

THE PACE QUICKENS

Plans are now well under way for the Launch of the Diocesan Growth Strategy. Every Region will be holding a service around Pentecost, using a common Liturgy written for the occasion. To emphasize the diocesan nature of this work, the Preacher and President at each service will be the Bishop, but the service will also include symbolic actions or symbols appropriate to the local context.

That balance between 'the local' and 'the diocesan' in the Launch Liturgy is symbolic of the Strategy as a whole. For while it is a coherent set of pathways guiding our corporate life over the next five years, offered and led by the Bishop, that 'framework' will enable each charge to grow according to the nature of the *local* soil and 'weather conditions'. The fruits growing up the trellis will be different according to context.

Launch services will be held in the following places:

Galloway: St Ninian's Castle Douglas 6th June at 7.00pm

Glasgow South and Renfrewshire: Holy Trinity and St Barnabas Paisley 7th June at 7.30pm

Glasgow North West: All Saints Bearsden 13th June at 7.30pm

Ayrshire: St Ninian's Troon 21st June at 7.30pm

Glasgow North East: St James Bishopbriggs 22nd June at 7.00pm

Lanarkshire: St Mary the Virgin Hamilton 23rd June at 7.30pm

So what happens after the launch? Every charge will be invited to call a Facilitator to come and work alongside them in drawing up its Mission Action Plan (MAP) for the coming year. A MAP acts as a 'compass', pointing out the direction in which the charge will work, and a 'magnet', drawing all members to co-operate in shared aims and objectives. MAP Facilitators will work with up to two congregations – neither of which would be their own - accompanying them as they produce their Plan and thereafter keeping a watching brief as the charge seeks to implement the actions it has identified. This 'partnership' with the congregation will be reviewed annually, for a maximum of five years.

The Bishop or the Dean will visit every charge once a year to listen to the stories of avenues explored via the MAP, and to share in celebrating those ventures which have worked well and learning from those that have not been successful. Both are important, and the most important aspect of all is the fact that new ventures have been tried. These stories of growth will also be shared across Regions and Diocese by a variety of other means: through a dedicated web site, at Regional meetings, at synods and through DNS.

As members of the diocese we will work hard at planting and watering, and will be supporting one another too, but the Strategy is underpinned by an awareness that it is **God** who makes things grow, and that we are co-workers in God's service (1 Cor 3, 6-9). So in the lead-up to the launch let us all pray the Growth Strategy prayer:

Spirit of our Loving God, in your mercy and compassion inspire, encourage and empower us to live and work together as a Diocese, to allow your mission for us to take flesh through Jesus Christ our Living and Eternal Lord. Amen