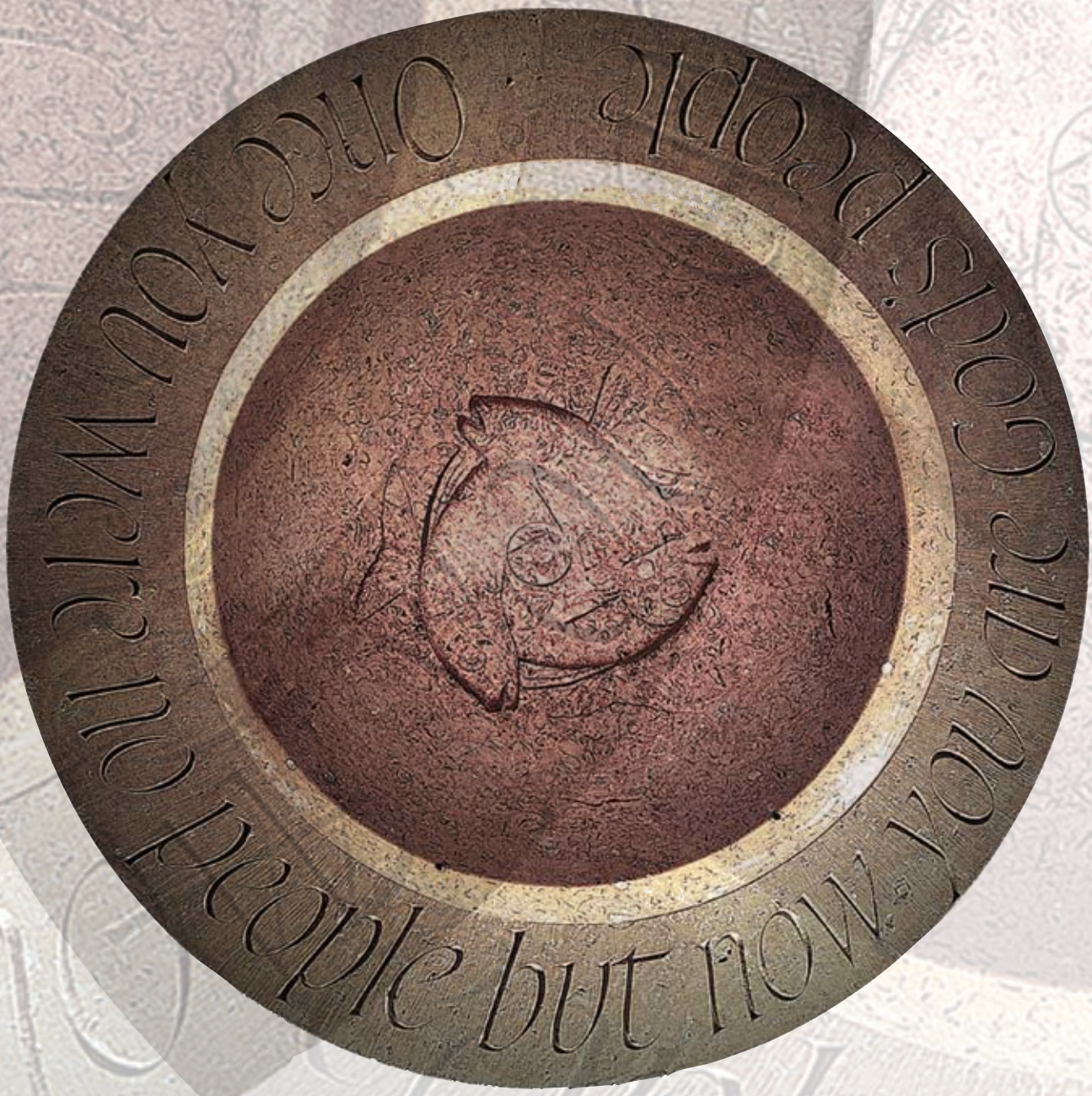

called to be

A PEOPLE OF HOPE

CLIFTON DIOCESE

www.cliftondiocese.com

DIOCESAN PRAYER

"GOD OUR FATHER
open the horizons
of our minds and hearts
so that we can see
what hope your call holds for us.

Pour out the overflowing gifts
of your Spirit
so that we, your Church,
may become a people
of hope for our world.

We ask you this,
through Jesus Christ Our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

OUR LADY
Woman of Hope, pray for us

ST PETER
Rock of Hope, pray for us

ST PAUL
Apostle of Hope, pray for us"

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FRONT COVER: The picture, by Richard Jeffrey-Gray, is of the Baptismal Font at Clifton Cathedral. THE INSCRIPTION READS: Once you were no people but now you are God's people (1 Peter 2:10)

This document is available from **www.cliftondiocese.com**

INTRODUCTION

'I know well the plans I have made for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you says the Lord' JER 29: 11-13.

The prophet Jeremiah was speaking to the people when they were going through a critical time in their history. In a time of great change they were seeking the face of God. In the past couple of years we have been seeking the face of Christ to enable us to frame guidelines for our Diocese. The promise made by God through Jeremiah that we will find the Lord, echoes the promise of Jesus – **'I will be with you always until the end of time'** MATT: 28:20. We are a people of hope believing that the promises made to us by God will be fulfilled.

Nearly every parish and many schools in the Diocese participated in the process of drawing up these guidelines. Thousands were involved and over 1,500 people came to the various gatherings held throughout the Diocese. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed their prayers and their reflections to this process.

What has become clear to me is that much is already happening in our parishes, schools and other communities and this needs to continue and flourish.

The guidelines are intended to provide principles which give direction to our actions. They cannot provide detailed plans as the needs of our parishes and schools are varied but together we can have a sense of common purpose. We are living in a period of change which is challenging but at the same time unsettling for many people. We need to live positively in this time of change so that we can be faithful to Christ and attractive in such a way that our lives point others to Christ.

Prayer, Communion and Mission are the three main themes at the basis of these guidelines. They are exemplified by the three principal Diocesan saints: Mary, Peter and Paul: Mary the woman of hope, Peter the rock of hope and Paul the apostle of hope.

As we look to the future we ask for their prayers and are inspired by their example. All that we are and do throughout the diocese must be judged by asking ***'Is what we do deepening prayer, enabling communion and strengthening mission?'*** Therefore, I have decided to call this next stage of the process: 'Called to be a People of Hope'.

These guidelines are intended to give a positive direction and a sense of hope to all our communities. They are simple but I hope you will find them encouraging and inspirational. They are not restrictive but they should inform all that we are and do as the local Church of the Diocese of Clifton.

+ Declan

RIGHT REVEREND DECLAN LANG, BISHOP OF CLIFTON

WHY DIOCESAN GUIDELINES?

The focus of these guidelines is the parish. As Pope John Paul II wrote:

"[the Church] finds its most immediate and visible expression in the parish. It is there that the Church is seen locally. In a certain sense it is the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters" [1]

The word 'parish' has been used to describe the Christian community since the earliest days of the Church. It derives from the Greek work paroikia which means 'stranger'. Christians used it about themselves to describe something very positive about their experience of life. Although they lived in their own country, even among their own people, they called themselves a community of strangers, a parish, because they sought to derive their values, not from the prevailing culture, but from the Gospel of Christ. They 'dwelt as strangers' because they knew that through the death and resurrection of Christ a new creation had begun and that their lives were directed to this new future.

Sadly the word parish has come to mean something different. When something is described as 'parochial' it can often mean something inward looking and limited. This is the opposite of what our parishes should be. Grounded in the promises of the Lord our experience of parish should open us to the wide horizon of God's future.

The communities of our diocese vary enormously from small rural and urban parishes to large city ones. Some are declining in number and some growing. There are different challenges and opportunities facing each of our parish communities.

Pope John Paul II wrote:

"since the Church's task in our day is so great, its accomplishment cannot be left to the parish alone" [2]

Therefore, the reason for diocesan guidelines, at this time, is so that we do not work in isolation. Parishes have always worked together at local and deanery level but the changing nature of the Church means that we have to find new ways of doing so.

Some will say one of the major challenges facing our diocese is the probability of fewer priests. This is true. However the reason for these guidelines is to see how in a changing society we can best be equipped to be a Church of hope in the twenty-first century. Parishes need to work closely together. We are called to be generous and the purpose of these guidelines is not to give all the solutions but to point a way forward and show how local communities may become centres of hope both for themselves and others.

While acknowledging that much that is good is already happening in our parishes, there is still much we can learn from each other. These guidelines call us to work more collaboratively within our parishes, with neighbouring parishes and with other Christians.

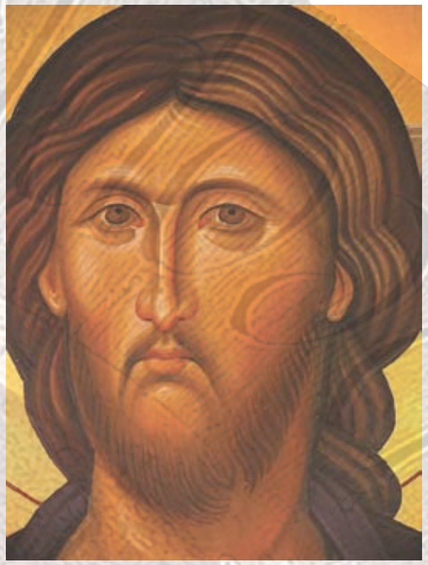
'Called to be a People of Hope' is to be a springboard for future action.

1 Pope John Paul II: Christ's Faithful People (Christifidelis Laici) No. 26 CTS Publications 1988

2 Pope John Paul II: Christ's Faithful People (Christifidelis Laici) No. 26 CTS Publications 1988

HOW TO APPROACH THESE GUIDELINES

Following the two year consultation 'Seeking the Face of Christ' the following areas emerged:



A PEOPLE OF WELCOME

ACTING JUSTLY

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY

ECUMENISM

ENVIRONMENT

FAMILY LIFE

FORMATION & ADULT EDUCATION

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

LITURGICAL PRAYER

PRAYER

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

VOCATION

YOUTH

This document is divided into three sections: Prayer, Communion and Mission. Each of these is focused on the three patron saints of our diocese: Mary, Peter and Paul. We have taken them as models who will lead us more deeply into the spirit of these guidelines and the hope which the Gospel gives us.

MARY the woman of hope, who teaches us to nourish our lives at the living spring of God's Word.

PETER the rock of hope, who keeps us in communion of mind and heart with the universal Church. It is within the community of believers that hope takes root.

PAUL the apostle of hope, who reminds us that the essence of our Christian life is to share in the mission of Christ and to be witnesses to our faith.

Each section is divided into four parts:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE the vision for each parish;

PASTORAL GUIDELINES how the guiding principle will enrich the life of the parish;

PARISH ACTION concrete things your parish can do. The highlighted bullet point is the action which will have the greatest impact on parish life.

DIOCESAN AND OTHER RESOURCES to point you in the right direction.

Most parishes are already involved in the areas which emerged in the Seeking the Face of Christ consultation process. Inevitably more emphasis is given to some areas rather than others, however we are called to develop all of them. With limited resources in every community we cannot tackle everything at once so we have to make plans to ensure every priority is covered during the next five years.

Some of the diocesan resources are already available from departments; others are in the process of being prepared.

A SIMPLE WAY TO APPROACH THIS BOOKLET WOULD BE FOR PASTORAL COUNCILS TO:

Read this booklet with a view to reviewing or forming a pastoral plan. Make a list of priorities for your own parish by:

1 **Recognising and celebrating what you already do well.**
2 **Considering the areas which might need further development.**
3 **Looking at what you are not doing in your parish and deanery and forming a plan to address these areas.**
4 **Deciding on a timescale to review these plans**

Diocesan commissions, councils and departments mentioned in this document:

Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation exists to support all aspects of formation and education.

Department for Liturgy works to promote formation and understanding of the liturgy by providing liturgical training.

Department of Ongoing Formation for Priests provides training and support for our priests.

Department for Schools and Colleges advises and supports the schools in their Catholic mission.

Ecumenical Commission advises and supports parishes and schools in their ecumenical activities.

Justice and Peace Commission works to support and encourage individuals and groups working for justice and peace around the diocese.

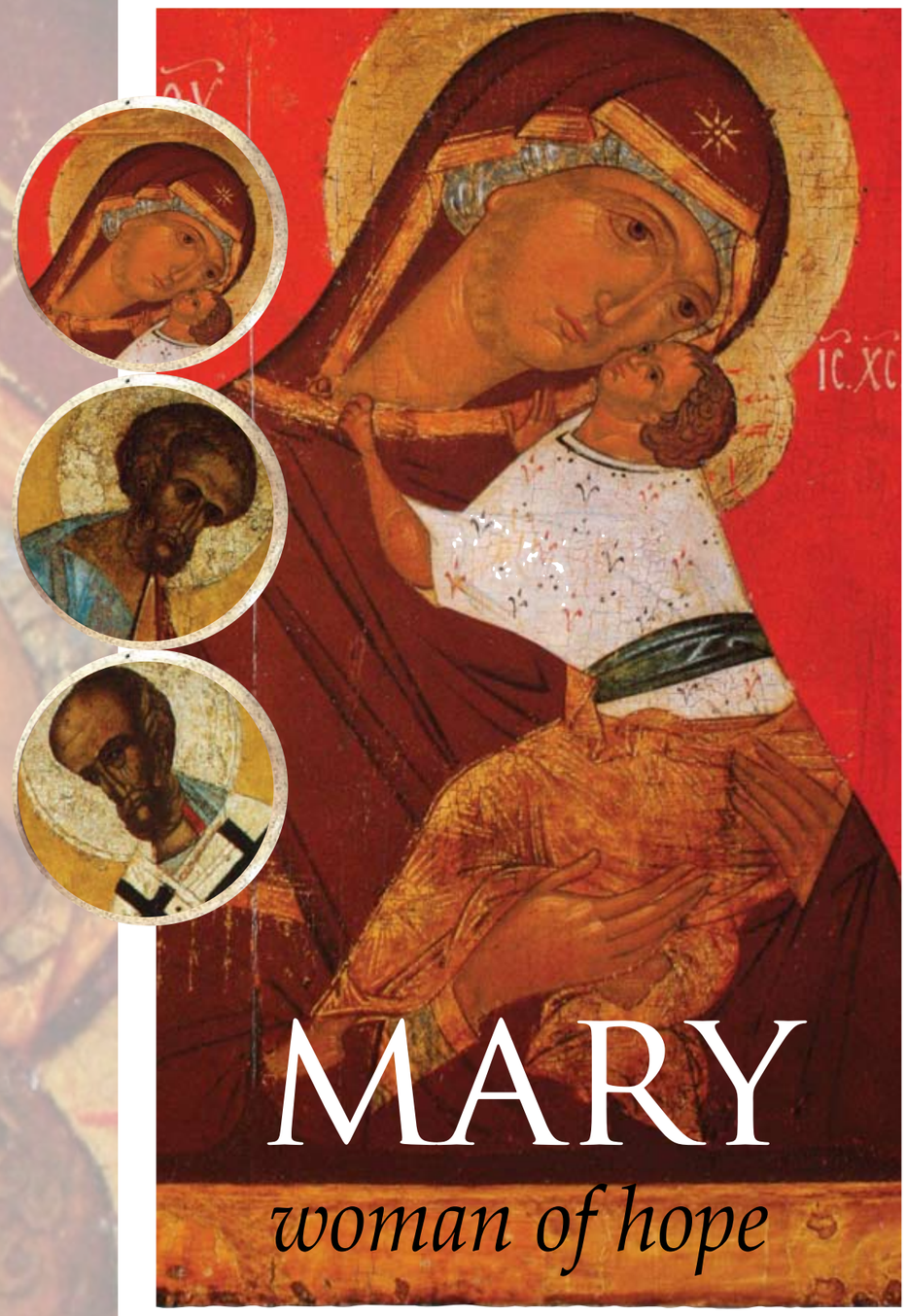
Safeguarding Office. To work for the protection and safety of all children within the diocese to ensure a safe environment in which young people can flourish. The department provides training and resources.

Diocesan Pastoral Council meets three times a year to support the Bishop in the pastoral care of the diocese. It is made up of the Bishop, the Vicars General and two representatives (a priest and a layperson) from each of the thirteen deaneries and a representative from each of the diocesan departments.

Deanery Pastoral Council to discuss how parishes can work together.

Parish Pastoral Council each parish is required to have a pastoral council or team to work with the clergy in the pastoral care of the parish.

More information about all the above and other diocesan groups can be found at **www.cliftondiocese.com**



MARY
woman of hope

"Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled"
LUKE 1:45

SCHOOL OF PRAYER

“Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled” LUKE 1: 45

These words spoken to Mary by her cousin Elizabeth reveal the meaning of Christian hope. To have hope is not mere optimism, it is a bold confidence in a future that is founded on God’s promise to us. To have hope is to have faith in God’s word. The Word of God is made present to us in the liturgy and whenever we open our hearts to God in prayer.

We can see in her these two indispensable aspects of prayer: a deep personal relationship with God and the communal prayer when she is with the disciples of Christ as they gather together in the upper room at the first Pentecost.

1 MARY is portrayed in the Scripture as a woman of deep personal prayer. In her relationship with the Lord she is described as pondering, listening, waiting, bold and strong in her response to God. The incarnation is made possible through the prayerful obedience of this young Hebrew woman, **‘Let what you have said be done to me’** LUKE 1:38.

We can learn from her example what it means to pray. Each of us is called to a personal bond with God. Each of us needs to hear the Lord’s call and to be able, as she did, to give our consent freely to God’s will. It is in our response to God’s call that we find true freedom and true hope. It is in prayer that we will find the strength to serve others.

As Pope Benedict XVI recently wrote:

“A first essential setting for learning hope is prayer” [3]

2 LITURGICAL PRAYER is revealed in the upper room. After the Resurrection we glimpse Mary, with the disciples, waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit to breathe life into the Church. In this event Mary is an example of the need to gather together with the Church to pray and to receive the gifts of the Spirit. It is in our participation in the liturgy that our faith grows and hope deepens.

Pope Benedict XVI recently reminded us that the Church’s liturgy is a ministry of hope:

“Through the liturgy, the “work of Jesus” is continually brought into contact with history; with our lives in order to shape them. Here we catch another glimpse of the grandeur of our Christian faith. Whenever you gather for Mass, when you go to Confession, whenever you celebrate any of the sacraments, Jesus is at work. Through the Holy Spirit, he draws you to himself, into his sacrificial love of the Father which becomes love for all. We see then that the Church’s liturgy is a ministry of hope for humanity. Your faithful participation is an active hope which helps to keep the world – saints and sinners alike – open to God; this is the truly human hope we offer everyone” [4]

It is the combination of personal prayer and liturgical prayer which is the bedrock of a Christian spirituality worthy of the name.

3 Pope Benedict XVI: Saved in Hope (Spe Salvi) No. 32 CTS Publications 2007

4 Pope Benedict XVI: Homily St Patrick’s Cathedral New York, April 2008

PRAYER

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

“Each parish and community should be a school of prayer and we should become experts in prayer” [5]

5 Pope John Paul II: At the beginning of the New Millennium (Novo Millennio Ineunte) No. 19 CTS Publications 2001

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

Growing in our relationship with the Lord is the wellspring of our Christian life and so prayer and teaching others to pray is of fundamental importance.

Our parishes and communities are already rich in their experience and their faithfulness to prayer. But for our parishes to grow as “schools of prayer” we need to rediscover, and at times reinterpret, the richness of our spiritual heritage. A relationship with Christ deepens our experience of daily living. In a world which is spiritually hungry we are called to help people see the connection between prayer and life, that God is in all things.

PARISH ACTION

- **Reflect on the riches of prayer already present in your parish and see how these can be developed.**
- **Organise a parish retreat or days of reflection.**
- **Look at what forms of prayer are practiced in neighbouring Catholic parishes and other Christian communities and see how they could be incorporated into your own community prayer.**
- **Look at ways which will enable us to pray with other Christians.**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

The Departments for Adult Education and Evangelisation, Liturgy, and Schools and Colleges offer a variety of resources and days of reflection. 0117 902 5595.

Dulverton Residential Centre, Somerset, on the edge of Exmoor. Self-catering or catered accommodation for schools, youth and family groups who would like time away to reflect and explore the Exmoor countryside. **www.exmoorhostel.co.uk** 01398 324217.

Prayer Groups. A list of prayer groups in the diocese is published in the ‘The Clifton Diocese Directory’.

OTHER RESOURCES

Ammerdown Centre, near Radstock, Somerset. An open Christian community dedicated to peace, reconciliation and renewal. **www.ammerdown.org** 01761 433709.

Monastery of Our Lady and St Bernard, Brownshill, Stroud, Gloucestershire. A retreat centre run by the Bernardine Cistercian Sisters. **www.bernardine.org/brownshille.html** 01453 883084.

Downside Abbey, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Somerset. A place of silence and prayer for people to find God in their own lives. The Abbey offers three venues: the guest house which is open only to men: Bainesbury House which is in the Abbey grounds and accommodates up to 17 people. St Bede’s Centre, a bright and spacious conference room for days of reflection and study. **www.downside.co.uk** 01761 235161.

Emmaus House, Clifton, Bristol. A retreat and conference centre run by the Sisters of La Retraite. **www.emmaushouse.org.uk** 0117 907 9950.

Our Lady’s Homestead, Nympsfield, Stroud, Gloucestershire. A retreat centre run by the Marist Sisters. 01453 542039.

Prinknash Abbey, Cranham, Gloucestershire. A Benedictine community overlooking the Severn Valley. **www.prinknashabbey.org**

Sarum College, Salisbury. Theological learning and spiritual growth, open to all. **www.sarum.ac.uk** 01722 424800.

Wesley College, Henbury, Bristol. A Methodist college promoting excellence in theological education for the wider church community. **www.wesley-college-bristol.ac.uk** 0117 959 1200.

LITURGICAL PRAYER

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

"The Liturgy is the source and the summit of the life of the Church"[6]

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

The Catechism of the Church reminds us 'Liturgy teaches us to pray in hope', [7] so the Liturgy is both the source and the celebration of our hope.

Our Parishes are centred upon the celebration of the Sacraments and especially the celebration of Mass. Catholics are rightly orientated toward the centrality of the Eucharist. The Eucharist builds up the Body of Christ but all the Sacraments are essentially communal and are best celebrated in a community. The Sacraments of Anointing, Reconciliation, Baptism, Confirmation are best celebrated in a whole parish setting. The Sacraments of Ordination and Marriage are to be celebrated in such a way as to underline that they too belong to the whole community.

6 Second Vatican Council: The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium) 1963

7 Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2657; Geoffrey Chapman 1994

PARISH ACTION

- **Consider ways in which you could implement the 'Diocesan Guide to Parish Liturgy Groups'.**
- **Develop celebration of the Liturgy of the Word in the absence of a priest.**
- **Consider ways in which all sacramental celebrations involve as much of the parish as possible.**
- **Train Ministers of Communion to be able to minister to the sick and housebound.**
- **Organise the training of Readers and Ministers of Communion at a parish and deanery level.**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

Department for Liturgy works to promote formation and understanding of the liturgy by providing liturgical training. 0117 983 3930. liturgy@cliftondiocese.com

Diocesan Guide to Parish Liturgy Groups will be produced by Spring 2009.

Diocesan Pastoral Liturgy Certificate offers a well-defined programme to form pastoral liturgists for every parish or Church community. No previous qualifications are required.

Training courses for Ministers of Holy Communion and Ministers of the Word

Advent and Lent resource packs are published in the Spring and Autumn.

Clifton Diocese Liturgical Diary is published on the First Sunday of Advent.

OTHER RESOURCES

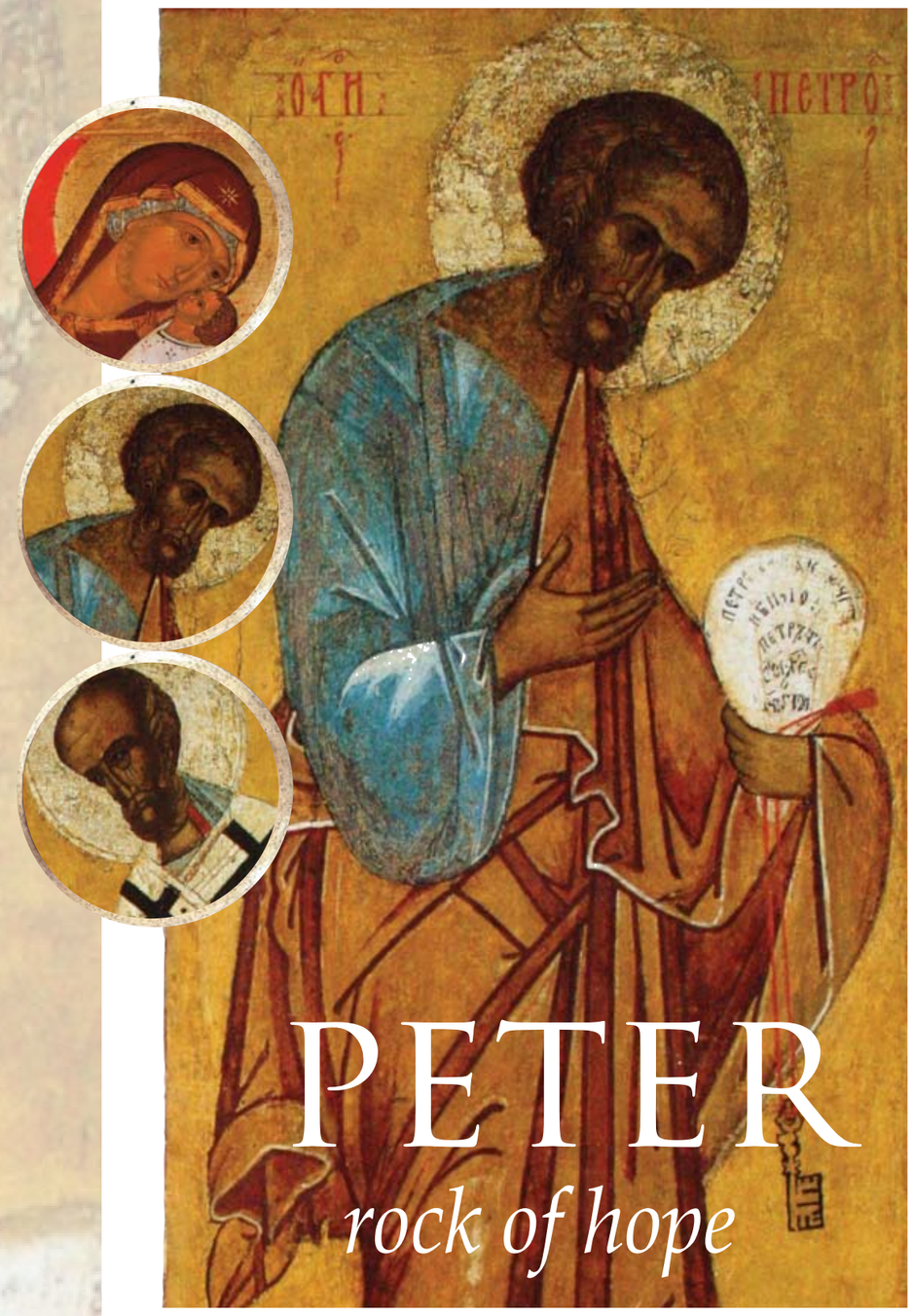
Department for Christian Life and Worship of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales www.catholicchurch.org.uk

General Instruction of the Roman Missal CTS Publications 2005, The Church's official guide as to how Mass should be celebrated.

Celebrating the Mass CTS Publications 2005, pastoral guide intended to assist everyone in their understanding of the Mass.

Consecrated for Worship CTS Publications 2006**,** A teaching and policy document concerning the building, alteration, conservation and maintenance of Church buildings.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium) Second Vatican Council 1963. This document outlines the Council's vision for understanding the reform and promotion of the liturgy.



PETER
rock of hope

"Always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have"
1 PETER 3:15

CHURCH AS COMMUNION

Having looked at the Church as a School of Prayer we now reflect upon the Church as Communion and the pastoral actions to which that calls us. The Church reminds us that we are not saved only as individuals but as members of the Body of Christ. In an increasingly individualistic culture our Catholic faith teaches us that we form one body, sharing our gifts and talents for the good of all.

In the first letter of St Peter we hear **'Once you were not a people but now you are the people of God'** 1 PETER 2:10. God calls us and saves us as a people. It is not 'God and me ', it is 'God and us'.

Through the revelation of Christ, and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit we come to know that there is one God who is the Father of all. To believe in the God of Jesus Christ is to believe in the equality of all God's people. The redeeming work of Christ restores wholeness and freedom to all humanity. Our Christian hope is based on the Lord's promise of **'a new heaven and a new earth'** REV 21:1 where harmony and peace are restored between all people and the whole of creation. To know this is to realise that all Christians are called to be a sacrament, an effective sign and instrument, of the unity of all humanity. As one of the prayers from the Roman Missal says:

"Father, you feed your people and strengthen them in holiness so that the family of humanity may come to walk in the light of one faith in one communion of love" [8]

Peter, as the rock of hope, is he who holds the Church in Communion. As Pope Benedict XVI recently said:

"Peter must be the custodian of communion with Christ for all time. He must guide people to communion with Christ; he must ensure that the net does not break, and consequently that universal communion endures. Only together can we be with Christ, who is Lord of all" [9]

The root of our understanding of Church as Communion is not ensuring efficient management but understanding what sort of Church God is calling us to be. Pope John Paul II, in his letter to mark the beginning of the new millennium reminded us that when the structures of the Church reflect the self-giving love of the Trinity then this:

"spirituality of communion supplies institutional reality with a soul" [10]

This section looks at the ways the Lord calls our parishes and communities to live and work together.

8 Preface of the Holy Eucharist II

9 Pope Benedict XVI, page 54: Christ and his Church CTS Publications 2007

10 Pope John Paul II: At the beginning of the New Millennium (Novo Millennio Ineunte) No. 45 CTS Publications 2001

COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

"The Church in Christ is a Sacrament, that is a sign and instrument of communion with God and the unity of the entire human family" [11]

11 Second Vatican Council: The Light of the Nations No. 1 (Lumen Gentium) 1963

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

The way in which we work together underpins and deepens the mission of the Church. We do not first organise ourselves and only then begin the mission of the Church: the very way in which we collaborate with one another is part of our mission. If we are able to work effectively as people of diverse backgrounds then our parish communities will be a source of hope to us, and those who encounter us.

Authentic collaborative ministry is based on a common understanding of the vocation of all the baptised in the work of the Church.

PARISH ACTION

- **Each parish needs to have a Pastoral Council which relates to the Deanery and Diocesan Councils.**
- **To be an effective Pastoral Council there will be a need for ongoing development and review.**
- **Parishes to review how they work with neighbouring parishes. (e.g sharing in sacramental preparation, outreach to the wider community, catechetical training, planning for complementary Mass times).**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

Committee to be formed to review existing deanery and parish structures

In the light of projected numbers of clergy and pastoral needs, the committee will make recommendations to the Bishop, the Council of Priests, Council of Deacons and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. This report will form the basis of structural changes in our parish system and how they will be implemented.

This group will make a report to the Bishop by Autumn 2009.

GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL COUNCILS

Guidelines for the setting up and running of parish pastoral councils will be produced by Summer of 2009 by the Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation to help implement 'Called to be a People of Hope'.

1 WHOLE PARISH FORMATION & ADULT EDUCATION

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

"The continuing Christian education and formation of adult members of the Church has become a priority ... This formation must fulfil real needs for adults to develop their talents to the utmost"[12]

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

Faith formation is a lifelong activity. Every Christian is called to reflect upon and learn more about their faith, and so the Church teaches us that catechesis is to be provided for every parishioner.

12 The Priority of Adult Formation: Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Published by the Catholic Media Trust (2000)

PARISH ACTION

- **Make a yearly plan for education in the faith for everyone in the parish.**
- **Look at what neighbouring parishes are doing. Are there ways in which you can you work together?**
- **Look at what people are doing ecumenically and consider ways of working more closely with other Christians.**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

'In-formation' A booklet detailing resources and training available from the Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation. This is published every year.

Diocesan training course for catechists. A foundation course to train people in sacramental preparation beginning in Autumn 2009.

Resource booklet for adult education. A collection of diocesan and other resources to help parishes in their sacramental preparation will be produced in Autumn 2009.

All the above is available from the Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation. **www.cliftondiocese.com** 0117 902 5595.

OTHER RESOURCES

Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation is dedicated to equipping Catholic individuals, parishes and schools to become involved in the task of evangelisation. **www.caseresources.org.uk**

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Geoffrey Chapman Publications 1994
A statement of the Church's Faith and Doctrine.

General Directory for Catechesis. CTS Publications 1997
The Church's directory on how to implement and teach the Catechism.

2 CLERGY FORMATION & ADULT EDUCATION

13 The Priority of Adult Formation: Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (2000)

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

"The ongoing formation of the clergy is particularly urgent today because of rapid changes in the social and cultural conditions of individuals and people and the demands of the new evangelisation"[13]

ACTION

- **Clergy to take a pro-active responsibility for their own personal development and on-going formation and see it as a benefit not only to themselves, but a benefit to the people they serve.**
- **Formation should be on the agenda of clergy deanery meetings at least once a year.**
- **The Council of Priests and the Council of Deacons to review their programme of ongoing formation for clergy.**
- **There is an expectation that clergy participate in an annual retreat.**

CLERGY RESOURCES

Programme of formation. This booklet details retreats and training days which are available to clergy throughout the year.

Handbook for priests. A practical handbook on priestly ministry will be produced in Spring 2009.

Discussion papers for clergy deanery meetings. Priests and deacons meet together six times a year. Discussion papers on various topics will be produced.

All the above available from the Department of Ongoing Formation for Priests 0117 902 5595.

ECUMENISM

Guiding Principle

"Yet those who profess that Jesus Christ is Lord are tragically divided and cannot always give a consistent common witness ... Herein lies an enormous responsibility for us all"[14]

Pastoral Guidelines

Parishes are urged to pray, work and witness with their ecumenical partners so that together they may be credible witnesses to Christ's Gospel and more effectively serve their community. Together they may be seen to be a living example of the hope that being disciples of Christ brings.

Parish Action

- **Play an active part in local eucmenical work such as churches together groups, local ecumenical partnerships, or councils of churches.**
- **Get to know your local Christian communities.**
- **Include other churches in the prayer of the faithful at Mass.**
- **Join with local churches in expressions of united witness.**

Diocesan Resources

Clifton Diocese Ecumenical Commission exists to help and educate parishes in their ecumenical work. For contact details see **www.cliftondiocese.com**

'The Ecumenical Commission Guide' a resource to help parishes work together with other Christians in their area. Available from the Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation. 0117 902 5595. **www.cliftondiocese.com**

County Ecumenical Officers there are ecumenical officers in each county of the diocese. Contacts are listed in the 'Clifton Diocese Directory'.

Other Resources

Department of Dialogue and Unity of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. www.catholicchurch.org.uk

Churches Together in England www.cte.org.uk

14 Pope Benedict XVI: Address to the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions; 29 October 2006

VOCATION

Guiding Principle

"In a church which is totally vocational all are vocation promoters. Blessed are you, then, if you can express with your lives that to serve God is beautiful and fulfilling, and reveal that in Him, the living one, is hidden the identity of every living person"[15]

Pastoral Guidelines

Every person has a specific vocation, 'a dream within the heart of God for each of us' [15]. That vocation is different and specific for each person. We need to help everyone, but especially the young, to ask questions about their lives and to challenge them to discover and respond to God's call. Nurturing vocations is the responsibility of all and cannot develop unless there is a climate of hope, where the Gospel is presented as Good News. We need to encourage specifically vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Parish Action

- **Challenge people to respond to God's call by putting into practice some or all of the suggestions made in the document 'Building a Culture of Vocation'.**
- **Celebrate Vocation Sunday.**
- **As a pastoral council or parish group study the document 'In Verbo Tuo' and consider how you might use this in your parish.**
- **Build on existing sacramental programmes to develop a culture of vocation.**

Diocesan Resources

These include discussion documents for pastoral councils, multi-media presentation, videos, powerpoints, posters. leaflets and testimonials available from:
Fr Robert King Vocations Director, 103 Queens Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1LL.
www.cliftondiocese.com 0117 914 0003. robert.king@cliftondiocese.com

'Building a Culture of Vocation' a resource to help parishes promote vocations. Available form the Deapartment of Adult Education and Evangelisation.
0117 902 5595

Other Resources

National Office for Vocation offers advice and resources including resources for Vocation Sunday. **www.ukpriest.org**

'In Verbo Tuo' New vocations for a New Europe. **www.vatican.va**

Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation. An organisation which is dedicated to enthusing, engaging and equipping the Catholic community to become involved in evangelisation. **www.caseresources.org.uk**

Compass Points is sponsored by a group of Roman Catholic Religious Orders and Congregations in England and Wales. **www.compass-points.org.uk**

15 'In Verbo Tuo' New vocations for a new Europe by Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and to the Consecrated Life in Europe. 1997

YOUTH

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

'The young have shown themselves to be a special gift of the Spirit of God. If Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears much of the cross' [16]

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

Young people need to be fully integrated into the life of the parish, encouraged to feel part of the community, and given the opportunity to take on leadership roles.

16 Pope John Paul II: At the beginning of the New Millennium (Novo Millennio Ineunte) No. 9 CTS Publications 2001

PARISH ACTION

- **Challenge young people to deepen their prayer and to serve the poor.**
- **Recognise the contribution young people make in your parish.**
- **Listen to young people and, with them, formulate a plan to meet their needs and the needs of the parish.**
- **Encourage young people to become active members of the parish and involved in its ministries.**
- **Strengthen links between schools and wider parish community.**
- **Work ecumenically.**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

Diocesan Youth Coordinator. To be appointed in 2009 by the Bishop. Further resources, including a training programme for those involved in youth work, will be developed.

'Youth Matters'. This newsletter is for those involved in youth work produced quarterly. Available from your parish or the Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation. **www.cliftondiocese.com** 0117 902 5595.

Safeguarding Office. To work for the protection and safety of all children within the diocese to ensure a safe environment in which young people can flourish. The department provides training and resources. **www.cliftondiocese.com** 0117 954 0993

OTHER RESOURCES

Bishops' Conference Website. **www.catholicchurch.org.uk**

Yfaith. A website created by the Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation to be used by 10 to13 year-olds who want to find out more about their faith. **www.yfaith.co.uk**

FAMILY LIFE

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

''God wished to be born and to grow in a human family. Thus he consecrated the family as the basic and ordinary way of his meeting with humanity'' [17]

17 Benedict XVI: Homily on the Feast of the Holy Family 2006

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

We are called to deepen an awareness of the vocational nature of marriage and parenthood and be aware that families today take many forms. It is through the supportive practical love of the family that the Church can most effectively express its conviction that God is love.

PARISH ACTION

- **Identify the varieties of family life within your parish and identify support structures with them.**
- **Particular consideration needs to be given to those families with members suffering from disabilities; we need to consider especially how we include them as members of the parish community.**
- **Parishes to ensure there is preparation for those intending to marry sacramentally.**
- **Help families develop their awareness of the holiness of everyday life through materials provided by the Bishops Conference initiative 'Home is a Holy Place'.**
- **Ensure that there is a safe environment in which children and vulnerable adults can flourish.**
- **Identify ways to work together with Catholic Schools to provide relationship education.**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

Diocesan Coordinator for Marriage and Family Life to be appointed in 2009 by the Bishop.

Clifton Children's Society. An adoption agency recruiting and supporting adoptive families. 08451 220077 **www.ccsadoption.org**

For those working with children with disabilities, help is available from **the Department for Schools and Colleges and the Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation**. 0117 902 5595.

OTHER RESOURCES

Home is a Holy Place a Bishops' Conference initiative for family life. **www.homeisaholyplace.org.uk**

Marriage Care. An organisation committed to the lifelong support of marriage, relationships and family life. **www.marriagecare.org.uk**

Bishops' Conference Website **www.catholicchurch.org.uk**

Association of Separated and Divorced Catholics. **www.asdcengland.org.uk**

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

"The Catholic school must be able to speak for itself effectively and convincingly. It is not merely a question of adaptation, but of missionary thrust, the fundamental duty to evangelise, to go towards men and women wherever they are, so that they may receive the gift of salvation"[18]

Pastoral Guidelines

Schools have a key role in the mission of the Church; they exist, as the whole Church does, to communicate Christ to others. Our schools are integral to the life of the Church and are not an 'add on'. Schools must see themselves as a part of the Church community working in partnership with the parishes. Teaching is a ministry within the Church and the vocation of teachers and all those who work in schools, needs to be highly valued.

18 'The Catholic School on the Threshold of the New Millennium' Published by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1997.

PARISH ACTION

- **Explore and celebrate the ways in which the school enriches the life of the parish.**
- **Representatives of Catholic schools should be invited to attend the deanery pastoral council.**
- **Celebrate Education Sunday.**
- **Inform schools of sacramental celebrations.**

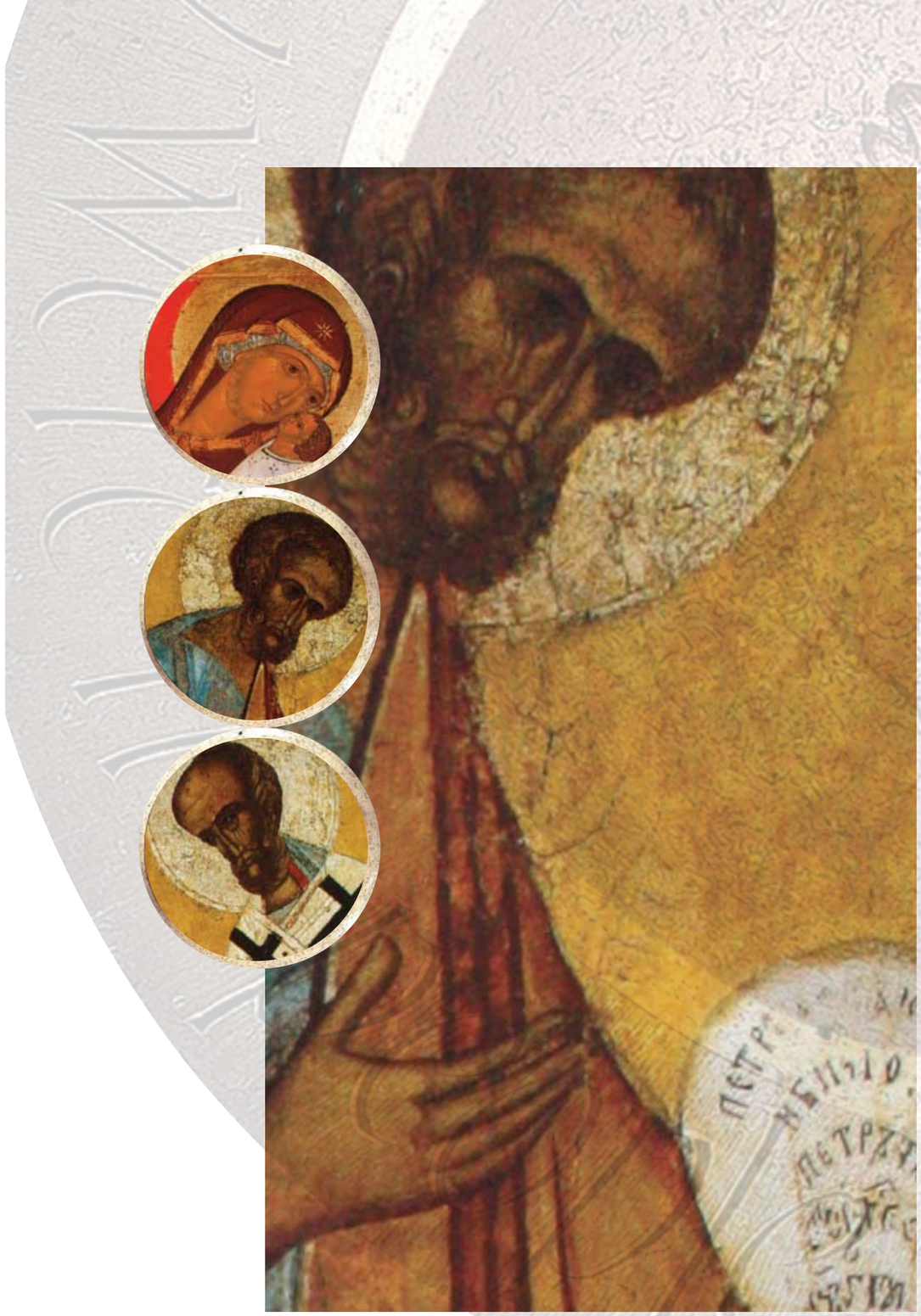
DIOCESAN RESOURCES

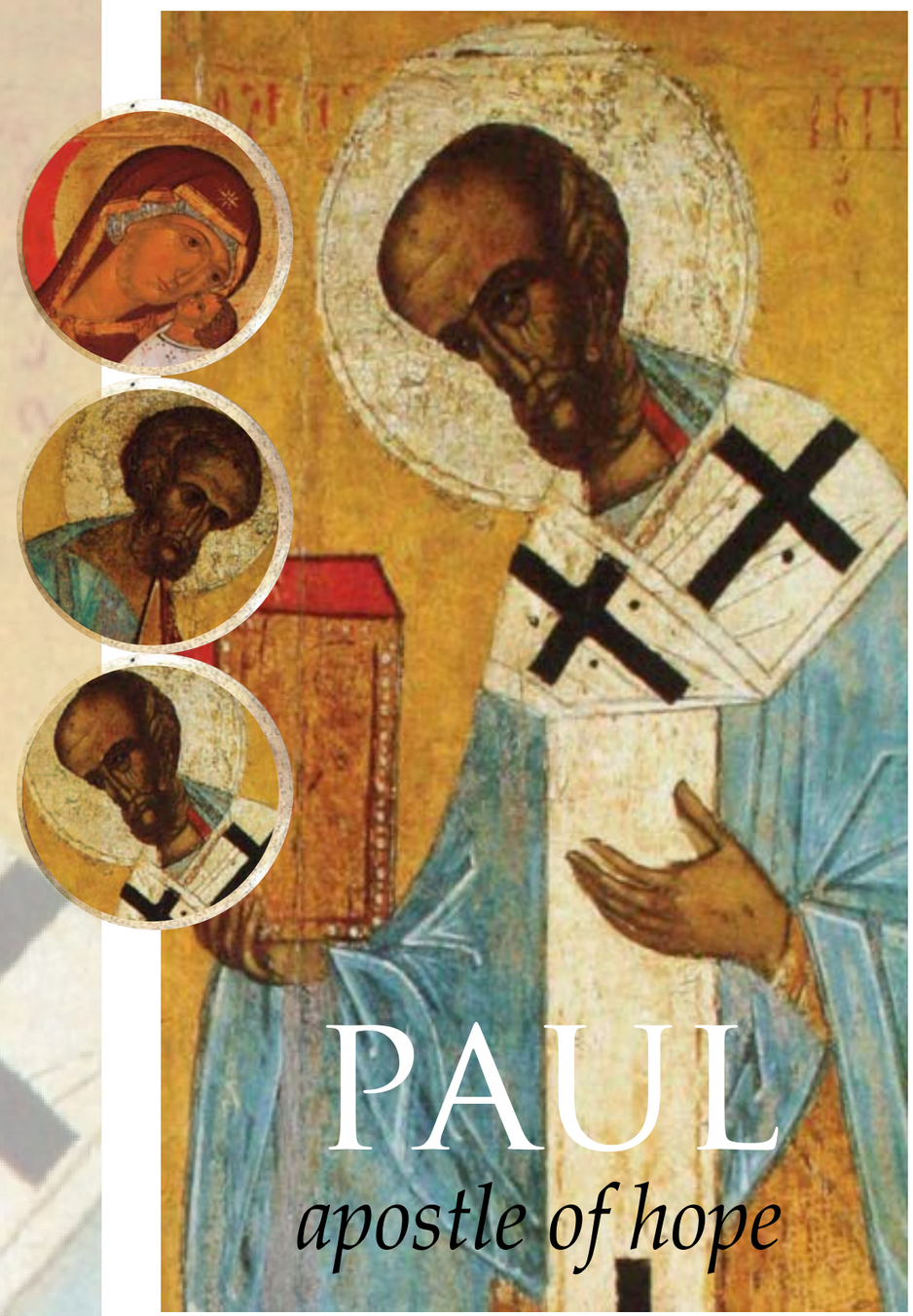
Department for Schools and Colleges. The department acts for the Bishop on all matters relating to schools and colleges. It advises and supports schools in carrying out their mission and provides training for teachers and governors. 0117 902 5593. **www.cliftondiocese.com**

'Called to be a People of Hope: Schools'. Diocesan Guidelines to support schools in their mission will be published in Spring 2009.

OTHER RESOURCES

Catholic Education Service. Negotiates on behalf of the Bishops' Conference with government and other bodies on legal, administrative and religious education matters. **www.cesew.org.uk**





PAUL
apostle of hope

"May He enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope His call holds for you, what rich glories He has promised the saints will inherit" EPH. 1:19

CHURCH OF MISSION

On the road to Damascus Saul was knocked to the ground by a blinding light. He heard the voice of Jesus which set him on the path of total conversion. His name was changed to Paul, he was entrusted with a mission and his whole life was given as a witness to the hope which Christ brings. He became known as the Apostle to the Nations. In the two thousand years since then, the Gospel of hope has spread to every corner of the world.

When we have encountered the call of Christ, we are similarly entrusted with a mission. We are called by Christ to be his witnesses today, to share the light of faith with others. Our parishes are already engaged in the work of mission and this section of 'Called to be a People of Hope' sets out further practical ways we can respond as individuals and parishes to Christ's call to bear effective witness to our faith.

The history of Christianity teaches us that when our parishes are outward looking, when we live for others, the Church flourishes. When we look in on ourselves we die. Recently Pope Benedict XVI warned us not to be closed in upon ourselves but to look outward:

19 Pope Benedict XVI: Meeting with young people, USA, 2008

> *"At times, however, we are tempted to close in on ourselves, to doubt the strength of Christ's radiance, to limit the horizon of hope.*
>
> *Take courage!*
>
> *Fix your gaze on our saints.*
>
> *The diversity of their experience of God's presence prompts us to discover anew the breadth and depth of Christianity. Let your imaginations soar freely along the limitless expanse of the horizons of Christian discipleship. Sometimes we are looked upon as people who speak only of prohibitions. Nothing could be further from the truth! Authentic Christian discipleship is marked by a sense of wonder.*
>
> *We stand before:*
>
> *the God we know and love as a friend,*
>
> *the vastness of his creation,*
>
> *and the beauty of our Christian faith"* [19]

This section calls us to be a people of hope by opening our horizons more broadly. We are called to be a people who live for others.

ACTING JUSTLY

Guiding Principle

"This is what the Lord asks of you, only this: that you act justly, that you love tenderly, and walk humbly with your God" MICAH 6:8

Pastoral Guidelines

Every parish needs to be aware of its responsibilities to the wider world. Jesus' fundamental option for the poor is not an optional extra but is essential to who we are as a people.

Parish Action

- **Support at least one project in the developing world and also in your local area.**
- **Identify justice issues related to migrants and asylum seekers.**
- **Work with other parishes, schools, and ecumenical and interfaith groups, in areas of justice and peace.**
- **Identify and support CAFOD and your parish CAFOD representative. (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) representative.**

Diocesan Resources

Clifton CAFOD. Works with the Catholic community to raise funds for and awareness of global poverty and injustice. **www.cafod.org.uk** 01823 338903

Clifton Diocese Justice and Peace Commission. Works to support and encourage individuals and groups working for justice and peace around the diocese. justiceandpeace@cliftondiocese.com **www.cliftondiocese.com**

Other Resources

Caritas Social Action. Dedicated to the eradication of poverty and social inequality. Caritas provides assistance to the most vulnerable on behalf of Catholics around the world. **www.caritas-socialaction.org.uk**

St Vincent de Paul Society. International Christian voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty and disadvantage by providing direct practical assistance to anyone in need. **www.svp.org.uk**

National Justice and Peace Network. Links people who have a concern for justice and peace and offers support and advice for groups and individuals. **www.justice-and-peace.org.uk**

Catholic Association for Racial Justice. Works towards creating the culture where people are made to feel welcome. **www.carj.co.uk**

Pax Christi. A Gospel-based international movement for peace which produces material for parishes each year to encourage support for Peace Sunday. **www.paxchristi.org.uk**

A PEOPLE OF WELCOME

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

"If we have truly contemplated the face of Christ, our pastoral planning will necessarily be inspired by the 'New Commandment' which he gave us: 'Love one another as I have loved you'"[20]

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

Welcoming is essential to who we are. We are called to be an inclusive community of faith, hope and love: a truly catholic community that welcomes all people. We are also called to follow Jesus' example in being pro-active in reaching out to others.

20 Pope John Paul II: At the beginning of the New Millennium (Novo Millennio Ineunte) No. 42 CTS Publications 2001

PARISH ACTION

- **Look at the way in which you welcome visitors from all backgrounds into the life of your community.**
- **Develop ways to include new and arriving communities into the parish, being sensitive to cultural diversity.**
- **Recognise ways in which people may feel discriminated against and work towards overcoming this.**
- **Consider how you communicate parish life in the local community.**
- **Prepare welcome packs, together with local churches, to be available and distributed in areas of new housing.**
- **Consider how to engage with those families whose contact with the Church is primarily through the Catholic school.**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

Guidelines for Welcoming Migrants and New and Arriving Communities will be produced by the Justice and Peace Commission in 2009 justiceandpeace@cliftondiocese.com

'Becoming an Even More Welcoming Parish' a resource to help parishes. Available from the Department of Education and Evangelisation. 0117 902 5595.

'Clifton Diocese Polish Direcory' times of Polish Mass and other local information. **www.cliftondiocese.com**

OTHER RESOURCES

Bishops' Conference of England and Wales provides a variety of resources including: 'Diversity and Equality Guidelines' and 'Mission of the Church to Migrants in England and Wales'. **www.catholicchurch.org.uk**

Everybody's Welcome a Bishops' Conference initiative supporting parish communities to become more friendly, more family-sensitive, and more welcoming of all. **www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk**

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS: A JOURNEY OF FAITH

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

"The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the way in which we welcome and share with others our faith and way of life as Catholics. The RCIA is not a programme but the process by which we engage with others who seek the face of Christ. It involves the whole parish and is the responsibility of all the baptised"[21]

21 'Diocesan Guide to the Rite of Christian Initiation': Introduction Bishop Declan Lang

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

Parishes are called to help people grow in confidence and knowledge in sharing their faith with others especially those who seek to join the Church. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is in this section because its primary focus is those who do not know Christ and are yet to be baptised. The RCIA can be sensitively adapted for those who have already been baptised and who seek full communion with the Church. The distinction between the baptised and those not baptised should always be clear.

PARISH ACTION

- **Pastoral council to develop a parish RCIA team.**
- **Study the 'Diocesan Guide to the Rite of Christian Initiation'.**
- **Consider how the Rites of Initiation are currently celebrated liturgically.**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

Diocesan RCIA Team helps parishes set up and run the RCIA.

'Diocesan RCIA Guidelines' will be updated and revised in Spring 2009.

'A Practical Guide to Approaching the RCIA' will be available in Summer 2009.

Guides to lectionary based catechesis. Practical guides which connect the liturgical year with the teaching of the Catechism in RCIA groups.

All the above is available from the Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation 0117 902 5595

OTHER RESOURCES

'Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults' the Church's Rites of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Geoffrey Chapman Publications 1987

National RCIA Network supports people who have RCIA leadership roles in parishes and dioceses. **www.rcia.org.uk**

ENVIRONMENT

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

'Humanity, if it truly desires peace, must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology. Experience shows that disregard for the environment always harms human co-existence, and vice versa. It becomes more and more evident that there is an inseparable link between peace with creation and peace among men. Both of these presuppose peace with God' [22]

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

We need to rediscover a sense of wonder and awe about the whole of creation. We are called by God to be stewards of creation, where this is understood in terms of service and nurturing rather than domination and exploitation.

22 Pope Benedict XVI: Message for World Peace Day 2007

PARISH ACTION

- **Explore ways of liturgically celebrating the wonders of creation.**
- **Fabric committee to review how we use the parish buildings and consider the impact they have on the environment.**
- **Consider becoming a Fairtrade parish by January 2010.**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

Clifton CAFOD. Works with the Catholic community to raise funds for and awareness of global poverty and injustice. **www.cafod.org.uk** 01823 338903.

Guidelines for Schools on Environmental Issues. This document is to help schools consider environmental issues in the light of Catholic teaching and will be issued in Spring 2009.

OTHER RESOURCES

'The Call of Creation: God's Invitation and the Human Response' This document concerns the natural environment and Catholic social teaching. This is a Bishop's Conference document **www.catholicchurch.org.uk**

Operation Noah This organisation aims to encourage Britain and Ireland's churches to lead simpler and more sustainable lifestyles. **www.operationnoah.org.uk**

'Safeguarding the Environment'. Chapter 10 of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church **www.vatican.va**

Hope for Creation a suggestions in which churches, groups and individuals can focus on creation **www.ctbi.org.uk/creationtime**

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

'The Church… has sought to build a relationship of openness and dialogue with the followers of other religions. This dialogue must continue. In the climate of increased cultural and religious pluralism which is expected to mark the society of the new millennium, it is obvious that this dialogue will be especially important in establishing a sure basis for peace and warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religion which have so often blooded human history. The name of the one God must become increasingly what it is: a name of peace and a summons to peace' [23]

23 Pope John Paul II: "At the Beginning of the New Millennium" (Novo Millennio Ineunte), No 55 CTS Publications 2001

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

Dialogue is to be seen as an essential tool for forging peace, developing understanding and avoiding conflict. We need to develop our knowledge of and respect for other faiths and be attentive to what is true and holy within them.

PARISH ACTION

- **Continue as a community to develop our knowledge and understanding of other faiths and beliefs.**
- **With other Christians, to encourage religious dialogue and work jointly for the common good.**
- **Schools to continue to develop their approaches to community cohesion and share with parishes their experience.**

DIOCESAN RESOURCES

Interfaith Officer Fr Robert King **www.cliftondiocese.com** 0117 914 0003.

OTHER RESOURCES

Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Committee for Other Faiths and Committee for Catholic Jewish Relations. **www.catholicchurch.org.uk**

Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Publishes messages from the Vatican to mark major festivals in all world religions. **www.vatican.va**

MY HOPE FOR OUR FUTURE

Speaking to the young people at the World Youth Day in Sydney, Pope Benedict asked ***"What will you leave to the next generation? Are you building your lives on firm foundations, building something that will endure? Are you living your lives in a way that opens up space for the Spirit? In the midst of a world that wants to forget God, or even rejects him in the name of a falsely -conceived freedom?"*** The Pope was asking the young people what is the vision they have for life. The questions he asked are valid for all of us. In the midst of a changing world what is the vision we offer to others that gives them, and us, reasons for living and hoping?

At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus proclaimed his vision for life. The Spirit of God was on him and had anointed him to bring good news to the afflicted, **to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free** LK 4:18. Jesus announced the age of God, the reign of God, and it was made visible and present in Jesus himself. He had a mission. He was sent by the Father so that through Jesus and by the power of the Spirit we might be drawn into communion with God, with one another and the whole of creation. Jesus came to heal the brokenness of life, to reconcile us to God, to each other and to our environment. His love was especially directed towards all whose lives were oppressed, to restore their dignity and enable them to flourish.

In the beginning God created us in his image and likeness and invited us to share in the work of creation GEN1:26-31. After the resurrection, Jesus invited his disciples to share in the work of the new creation and be the sign and instrument of God's peace: **'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you... Receive the Holy Spirit'** JN 21 21:22. If the Gospel was to be believed, it had to be lived. What the world needed were first witnesses to Christ who would teach by who they were in relationship to God, humanity and all creation. The Gospel needed to be lived in the reality of people's lives so that it could transform their lives and enable them to live as a newly created people.

We are the disciples for today. We are called to live the Gospel and witness to the truth of God. Our communities are to be living signs of a people sent in God's name to a broken world of which we are part, to bring healing and hope, reconciliation, justice and a newness of life. We do so by living the two great commandments: **'you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbour as yourself'** LK 10: 25-28.

Pope Benedict XVI also said in Sydney: *'A new generation of Christians is being called to help build a world in which God's gift of life is welcomed, respected and cherished.... A new age in which love is not greedy or self seeking, but pure, faithful and genuinely free, open to others, respectful of their dignity, seeking their good, radiating joy and beauty. A new age in which hope liberates us from the shallowness, apathy and self absorption which deaden our souls and poison our relationships. The Lord is asking you to be prophets of this age, messengers of his love, drawing people to the Father, and building a future of hope for all humanity.'*

We are called to be a People of Hope in a time of change within the Church and society. We live and celebrate our faith in the reality of our lives. We cannot separate our faith from our daily experiences because if we do so, our lives will not be renewed and our faith will become sterile. We have to recognise new challenges such as changes in family life, environmental issues, fewer priests and a consumerist culture which often marginalises people who are materially or culturally different. Many people have become strangers to the Gospel but the search for meaning in their lives continues. The challenge for us is to hear the words of Jesus telling us not to be afraid and to make our communities so attractive that the words of Zechariah become true that people will say: '**we want to go with you, since we have learnt that God is with you'** ZECH 8:23.

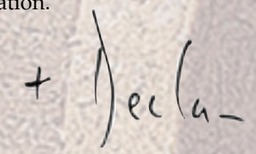
I would like to acknowledge the other members of the steering group, Fr Michael McAndrew, Fr Bernard Massey and Ann Fowler.

I would also like to thank Tom Bigwood and Catherine Roperto, who have helped produce this document.

Our thanks also to the Bernadine Sisters and the Benedictine Monks of Downside, for providing hospitality for our meetings.

My appreciation also to the parishes and schools, who hosted the diocesan gatherings, which were integral to this process.

The steering group will continue in existence to support parishes as we continue to be 'A People of Hope' living the Gospel with love for God, one another and the whole of creation.



RIGHT REVEREND DECLAN LANG, BISHOP OF CLIFTON

DIOCESAN PRAYER

"GOD OUR FATHER
open the horizons
of our minds and hearts
so that we can see
what hope your call holds for us.

Pour out the overflowing gifts
of your Spirit
so that we, your Church,
may become a people
of hope for our world.

We ask you this,
through Jesus Christ Our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

OUR LADY
Woman of Hope,
pray for us

ST PETER
Rock of Hope,
pray for us

ST PAUL
Apostle of Hope,
pray for us"

CLIFTON DIOCESE

www.cliftondiocese.com