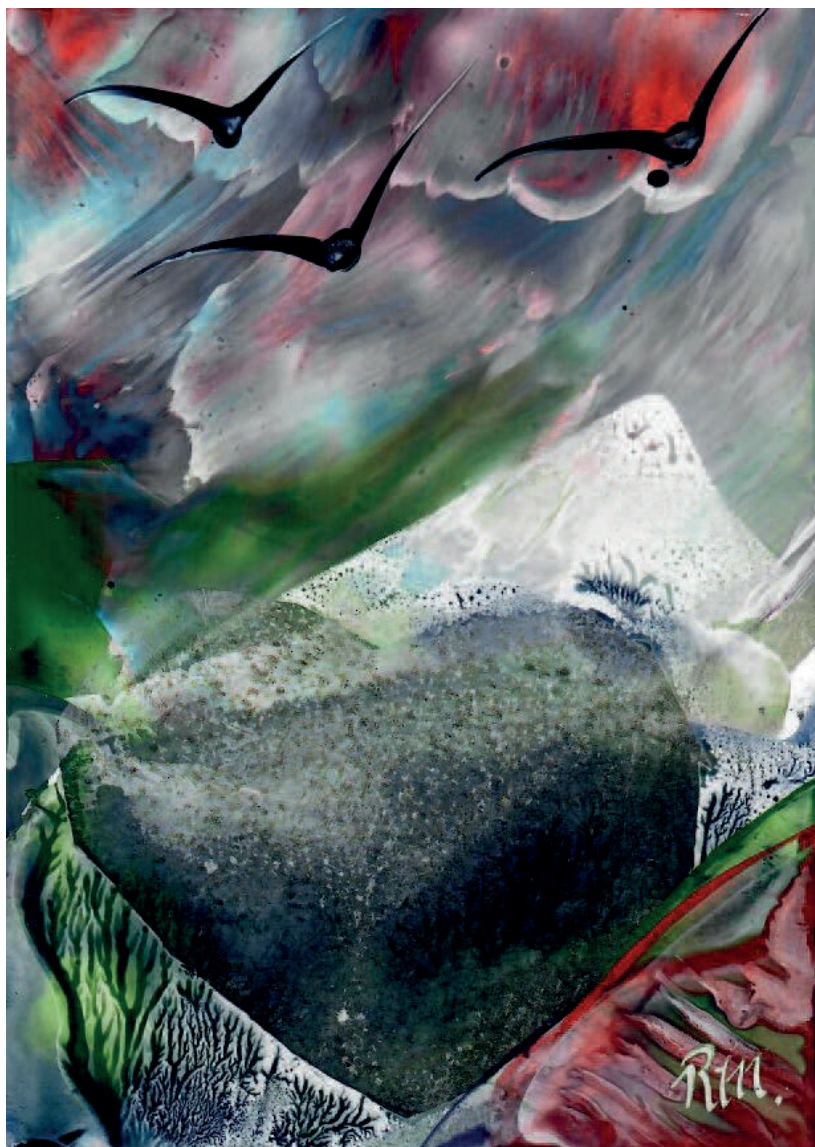


Led By The Spirit

Sgir-Easbuig Earraghaidheal's nan Eilean

Diocese of Argyll & The Isles



Consultation Phase 3

Living our Mission:
Being Called to Holiness

Gathering and Opening Prayer

God of love, we come before you as the Diocese of Argyll & the Isles, humbly seeking your guidance in determining our way ahead. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, guide us and give us the grace and courage to go where you want us.

Cleansed and enlightened by your Holy Spirit may we follow in the footsteps of your beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we stand at the crossroads and wonder what road to take, help us to discern the path you wish for us.

May we listen with an open heart and embrace your will.

Stir our hearts O Lord to consider what we can all do as individuals and be instruments of your Church's mission among all people using our talents. O Lord hear our prayer. Amen

Opening Hymn

Our Question

The purpose of Phase 3 of Led by the Spirit is to determine how can we best fulfil our mission with the resources we have. Our mission is to grow in personal holiness, and in doing so enable our diocese to also grow in holiness, making us better witnesses to Christ's love. Knowing what we now know about the diocese and knowing our own spiritual needs and the unique gifts we can each contribute in our parishes and in the diocese:

How do we live out our 'call to holiness' now and in the future, in a way that prepares us for a changing diocese? That is, how can we better live out our mission, knowing the potential yet also the limits of our shared diocesan life?

*What is being asked of **me** individually, of our **parish** and of our **diocese** and what needs to develop or change in me, in my parish and in the diocese?*

Gospel Reflection

Jesus washes the feet of his disciples (John 13:4–15)

Introduction to Spiritual Conversation

Spiritual conversation is undertaken in groups and is as much, if not more, to do with spiritual listening as it is to do with speaking. Everything said is of value and will be recorded in the report of the meeting so that everyone is heard and everything said is respected.

Our parish meetings will begin with shared listening to a passage of scripture, followed by a period of quiet personal reflection.

Spiritual Conversation takes place over three rounds, or stages: a process of active listening, of intentional speaking and of being attentive to the movement of the Spirit, which we come to know through our own reactions to what we hear being shared by others.

The Spiritual conversation Process

Round One:

The process begins with a round of personal sharing of reflections on our question.

We begin with a brief period of quiet prayer (about 1–2 minutes) in which participants reflect again on the question for Phase 3.

After the time of quiet prayer, each person shares with the group, beginning with ‘In my prayerful reflection on the question, I ...’

During this conversation, participants practise active listening and intentional speaking. We will pause after every 4th speaker.

Active listening:

- involves a profound welcome of the other
- asks, ‘How is the Holy Spirit speaking to me and to us through the other person?’
- asks, ‘How am I affected by what is said?’

Intentional speaking:

- involves speaking from my prayer (not from someone else’s)
- avoids story-telling
- shares from the heart.

A few practical matters:

- Speak one after the other, moving clockwise around the group
- Each speaker is timed and should not go for longer than 2 minutes.
- There are no comments or crosstalk, even in one’s own sharing. This is not an opportunity for discussion.

Round Two:

This is where the communal movements of spirits start to emerge.

Before sharing, allow a minute or two to reflect quietly on the question: ‘How was I affected interiorly by what I heard in the first round – what resonates with me?’

After reflecting quietly, each person shares with the group, beginning with ‘In the group, I heard ...’ or ‘I was moved by ...’

Some prompts might include, for example:

- What did you hear in the first round?
- Were you struck by a common theme or one comment?
- Did you experience harmony or dissonance with the others as they shared?
- What are you feeling now?

Some practical matters:

- This is a short intervention—be disciplined and intentional in speaking.
- There is no particular order of speakers.
- Speak only once. No crosstalk.
- This is not a chance to say something you forgot to say in the first round.
- Each speaker is timed and should not speak for longer than 2 or 3 minutes.

Round Three:

This is for open discussion, to discern together the main themes and discernment of the conversation. Again, allow a minute or two of quiet reflection before beginning the conversation.

Open the group to a time of discussion, asking them to:

- name the spiritual movements that were recognised in the second round of conversation
- keep the same attentiveness and sincerity of the previous rounds
- keep their contributions to about a minute each.

If there is a particular question to be considered or an opportunity to give feedback to the larger group, this is when a communal response may be formulated.

Conclude the time of small-group spiritual conversation with a 'Glory be'.

A Fourth Step:

If there has been more than one group, come back together and report on what has been shared in round 3 of each group.

Closing Prayer

With our thanks to the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia, for some of the material used in this booklet