

PART 3 – THE WAY FORWARD

With all of this in mind, how may we move forward as a Diocese? In short, the way forward will be multifaceted. It will require us to continue the work of pastoral strategic planning first begun 4 years ago. We will need to unify parishes to be better stewards of God's blessings and our resources. Doing so means that we can better allot time, talent, and treasure within our local Church communities to the essential work of evangelization and forming missionary disciples.

To these latter ends, I urge all of us to move forward in a way that mirrors Jesus' method of evangelization in scripture: inviting individuals to first come and see; next, calling individuals to follow him; and then sending them out to go and make disciples. As you will see in each of these three sections below, I have outlined "Mission Steps", which are action items I ask individuals, parishes, and the Diocese to focus on over the next 4 years.

At this critical time in our Church, I ask you to recognize and embrace your universal call to holiness; to remember you are created by God for sainthood and to seek His wisdom on how to act upon this call.

INVITATIONAL WITNESS - COME & SEE

The Gospels reveal Jesus' powerful yet simple example of being an invitational witness, of how to extend invitations to those people around him seeking truth, hope, and in someone to believe. Gently welcoming, and lovingly inviting people to come and see so they may discover for themselves all the grace, blessings, and promises God has for them.

John's Gospel illustrates Jesus' extending such an invitation, "The next day again John [the Baptist] was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of

God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, 'What do you seek?' And they said to him, 'Rabbi' (which means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour" (John 1:35-39).

Just like Jesus, we need to be aware of those around us, to extend an invitation, and be a welcoming community. This is necessary if we are to move our churches from maintenance to mission. Now is the time for courageous, creative outreach.

To this end, I've created an ad hoc Revitalization Committee to work with me to define best practices and methods for being "Invitational Witnesses." This committee's primary role will be to assist the diocesan movement post-pandemic and work with the Secretariat for the New Evangelization on the upcoming USCCB and Vatican Synodal initiatives.



Bishop da Cunha greets attendees at St. Thomas Chapel Rededication, Falmouth