



Archdiocese of Liverpool

Message from the Archbishop:

The Church exists to proclaim Jesus Christ to all peoples. This is her mission. Christ loves us, has saved us, walks with us and offers the hope of eternal life. As Pope Leo XIV said to the young people at the Jubilee of Youth in Rome, 'Encounter Christ. The Lord is gently knocking at the window of your soul.'

We are pilgrims of hope who wish to share the hope of Jesus Christ with others. I invite you to actively engage in the discussions about the Pastoral Development Strategy (PDS) to shape the future of the Church and our pastoral plan for the archdiocese. The mission today, for tomorrow, needs realistic and forward-looking structures because people have moved, the cost of maintaining too many buildings is prohibitive and the number of clergy has reduced. We need the means that help us proclaim Jesus Christ to all people and help them to participate in the life and mission of the Church. This is the calling of all the baptised. Our hope in Jesus Christ, our culture of vocation, and our participation in the life of the Church will then foster faith in the family, attract more men to serve the Church as priests, and enable all members of the Church to proclaim Jesus to the world and serve others through faith in action.

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We ask the help of the Holy Spirit to be with us and the prayer of Mary, Star of Evangelisation.

Archbishop John Sherrington January 2026

What is driving change:

- The desire to be a Church which lives out its missionary purpose: to proclaim Christ, to worship, nurture believers, evangelise and serve communities, especially the poor
- The hope of greater cooperation between parishes and deaneries to support our mission and to support one another
- The reality we face of going from 100 Diocesan priests now to less than 60 in 7 years.
- The hope of our children and young people now and for the future
- The vibrant life of Catholic schools and families
- The wish to attract more vocations to priesthood, diaconate and religious life
- The need for all the baptised to serve the mission of the Church
- The burden of the existing number of buildings leading to an annual overspend lasting many years.
- The burden of maintenance falling on a reduced number of priests and parishioners
- The challenge of people who are indifferent or hostile to the Church



The PDS is the way by which the Church in the Archdiocese accepts the new reality and embraces the possibility of change. Walking together, this is a developmental process which needs local acceptance of the need to change and a willingness to shape a vibrant, mission-focused, healthy and sustainable Church now and in the future.

In mapping the way forward, the Pastoral Plan set out four signposts to the future:

- be immersed in the joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of humanity today;
- be brave and creative in renewing local structures;
- develop leadership to attend to changing needs;
- embed synodality in every aspect of archdiocesan life.

The Pastoral Plan sets out these ambitious, high-level missionary aspirations, which need to be delivered at local level in the parishes of the archdiocese.

This local planning process will be conducted at four stages:

1. **REVIEW THE CURRENT SITUATION** Each parish will carry out their own review. Local members of the Steering Group will lead this process, consulting as many people as possible.
2. **DISCERNMENT—FUTURE PRIORITIES** This stage will be carried out at parish and Family of Parishes level. The findings will be shared at Deanery Synodal Council level.
3. **MAKING PLANS** As a local church, based on future priorities make plans and present them to the Archbishop.
4. **ACTION** Agreed plans to be implemented within a given time frame.



Embedded in prayer:

The prayer of all in the parish is a pivotal part of each stage of the process.

Future priorities will need to be imagined, discerned, discussed widely and proposed.

Proposals will be sent to the Archbishop who has the responsibility to ensure the processes of Canon Law are followed and makes the discernment as the Diocesan Bishop.

This initiative must involve everyone; it must be truly synodal and every voice matters.

Can I find out more?

As this is a fully synodal approach, the full strategy document is available for everyone to read. You can view it here: www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/parishdevelopment

What will happen next?

Look out for information in your parish about how you can get involved in the first stage – reviewing every aspect of the life and mission of your parish.

