



Diocese of Portsmouth

ministryformission

Bishop's Presentation

Roadshow Evenings – May 2011

1. Together we are the Diocese of Portsmouth.
2. Tonight we meet to explore the challenge of Ministry for Mission.
3. Welcome.

It's wonderfully appropriate that this M4M Roadshow takes place in Eastertide. Easter celebrations are not a one-day wonder but spill out into a season when we rejoice in a living faith, full of vitality and energy.

This season of the year compels us to recognise that the Christian faith centres on God's activity in the world. The raising of Jesus, and the gift of resurrection, is a divine initiative, not at all attributable to human effort or will. Priority is always God's, and M4M is based on that fundamental truth. Mission is God's activity in the world. Ministry is our cooperation with God.

Our Ministry for God's Mission

4. Thank you for your willingness to explore what this means for you, your parish or benefice, and for us all together in deanery and diocese. I am excited by the opportunity we have together:

For prayer and worship

For growth in spiritual depth and numbers

For being disciples and engaging with our communities

Tonight I invite you to share in this exciting and vibrant challenge – and to do this not by following a blueprint, a pattern, and a set of rules and regulations but by accepting my invitation to join in exploring what God is doing and how we share in it.

Our diocese, through the Synod, after consultations & conversations, prayer and process, work and wisdom, since 2008, has agreed a framework for ministry and some core principles.

5. These are based on our core calling to proclaim that Jesus Christ offers to all, everywhere, renewal and transformation.

The first principle is that Jesus died and rose for all. The gospel is for the world, not just for the Church.

Second, God is lavish in his gifting not skimpy. He calls many, not the few.

Third, we are called to minister together. We are the body of Christ, praying to Our Father.

And these principles apply not only to our Church (of England) but to the whole people of God who are our partners in the ministry.

6. Everything we do comes from who we are. Each of us is a disciple of Jesus. That is simple and profound. I could re-draft the title Archbishop Rowan gave to his retreat addresses at the start of the last Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops from all over the world: God's Mission and a Bishop's Discipleship.

God's Mission and your discipleship, her discipleship, his discipleship, my discipleship. Whatever our office or role, whatever our age or background, whether baptised and confirmed last week or decades ago, there is no hierarchy. You and I are simply disciples.

Each one of us, as a disciple, wants to:

- Go deeper spiritually, so that we allow God to come closer,
- Think broader, so that we widen our vision of God's world and people
- Be leaner or fitter, to do our best for God and the Church.

As the Kairos process taught us in this diocese, that needs to be true for us together as well as individually.

That is why we are here and why M4M will be our framework not just this year but as we look forward to the coming years. This is not a theme for this year only!

7. So let me say, clearly, what M4M is not. It is not, as I've hinted, my attempt to be the vicar of every parish in the diocese and to micro-manage the ministry of the gospel in every place. My responsibility is to encourage, lead and challenge. There is not a parish or chaplaincy in our diocese that is satisfied it can do no more and no better for God, Jesus and the gospel. So while this is not a detailed blueprint for you and your setting, M4M is the benchmark by which every parish must review and assess its ministry.

God deserves and expects the best; not what will do, nor the way it has always been. This is my invitation to you to pray, to think, to work so that the questions asked by this framework and the core principles are meaningfully addressed in your setting by the whole of your church and not just the usual 'faithful few' or the 'usual suspects'.

I do expect that you will decide what these principles mean in your communities. But I cannot tell you what they will mean for you, and I will not be prescriptive. I and we intend to

support you in this exciting discovery of what God is doing and how we cooperate in that mission.

Under this M4M banner you should take heart, be confident, and be the Church where you are.

8. Tonight begins to show you what we can do together in Mission and Ministry. All around are people and information and resources to inspire us, challenge us, and encourage us. They are offered because we ought as Christians to be open with each other; in our faith there is nothing we keep to ourselves, protect and guard as a secret; and there is no problem for us in being made to question if we perhaps haven't got it right. We need both encouragement and challenge. I hope you'll find both these tonight.

This is the start of what we can offer each other – person to person, parish to parish, - in good practice, new ideas, and stimulating questions. And you are right to expect that the diocese should help and resource you as well, though remember that you are the diocese, just as much as me, the people who work out of the office at Peninsular House, the archdeacons and the cathedral.

9. As a start there are prayer cards available tonight, in quantity for you and every member of the congregation. It's right that we begin with prayer, and continue in it; they are also a reminder that some things are best done together and that we seek to support you and each other.

10. We've identified four key areas:

- Vocation
- Training and development
- Deployment of resources, and
- Mission support, boundaries and permissions.

So we know that both individually and together, we are (and need to be),

- Called for growth
- Trained for growth
- Structured for growth
- Supported in growth

Most of this will go on, like it always has, in our own congregations and communities with the backing and expertise of others in the diocese and beyond.

11. For help in the call to Christian discipleship we're soon to appoint a new Spirituality Adviser – the only diocese in this country to offer a service like this to its people and parishes. We have a network of advisors in the Mission and Discipleship Team helping us discern new ways in which God is calling people to be – yes, to be disciples - and lay ministers, baptism visitors, churchwardens, soul friends, priests, teachers, youth leaders and much more. We work together to spot the gifts and to draw out leadership in ministry. Colleagues in the Mission and Society Team, and the Mission and Education Team are ready to help us explore how our calling as disciples is worked out in our society, communities, schools and colleges.

12. We need to be sustained in our discipleship by the refreshment of continuing learning and training. Life-long learning, continuing professional development is what the world talks about; Christians need just as much the resourcing that comes through prayer, stewardship, and by taking seriously the Bible and our faith. There are many very good courses and

resources available. The M4M consultation has highlighted that, as well as growing and developing these, we need to make the most of them by holding and using them together in a coherent way. So I have recently commissioned work with this aim, of bringing together our training and development resources and finding a way to tailor these better to your needs, our needs. To supplement the already considerable resources of our Reader Training programme, the Bishop's Certificate, the Cathedral Lectures, the excellent courses for lay and ordained and much more, we will offer our own Lent Course in 2012, written by the Dean & myself, for our Portsmouth parishes with M4M principles.

13. Undergirding our ministry are structures. It's easy to knock them but a moment's pause reminds us that our lives and our society, as well as Church, would be a mess without some structure. But structure must not be a cover for a church subject to central soviet-style control. I long for there to be a flexibility which enables organic, natural, change and development. Let's try out some new possibilities and see if, for instance, we can use gifts and skills in a collaborative way, perhaps for a specific time or focus, across boundaries so that new ministry can be offered and new leadership grown. The Mission and Resources Team are enthusiastic to be helpful; whenever possible the answer is yes. But, please, let's not use this as a way to get the change I or any single individual want. This is not about personal preferences, but must be our response to what God is doing.

14. Christian service is marked by a faithfulness which is not static or dull. A faithful Christian, church, and community is vital. So, we need, as I've said earlier, to be open to reviewing where we are and what we should do with clarity. We must help each other to do that. To help you look at your local ministry and mission in the M4M framework we will support you by providing people for an away day, parish weekend, for a day or evening in your local context to facilitate a process which reviews the vitality of ministry and mission. We are calling it a vitality review

15. In the packs you were given tonight you will find not only the prayer cards I've mentioned but also a sheet with ideas about how you can respond to my invitation and engage in the Ministry for Mission challenge. It lists several ways in which you could do this within the framework and principles. We are looking forward to working together with you!

On a different level sometimes I shall judge, perhaps in a vacancy, that the local church or churches need additional concentrated challenge and support so that God's mission may be better served. This is a crucial ministry and you will expect us to resource you properly.

16. Called, trained, structured and supported for growth. I ask you to accept this invitation to be bold and bright for God in the name of Jesus Christ. Together we can be who we are called to be - you, me and us. Only together can we be the Church, the body of Christ.

The absence of risk is a sign of mediocrity, and mediocrity is not what God asks of us, but to step out in discipleship.

Jesus says "I have come that you may have life in all its fullness."

That's an invitation into a living vital faith and into the excitement of ministry with Jesus in God's mission.

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