DIOCESE OF ATHABASCA
BISHOP'S CHARGE COMMITTEE REPORT
Synod 2026
The Church in Action
Theme: "Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Embracing All"

1. Introduction

The Bishop's Charge reflects on the Diocese of Athabasca's life, ministry, and continuing vocation. The Bishop thanks the Diocesan Executive Council, its subcommittees, diocesan staff, clergy, and parish communities for strengthening the financial, administrative, and physical foundations necessary for effective ministry.
While acknowledging the progress made, the Bishop reminds the Diocese that this work is not an end in itself. Administration must serve ministry, and all diocesan activities must contribute to the Church's participation in God's mission.
The central challenge is to become a Church continually formed by prayer and worship, transformed by Christ's love, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to embrace all people and work toward the wholeness of God's creation.

2. Summary of the Bishop's Charge

The Committee identifies five principal commitments emerging from the Bishop's message:

2.1. Be Empowered by the Holy Spirit

The Diocese is called to place God at the centre of its discernment and mission. Through common prayer, Scripture, sacramental worship, and the Holy Spirit's guidance, we are formed for holy living, Christian community, and faithful service in the world.

2.2. Cultivate a Culture of Christian Love

The Bishop emphasizes that the Church's identity is shaped not merely by programs, strategies, or institutional structures, but by a culture of daily, habitual love. This culture must show itself in our relationships with God, one another, and the communities we serve.

2.3. Embrace All Through Christ's Love

The Diocese is called to embody Christ's welcome through hospitality, compassion, practical care, and faithful companionship. By reaching out to vulnerable people, welcoming those who feel excluded, and nurturing relationships, our parishes bear witness to the dignity of every person and the inclusive love of God.

2.4. Become Agents of Shalom

Leon
Gwen
Edna

The Bishop presents shalom as the wholeness of people and communities in relationship with God, themselves, one another, and creation. Our ministry participates in God's healing and reconciling work by forming disciples, strengthening communities, embracing the vulnerable, and supporting clergy and congregations in mutual support.

2.5. Remain Faithful and Entrust the Results to God

The Bishop challenges the Diocese to focus on what is within its responsibility: praying together, allowing Christ to transform us, and faithfully living out the Gospel. Although we cannot control every outcome, we can remain faithful to our calling and trust God with the results. Our primary concern must not simply be whether our parishes are surviving, but whether we are living as the people Christ calls us to be.

3. The Bishop's Challenge to the Diocese

The Committee understands the central message of the Bishop's Charge as a call to move beyond institutional maintenance toward a deeper embodiment of the Church's mission.

The Synod theme, "Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Embracing All," expresses this vocation. Empowered by the Spirit, we are called to become a community that reflects Christ's love through prayer, worship, hospitality, service, and the pursuit of peace, justice, reconciliation, and wholeness.

The Bishop invites the Diocese to reflect on three essential questions:

Are we praying? Are we seeking God's guidance together through common prayer and worship?

Are we being transformed? Are we allowing Christ to shape our hearts, relationships, and common life?

Are we living it out? Are we embodying Christ's love by embracing all people and becoming agents of shalom in our communities?

These questions provide a practical framework for discerning the faithfulness of our common life and ministry.

4. Conclusion

The Bishop's Charge reminds us that the vocation of the Diocese of Athabasca is not measured solely by institutional stability, numerical growth, or material resources, but by our faithfulness to the Gospel and our participation in God's mission.

The Committee therefore invites Synod to receive the Bishop's Charge as a call to deepen our life of prayer, strengthen our relationships, support one another in ministry, and embody Christ's inclusive love in the world.

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Empowered by the Holy Spirit, may we continue to become the Church in action: embracing all, nurturing Christian community, and participating faithfully in God's work of healing and wholeness.