

# **Bishop Peter Carrell's Presidential Address, Synod, 11/09/2020**

*This is the full, official text of the Address. For the Zoom Synod itself, under time constraint, a briefer version will be verbally delivered.*

## **Introduction**

In the Christian movement Jesus catalyzed into life and growth through history there are moments when we pause to take stock.

Every synod is a pause in the life of a diocese.

In our Synod our reports and bills and motions as I read them are properly about a Diocese taking a moment to pause, to review, to take stock, to ask whether we are heading in the right direction – the direction, that is, which is faithful to the call of Jesus to fish for people, and the direction which is never satisfied until we see the fullness of the kingdom of God.

My address to you is also part of pausing to reflect on where we are going.

It is an opportunity for me to share with you my vision for the future and proposed strategic themes as I lead you, having been called by God through you to be your bishop.

But this year our pausing for collective reflection, review and decision making is brand new (our first Synod by Zoom) and in the midst of a year which has repeatedly made a mockery of the best laid plans of governments, corporations, educational institutions, sports bodies and churches to make a plan and to stick to it.

In this crazy time we will do our business as a Synod assuming that sometime soon life will return to a new normal of meeting physically together, without Covid inspired limitations.

At the end of Luke 5, Jesus talks about new and old things. Reading from verse 36 we find:

No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old. (36)

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. (37)

But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. (38)

And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, "The old is good." (39)

There is a sense in which all our talk of the Regeneration of the Diocese has characteristics of "the new" and thus we wonder what "new wineskin" of a Diocese we need for our new future.

But this year, exemplified by this Zoom format for meeting as a Synod, we have had some new wine and a new wineskin, virtual church, forced on us by the Pandemic. An irony of the situation is that many of us find ourselves appreciating verse 39: "The old is good", meaning, bring back physical meeting together, with hugs and handshakes, with communion in two kinds and biscuits and cake for morning tea!

# **The Diocese of Christchurch, 2019-2020 – Part A**

## **Gratitude**

I begin this part of the address by saying, “Thank you.” Praise and thanks to God who has called us into being as a Diocese and who continues to work among us and with us. Through God we have been blessed in the past year in many ways.

It is also appropriate to offer our human thanks to those who have done so much for us.

Thus, on behalf of the Diocese, I thank the many people, clerical and lay, paid and unpaid, elected or appointed, who have worked so hard over the past year and who make the Diocese of Christchurch what it is.

The list is extensive, it is readily found across the pages of our Diocesan prayer cycle, but it is not limited to those whose names appear in the cycle.

I work very closely with some on the list. There are more than a dozen names in this category, I will not list you all, but you know who you are: thank you, thank you, thank you.

I also warmly thank the following people who are leaving one of our three major Boards in the Diocese:

CPT: Bruce Deam, Lisa-Marie Richen.

I also warmly thank our Chancellor, Jeremy Johnson, who is leaving this role after an intense period of work over many years, from 2008 to 2015 as Vice Chancellor and from 2015 to this Synod as Chancellor. Later in the Synod we will acknowledge Jeremy’s work more fully.

Finally, in this section, I want to say thank you to Teresa for her loving support through this past year. I could not do this job without you!

## **Disaffiliation**

A year on from my lament at Synod about Disaffiliation, I acknowledge that the consequences remain with us, despite significant commitment on the part of several ministry units to move forward into a new future – commitment which I honour and applaud.

One such consequence I mention here is the importance at this Synod of embedding into the Diocesan network of ministry units a revised and enlarged Parish of Shirley which incorporates the districts of Burwood and Marshlands. I thank the parishioners of Shirley and Each Christchurch parishes for their great efforts to bring the proposed resolution to this Synod.

## **Recovery**

Through 2019-2020 great progress has been made on our Recovery Programme – our programme for repairing, restoring and re-strengthening buildings across the Diocese which were damaged in the earthquakes in 2010, 2011 and 2016.

This year the **Reinstatement of the Cathedral** has included progress towards 100% Concept Design, which we hope can be made public before the end of October, and the beginning of Stabilization Work on the building itself.

There will be a presentation on this project as a separate item on our order paper. Here I simply note that this project is both a pleasure for me (because I meet and work with some wonderful people associated with this project) and a significant demand on my diary (there are lots of meetings and emails to attend to). Through Lockdown this year we made considerable progress on the concept design for the project. In the past month or so we have seen considerable progress on site as work on stabilization has begun.

In respect of the overall Recovery Programme, we have determined that most of it will be completed by 31 March 2021. A few projects will take a few more months to complete. A few projects are effectively on hold due to shortage of required finance, such as St John's, Hororata and St John the Evangelist Church, Okains Bay.

At other moments in our Synod timetable we will have time to consider various matters to do with the Cathedral Reinstatement and our Recovery Programme, but here I want to acknowledge the hard work CPT, parish, CCRL and CCRT staff, vestry and Board members have put into making things happen, including raising much needed funds for work to proceed. Thank you.

### **Property and Mission**

Last year in our Synod we had a few motions concerning assets, especially property in relation to our participation in the mission of God. I said then, in my Presidential Address,

“I see these motions as representing some frustration, some dreaming and some aspirations to be better resourced in our gospel mission. I hear, as you likely do also, some talk about how we might better deploy assets across our Diocese for a better focused mission.”

This year we have an opportunity to move forward on property and mission matters. First, by formally withdrawing last year's motions which were laid on the Synod table. Secondly, by discussing and then voting on a motion which, if agreed, would become part of the Guidelines of the Diocese in respect of property. The motion broadly speaking compels no ministry unit to do what it does not want to do but presses on every ministry unit the importance of thinking of the needs of other ministry units as well as our own needs.

As I also said a year ago,

“The single most powerful signal of a change in the deployment of assets would be initiatives taken by individual parishes to give away surplus assets in order to developed focus, strategic mission in another part of the Diocese.”

I am delighted to report to you that some ministry units have been taking initiatives to give to other ministry units. Thanks be to God!

I have also been on record as saying that I see one of my tasks to encourage the lightening of the load of property on our Diocese. We have lots of properties. We will always need quite a bit of

property: churches, halls, vicarages. But every property we own represents both a financial and an administrative burden.

When the question of selling a property arises, especially a church which is no longer useful to the mission and ministry of a parish, I am likely to agree to the sale. One reason, which I have said before and I will say again, is that I do not see the new, younger generations of Anglicans as showing signs of wanting to administer lots of properties.

This past year, I am glad to report, has seen the sale of properties!

### **Royal Commission**

A significant amount of work has occurred within our Diocese through the past year as the Royal Commission on Abuse of Vulnerable Persons has gotten into its stride. There has been research into files of past complaints. There has been work for the Diocese, for Anglican Care and for each of our Anglican Schools. The Commission has, as the months of 2020 have unfolded, made increasing demands on us to supply information. I thank all those involved in this work and acknowledge with gratitude the work of Wynn Williams, including our Chancellor, Jeremy Johnson, in collating information and engaging with the Commission on behalf of a collective of episcopal units, social services boards and Anglican schools, of which the Diocese of Christchurch is a part.

### **Good things in our Diocese**

It was a very good experience, while we were not yet in Lockdown, to have two Churchwardens and Treasurers day conferences in March 2020. Prompted by a motion at last year's Synod, these conferences were well attended, well organized and received some great feedback. We will – Covid permitting – continue these conferences. We are also doing some thinking about a day Ministry Conference for training and encouraging all in ministry.

Our Anglican Schools – Christ's College, St Margaret's College, Craighead Diocesan School, St. Mark's, St. Michael's and The Cathedral Grammar – continue to provide opportunities for Christian teaching and witness, through chapel and classroom. I want to acknowledge the commitment of our Chaplains and the significant work of our Principals in responding to the special challenges of Lockdown this year.

We have Chaplains working in other spheres of life and work and I acknowledge all your ministries and pay tribute to your patience and endurance through the special circumstances of this year.

Good things in our Diocese are much, much more than this. I note, for example, the brilliant and generous response of many people to our two special appeals this year, for a general Pandemic Fund to support ministry units in the Diocese and even the Diocese itself as we face economic challenges due to the virus, and for a special situation, the Mirpurkhas Boys Hostel in Pakistan, also threatened financially because the virus has led to its usual sponsor withdrawing support.

### **Our life together**

A huge number of people in our Diocese quietly get on with the tasks God has assigned to us. It is a privilege to meet so many of you, to talk about what God is doing among you, and then as bishop to leave your ministry unit, knowing that the work continues faithfully because of your responsibility and dedication to the work of Christ in the world.

### **The Covid 19 Pandemic**

Permeating this Address and other presentations to Synod is the continuing Covid 19 Pandemic in our globe and in our nation and its effects on our mission and ministry operations.

Here I acknowledge with gratitude to God the wonderful way in which our Diocese has risen to the challenge of the Lockdown which began in March and more recently to a life in a resumed Level 2.

## The Diocese of Christchurch and the world (2019-20) – Part B

Last year I drew attention to a theologian, Masure, who profoundly observed, in 1934, in the midst of a very troubling decade in human history that,

“Fundamentally the Gospel is obsessed with the idea of the unity of human society.”<sup>1</sup>

A year ago I mentioned that contrary to a gospel vision for a unified human society, we had experienced the pain of the 15 March 2019 mosques massacres, the continuing divisive impact of President Trump on our world, and the ongoing menace on many levels of climate change.

A year later divisions due to Trumpian politics, terrible violence inflicted by human beings on one another and the threat of climate change remains. But we look back on a year in which, remarkably, there have been some moving and profound signs of human unity.

In relation to the tragedies of 15 March 2019, I note the moving way in which we united as a nation, just a few weeks ago to support Muslim brothers and sisters giving testimony at the sentencing of the terrorist. We have been further united in our complete and utter condemnation of the terrorist and in our shared conviction that a life sentence for this man must mean he is imprisoned until his final breath is taken.

Then, since January this year, as the world, including our own nation, has responded to the spread of Covid-19, we have seen in the midst of much virus induced division in the world around us, a remarkable period through the Lockdown of late March, April, May and early June in which we have been a “team of five million” Kiwis.

A few months later, as we have returned to Levels 2 and 3, some of that unity is fraying and the patient of many is being sorely tried, but let’s never forget the experience of being a united nation, determined to gain victory over the virus. Our journey into Level 4 and then down through Levels 3 and 2 to Level 1 in June has been a story of what we can do when we all want to paddle the waka in one direction.

Of course through the Lockdown earlier in the year, we paid a price as a nation in respect of economic pain, the sharpest edges of which were felt by the City Mission as its staff experienced unprecedented demand for food parcels and for other services.

Beyond the City Mission, as the whole year is looked back on, we see a wide range of ways in which Anglican Care has cared for our city and our province, including specific responses to the stress of the Pandemic on neighbourhoods. I want to thank Moka Ritchie, Chair of the Anglican Care Board, the Board, executive leaders including Matthew Mark, Patrick Murray, Roger Sutton (until end of January) and Jolyon White (Acting Anglican Missioner since January) and all their staff for their many commitments to serve others in the spirit of Jesus.

As I said a year ago, I want to say again this year,

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<sup>1</sup> E. Masure, conference in *Semaine sociale de Nice* (1934), p. 229, cited in de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (1988), p. 15.

“Every person we engage with through such ministries is our opportunity to be obsessed with the unity of human society, to be obsessed with bringing the reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ to the lives of the last, the least and the lost in our midst.”

We cannot leave this section without noting that 2020 is the year of two referenda, on the End of Life Choice Act and on the legalization of cannabis. The former, if approved, will see the Act approved by Parliament enacted; the latter, if approved, will see a highly regulated regime for the legal sale of cannabis proceed to consideration by a select committee. Both referenda are controversial and both have received some good consideration in our Diocese, especially through the work of Theology House and the Transitional Cathedral in organizing some first rate seminars on these matters.

2020 is also a year in which revision of legislation on abortion has been approved by Parliament. Much less controversial across the whole of our society these changes have not been beyond the concerns of many Christians who remain committed to the human right to live for the unborn child.

## **Mea Culpa – What have we not done in the past year? – Part C**

I find it easy to forget what we said or resolved at the previous Synod! Perhaps you do too. I want to try to own up to areas in which we have not done what we said we would do, including areas in which I have not done what I said I would do. I mention three matters, though no doubt there are other sins of omission which could be named

1. **Strategic Goal:** A year ago I spoke about measuring how we are doing on Regeneration of the Diocese through this decade.

“Regeneration of the Diocese from 2019 -2030, measured by attendance numbers and by age profile of the Diocese, with reference to specific age surveys for the years, 2020, 2025 and 2030.”

Covid has affected our ability to embark on a measurement of both attendance numbers and to relate these numbers to an age profile of the Diocese. We will look again at this matter in 2021 but that re-look may involve determining that 2022 would be a better year in which to survey the Diocese.

2. **Climate Change:** last year at our Synod we resolved the following:

“MOTION 11: Climate Change & Ecological Emergency

That this synod, seeking to care for God’s creation and preserve a liveable earth:

- a. recognises a Climate & Ecological Emergency and seeks to act upon this truth,
- b. encourages other Dioceses of New Zealand / Aotearoa and Polynesia to do the same,
- c. asks Standing Committee/SLT to report back to synod 2020 via the Diocesan Manager, what actions have been taken in respect of the climate and ecological emergency,
- d. resolves to lobby local and central government to declare a climate and ecological emergency and act upon that truth, and

e. requires ministry units to seriously consider what actions they can take to:

I. mitigate the effects of climate heating & bio-diversity losses,

II. reduce our carbon footprint., and

III. to report back those actions to the Diocesan Manager who will provide a report of those actions at the 2020 Synod.

f. to assemble some resources/information to enable and empower ministry units to undertake appropriate action to reduce their carbon footprint.

Moved: Mr Arion Pons Seconded: Mr Neville Queen.”

The honest truth is that very little relative to the precise terms of the resolution has been achieved. However, some things have happened and I will note them here.

First, Standing Committee addressed the terms of the resolution in meetings in 2019 following Synod.

Secondly, we tried to get each ministry unit in the Diocese to appoint a “climate change champion” and report back to us who that person was. We received very little indication of ministry units making such appointments.

Thirdly, while the effects of Covid-19 meant we lost this resolution from Standing Committee’s agenda, there were other good effects in respect of climate change. Standing Committee is currently following a pattern of meeting face to face every second meeting and meeting via Zoom for its other meetings. CPT is trying the same regime and Anglican Care is proposing every third meeting is via Zoom. Other meetings in the Diocese are taking place by Zoom. And, in my experience, it is noticeable that meeting electronically is shifting us away from printing everything to do with our meetings on paper. (Our current Zoom Synod is also an example of this trend). Thus, in some measurable, practical ways, the Diocese is reducing its carbon footprint. It is also the case that nationally our church is doing more on Zoom and thus there is less flying around the country to get to meetings.

In sum: we have more work to do across our Diocese on combatting climate change and things certainly have not worked out according to the letter of this resolution but according to the spirit of the resolution I can report to you that some significant changes are taking place.

3. **Vicarage Design Review:** the request for this work, which included a report back to Synod, has not proceeded as we hoped. We still need to do this work but in at least one way, the delay in the work will lead to greater clarity about what we need to achieve. Events through this past year in respect of vicarages has highlighted the challenge of offering to ourselves a high standard for vicarages while real time engagement in various housing markets means we more often than not find ourselves unable within constraints of price and time to secure a house which meets that high standard.

# Regeneration of the Diocese of Christchurch (2020-2030) – Part D

## Introduction

Last year in my Presidential Address I began talk about Regeneration in this way:

“What kind of Diocese will we be in 2030?

Asking that kind of question helps us determine what we do in the years between now and 2030.

What kind of a Diocese could we be in 2030?

We could be healthy, happy and harmonious. And we should be. But that is a bit general!

My vision is that we are a **regenerated** Diocese – a Diocese regenerated through Christ.

Our statistics about decline in attendance, decline in baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals are well known to us as Synod members.”

Last year I gave a table which this year is enlarged with 2018 figures:

	Total Attendance for worship in Dio Chch
2014	356,080
2015	351,448
2016	316,098 [a blip re counting?]
2017	336,155
2018	277,526
2019	258,623

**The below par figures for 2018 and 2019 represent a number of parishes not making the statistical returns required of them. The figures for 2018 and more so for 2019 also represent a Diocese which has suffered disaffiliation of several congregations.**

I also said this last year:

“Statistics are one thing, another is what we see with our eyes:

- I see a Diocese dominated by participants aged over 60 years.
- I see a Synod which represents that domination well

My vision is that in 2030 our eyes will tell us that the majority of our worshippers are aged under 60 years.

My vision is that in 2030 our statistics will tell us that we are growing again as a Diocese.

My vision is that in 2030 our testimonies will tell us that we have rediscovered ourselves as te Hāhi Mihinare, the missionary church.

The alternative in 2030 is that our eyes, our statistics and our hearts will tell us we are about to die. You do not want that. I do not want that. We do not want that future.”

So I set out before you a vision for a regenerated Diocese which paid attention to its understanding of its message, the gospel, and the importance being able to communicate the gospel effectively because we also understood that in the world today we need to be,

“a gospel church which is institutionally ethical, socially viable, personally effective and intellectually plausible.”

I underlined that

“Talk of regeneration is not about saving the Anglican club from closure.”

And I proposed that regeneration was about,

“**re-discovering our purpose as New Zealand’s Missionary church.**”

All such hopeful talk about a different future would struggle I observed because,

“Our cultural tendency is to look in on ourselves, to preserve what has been our way of doing things, and to focus on the needs of those who currently come to church.”

Thus I offered my vision for the Diocese of Christchurch in 2030 with this “snapshot”:

- a diocese in which God is glorified and the Gospel is proclaimed vibrantly in word and in deed, with its churches –all the churches – likely fewer in number than we have today - full on Sundays, with every generation represented in the congregations,
- and our multi-purpose buildings are busy Tuesdays to Saturdays with community serving activities and spiritual growth Bible study and fellowship groups;
- our cathedral in the Square is barely big enough for regular Diocesan youth services;
- Theology House has a staff of two full-time theologians, one of whom is a leading advocate for social, political and community issues of the day;
- there are several Anglican congregations in Christchurch city which no one is sure about where they meet because they keep moving but Facebook 3.0 keeps the networks informed.

Of course in 2020 that vision met the reality of Covid-19 as we faced being church online rather than in buildings and had to reconfigure our mission in our local communities in ways which did not involve physical gatherings of people.

I also noted to you that it was time to

“move on from talking about Christ-centred mission, raising up young leaders and faithful stewardship, though not because any of these three values are no longer important. They remain important but we need some refreshment and refocusing.”

Hence I introduced three new **Strategic Themes**:

DISCIPLES, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES

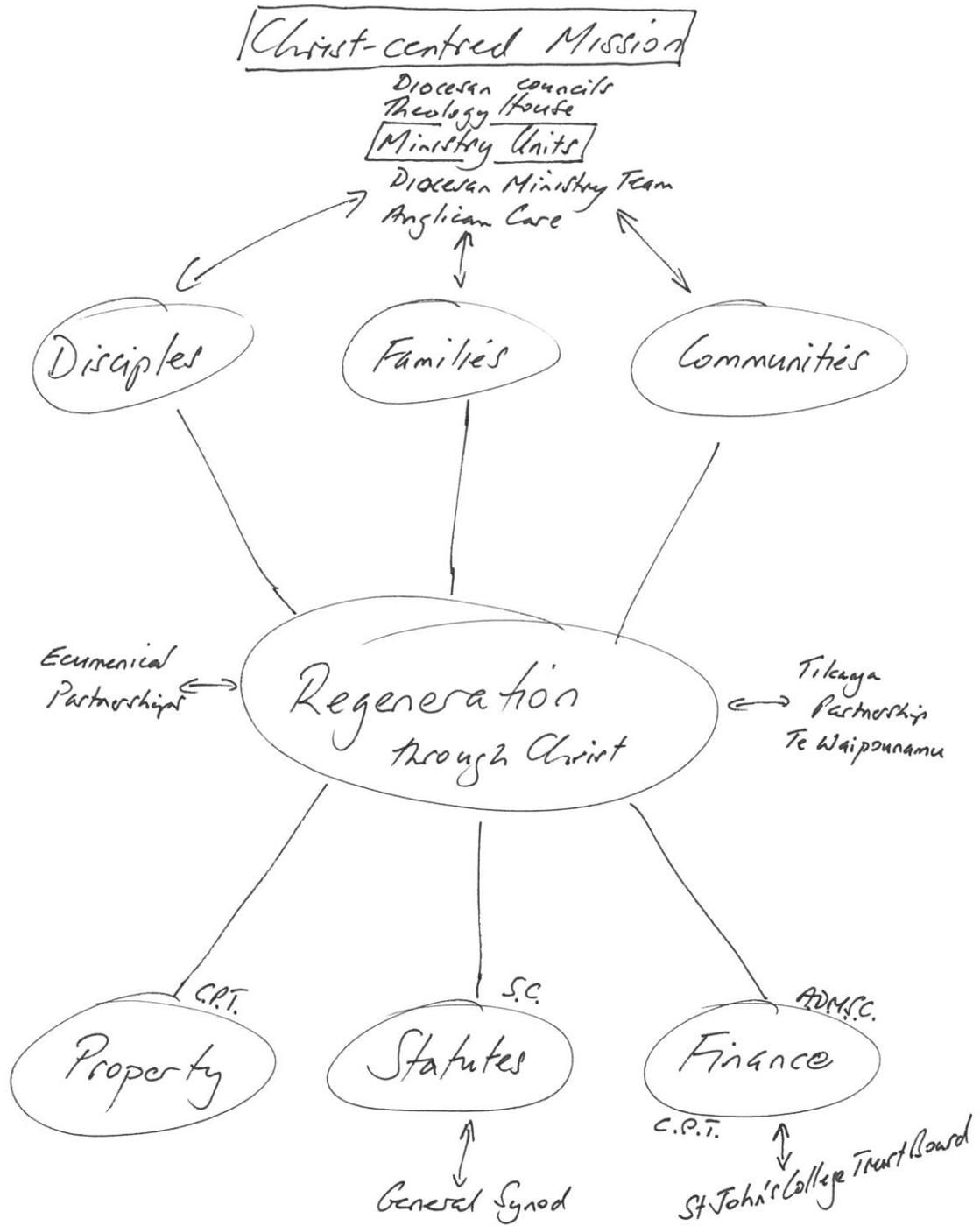
I suggested if there were eight words to take away from the Address it was these:

“Regeneration through Making Disciples, Supporting Families, Strengthening Communities.”

A year later I remain convinced that Regeneration involves Making Disciples, Supporting Families and Strengthening Communities. Where we see Regeneration occurring in our ministry units we see these factors as work.

I also shared with you an **“Illustration of strategic themes”**

With respect to that illustration I observe that in various ways we have been able to strengthen our sense of partnership with Te Waipounamu and with ecumenical partners such as the Presbyterians and the Roman Catholics.



**Resourcing Christ-centred Mission**

Recognising, last year, that some sense of “**Strategic directions and values to guide decision-making in the Diocese and within its ministry units**” was needed, I offered the following:

“As a Diocese, when making decisions, we will:

1. Acknowledge that the local is connected to the universal and the universal is made up of the local: we walk and work together, ministry units and Diocese, towards regeneration of the ministry units of the Diocese.
2. Entrust decision-making, within constraints of civil and canonical law, to local faith communities.
3. **Ask ourselves (Vestry, Standing Committee, CPT Board, Anglican Care, Diocesan ministry Team, other Diocesan bodies), what will:**
  - a. ***Make Disciples***
  - b. ***Support Families***
  - c. ***Strengthen Communities.***
4. **Repeat (3) as we make decisions about personnel, property and planning!!**
5. Bless thriving local churches and flourishing mission initiatives with practical support, thoughtful encouragement and public acknowledgment.
6. Strengthen weak local churches but always be willing to make change when, after a reasonable time period, strengthening has not yielded flourishing.
7. Acknowledge differences between rural and urban parishes (e.g. in respect of differing abilities to maintain property).
8. Acknowledge special situations in the Diocese, notably, the Chatham Islands, the West Coast parishes, Lyttelton and the Mission to Seafarers, the Transitional Cathedral, Rolleston, Hornby, Templeton and West Melton in relation to Wigram.
9. Offer, for a reasonable period, intense “life support” for the parishes most affected by disaffiliations in 2018-19.
10. Take account of short term needs (1-2 years), medium term considerations (5-6 years), and long-term strategic value (2030).
11. Be open to new arrangements for parishes and archdeaconries so that we support ministry to local communities across the rural districts and urban areas of our Diocese.
12. Invite generosity from ministry units as they support other ministry units.
13. Nevertheless be open to synodically and consensually determining aspects of resource sharing.
14. Encourage new initiatives in mission and ministry and acknowledge the possibility of risk to current ventures when new things happen.
15. Continue support for and engagement with ministry units which have chaplains: schools, hospitals, residential care facilities, universities, armed forces, emergency responders, police.
16. Favour co-operation where this is either locally desired or become necessary, especially with Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches, while always supporting identity and strengthening accountability.
17. Lighten the property portfolio of the Diocese which is held in trust by the Church Property Trustees, acknowledging that a regenerating Diocese is unlikely to increase the number of administratively minded Anglicans, by encouraging parishes to reduce their holdings of churches, halls and houses.”

While this document remains important to me, it is more important for the Diocese, especially for the CPT Board and for Standing Committee that we have a document which the Synod has adopted to guide decision-making, especially in respect of “big ticket” items which beg questions about the strategic context in which they should be considered.

Hence at this Synod we have a motion which, if resolved, will lead to the establishment of a working group to develop a draft Diocesan Mission Action Plan with a view to this draft being presented to Synod in 2021 for adoption by the Synod.

I want to make a few remarks about what a **Diocesan** Mission Action Plan means.

1. It must be a plan we agree to by majority in our Synod.
2. It cannot be a plan which cannot command a majority even if it accords with the smartest mind in the room or with the edgiest thinker in the precinct.
3. For CPT or Standing Committee or any other entity in the Diocese to act according to a Diocesan Mission Action Plan, it needs the authority of Synod in doing so.
4. Otherwise a ministry unit can ask, in words familiar from one of the gospel stories, “By what authority do you act?”
5. Thus a particular challenge for the working group will be to listen carefully to voices from across the whole Diocese and to discern what the mind of our Synod is likely to be in September 2021.
6. There is no expectation on this working group that they will travel widely across the Diocese, spending hours and hours on the road and even more hours in meetings. That approach would require time and energy that few of us have, and might well hold the process back for an extra year.
7. It is an expectation of the working group that there will be smart ways of listening to the Diocese, for instance through surveys, phone calls, Zoom meetings with representatives from the different Archdeaconries, as well as conversations with our younger generations – the generations which will carry the Diocese forward from 2030.
8. Finally, if we had been able to meet face to face, we would have had a good hour in small groups on the second day of our Synod business sessions. We do not have that opportunity this year, which is a pity but is also the way things are.

#### **Two announcements about the immediate future**

1. I am working on a new position on the Diocesan Ministry Team which will focus on the cause of Regeneration of our Diocese: a “Consultant on Regeneration” though likely the position will have a different title to that phrase. I hope we can begin advertising for this position soon and make an appointment effective from early 2021.
2. I am very pleased to announce to the Synod that we have secured a new location for the Anglican Centre. This new location is Cardale House, a property belonging to the Parish of Christchurch St Michael’s. It is on Tuam Street, just around the corner from Durham Street. Some strengthening work is required on the building and there will be some fit out. Our hope is that we can move from Logistics Drive mid 2021, and certainly by the end of October 2021.

## **Conclusion**

There is so much more to be said but I must stop here to allow for your questions.

Thank you for listening, thank you for praying, thank you for being open to where the loving heart of God leads us.

*Bishop Peter*  
*10 September 2020.*