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To: The Faithful of the Diocese of London

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Today, Ascension Sunday, we listen to the passage in the Gospel of Mark in which Jesus commissions his disciples: “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (*Mk 16:15*). After he ascends to the Father, his disciples “went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it” (*Mk 16:20*). Next week is Pentecost Sunday. The whole Church will join in prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that we, like the early disciples, will be turned into bold and courageous heralds of God’s wondrous deeds.

Four years ago, I established a task force to look into the *Future of Pastoral Care in the Faith Communities of the Diocese of London*. It proposed a ‘Family of Parishes’ model. The excellent work done by the task force will help our parishes to be vibrant and active in the Church’s mission of evangelization – the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus.

Now that the task force has completed its mandate, I have established a diocesan commission to build on the work that has already been done. The commission will oversee the implementation and development of Families of Parishes that are oriented on our mission of evangelization. It will assist parishes in the realization of the goals of the ‘Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of London’. It will help us especially: to enter into a close, personal relationship with Jesus and become intentional disciples (Goal #1), to minister with justice and compassion to the wounded and marginalized (Goal #3), to have vibrant liturgies in our parishes (Goal #4) and to promote continuing formation of pastoral leadership – priests, deacons and lay ecclesial ministers (Goal #5).

The commission will use the different media to communicate, so that we can be more effective in our mission of evangelization. In the weeks ahead, there will be a series of bulletin inserts that will explain the different aspects of this mission.

Our most important task is the commitment of each of us to prayer. I urge you to join together in prayer that we the baptized – you and I – support one another in growing closer to Jesus. Today, as we celebrate the Lord’s ascension, I invite you to reflect on Jesus’ commission to the first disciples. It is our mission. May we, through our words and deeds, go out and proclaim the Gospel with boldness and courage, inviting others to experience the joy of meeting Jesus. We implore the help of our diocesan Patron, our Blessed Mother under the title of the Immaculate Conception, and ask God to bring to completion the good work he has begun in us (cf. *Phil 1:6*).

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, C.S.B.  
Bishop of London