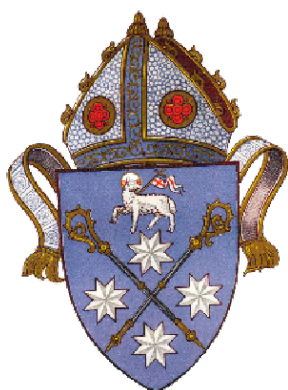


ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

Diocese of Bathurst

Extraordinary session of the 49th Synod

19th September 2020



BATHURST
DIOCESE

Anglican Church of Australia

Presidential Address

By the Right Reverend Mark Calder

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So we need to:

1. *Send one another into our communities*
2. *Renew/refresh our clergy team*
3. *Build up and equip teams of lay leaders/ministers*
4. *Investigate strategic alliances and team ministries*
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May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5-6

Those with good memories (or a good filing system) will note that this is the same verse of Scripture, with which I opened my video address to you at last year's Synod, as Bishop elect.

It is still my prayer that we might have the same attitude toward each other that Jesus had – of love, of forgiveness, of sacrificial service – so that with one mind and one voice – reconciled to one another and unified in Christ – we may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

My aim for this my first synod charge is simple – to look with you at the past, the present and the future under the following headings:

1. *The past **named***
2. *The present **faced***
3. *The future **explored***

1. THE PAST NAMED

I first want to recall all that is good about the past.

a. THE GOOD

We give thanks to God for those whose vision it was to establish churches, and then a Diocese, out here in the west. Over our 150 years history, there have been extraordinary men and women who persevered through many hardships to bring the good news to remote communities and isolated homesteads. They battled the heat, they travelled on horseback, they slept under the stars, they had few resources, but they had a passion to bless the west with the good news of Jesus. They were pioneers and visionaries. Their ministry brought hope and life, when there was very little of either to be found anywhere else.

The fact there is still a diocese here today is a testimony to the foundations laid 150 years ago and those who have laboured on in the Lord despite the roadblocks and challenges.

And there is much that is good about the present. In the ten months I have been in the role, I have met so many wonderful people who have persevered through the challenges of this our day and who still hold out hope for the future because they unfeignedly believe that the gospel is the power of God for salvation.

There are so many – clergy and lay, leaders and members - who continue to serve God with extraordinary sacrifice day after day, whether that be in our larger centres or remote communities. Thank you for all you do in the name of the Lord Jesus.

I'm grateful to God for the support and encouragement of the Registrar Karen Trafford, Archdeacons Brett Watterson, Joy Harris, Grahame Yager and Jono Williams; Dean James Hodson, the Reverend Canon Tim Fogo and those who serve with them on Bishop-in-Council and the Anglican Property Trust. I am grateful also for the work of Chantal Bremner in the office, assisted as needed by Judy Meadley.

The work of the Bishop's Election Board was thorough, and prayer filled. It is the story they shared, of a diocese ready for gospel-shaped change, which inspired Susan and me to declare ourselves available to come should we be asked.

So for all that has been good about our diocese in the past (leading up to the present), we must give 'humble and hearty thanks'.

Yet for all that has been good, we must also name what is not.

b. THE BAD

I only know some of what has been hard and sad about these past difficult years.

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry that so many of you still carry scars and pain and personal hurt and disappointment as a result of certain financial, legal, and management decisions.

I have heard many of your stories.

Stories of parishes and people who are hurting, and perhaps still angry. Both as a result of certain original financial decisions and undertakings, and then from the ramifications of the diocese being unable to meet those commitments.

This situation has resulted in:

- *Trust funds being drained, which may have otherwise been used for growth and development.*
- *Buildings and institutions sold bringing massive sadness, disappointment, frustration, and financial hardship.*
- *Funds earmarked for one purpose, used for another, with little or no consultation.*
- *The reputation of the diocese and church damaged.*
- *The ongoing request for yielding up of unused or under used properties for sale.*
- *Our diocese now crippled financially and dependent on another.*

I have been so sad and sorry to hear of these accounts and the toll they have taken on many at a personal level, and also the impact on the work and ministry of the diocese as a whole.

I will say more on how we might deal with the past shortly, but let me say this: many who were involved in decisions we now question had good intentions. Similarly, many of those tasked with dealing with the aftermath did the best they could with the advice given, the information to hand, and the resources which remained. We can all look back with a certain satisfaction and say, 'we would have done things differently or better', but we have the benefit of knowing how things turned out.

Somehow we need to find a godly way to reconcile ourselves with the past, even though we still live with the consequences.

We might be angry – but we must be careful, that in our anger, we do not sin. (*Ephesians 4:26*)

We may carry certain disappointments and still be suffering hardship – yet we must take those to the Lord in prayer, casting all our cares on him for we know he cares for us. (*1 Peter 5:7*)

And we must trust God, who has promised that he will take all that happens in our life – both good and hard – and use them to that great end of making us more like Jesus. (*Romans 8:28ff*)

In our look to the past we have so far explored, the good, and the bad. But now, we must also face the ugly.

c. THE UGLY

Shameful, repulsive, sick. Those are a few words that come to mind regarding the sexual abuse undertaken by priests and lay people in our diocese on young people in their care or under their leadership.

What must it take to use your honoured position in the church to take advantage of girls and boys to satisfy your perverted sexual desires?

What must it take to preach and lead worship on a Sunday morning, and be planning how you might groom a victim for your afternoon pleasure?

Be assured that those who perpetuated such crimes will answer before God for leading these little ones astray. (*Matthew 18:6*).

What must it have been like for a young person to find themselves preyed upon by their priest or teacher or youth leader, and then feel disgusted and dirty themselves, as if what had happened had been their fault?

While some want to minimise the harm victims experienced, victims themselves report such outcomes as a decline in academic results, withdrawing from human relationships, no longer being able to trust people, unable to find gainful employment, unable to experience sexual intimacy, and mental illness which has led some to self-harm or suicide.

Let us be clear: no dollar amount can compensate for what these victims have been through.

Redress is not compensation but a small attempt to bring some measure of relief from the daily stresses they experience due to the trauma they should never have faced.

Due to our financial situation, the only way we can meet our commitment and responsibility to those abused is the sale of more property. Who knows when the claims will stop coming? So we must keep being generous with our physical resources despite our historical and emotional attachment to them. As hard as it is, we hold them with an open hand, knowing that nothing in this world is ever permanent, and that our inheritance is a kingdom that can never perish, spoil or fade. (*1 Peter 1:4*).

The good, the bad and the ugly.

All this has left us with significant baggage we now carry.

d. THE BAGGAGE

What *is* that baggage? First:

i. Mistrust

1. *Within* – among ourselves *within* the diocese and in our churches, I have observed a certain mistrust of others – of others' motives or questioning about a hidden agenda. This is a sad reality of the baggage of the past. There are whispers about others and a culture

of suspicion. We will have to find ways of dealing with this if we are with one mind and one voice, [to] glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Romans 15:6*).

2. *Without* – there is a mistrust of our organisation from those who were never part of our church and from those who are no longer part of our church *because* of that mistrust. Our name is mud to some. Promises were made that were not or could not be kept, and we have a damaged ‘brand’ as a result. If we are to make an impact for the Lord Jesus, we will have to find ways to rebuild trust, by the beauty of the gospel itself, and lives lived consistently with that gospel.

ii. Unresolved conflict - everywhere I have been, I have been told of conflict between people or groups of people which has gone on for years. There are people who will not make contact with others in the diocese or who can’t be in the same room as others. Even clergy are alienated from one another. This is ungodly and unbecoming. It bears no resemblance to the call of the Apostle Paul to:

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 4:31-32

Some very honest conversations and reconciliation needs to take place.

iii. The missing generation – because we have been so focused on the challenges of these past years, and for a large part, so inward looking, there is a missing generation or a number of missing generations in our churches. I’ll have more to say about that shortly, but this is part of the baggage of the past we carry into the future.

iv. Lack of resources – we have little to no resources to try new things, plant new churches, increase our online presence, or employ people for new positions. Just managing the financial demands of each month is a challenge. Already dependent on the generosity of another diocese even to fund the Bishop and Registrar, we will need to look to the generosity of individuals both within and outside the diocese if we are to try new things and develop new ministry.

So how do we deal with the past?

e. DEALING WITH THE PAST AND ITS BAGGAGE

i. Repentance – this must come first. You may claim that you have nothing from which to repent, but we learn that:

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us

1 John 1:9

What might there be in your life from which you need to repent? Only you can answer that question as you search your heart.

- *Perhaps you have been judgemental and harsh in regard to past decision makers and power brokers.*

- *Perhaps you have spoken maliciously or falsely of others or indulged in gossip and the spreading of rumours.*
- *Perhaps you were part of certain decision-making groups in our past but have never, with humility, admitted any fault.*
- *Perhaps you have sought attention for yourself at the expense of the gospel or relationships.*
- *Perhaps you have a sense of entitlement and let fly when things don't happen the way you like.*
- *You may have been an abuser but have never admitted it.*
- *You may have withheld forgiveness, hanging on to rage or malice.*
- *You may have chosen to withdraw from relationship instead of seeking the costly way of reconciliation.*
- *Perhaps you are holding on to hurt and anger, and your disappointment in past or present leaders is impacting your ability to get on now and serve the Lord with joy.*

Remember this:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness

1 John 1:9.

That is a staggering promise. We do well to reflect on the past; search our hearts, confess our sins and then revel not only in God's forgiveness, but in his promise to purify us. And through his purifying work in our hearts, may past conflicts be resolved, or may they be left well and truly in the past without ongoing bitterness.

ii. Forgiveness – having sought and received forgiveness from our heavenly Father, we need to forgive others who have hurt us, disappointed us, let us down, or made decisions with which we have disagreed. Do we not pray, 'forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us'?

The gospel reading last Sunday challenged us with the man who was forgiven a debt which was the equivalent of (in round terms) \$10 million dollars, and yet failed to forgive the debt of someone who owed him a mere \$10! We saw there that when you *really* grasp the significance of the forgiveness you have received – forgiveness for living as if God doesn't exist or doesn't matter – then you become someone who forgives others.

Have you been forgiven much? Do you understand at what great cost?

Then you will work out how to forgive others.

If we are going to deal with the baggage of the past, we need to be people of repentance first and then people of forgiveness.

And we need to be people who seek the transforming work of God's Holy Spirit.

iii. Transformation – as Bishop, I can help plan and strategise ways in which to implement the great commission for our diocese and parishes, but unless we all seek the ongoing transforming work of the Holy Spirit, I am wasting my time.

Given the mistrust and unresolved conflict, we are foolish to try and implement any new plans together, unless in humility we first cry out to God to renew us inwardly by his Holy Spirit.

That will be the only way we can possibly with ‘one mind and voice’ glorify God. How could we hope to do that while there remains mistrust and conflict?

Do not conform to the pattern of this world’, we are exhorted, ‘but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Romans 12:2

We need to open ourselves up to God’s Holy Spirit making sure we do not quench his work, but rather welcome his reforming work so the fruit of that work is increasingly seen in our lives, namely;

Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23

We need to listen again to the Apostle Paul’s word to the Corinthians:

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Corinthians 1:10

Pray that God by his word and Holy Spirit, will teach us, rebuke us, correct us, and train us in righteousness, so that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Only then might we with one mind and voice, glorify God.

I pray that you might all look back over this first section of the address, with humility, prayer, and an open heart to hear what the Lord might be saying to you.

The past **named**; second:

2. THE PRESENT FACED

I have really appreciated the opportunity to visit parishes and people, though COVID-19 has limited such visits from the end of March.

As I commented earlier, I am thankful to God for those who are working so hard to be a witness for the Lord Jesus in our townships; to love and care for church members and to pray and work for growth.

We must have an accurate picture of what is currently happening in our parishes so we can plan for the future.

Statistics of course cannot tell the whole picture. They cannot tell stories of conversion and transformation. They cannot tell of people helped through Op Shops and food pantries. They cannot tell of gospel conversations many have had.

Nevertheless, they can give a snapshot in time, so we can get some idea of the reality of our present situation.

I am very grateful for those who assisted Karen and me to take this quick snapshot of our church. All the following figures refer to the situation across our diocese, pre-COVID.

a. WHO IS IN CHURCH?

An average Sunday (or weekend), would see around 1500 people in our churches across our 30 parishes.

Of these (estimates only):

- 150 are under 16
- 66 are between 17 and 30
- 100 are in their 30s and 40s
- 168 are in their 50s
- 237 are in their 60s
- 494 are in their 70s
- 369 are in their 80s, and
- 99 are in their 90s or over 100

While it is estimated we have 80 young families in our parishes, 23 out of 30 have only 3, or less than 3, young families.

We have failed to stay connected with late teens and young people in their twenties, with only 66 people in this age group.

17 out of 30 parishes have three or less than 3 people in their 30s or 40s.

We do very well with people in their 70s and 80s.

We have 35 regular Bible studies across 30 parishes. However, 13 parishes have none.

Just 5 out of 30 parishes ran a course introducing people to the Christian faith in 2020.

16 out of 30 parishes offered programs to assist the needy

Just 7 out of 30 parishes currently have a strategic plan to help them achieve their goals over the next 2-4 years.

These are sobering statistics.

b. HOW MANY FULL-TIME STIPENDIARY CLERGY?

We only have full time clergy leading the ministry at Kelso, Dubbo, Mudgee, Nyngan, Gilgandra and Orange.

c. HOW MANY PART-TIME STIPENDIARY CLERGY?

We have part time clergy leading the work at our Cathedral, in Canowindra, Grenfell, Cowra, Orange East, Bourke, Trundle, Condobolin, Grenfell and Narromine. A minister from Nyngan visits Warren, and one from Bourke visits Brewarrina.

d. HOW MANY PARISHES NEED A MINISTER?

We need ministers (or solutions for future ministry) for West Wyalong, Parkes, Forbes, Coolah-Dunedoo, Cumnock, and Coonamble. As of January 2021, we will also need new ministers for Narromine, Nyngan and Gilgandra.

e. WHICH PARISHES HAVE FOUND NEW MINISTERS?

Praise God we have clergy in the pipeline for Coonabarabran, Blayney and Cudal-Molong.

f. AMALGAMATIONS

Gulgong will join Mudgee as of January 2021.

g. HOW MANY 'RETIRED' CLERGY REGULARLY HELP OUT?

We are so grateful to the 20 retired clergy who regularly help out in our parishes.

h. HOW ARE OUR PARISH FINANCES?

We are concerned for 16 parishes who are struggling to meet their commitments at present and 8 who are currently behind in their commitments. That means only 6 are going well financially.

The challenges presented by this snapshot include:

- a. An ageing congregation. With 60% of our people over 70, unless we are able to reach a new generation then in 10 years' time more parishes will have to amalgamate (or close), and by 2040 (if nothing changes) it *may* only be possible to have churches in the major population centres.
- b. Unless we attract clergy who are able to raise some of their own support from outside the diocese, thereby enabling them to minister full time, the best we can expect is that current patterns of ministry will be maintained but will not have the ability to grow. Part time clergy can only maintain present ministry and are not able implement new initiatives which lead to growth.
- c. We need to actively recruit new clergy who have the ability to connect with families and those in their 20s, 30s and 40s.
- d. If we continue doing the same things the way we always have, we cannot expect any different outcome. We cannot expect to grow or reach those generations we are currently missing by doing more of the same.

The past **named**, the present **faced**, and finally:

3. THE FUTURE EXPLORED

a. THE SYDNEY GIFT

I understand the misgiving of some, of a financial dependence upon the Diocese of Sydney. There is a lot of history between our diocese and Sydney! My experience is that people in each diocese love to demonise the 'other' and paint them in the worst possible light. The reality is, a lot of what I had heard about Bathurst Diocese over the years is not true. And a lot of what many here have concluded about Sydney Diocese is also not true.

The large majority of people in both dioceses love the Lord Jesus and long to see the church grow and flourish through the proclamation of the Good News, by the clear and relevant teaching of God's word, and by God's people connecting with and loving those in their communities. Anglicans in both places must stop seeing those in the 'other' as enemies of the gospel or the church. Nor ought we regard with suspicion the motives of the Archbishop of Sydney and others who have wanted to assist us financially.

Let's be clear: without Sydney's generosity, the election and appointment of a new bishop last year would not have been possible, and this diocese would have faced a very uncertain future. Bathurst diocese would have had to merge with another, and in so doing lose its independence and identity. We should be very grateful indeed to the Archbishop of Sydney and the people of the Synod of Sydney Diocese for their generous partnership in the gospel.

Whilst we are dependent *financially* on the Sydney gift, we are functionally and legally separate and independent. It is true that the Archbishop of Sydney of the day, at the time of election of a new bishop, must be happy with the final nominees, yet there remains a wide scope for who such candidates might be.

At the end of this year, we will be two years in to a six-year commitment from Sydney of \$250,000 per year. I cannot envisage how we will work our way to financial independence in a further four years. To be able to support the bishop and registrar once again from our own resources, given present interest rates, would require an endowment of at least \$5M. (Our "Endowment of the See" fund, the interest from which once supported the bishop, is now practically zero.)

It is incumbent upon us (and certainly upon me) to ensure we use the amazing opportunity afforded by this gift wisely and well. Perhaps if Sydney can see that throughout the years of this gift the gospel has advanced and the church has been renewed, they may consider, if they are able, an extension to that gift.

We should remain thankful in the meantime, and in the light of the gift, reconsider any prejudices we may have had against that diocese. While I am not suggesting for a moment that we must fall into line with and agree with 'everything Sydney', I am encouraging a more generous attitude toward Sydney Diocese, even as they have displayed such generosity toward us!

As we continue to explore the future, let's have a closer look at:

b. OUR MISSION

The first thing to say about our mission is:

- i. It is a given!** – as a bishop, as a diocese, as churches working together, we don't have to spend any time working out what our mission is.

Our mission was given to Jesus' first disciples 2,000 years ago and it remains his mission for his disciples today.

It comes at the end of Matthew's Gospel, where we learn that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to the risen Lord Jesus. What does he do with that authority?

He commands his disciples to:

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Matthew 28:19-20

He then promises:

Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:20

Disciples in the first century were centred on the teaching of their rabbi and absolutely devoted to prioritising their leader and doing everything according to his teaching. And so it was with disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Their task was to make more disciples; to gather with them more and more people who would be absolutely devoted to Jesus, prioritise him above everything else in their lives, and seek to conform their lives to the pattern of his teaching.

Our task corporately, as the people of God in the Anglican church across our diocese, is to continue this work of seeking more devoted followers of Jesus.

Those who become followers (who were not baptised as infants) we are to baptise, and we are to teach all new disciples what Jesus has taught us, so that they will become mature in their trust, wise in their understanding, and join us in the task of making more disciples.

We want to make disciples of Jesus who will make disciples of Jesus!

But will you notice that we are not just sent off to do this alone? We are enabled and empowered by the Lord Jesus himself who has promised to be with us in this task until the end of the age. What great news is that!

But here is the important question: given our need for more clergy; given the age profile of our congregations; given the challenges of the last few years; given our lack of finances; given the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 and given the context in Australia of increasing indifference or even hostility towards the church; how on earth are we going to make more disciples?

ii. How are more disciples made?

1. Prayer – does your heart long that we might make more disciples and see more and more people come into relationship with the Lord Jesus, so they share the hope and joy and life we have found in him? Have you asked the Lord? Have you prayed for the transformation of your heart and the renewal of our church? Have you prayed for more gospel workers? Here is the Lord's promise: he is able to do more than either we ask or imagine! (*Ephesians 3:20*) So I must pray. You must pray. We must pray for the enabling and empowering of the church, that we might make more disciples, according to Jesus' great commission.

2. Teaching – we need a deeper understanding of the significance of the Good News. When people grasp that in my experience, they become crystal clear that more people need to hear of the love and forgiveness Jesus came to bring.

3. Assurance – we need to be people who have full assurance that we are saved – forgiven and reconciled to God and rescued from sin and death – by what Jesus has done for us, and not by our (often feeble) good deeds and church involvement. As people understand that salvation is by grace, taken hold of by trusting Jesus, they become more passionate about the gospel and making the good news known.

4. Excited – clergy, lay preachers, and Bible study leaders need to be excited by the gospel again, and then excite others regarding the sheer delight of the gospel and its power to change lives. Our confidence and joy in the gospel needs to be refreshed and renewed!

5. Equipped – we all need some help to become people who say something about Jesus and our relationship with him. Not to become Evangelists or Apologists – but simply people who have the confidence to say *something* direct and simple about the relationship we have with Jesus. Many of us speak endlessly about our grandchildren, the weather, sport, politics, the livestock or crop prices, or real estate; but say nothing (ever) to others about the most important relationship in our lives. There are some wonderful ways to help one another speak of Jesus naturally and without apology or embarrassment.

So we need to:

1. Send – one another out to be involved in our communities in many and various ways, so we are building networks and friendships and raising the profiles of our churches. We need to work out how to bless our communities with our presence and become a vital and valued part of our towns.

2. Renew/refresh our clergy team

- a. *Those presently serving* – we need to care for them and refresh them, perhaps reskill them; inspiring them to become agents and enablers of disciple making.
- b. *Seek new clergy for the diocese* – we all need to work hard at making the need here known. Next year I plan to visit five key theological colleges on the eastern seaboard, seeking to plant in the minds of students, the possibility of serving here in central and western NSW.
- c. *Welcome and equip new ordinands* – I'm delighted to announce that we have three people who have been approved by our ordination panel and me for ordination on the 12th December this year.
 - Wally Cox is married to Jordon with two young boys and will serve in the parish of Blayney.
 - Andrew Thornhill is married to Kath with two young teenagers and will serve in the parish of Coonabarabran.
 - A third candidate is awaiting confirmation of funding.

3. Build up and equip teams of lay leaders/ministers to work alongside our clergy. Lay ministers in this diocese are very impressive in the time they give and the wonderful way they love and care for people. But we need more, so the work can grow.

4. Investigate strategic alliances and team ministries especially in our smaller remote centres, so that no one is left struggling alone to try and make a difference.

5. Build and extend our online ministry so that in remote places where clergy can only visit irregularly, people who have internet access and are able to use it may have opportunity with the rest of us to learn and grow and be equipped.

6. Help churches with technology so that when resources are made available by me or others, they can make use of a sermon or other online teaching and equipping opportunities. We also want to help all parishes increase their own online presence.

7. Teach regarding sacrificial giving so that our giving and resourcing might increase. To this end, I will be running a teaching series in November called “Living Generously” which I hope many parishes might use.

8. Raise support from outside the diocese such as we are seeking to do to support Phil Howes in his new position at the Cathedral. We may need to ask clergy to come as missionaries, raising a portion of their own support, just as they might do if serving overseas.

9. Review everything we have been doing. The great COVID pause of 2020 gives us a very significant opportunity to review all we have been doing and assess the effectiveness of each of our activities in terms of our commission to make disciples. During the early weeks of lockdown I urged each parish to ask three questions:

- a. *What have you stopped which, on reflection, should remain stopped?*
- b. *What have you adapted that should remain in its new form?*
- c. *What have you started which now ought to become part of what you do?*

These questions remain pertinent and maybe good to revisit or to use now if you have not done so before.

In regard to Sunday services, many churches have simplified worship under COVID conditions and enjoyed rediscovering Morning Prayer or Praise, Prayer and Proclamation. Perhaps some of these adaptations ought to be maintained, especially if our services are to become more welcoming and accessible for those who have not joined us before.

Finally, as we explore the future, we need to keep our:

c. EYES FIXED ON JESUS

It is easy to become either despondent or overwhelmed when we name our past, face our present and explore our future. We can feel helpless and inadequate for the challenges before us and the opportunities ahead.

We must remember:

- *that the task is not ours alone as we are God’s fellow workers (1 Corinthians 3:9).*
- *that we are each members of the body of Christ and each have our own particular gift or gifts to be used in the task (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12).*
- *that God is at work building us into a spiritual temple (1 Peter 2:4-5).*

- *that God has constituted us as his chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his special possession, that we might declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9).*
 - *that the gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).*
 - *that He is able to do more than either we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).*
 - *that we are loved with an immeasurable love (Ephesians 3:18-19).*
 - *that we are privileged to draw near to God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:16ff).*
 - *that nothing can ever separate us from God's love for us through the Lord Jesus (Romans 8:38-39).*
 - *that we are to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and rid ourselves of anything what would distract us from doing that, so that with him as our example, we might endure opposition of many kinds, neither growing weary nor losing heart (Hebrews 12:1-3).*
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My brothers and sisters across the Diocese – loved and precious to our heavenly Father – I thank the Lord for our partnership in the gospel and for all the possibilities and opportunities there are for making more disciples of the Lord Jesus.

I conclude this, my first synod address, by calling on you to

- **Name the past** with lament and sorrow; with repentance and forgiveness; and then to surrender your heart to the Holy Spirit's transforming power.

I call on you to

- **Face the present** with eyes wide open to see the reality of our current circumstances with all its challenges, but also with all its possibilities.

And I call on you to

- **Explore the future** with a commitment to embrace and obey Jesus' great commission to be disciples who make disciples. I also call you to prayer: calling on God to renew, transform, excite and equip us as his church; prayer to send more workers into the harvest field and prayer that he will draw men and women, girls and boys to himself in repentance and trust.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give [us] the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice [we] may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5-6

Now to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. *(See Ephesians 3:21).*

The Right Reverend Mark Calder
Bishop

19 September 2020

4. APPENDIX

a. Clergy movements since last synod

- **The Rev'd Daryl McCullough** resigned from West Wyalong 17th January 2020 to become rector of Coffs Harbour in the Grafton Diocese.
- **The Rev'd Ron Spindler** resigned 2nd February 2020 from Parkes to return to Queensland.
- **The Rev'd Crystal Spindler** resigned 2nd February 2020 from Forbes, to return to Queensland.
- **The Rev'd Rosemary Wynter** resigned from the Cathedral staff effective 15th July 2020 to take up a position in the Grafton Diocese in the parish of Byron.
- **The Rev'd Anastasia Webster-Hawes**, has taken up a role in Newcastle Diocese as Priest-in-Charge of the parish of Denman and Merriwa.
- **The Venerable Grahame Yager** has given notice of his intention to resign from Gilgandra effective 15th January 2021 to serve as Rector of Byron in the Grafton Diocese.
- **The Rev'd Graham McLeod** has given notice of his intention to resign from Nyngan effective 15th January 2021 to retire to the Central Coast of NSW.

We are grateful to God for all that was good about the ministries of these clergy, and pray God's blessing on their next chapters. I am particularly grateful to God for Grahame Yager's ministry as Archdeacon and as Principal of the Company of the Good Shepherd. He will be greatly missed.

b. Amalgamations since last synod

- Cudal and Molong parishes amalgamated, effective 1st January 2020.
- South Bathurst was amalgamated with the Cathedral parish effective 1st January 2020.
- Gulgong will amalgamate with Mudgee, effective 1st January 2021.

c. Properties sold since last synod

- 288 William Street Bathurst (former Bishop's residence).
- Sofala Church – Bathurst Cathedral Parish.
- Carragabal Church – Grenfell Parish.
- Goolma Church – Gulgong Parish.
- Cargo Church and land – Cudal-Molong.
- Mandurama Church - Blayney Parish.
- O'Connell Land – Kelso Parish.
- South Bathurst Rectory – Cathedral Parish.
- Spicers Creek (pending settlement) – Wellington Parish.
- Ungarie Church – West Wyalong Parish.

d. Redress

- Paid so far (as of 7th September): \$4,058,921
- Estimated claims (as of 7th September): \$2,815,000

Licence review

I asked the Registrar to carry out a review of all clergy licences in the diocese as there were many licenced with whom we have no contact and to the best of our knowledge have not officiated in the diocese for many years.

Further, I am in the process of re-issuing *Authority to Officiate* licenses which have a limited term (three years) to all those who held open-ended licences, so that we may ensure compliance with working with children and safe ministry requirements.
