



## Catholic Diocese of Victoria *Office of the Bishop*

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Our synodal journey as the people of God in the Diocese of Victoria continues.

Since the beginning of our walking together, our “*syn-hodos*”, the heart of our way together has been listening to the Holy Spirit through the word of God, and listening to one another in Listening Circles. Together, this has become a rich “Conversation in the Spirit”.

Our focus at this time is the Gospel passage Luke 4:16-21. This is considered by scripture scholars as the blueprint of the ministry of Jesus, and therefore the blueprint of ministry for the Church:

*When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:*

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*

*And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

In the first yearly cycle of the Diocesan Permanent Pastoral Synod (DPPS), we shared and listened to one another’s faith journeys and considered the questions discerned at the Fall plenary in November 2024: What is your experience/connection with Christ, the Anointed One, in your faith journey? And how have you experienced blessings and hope in your life, in your parish, in your school, in your church, or in your family?

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, the answers we heard at the Spring Plenary in June 2025 bring us great hope indeed:

I belong to Christ, who participates in my life;  
I feel a deep and consoling joy in encountering Christ;  
This joy gives me trust in the community of the Church,  
and inspires me to share Christ with others.



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As we begin the second cycle of the DPPS, we continue listening to God's word in Luke 4:16-21 and turn to the next two words: *"to bring."* The text of Isaiah that Jesus reads in synagogue provides a short list of who Jesus came to bring good news to: the poor, the captive, the blind, the oppressed. In one way or another, this is a summary of all of us in our personal vulnerability and fragility on our pilgrim journey, and of all of the world throughout history. And in world history, as in our own time, it is easy to identify the poverty, the captivities, the blindnesses, and the oppressions.

The focus of our synodal journey for the next year will be these two small words: *"to bring."* This is an action of being sent and of movement toward. It is mission and ministry: the very life and existence of the Church, just as Jesus is sent by the Father and born of the Virgin Mary to live among us. Even before His birth, this movement of bringing was already unfolding—Mary herself embodied it. Her openness to the Spirit and readiness to go *"in haste"* to accompany her cousin Elizabeth show us what it means to bring the Good News with joy and humility.

The original Greek word for *"to bring"* in Luke's gospel is *"evaggelizesthai."* The writer took the noun for gospel / good news (*"evangelion"*), and turned it into a verb — *"gospelizing"*, literally, or *"good newsing"*. It is remarkable that the writer of this account put all the focus on the Gospel / Good News as the verb.

Good-newsing the poor... Wonderful-newsing the poor... Gospelizing the poor... This must mean practical care that achieves the Good News for our brothers and sisters, and makes apparent the meaning of God in our present reality. In short, everyone and everything needs good-newsing.

Now we turn to a vital question for our Church and each of our lives as followers of Jesus: *how* *"to bring."* How should we undertake *evaggelizesthai*—good-newsing—the poor, the captive, the blind, the oppressed? This is the fundamental question for the Church today: answering it requires a deep and real listening and seeing of the poor, the blind, the captive, and the oppressed, outside ourselves and within ourselves.

Every era of time and place and people and culture needs a listening ear and seeing eye for how to bring the Good News. The *"how"* is unique to every era and place, every time and season of human existence. Each parish, school, community, and family of the Diocese needs to explore the *"how"* of bringing good news. On a universal scale, we can see the developing ideas of *"how"* in the ecumenical councils and magisterium of the Church, and in the *Sensus Fidei* of God's people.

Exploring this *"how"* is the pastoral creativity and discernment we are all called to engage in, pastors and people together, to be a Church living the blueprint of Christ's own life. It is a privileged task before us as disciples of Jesus. The road together, as we see over the centuries up to today, has many forks and exits. The answer to *"how"* has brought much grace for people and glory to God. And, in all honesty, sometimes great suffering and pain to the body of Christ.

Indeed, our human frailties and vulnerabilities and fears are always with us. But the Holy Spirit continues to impel us onward with grace and gifts, to continue to focus on Jesus, and on those who Jesus focused on. The



blueprint of Luke 4:16-21 is constant, and gives hope in the midst of the polarization of fences and trenches in the world today.

Brothers and Sisters, let us be on the way together, trying with all our strength and courage to listen to the poor, the captive, the blind, and the oppressed, who are identified in the Gospel of Matthew as the living body of Christ:

*Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' (Matthew 25:34-36)*

As we walk together (*syn-hodos*) and listen to the Spirit, we are invited to listen attentively and rejoice in the good news like our Blessed Mother Mary. She, too, listened deeply—to the word of God spoken through the angel (Luke 1:26-38), to the needs of others, and to the stirrings of the Spirit within her. In her listening, she received the Good News and became its bearer to the world. At the foot of the Cross, she listened once again in her sorrow and received from her Son a new son in John (Jn 19:26-27) and a new family to care for—all God's people.

May our path be accompanied by the intercession of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was open to the good news of God's will. Let us listen attentively and rejoice in the good news like our Blessed Mother:

*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. (Luke 1:46-47)*

In Communion,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon  
Bishop of Victoria

