

DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE



✠ *Rt Rev Séamus Cunningham*
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle



Pastoral Letter for Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Launch of the Diocesan Vision, Mission, and Values
To be read in all Parishes weekend of 9th and 10th February

1 February 2019

My dear people

Today's gospel tells us how, after a relatively brief first encounter with Jesus, the three fishermen Simon Peter, James, and John "left everything and followed him": a dramatic start to a life of discipleship. Our ongoing journey of pastoral development has not demanded that we similarly drop everything and leave behind our families, our friends, and our careers, but it does ask us to take the opportunity to pray and reflect upon how we might become better disciples of Jesus. That journey has so far provided us with the 18 Partnerships through which we can continue to build God's kingdom here and ensure we have a thriving and sustainable Catholic community into the future.

It is important for any organisation that it has a clear Vision so that everyone has a common understanding of its goals and can focus their talents and energies on helping to reach these. A sub-group of the Diocesan Board of Trustees was tasked with developing a Vision and related Mission for our Diocese, underpinned by a set of Values drawn from a range of people across the Diocese. The resulting Vision, Mission, and Values have all been endorsed by me and by the full Diocesan Board.

The Diocesan Vision and Mission do not replace any local Vision and Mission statements that have been prepared at Parish or Partnership level – indeed they should complement and enrich each other.

The next stage is to communicate the Vision, Mission, and Values to everyone so that they become part of the very fabric of the Diocese and act as a reference point for all that we seek to do together. You will therefore today receive a Partnership Prayer card, on the reverse of which you will find the full wording of our Vision, our Mission, and our Values. A video containing further details will also be available on the Diocesan website and at a YouTube address that will be noted in Parish bulletins.

I pray that these resources will help each one of us to be better-equipped to emulate the examples of Simon Peter, James, and John, and follow Jesus whenever and however we are called.

With my very best wishes

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Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

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