

## **Bishop Martyn's update Transcript – October 2023 - <https://youtu.be/EZvi2Eld4nA>**

Hello it's been quite some time since I've made a video like this many of you will know that I've been away on sabbatical enjoying a time of rest and refreshments and renewal I've also managed to do a little bit of traveling and indeed to write a book the book on Intercultural church will be coming out hopefully early next year and Bishop Saju and Jessie Tang and Lusa, Bishop Lusa Nsenga Ngoy, have all been helping me with that as well I'm very excited about that. Sabbatical's been such a privilege, as clergy every seven to ten years we get this opportunity to take a sabbatical and for me it's been seven years now that I've been Bishop of Leicester and indeed even as I'm making this video it's been 10 years since I was ordained as a bishop in God's Church. So the sabbatical was very much what I needed but also everything I could have asked for in the sense of rest and renewal. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I've returned truly invigorated for the task of being your Bishop.

Seems a good moment then to also take stock of our diocesan vision and strategy. In one sense of course nothing has changed I want to be very clear that our vision as a diocese remains absolutely the same our vision is for the Kingdom of God. Jesus told stories about the Kingdom of God, Parables, he likened it to all sorts of things in the natural world. He was very clear that his role was to inaugurate the Kingdom of God here in this world and we too as God's church are signs instruments and we offer a foretaste of that Kingdom to the wider world. So that vision of the Kingdom of God remains similarly our mission as a church also remains. Some years ago we discerned Three Key Questions and it's been a huge encouragement to me as I've travelled around the diocese to see these questions being increasingly embedded within the life of all of our churches. So the questions about how are you growing and how are you helping others to grow in the depths of their discipleship? How are you growing the numbers of Christian disciples? And how are you growing and helping others to grow in their love and their service for the communities in which we're set? Those questions are being answered in different ways all across the diocese but they provide the core of what unites us and what we are seeking to do together as a diocese. So our mission just as our vision remains exactly the same.

What's changing? Well of course our world is rapidly changing and for us as a diocese that means in particular that we are facing a significant financial challenge, I hope you know that, I've written out about that in recent times. But it is a very big challenge for us at this moment in time. You'll also know that within the National Church of England there are disagreements going on about matters of Doctrine and ethics which are serious, again I don't know what's the outcome of all of that is going to be. So we're facing big challenges but none of that is an excuse to in any way draw back from our vision or our mission. Almost regardless of what's going on around about us that mission and that vision remains constant. Even if we had no money whatsoever left I would want to say we still need to be committed to that vision and that mission!

The question then is simply how we go about delivering that work and it's that question of how we go about it's sometimes called strategy which we are taking another look at at this moment in time. There are certain fixed things of course we're committed now to Minster Communities and to continuing to learn and explore what that would look like for the future of the diocese. We're committed to our work around Resourcing Churches and planting new churches, developing fresh expressions of church, we've seen some hugely exciting developments in that area and we want to continue that. We're also committed to the journey of Intercultural Church having all the cultures across Leicester and Leicestershire represented within our churches and learning from one another a real sense of mutual respect and learning. Similarly we're developing as an Eco diocese and we're learning what it means to live well together across difference and then we are very keen to make sure that our children and young people are placed at the heart of all we do. 23 000 children and

young people in church schools across Leicester and Leicestershire, that is a huge opportunity for us in terms of how we serve them how we enable them to grow in faith.

So these are the fixed points if you like which we want to continue but how we do it with less money how we do it in the context of disagreements and so on yes there's a lot to work out on all of that and that's why I'm pleased to be able to say that Revd Barry Hill who is currently the team director of Market Harborough is going to be taking on a new role within the life of the diocese, it's funded by the National Church of England but he's going to be helping us develop our strategy for the future he's going to work closely with myself and Bishop Saju, with Jonathan Kerry as Chief Executive of the diocese with Claire Bampton as the Program Manager and with our trustees as well. But together we're going to seek to shape out what the diocese will need to look like for the future even as we have less resource to be able to use. Now I believe there's a moment of opportunity for us here to discern what God is saying to us again at this moment in time. That's why I remain encouraged and excited in this work even though at times it can seem hard-going with some tough decisions to have to make. But I do hope and pray that you will continue to pray for us in this work even as we pray for you in your parishes, your fresh expressions of church and church plants, the schools, the chaplaincies, the parish churches that are so important to the life of this diocese. Every one of you has a part to play in that work and I counted a privilege to be one called to serve you so thank you for all that you're doing.