



## **STANDING WITH THE LIVING CHRIST AT THE GATES OF HOPE:**

### **A Vision for the Diocese of Newark**

#### **A Guiding and Galvanizing Prayer**

*O God, help us to claim our mission: to stand with the living Christ at the gates of hope. Not the prudent gates of optimism, which are somewhat narrower; nor the strident gates of self-righteousness, which creak on shrill and angry hinges; but a very different, sometimes very lonely place. It is the place of truth-telling, about our own souls first of all and its condition; the place of resistance and defiance, the piece of ground from which we see the world both as it is and as it could be, as it will be; the place from which we glimpse not only struggle, but joy in the struggle - with the Christ who sets us free; and we stand there, beckoning and calling, telling people what we see, asking people what they see. In Christ's name we pray. - Adapted from a prayer by Victoria Safford*

#### **Core Values**

##### **Worship:**

***"Enter gates with thanksgiving; go into God's courts with praise."  
Psalm 100.3***

Worship gathers and grounds us as individuals and as a community. Worship has the capacity to quicken the souls who come through the "gate of holiness" - and transform them into disciples of hope as they re-enter the world.

##### **Questions to consider:**

- What is your worship designed to do? What is its intention?
- How is the worship experience creating disciples of hope?
- How does each congregation design liturgy that invites the gift of mystagogia (which is the experience of living more deeply into the mystery of the divine hope), and then evaluate it?
- How best to use space, music, silence, language and, movement in the context of worship - for the soul's health and transformation?

##### **Spiritual Formation:**

***"Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel." Ephesians 5.19***

Spiritual formation is a commitment to live more intentionally as a person of faith - incorporating discipline that brings into alignment one's interior and exterior life.

##### **Questions to consider:**

- Into what sort of regula (a regular discipline of prayer, study and ministry) are you called to live?
- What study - of the tradition, the sacred texts and the historical witness do you need to do in order to stand at the gates of hope?

- What support do you seek and need to live creatively?
- How well do you know the context of your home, community or school - and their gates of welcome and exclusion?

### **Justice/Nonviolence:**

***"And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love Kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8***

Justice is the insistence that the gates of hope are open - and not hidden; and that the gates are open in equal measure for all. Foundational to the witness of justice is a commitment to non-violence - which is the resistance to a system, practice or ideology that creates victims

### **Questions to consider:**

- Where and how do you walk the walk as a disciple?
- Who is at the gate that hasn't been invited in? Why are they there, and what can - and will, you do about it?
- How do you identify the violence in yourself - and in your context - and how can you non-violently stand in the face of it?
- How do you work with the living Christ to set people free?

### **Radical Hospitality:**

***"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13.2***

Radical hospitality means that all are welcome all the time. Radical hospitality means that we will not only welcome the stranger; we will seek out the stranger -- and work to develop a process that transforms us all into neighbors.

### **Questions to consider:**

- What are the specific forms of hospitality you use in your life?
- What discipline do you employ to identify secret passwords or practices at your gates - and how do you disarm them?
- How does your hospitality reflect the South African notion of ubuntu - I am because you are?
- How do you create an environment of hospitality that enables you to see the face of Christ in everyone?