

See What Can Be, Not Just What Is
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A major part of “*The Pursuit of Excellence in Ministry*” vision is a challenge to embrace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - eight goals that respond to the world's main development challenges. They are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

A Parish Response to the Diocesan Vision

How do we integrate the vision into the everyday life of a parish?

At my parish we began by incorporating goals, objectives and priorities from the Diocesan vision into our **narrative budget** document. This ensures wide distribution and sets the stage for integration of the vision at the parish level. Here's what we've done with the major sections so far.

1. Prophetic Social Justice Making

This section of the vision aligns closely with the Millennium Development Goals, so we included both in the introductory section of our narrative budget. The vision statements are:

- *Advocating for commitment to the Millennium Development Goals*
- *Educating laity and clergy with respect to justice issues*
- *Encouraging lifestyles which are consistent with sustainability of the planet*
- *Undertaking at least one project for justice, beyond the many acts of charity already being done*

2. Effective Resource Management

One characteristic of parish ministries, i.e. outreach, parish life, worship, evangelism etc., is overlapping responsibilities. However it's where we can add in another priority of the vision: *effective resource management*. This includes:

- *Modelling a theology of abundance rather than scarcity*
- *Improving communication throughout the diocese*
- *Examining our systems to develop economies of scale, shared best practices, and partnerships*
- *Actively aligning the work of the Diocese and all parishes and ministries*
- *Tracking, acknowledging and celebrating volunteerism*

3. Instilling a culture of innovation

These objectives apply almost universally but to start we included them in our narrative budget in our Parish Life Ministry section.

- *Sharing stories of creative innovation and celebrating successes*

- *Giving permission to take intelligent risks and to learn from failure*
- *Looking outside the Diocese, beyond the Anglican church and outside of North America for ideas*
- *Modelling creativity in Diocesan events and gatherings*
- *Creating new forums and processes for dealing with difficult issues*

4. Promoting outstanding leadership for ministry

The diocesan vision for *promoting outstanding leadership for ministry* fits nicely in our narrative budget with our Ministry of Evangelism. The vision statements include:

- *Creating covenant partnerships among bishop, clergy and laity*
- *Intentionally living out our baptismal covenants in shared ministry*
- *Supporting and encouraging initiative and creativity in the whole people of God*
- *Building relationships in the community around us and respond to their needs*
- *Creating intentional experiences that relocate resources to areas of need*

5. Creating life changing worship experience

We have introduced the concept of liturgical teams and the parish has benefited enormously, with more members of the community than ever before involved. Therefore this is the place for these vision statements:

- *Responding to different expectations meeting people where they are*
- *Inspiring Christian social activism through worship*
- *Engaging clergy and laity together in the creation of life changing worship for the congregation and wider community*
- *Initiating and communicating diocesan wide vision of hospitality*
- *Encouraging a positive, inclusive, diverse participatory environment*

We're not finished of course, we're just getting started. But that's OK - it's taken considerable time for narrative budgets to become truer reflections of our parishes, and so the integration of the vision will take time too.

Is it a challenge? Yes. Is it doable? Yes. Like so many worthy initiatives, the key to success is getting started.