

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Bishop in Europe:
The Right Reverend Dr. Robert Innes



16 May 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is now 18 months since our Diocesan Synod agreed the Strategy, which will in the coming years, underpin our work as a Diocese and help us walk together in faith. I am attaching a summary by way of reminder.

From the outset, we have wanted to make sure that the Strategy is developed and implemented 'bottom-up' not 'top-down'. It must not simply depend on Bishops, Archdeacons, Councils and Committees telling chaplaincies and congregations how to do mission. It must be an invitation to chaplaincies themselves to reflect on how you can build on what you are already doing, to become chaplaincies engaged in mission. Psalm 37 reminds us that, under God, our feet have been placed in a large room. That means the possibilities for any church community to engage in mission are endless.

I hope you will use the Strategy to help your chaplaincy or congregation assess what you are already doing in mission and to ask whether there are other things you could be doing in some of the other areas of work we have identified.

Mission has been described as like one thirsty person helping another thirsty person to find water. Our Strategy is headlined 'Walking Together in Faith'. In this spirit, how can we encourage one another to become - even more than is now the case - communities in mission? We know that in our widely dispersed diocese communication is of the essence. In a technology driven age, most of us are used to our information coming through visual engagement, rather than through the written word. If as a diocese we want to excite mission we will do well to use contemporary media opportunities effectively.

That is why I now invite all the chaplaincies and congregations in our diocese, through harnessing the opportunities presented both by YouTube and by our new Diocesan Website, to share with each other the good things that you are doing to live out some of the hopes and dreams which are embodied in our Diocesan Strategy. I am confident that others will be inspired by hearing and seeing what you are doing.

So, please capture something of what you are doing in a video - not more than three minutes long. Let people speak for themselves about what they are doing. Show good things actually happening. This work has already begun and you can already see examples of videos already produced by visiting our current Diocesan Website. You don't need to hire expensive equipment to do this. All it needs is someone with a smartphone and a steady hand. With this letter you'll find some notes from our Diocesan Communications Officer, Paul Needle, to help you in making your own videos and sharing them with the wider Diocese.

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A Church without Mission is like fire without a flame. I invite all chaplaincies to join in our work of showing each other what it is to be communities in mission in the Europe of the first decades of the twenty-first century. We have much to learn with and from each other. Please share this invitation with your Councils. If you have a magazine or newsletter please copy this letter into that. Please share all this on your own webpage or Facebook Page or Twitter Feed so that as many as possible know can go to find out what is going on across our Diocese to help us walk together in faith.

As well as putting your own videos online, please also share with your congregations what others within the Diocese are doing to make real the words of the Diocesan Strategy. If our Diocesan Strategy remains fine words on paper then it will have failed. Thank you for all that you and your people will do to make those words live.

Yours in Christ,

+ Robert Gibraltar in Europe

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