

OPENING ADDRESS FOR REPORT ON DMAP

Ven. Canon Mark Chamberlain

Friday 2 September, 2022

INTRODUCTION

It's a real blessing to stand before you today and speak about the DMAP—the Diocesan Mission Action Plan which this Synod passed unanimously one year ago. On the 1st of February I was appointed to the role of Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission, and it has been a joy to be part of the implementation of the DMAP—along with the Standing Committee and the CPT response of course.

I have visited the majority of our Vicars and Priests-in-charge. I have spoken to just over a quarter of the Vestries and have preached at a good number of parishes. So thank you to all those who have spoken to me about their ministries and parishes and the many ways you are living out the gospel in the various neighborhoods and regions of our Diocese.

Because of the new members of Synod and everyone's need for a refresher, I want to spend a moment reviewing the DMAP. It's a 15-page document available on the Home Page of the Dio Website. It lays out a clear plan to regenerate our Diocese and enable growth in strength, depth and breadth. It identifies three priority areas—making disciples, supporting families and strengthening communities. At the heart of the DMAP are 17 clear mandates that cover such things as Mission Action Planning, Parish Reviews, Missional Coaches, resourcing and training, new forms of church, organizational structures and the effective use of land and buildings.

The principle that undergirds the DMAP is the *Missio Dei*—the mission of God. We worship a missionary God. Out of an overflow of love, God created the world. When we turned away God did not abandon us but sent his Son to live and die for us. He rose from the dead breaking its power forever and sent his Spirit to be God's holy and animating presence in the world. God sends and sends and sends. God is missionary God. And God calls the Church to participate in this great mission today—to bring the justice and love of God to all people. Old Testament scholar Chris Wright said "It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his Church in the world, as that God has a Church for his mission in the world."

So the DMAP is a **pointed challenge**. It says that we're not happy with 'business as usual'. It says we want to become healthy, growing communities of Christian believers. Where each member is a growing disciple. Where new people are being introduced to the wonders and deep fulfillment of the Christian life. And where we are intentionally making new disciples.

The DMAP is also an **innovative plan**. We adopted it one year ago, but we can change it as we learn more about being a church in mission. The DMAP invites us to try something new, to take some risks and to learn more about doing ministry and mission in our changing culture. It spurs us towards innovation.

The DMAP enables us to be **more accountable** because we've gone public with our hopes and dreams and we can be more easily held to account. That shouldn't scare us and it shouldn't scare me. God has given us gifts and talents and the scriptures teach that along with the gift comes the responsibility.

The DMAP also contains a **vision and a hope**. In these days when the church is struggling throughout the western world, we continue to be arrested by the person of Jesus Christ, by God's great love for the world and by the enlivening experience of the Holy Spirit. And we have a vision to share this fullness of life with others – a solemn mandate has been laid upon us. So

the DMAP both casts a vision of God's amazing grace and challenges us to do mission more effectively so we can share it.

I want now to invite members of our panel to share their experiences of various aspects of the DMAP so you can hear firsthand, about the ways it is helping us to reconceive parish ministry, to take some risks and to move from maintenance to mission. I hope you will all be inspired by these responses.

CONCLUSION

Thanks so much to those who have spoken. Clearly the DMAP is beginning to have an impact on the parishes and ministry units of our Diocese. This is what we wanted. This time last year we unanimously agreed to the DMAP because we wanted to change our trajectory, we wanted to move from maintenance to mission and we wanted to embed new ways of being missional that would lead to regeneration. And it's beginning to happen. But we're at the very beginning.

And don't forget that the DMAP is not all about if we do A plus B then God will bless us and make it like church in the 60s again. Rather, the DMAP calls for a series of new approaches because they, in principle, will help us become more obedient to God's call to be church in the world. This is about our own discipleship before God and facing up to change as we as a community of Anglican disciples seek to discern God's call on our lives and the life of our Diocese. So, it's not about wooden 'church growth techniques.' The DMAP is a spiritual exercise which will help us to grow in our faithfulness to the God of mission.

I want to close with a few questions that I invite you to engage with.

First of all, as the clergy and lay leaders of our Diocese, have you carefully and prayerfully read the DMAP, along with your Wardens and Vestry, and taken seriously what it says about seeking the regeneration of our parishes and Diocese?

Secondly do you recognize the need to step outside of your daily ministries from time to time to pray and to think and to talk about what your priorities are as parishes and ministry units? The Leading your Church into Growth conference will give you that opportunity so please seriously consider attending.

Thirdly does your parish have a Mission Action Plan? The DMAP calls for all our parishes to develop one. If you haven't done this or wouldn't know where to start, please contact me. I am your resource person – I am here to help. Thank you.