national Indigenous ministry training college. In May this year I took a second group of young leaders to the Northern Territory to make connections with Indigenous leaders. Joining me on the trip were Tom and Margo Hartley from St James' Dandenong who have agreed to act as coordinators to the partnership with the Diocese of Melbourne and remote Indigenous churches .

In addition a study of the existing Indigenous activities and partnerships within the Diocese was commissioned. Jointly funded by Anglicare Victoria and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, the study has been carried out by Dr Ree Boddé whose report has now been published, with copies for all Synod members available from tomorrow. This is a key report for the Diocese as we are challenged to a range of actions. I am frequently asked to speak on Indigenous issues, as is my wife, Joy, both of us having had long years of experience working in Indigenous communities.

Be assured that I will keep working toward the day when Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians will enjoy the same living standards and have equal access to all that Australia offers, including Christian ministry. The pain and shame of the past should not deter us from sharing the Gospel of Christ with all Australians, Indigenous and non Indigenous.

The study of Reported Child Sexual Abuse in the Anglican Church, published in June of this year, was an important step in the Anglican Church's ongoing determination to resolve matters from the past and eliminate matters in the future. It was only the second study in the world to analyse in such depth the incidence of abuse within a denomination. Any incidence of abuse is appalling but I am glad that the Diocese of Melbourne in 2002 set up a professional standards protocol through which all reported sexual abuse has been investigated and brought to resolution, with the aim of justice and healing.

This Synod has before it the outcome of a review of the protocol, the intention being to enact a bill which will improve the existing protocol and practice. The distinct advantages of the bill are: that it would have the support of Synod and thus the broader Church community; that the protocol would be consistent with the national scheme of the Anglican Church; that the bill continues to provide for a Director of Professional Standards and a Professional Standards Committee but adds a Professional Standards Board to adjudicate disputed decisions; and that the Board would have broad and flexible powers but would operate without the formality of a court. The Council of the Diocese commends this proposal to you as the best way forward at this time.

In June at Bendigo the Diocesan Ministry Conference was a valuable three days for clergy of the diocese to assemble together, to worship and to learn. I highlight this conference because it was impressive to see the talent, commitment and holiness of our clergy and full time lay workers as they gathered together for this time. I want to underscore the merit of continuing professional development for clergy. Such occasions are essential times for renewal of ministry and I hope that all wardens and vestries will ensure that parish clergy are enabled to participate in professional learning each year.

Before outlining my Vision for Melbourne I want to refer to terminology. The words 'strategic planning' signify particular meanings which relate to the experience of each individual. In "The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning", (1994) Henry Mintzberg argues that the label 'strategic planning' should be dropped because strategic planning - or the formalising of this notion - has in his view impeded strategic thinking. The simplest description of planning for the future is: "Where are we now? Where do we want to be? How are we going to get there?" I will try to use the term 'vision' for 'where do we want to be'.

Where are we now? When I came to Melbourne I saw an exciting and vibrant diocese as well as one with challenges. Strategy seemed focused in regions or in parishes, rather than being of the diocese as a whole. The 2020 Vision which was formulated in 2001 was in force, though I did not hear it referred to in any decision making as the informing text. It is an impressive document which aims largely to scope the physical resources, the demographic and the geographical factors and guide a property and church planting strategy up to the Year 2020. Through working with the company MacroPlan, much data had been provided for districts and parishes. I am not sure why so little was implemented, my point being that a strategic policy on its own does not lead to change.

My initial approach from December 2006 was to get to know as many people, parishes and organisations as quickly as possible. I coupled this with my Prayer4Melbourne, the name I used for going out and engaging widely with the community. I trust that in a small way I have practised what is undoubtedly part of our mission as followers of Jesus. In parallel, tactical decisions have led to a rearrangement of the regions and now to an Episcopate of three Assistant Bishops rather than four; to a reduced size Archbishop in Council; the restructure of the business services, the global financial situation having spurred a much needed development; and the AIM4Melbourne and Fresh Connections 2009, which has spawned a variety of initiatives, some being celebrated in this Synod.

In the AIM4Melbourne leaflet which went to all clergy and parishes our essential connections are featured: connecting with God in Christ; connecting with each other; connecting with the community; and connecting with the generations and cultures. Another offshoot of AIM4Melbourne is Calling Melbourne2Prayer, the group which has for two years written the Lenten Study series, Journey to Easter, and Advent conversations in the Cathedral. I have also enjoyed leading two Lenten Missions, to the Northern & Western Region in 2008 and the Southern in 2009.

Additional initiatives have included the development of a new church at Caroline Springs, made possible through property redistribution in the Moonee Ponds cluster of churches, and the Docklands Church, the first initiative anticipated under the 2004 Authorised Anglican Congregations Act which, two years from its inception, is prospering. New churches for St Alfred's Blackburn, Christ Church Ormond and Holy Spirit Watsonia have been opened. Hume Anglican Grammar School at Craigieburn has commenced and is now in its second year of operation - the list continues and shows that initiative is alive and well in the Diocese.

The establishment of an interim Ministry and Mission Commission early in 2009 was intended as a vital step towards a more efficient structure, particularly in the management of property matters which currently can be a source of frustration for parishes eager to move quickly with a project. As the year has unfolded, I detect the sense of the Commission that we are before our time. Its function would dovetail neatly with structures that are still being put into place. We were charged with our work for 2009 only, though with the expectation of flourishing into the full Commission. My conjecture is that the Commission, or a similar body, will be vital in the future but may not contribute effectively in 2010, but I await the next meeting of the Commission to hold that discussion. One important insight agreed at the Interim Commission is that we need to support multiple pathways for church growth and extension, rather than expecting the property questions to be resolved at the outset.

Some see future planning as being made possible through closing down existing parishes and opening up new churches in growth corridors. While there is a certain simplicity in this notion it suggests that God's economy is a limited and finite one, something far different to the great commandment of Matthew 28.

It is always sad for a parish to have to close, after all possible avenues of keeping it open. There is inevitably a long history of faithful worship and generations of families belonging to a parish. Any dynamic Diocese may have parishes closing and others springing into life. Such events, however, are a consequence of patterns of population and the need for worship centres to be where the people are.

A vision for a diocese has to be wide ranging and be open also to struggling ministries being revived and renewed, as well as acting decisively if they are not to continue.

Last year I stated my vision as being “*of a strong and confident church and a diocese which is united, a diocese with one vision, one mission, and one strategic property proposal and, I hope, one strategic plan.*” I said that “*I value the part played by the regional councils and regions, our current geographical and administrative structure, and I am impressed by the strategic plans for each region.*” I went on: “*By 2010, however, I intend to bring a strategic plan for the whole diocese, a plan which looks across the regions and seeks to maximise our combined capacity. The Fresh Connections vision and AIM4Melbourne, the existing strategy plans for the regions and the work of the past will be used in the process.*”

I can report that we almost achieved this! But for having to confront and deal with the budget deficits through an intensive and rigorous process, the initial consultation and pre planning would have been concluded by now. Nonetheless I see no reason not to meet these goals by the original target of the October 2010 Synod.

My Vision includes another ‘V’ word, namely ‘values’. The value and culture of any organisation of people are the foundation of the behaviour and life of the people. Building on our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the first principle of any statement of belief for Anglicans in the Diocese of Melbourne, the starting point for our vision for the future must be who we are and what we value.

I want to start with the bedrock, the common foundation, reached through the layers and fissures of difference and imperfection. Even as bedrock geology influences the surface of the earth, determining the flow and direction of rivers, so the bedrock of our Christian faith, culture and values inform and enable both individual and corporate behaviour. The culture of how we interact and relate is foundational, affecting our capacity to grow the church of God.

On the bedrock of our foundation, of faith, values and culture, we build up the body of Christ in building people. I see us:

- Building ordained leaders
- Building parishes
- Building theological education
- Building lay education
- Building connections
- Building Indigenous outreach and partnership
- Building partnership with our schools, agencies and sector ministries
- Building in the community
- Building culture

Building ordained leaders

Clergy in parishes and other ministries need effective pastoral support systems. I want the Diocese to create an improved structure of pastoral care for clergy and I want to work towards more rigorous continuing professional learning for clergy. As part of an improved structure I see the building of the role of deaneries as an essential component. I add the honouring of retired clergy as another focus, retired clergy having much to offer in mentoring and other roles.

Interestingly, the Synod of 1999, in response to reported levels of stress among the clergy, passed a motion that strongly encouraged all clergy to be responsible stewards of their time and to make proper provision for rest and recreation, and it urged vestries and parishes to assist in this by aiming to reduce the workload of full time clergy. I put it to you that work life balance is only one aspect of effective clergy support. In what is widely considered a post Christian society and in a world where longstanding institutions and authority are challenged, the nature of ministry has changed, particularly in parishes. Parish life is not spared the cares and relationship issues of the community. Clergy will benefit from a network of pastoral support, one where the sharing of ideas and strategies can be explored.

Building Parishes

The building up of people and parishes is at the heart of ministry. Whatever 'church' might look like in an assortment of possible expressions, with a better supported clergy and more teaching and learning opportunities, parishioners will be nurtured better in worship and faith.

We know that parish is a geographic and administrative term as much as it is a term for a local unit of the Church. Our parish system has been marvellously effective in evangelising neighbourhoods and sustaining the faithful with pastoral care. Nevertheless we know that modern society sees many people relating to each other through networks of shared interest, not just through or not even in neighbourhoods. The Church of England has pioneered work in Fresh Expressions of Church to seek to evangelise the networks of relationship in our society and pastorally care for Christians within them. There are undoubtedly many opportunities for us to progress work in this area in Australia. Early initiatives have included a dog walking group in the northern suburbs, the revitalisation of midweek worship as a focus for community in itself, and ministry around cycling groups in Bendigo.

Building Theological Education

We must build up people to preach, teach and draw others to Christ, people across the generations, from those who choose ministry as their life's work to those who feel called to ordination later in life. Our provision of theological education in this diocese is through two Anglican colleges, Ridley Melbourne and Trinity Theological School, with other ordinands sometimes coming after completing degrees at Tabor College or the Bible College of Victoria. Both Trinity and Ridley show an impressive commitment to excellence and innovation. Full time student enrolments are up. Participation in distance and online theological study is strong. The restructure of our diocesan theological education and training activities as Network 1:28 has allowed us to offer accredited training at VET level for the pre and post ordination training offered by the Diocese. Network 1:28 is a commendable work in progress and I intend there to be a full review of the program within the next three years.

Building Lay Education

For lay people I want the diocese to build up its offering of theological education of a different kind, by whatever name. The deepening or even the apprehension of faith can be enhanced by learning programs across the age range, from Alpha, Cursillo, Education for Ministry, Certificate courses offered by Ridley and Trinity, parenting groups, and for youth and children the Anglican boys' and girls' societies, Godly Play and other Kindergarten and children's church programs. To have all parishes reviewing and extending their range of faith formation programs must be a goal across the board.

The vision must include parishes and ministries yet to be created. Whether in the form of church planting or simply opening new parishes in growth areas, I want the Diocese of Melbourne to aim at building at least one new ministry in every direction of the diocese, to the north, south, east and west, within the next couple of years. Let us go boldly in Christ and take the Anglican Church to areas with no Anglican presence.

Building Connections

There is much to build on from the Fresh Connections initiatives of 2009 during 2010 and beyond. To make our churches inviting and accessible is crucial. Do not underestimate the apprehension with which those who are not churched might approach our churches. Nor should we overestimate the warmth of the welcome that is offered to visitors in a parish church. Anecdotal evidence abounds of visitors experiencing unfriendliness and even exclusion, when we think we are extending a warm welcome.

Building Indigenous Outreach and Partnerships

It is pleasing that many partnership and outreach projects already exist. The projects underway will continue and we are encouraged to respond to the recommendations of the scoping report.

Building Partnership with our Schools, Agencies and Sector Ministries

Our diocese has the enormous resource of its agencies, schools and sector ministries. These, with the parishes, are central to our mission to build up the body of Christ and proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and action. I want there to be a study exploring ways for the diocese better to connect with these organisations which daily engage with several thousands of people, whose only contact with the church is via these Anglican bodies, not parishes.

Building in the community

The Anglican Church is already a significant contributor to the social good, through its agencies AngliCORD, Anglicare, Benetas, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Lifeworks, St Laurence Community Services, through the Anglican Schools, the Hospital and Prison Chaplaincies, the parishes having their own incorporated bodies doing this work in the diocese, and more. In any vision for the future this aspect of our mission must continue. The Diocese of Melbourne will be there to meet people in their time of need, suffering the effects of poverty, of sickness, of unemployment and inequality.

Finally, Building the Culture

The Diocese of Melbourne is a great place and a great community. I celebrate its diversity. Diversity does not preclude trust and mutual respect. We must provide more occasions for clergy and lay Anglicans to learn and understand the different theological perspectives that lead to difference in liturgy, language and style, often the boundary markers amongst us, while sharing the one faith and worshipping the one God. The strengthening of trust and mutual respect amongst Anglicans from different traditions will build the body of Christ.

To support the 2015 Vision we will need to build resources, people and finance. The Diocesan Property Policy was approved in June 2001 to ensure that we could build up the corpus of capital to allow the Diocese to embark on new projects. This was an important decision by Archbishop in Council made for the growth of the ministry of the church. Rather than just to leave the property resources to be used where they happen to exist, it was intended to allow resources to be freed up.

I have asked for an analysis of the figures for the sale of property since the policy has been in force. The records in the Archbishop in Council minutes for the period between August 2002 and September 2009 reveal that 39 properties have been sold for a total of \$41.5 million. Of this revenue: 61% has been applied to the parishes from which the property sale originated; 17% was added to the Diocesan capital base; 8% or \$3.2 million was added to the Church Extension and Development Fund; and 14% was applied to parishes other than the ones where the parish property was sold. The land for the parishes of Brimbank and Caroline Springs was purchased out of these proceeds of sale. Total purchases amounted to \$11.6 million. This means, roughly speaking, that a quarter of all sale proceeds went to purchase new properties, and a quarter was applied to either the capital base of the Diocese or the CEDF, leaving a half, or over \$20 million spent in building projects within parishes.

We know that both chance and history have meant that property resources sit more densely in the older settled areas of Melbourne than they do in the urban growth fringe. If we want our church to grow in new areas, the funding for this must be assisted through the sale of property no longer required.

I want to pay tribute to my Episcopal colleagues and my staff. We have shed five full time positions in this area alone since this time last year. The ability to maintain the same levels of work and service with such a significant reduction of people is questionable but we are constantly seeking to serve the Diocese to the utmost of our capacity.

The building of people resources has already begun through the restructure in Business Services at the Anglican Centre. The restructured Archbishop in Council is due for review this year. I have initiated a process of review and have invited current members of Archbishop in Council to evaluate the model that has operated for the past two years.

My Vision then for the next five years is building from the bedrock of our faith, values and culture, building the body of Christ, building people, parishes, clergy, community and connections. Whatever I say tonight can be critiqued through a variety of lenses, including the words 'my vision'. It is my Vision as articulated tonight, but it can and must be moulded into 'our' vision through a process of analysis, discussion and consultation. The point of course is that unless it is God's vision, 'my' or 'our' are irrelevant qualifiers.

The consultation, essential to the shaping of a vision owned by the whole diocese, has begun. My fellow Bishops and I have commenced collaborating on a list of around fifteen key values, not designed as theological principles but rather principles which we value, for instance 'our unity together with our diversity' and 'affirmation and encouragement of each other'. The Archdeacons have contributed to the shaping of this list with Council members also invited to do so. Unless future planning is built from the foundation of values and identity, it is unlikely to achieve sustainable implementation. Commencing from the end of Synod, I want to consult widely about values and culture as well as the ideas outlined in my vision. I hope to share discussions with a mixture of groups, such consultation complemented by the opportunities afforded by technology. Through the website and email I will seek both individual and group responses to the issues laid out before you tonight.

Archbishop in Council meets in two weeks' time for a planning day, one aspect of which will be our vision for the Diocese. In March of 2010 there is another Archbishop in Council workshop, at which I hope to bring the progress findings to be sifted through the contribution of the Council. We are fortunate in our Council, to have an eclectic mix of expertise, experience and wisdom from a group of committed Anglicans. I thank the members of Council, the Chancellor, the Deputy Chancellor, the Advocate and the General Manager for their leadership and work for the Diocese and their support of me.

In addition to all I have said, my personal AIM4Melbourne in 2010 is to engage as widely and deeply as possible with parishes, agencies and chaplaincies around our vision. I want to learn more at first hand of the needs of those who serve in and are served by parishes, agencies and schools and of their dreams for the Diocese of Melbourne.

My charge to you tonight is a call to a deeper relationship with Christ, a call to faithful Christian ministry both as clergy and lay Christians, a call to Christian witness in our daily lives, a call to prayer, a call to love one another and a call to share in the creation of a vision for the Diocese of Melbourne for the next five years and beyond.

Will you join me in my call ?

Please now join me as I pray, firstly in a paraphrase of the words of St Augustine:

You are great, Lord, and worthy of our highest praise. We are a tiny part of your creation, bearing within ourselves the evidence of our mortality. Yet we mortals, a tiny part of your creation, wish to praise you. It is you who moves each of us to delight in your praise. For you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest with you.

Grant, Lord, through your mighty power the love that changes hearts and renews minds. So guide the meeting of this Synod, that when we feel troubled in spirit we may know your grace. When our minds are active and thoughts flow in every direction, we may know your peace. And in those things that most touch our fears, we may know your presence and strength.