

Vision Values:

At the Synod in March 2010, it was announced that a sixth Vision group was being formed.

Its purpose is to help people and parishes and diocesan committees to hold in awareness the mission statement which forms the centre and core of our shared Vision as well as the foundational values which undergird our Diocesan Vision.

- Early conversations within the group explored the challenges of defining some of the Vision Values. For example, *honesty* may be relatively easy to define but the meaning of *integrity* is much more elusive.
- We discovered that the use of story-telling enabled us to sharpen our comprehension and our insights about each word. We are preparing online resources and print resources to enable parishes and people to both claim and articulate an understanding of each of the words and phrases in the core Mission Statement and the foundational Values. Story-telling and discussion starters will help individuals and communities to engage and respond to our principles and hopes expressed in our Diocesan Vision.
- After the Vision Values group re-interpreted the Diocesan Graphic for the October 1st Vision Day this fall, it became more obvious that specific ministry initiatives associated with particular petals in the Vision also actually expressed and emerged *out of* our foundational Values. For example, food security projects undertaken by parishes demonstrate our Vision of Prophetic Social Justice-Making *and* they arise out of our valuing of diversity, our integrity in Christ's mission as well as our passion and hard work.
- For Advent, a study resource is being created to enable reflection and discovery about the principles and directions embodied in our Diocesan Vision. It is designed as an Advent series which will be scriptural, prayerful and conversational.

From the outset, it has been evident that the Vision Values conversations are being engaged most naturally using the imagery of organic things – living and growing, nutrients and fertile ground. Building on such imagery, online resources including short videos are being planned – as a way to grasp the potential expressed in our Vision and to widen our perspective in Mission and Ministry.

NOTES: Vision Values Group Oct 1, 2011

Within the Vision Values group, our preparations for the Vision Refining Day included the preparation of a large graphic re-interpretation of the Vision – not to suggest the need for a new image – but to illustrate the reality that the Vision Values are expressed through all the 'petal' work being done.

14 people elected to come to our Vision Values discussion on Oct 1.

From experience, members of the Vision Values group understand how hard it is to hold a conversation about some of the Vision Values.

Eg. How do you define what you mean by 'honesty and integrity'? Or – 'valuing diversity'

As we convened for the discussion, the re-interpreted graphic poster was on the floor in front of us.

Our discussion focused on two sections:

- the Core words of the Vision:

‘Following Christ passionately, we pursue excellence, practice justice and grow’

- the words at the ‘base’ of the Vision

Honesty & Integrity + Valuing Diversity + Spiritual Discipline + Passion and Hard Work

Unlike the ‘petal’ sections, the earlier stages of Vision development process did not expand the thinking or express what was meant at the Core of the Vision or with respect to the ‘values’ expressed as the ‘foundation’ or ‘grounding’ of the Vision themes.

In other words, no proposed goals were articulated;

no proposed indicators (concrete evidence) were suggested;

no proposed missional objectives were identified.

For that reason, our conversation could not review the above categories – with a view to revising those.

In a sense, this was the FIRST conversation convened to explore what we mean by the Vision Values & Central Mission statement.

Conversation points:

- In order to ‘Follow’ Christ, we need to *know* Christ – therefore we need to be Gospel-focussed
- In the Central Mission Statement, the first word should be *PASSIONATELY* –
- *Excellence* is a nebulous term. Eg – we could have rich & purposeful ministries – yet, our actions and words can compromise our excellence in such simple ways – gossip, pettiness, dismissiveness, hurtful behaviours – all our actions/ all our conversations need to create consistency in excellence – in ALL ASPECTS OF OUR CHURCH LIFE – attention to detail – from public politeness to genuine appreciation of the more hidden ministry roles. When a particular ‘business’ talks about excellence, effort is made to define & claim the kind of ‘service’ experienced by every single person who comes in contact with the place.
- How can we become a **5 STAR CHURCH**?
- Interesting – some pretty important words are MISSING!
 - Community
 - Gratitude / thankfulness
- How can we move forward in any of the ‘petal’ areas if we lose touch with our *values*;
- Each ‘value’ SHOULD affect the objectives of every other group.
 - Eg. We need to consider worship objectives which demonstrate our ‘valuing of diversity’ & strengthen or deepen our faithful living out of that value.
 - Eg. It may be relatively easy to describe how our Prophetic Social Justice-Making might demonstrate our integrity & honesty; how can we ensure that our development of Ministry Covenants is grounded and reflective of our integrity and honesty.

- Re: Central Mission statement:
- Need to articulate
- Growing in Ministry – what does this mean?
- Pursuing Excellence – what would this look like?
- Comparing Vision patterns to our Baptismal Covenant
 - which is organized to
 1. Express what we believe – CREEDS
 2. Express how we will live our lives in light of our beliefs – the other promises
- Following Christ – making disciples. . . how do we make ‘healthy’ disciples?

- Interestingly, our conversation several times expressed our Values & Vision in organic language
 - eg living, growing, healthy, nutrients, seeds, germination, greenhouse, fertilizer, soil, bearing fruit, each seed matters, variety in nature = abundance ~ diversity in our diocesan family & within parish families, blooming where you’re planted. . . etc. . .
 - these phrases echo some patterns developing within the Vision Values group as we discern ways to help people across the Diocese in recollecting our values as we discern ministry & mission pathways.
- Our conversation also included the recognition that we must not rely only on the websites for sharing Vision-thinking. We need phone trees & print materials – so that people without internet access can still be included.

These notes represent the morning conversation about Vision Values – and will support our ongoing work – articulating objectives, indicators and goals – in order to help us, as a Diocese, *own* the deeply held values which ground our mission and ministry.

Our afternoon conversation focused on two aspects of Vision Values

1. The re-interpreted Vision graphic showed the petals ‘branching-out’ – into in 4 directions

Honesty & Integrity + Valuing Diversity + Spiritual Discipline + Passion and Hard Work

Participants then added ‘buds’ to these little extensions

– eg an outreach project in their parish might represent ‘valuing diversity;

or a study series might be an expression of spiritual discipline;

(trying to overwork the organic parallels can make you crazy – eg stamen, pollen, pistil. . .but people quickly were able to identify which value was most deeply expressed in the ministry & mission initiatives within their own community. Even people who have not been particularly involved in Vision work seemed easily able to see that our deep hopes are expressed in our values and to see that their own community’s *passion and hard work* is often expressing eloquently our values-in-action. People quickly began to discover that you could *talk* about integrity, diversity etc.)

2. We then engaged participants in an exercise that gave them a benchmark – word or statement that expressed their thinking about ‘integrity’. It was very successful and will be an approach we use to help parish conversations AND the other petal groups hold conversations about ‘integrity’ and the other ‘nebulous’ words and phrases included in the Vision Values. (I can provide the sample exercise if that’s helpful.)

For the Vision Values group, it was a highly successful day because:

- Over a hundred people *heard* that work is being done on our Foundational Values and our Central Mission Statement.
- 14 people opted to find out how we can talk about our values.
- The conversation was so rich that we had no time to do our second afternoon exercise.
- We gained at least 4 new recruits to our group!!

WORK IN PROGRESS