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May 22, 2019

Dear People of the Diocese,

At the first Christian Pentecost, St Peter spoke about young people seeing visions and older people having dreams. The Acts of the Apostles describes the coming of the Holy Spirit on the followers of Jesus. St Peter explains this as fulfilling a promise God made through the prophet Joel. "I will pour out my Spirit on everyone. Your sons and daughters will speak through the Holy Spirit; your young people will see visions and your old people will have dreams." (Acts 2:16-17)

As we approach the feast of Pentecost 2019, I invite you to pause and consider what visions and dreams the Holy Spirit is inspiring in our community today. I invite you to help formulate a vision for our Diocese of Ballarat for now and the coming years.

I suggest that you spend a few moments in prayer and then read through the enclosed leaflet and reflect on how you would express a vision for our diocese. It would be good if you could meet with others to share your reflections and come up with some common words or phrases that could be included in a vision statement. Then, send those words or phrases to the Bishop's Advisory Council so that we might draw on them to formulate a diocesan vision that expresses some of our key hopes as a Christian community. This part of the consultation process is open till July 15. I encourage parish and diocesan groups, large or small, to take part. This is a time for young and old to be open to visions and dreams.

May God bless us all.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Bird CSsR".

Paul Bird CSsR

Bishop of Ballarat