



SUPPORTING PAPERS

DIOCESAN SYNOD

ON 14TH MAY 2022

Make disciples¹⁶

*'And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.'*¹⁷

The annunciation by the angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary encapsulates the centrality of evangelism in the Church. Gabriel is the messenger sent from God to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.¹⁸ Proclamation of the gospel in evangelism through teaching, preaching and discipleship nurture is essential to enable spiritual and numerical growth in the Church.

Introductory discipleship courses such as Alpha, the Pilgrim Course and Christianity Explored foster a culture of invitation and hospitality, recognising that people are more likely to be open and responsive to faith when a family member or friend invite them, and when some experience of shared food and fellowship is included.

Fr James Mallon, a Canadian Roman Catholic priest (and advocate of Alpha), clearly identifies the making of disciples as the theological centre and key to effective mission:

*'The finite verb is "make" – literally, "make disciples" (matheteusate). This task is the very heart of the Great Commission, and it is around the making of disciples that all the other Missionary aspects of the Church revolve: the going, the baptizing and the teaching.'*¹⁹

In his commentary on the Vision for the Church of England in the 2020's, Archbishop Stephen Cottrell explores the first strategic priority of becoming 'much more a church of missionary disciples', noting:

*'We are an apostolic church. God calls every one of us to be a missionary disciple. In the New Testament the same twelve who are named disciples are also called apostles. There is no point when they graduate from one to the other. They are always those who gather around Jesus and follow him. And they are always those who are sent out by him. It must be the same with us. We are called to gather around Jesus in worship, prayer and fellowship. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we are sent out by Jesus to be his witnesses and ambassadors in the world.'*²⁰

AII²¹

The parish system which is central to mission and ministry in the Church of England has at its core the concept of the 'cure of souls', held by the diocesan bishop and shared with their priests when licensed to a parish: 'Receive this cure of souls which is both yours and mine.' The cure of souls includes everyone living in that parish or benefice, whether Christian or not. It means much more than care, this deep love centres on the reconciliation between individuals and God and between people and communities through the salvific work of Jesus Christ.

¹⁶ See the second mark of mission

¹⁷ II Cor.3.18

¹⁸ Luke 1.28-33

¹⁹ J. Mallon, *Divine Renovation*, Twenty-third Publications, 2014, pp.19-20

²⁰ *A Vision for the Church of England in the 2020s 'Christ centred and Jesus shaped. Simpler, humbler, bolder'* The Most Revd Stephen Cottrell Archbishop of York, 2020 , p.2

²¹ See the third and fourth marks of mission

