



BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD TOGETHER – OUR JOURNEY

SYNOD PAPERS – 22 MAY 2021

A photograph of a man with glasses, wearing a blue clerical shirt and a black jacket, sitting in a wooden church pew. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background shows the interior of a church with large, multi-paned windows and a cross on the wall.

Foreword

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you for continuing to listen to the voice of the Spirit for both our Diocesan Synod and the Plenary Council.

I appreciate the discernment that has taken place during Lent with the Five Foundation Papers that formed part of the Contemplative Dialogue process of *Building the Kingdom of God Together – Our Journey*.

These Synod Papers come from many years of listening and dialogue. It is my hope that the recommendations will provide us with a framework from being a community of missionary disciples to journeying together to Building the Kingdom of God.

Many of you have joined me on my reflection days and have imagined with me what a Church that goes forth looks like. It is my hope that the Holy Spirit will inspire us as we gather on the weekend of the feast of Pentecost as a diocesan community across the six hubs for our second session of Synod.

And yet I am reminded of the words of Pope Francis that an evangelising community gets involved in people's daily lives with patient expectation. Evangelisation consists mostly of patience. I trust we will be a community filled with the joy of the Gospel when we gather.

A handwritten signature in black ink, preceded by a small cross symbol.

Most Reverend William Wright
Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

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Introduction to the Synod Papers

We are pleased to invite you to further immerse yourself in our diocesan Synod. In this Second Session we will consider a Spiritual Framework for *Building the Kingdom of God together in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle*.

During Lent, the community was invited to reflect on what we heard in the First Session of Synod and the First Stage of the Plenary Council. We were invited to discern what and how the Spirit is calling us to *Build the Kingdom of God Together*.

Our discernment was guided by the contemplative dialogue process as we considered the Five Foundation Framework of our Diocese:

- ▶ Identity and Community
- ▶ Worship and Prayer
- ▶ Formation and Education
- ▶ Mission and Outreach
- ▶ Leadership and Structure.

Feedback was considered by the Synod Working Party and distilled into the Five Foundation Synod Papers. Each contains:

- ▶ a summary paragraph of responses
- ▶ our Story
- ▶ foundational statements
- ▶ recommendations for Synod.

If you believe further additions, deletions, or modifications need to be made, please complete the electronic form on our website www.domnsynod.com.au.

A member of the Synod Working Party may contact you to discuss your proposal.

Synod Members will be given the opportunity to vote on these proposals at Synod and on each of the individual Foundation Papers.

The Five Foundation Synod Papers, together with the Synodal Directory, and its associated documentation (Appendix A to E) form the Synod Papers. It is important that you read all the documents in the Synod Papers as they provide the information and processes for Session Two of our Synod on the 22 May 2021.

The discernment leading up to and during Session Two will result in the Spiritual Framework for the pastoral direction for our Diocese. It will inform the “how” or actions that will be presented to the Third Session. If accepted, they will become our Diocese’s way of acknowledging and actioning the *sensus fidelium* of our community. They will be our guide in Building the Kingdom of God together in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Thank you for your continued effort to listen to the Spirit and your commitment to this most important work as we journey together to Build the Kingdom of God in our Diocese.

Diocesan Synod Hub Locations

In planning for Session Two on Saturday 22 May, consideration has been given to COVID-19 restrictions. The Diocesan Synod will be held in six multimodal hubs.

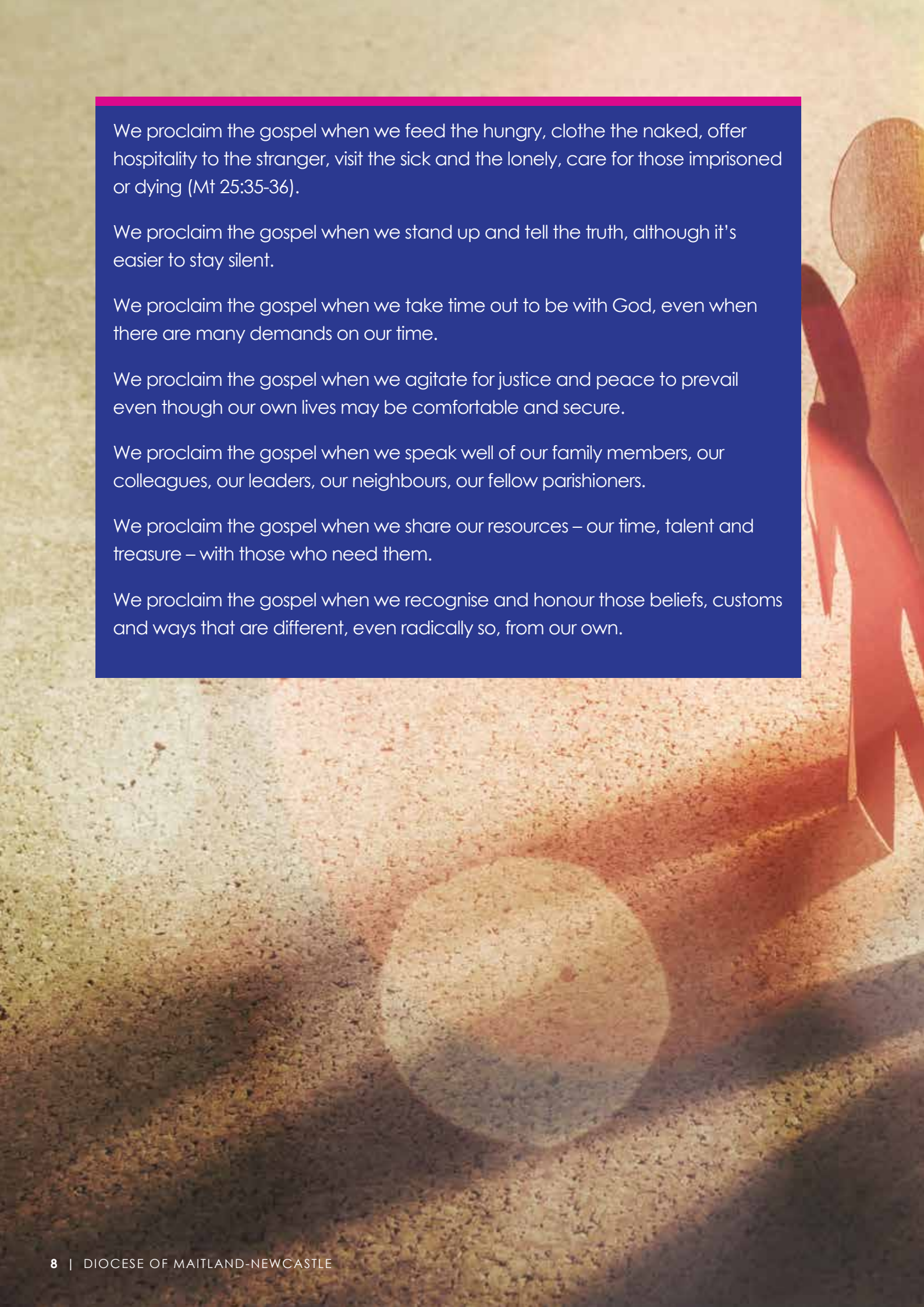
- ▶ **Hub Central** – Victor Peters Suite/Diocesan Rooms, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle West
- ▶ **Hub 1** – San Clemente High School, 78 Havelock St, Mayfield
- ▶ **Hub 2** – St Paul's College, Primrose St, Booragul
- ▶ **Hub 3** – All Saints' College – St Mary's, 16 Grant St, Maitland
- ▶ **Hub 4** – St Joseph's High, Segenhoe St, Aberdeen
- ▶ **Hub 5** – St Clare's High, Davis St, Taree

Diocesan Synod Members have been allocated to each of the six hubs to ensure even distribution.

Agenda Program

| Time | Agenda Item | Process/Who |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8.15am | Registration | Gathering |
| 8.45am | Acknowledgement of Country Prayer Opening of Session Two of Synod | Video Synod Liturgy Team Bishop Bill / Facilitators |
| 9.30am | Identity and Community | Process |
| 10.30am | Morning Tea | |
| 11.00am | Worship and Prayer | Process |
| 12.00pm | Formation and Education | Process |
| 1.00pm | Lunch | |
| 1.45pm | Mission and Outreach | Process |
| 2.45pm | Leadership and Structure | Process |
| 3.45pm | Break | |
| 4.00pm | Reflection from Theologians (five minutes each) Reflection from Canon Lawyer (five minutes) Reflection from Bishop Bill (five minutes) Where to from here? Preparation for Session Three Prayer | Theologians Canon Lawyer Bishop Bill Facilitators |
| 5.15pm | Finish | |

Notes:



We proclaim the gospel when we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, offer hospitality to the stranger, visit the sick and the lonely, care for those imprisoned or dying (Mt 25:35-36).

We proclaim the gospel when we stand up and tell the truth, although it's easier to stay silent.

We proclaim the gospel when we take time out to be with God, even when there are many demands on our time.

We proclaim the gospel when we agitate for justice and peace to prevail even though our own lives may be comfortable and secure.

We proclaim the gospel when we speak well of our family members, our colleagues, our leaders, our neighbours, our fellow parishioners.

We proclaim the gospel when we share our resources – our time, talent and treasure – with those who need them.

We proclaim the gospel when we recognise and honour those beliefs, customs and ways that are different, even radically so, from our own.

Foundation 1:

Identity and Community

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and our Synod Listening and Dialogue emphasised the hope that we as a diocesan Church would be recognised not as a powerful institution, but as a community of Jesus' missionary disciples, prioritising mission over maintenance, reflecting the gospel values of justice, compassion, forgiveness, peace, equality, and freedom.

Respondents recognised the need for all of us to build relationships with God, others, self, and creation, to honour and value each person and their gifts, respect our differences, face our prejudices, and value others without judgment.

We need to explore new models of community, open to the needs of all: the elderly, the poor, young people, newcomers, singles, those with a disability, the marginalised, the vulnerable and those at risk, single parents, divorced/remarried people, refugees and asylum seekers, those of other cultures, of different faiths, survivors of sexual abuse, those of different sexual orientation, the disconnected, the disillusioned, the confused and those with whom we disagree.

Our Story

Watch the Visual Liturgy at:

www.domnsynod.com.au/building-the-kingdom

On the day of Pentecost, 3,000 became disciples of Jesus, evangelised by the few on whom the Holy Spirit first descended.

They remained faithful to the apostles' teaching, to the communal life, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers. The whole group was united, heart and soul, gladly and generously sharing all.

They grew and developed beyond their Jewish roots, assuming a separate identity as "the Way" and as "Christians". "See how these Christians love one another!"

The early Christian community gathered around those whom Jesus had gathered around himself.

They "remembered" what Jesus said and did, passing on their treasured encounters with the God-man who had invited them to think, speak, and act like him in relating to God and to one another.

By word and example Jesus had taught them to be lovers always, motivated by the love of God.

They were to be known for loving enemies, turning the other cheek, endlessly forgiving!

Such radical, counter-intuitive behaviour identified a community as founded by Christ. Animated by Christ's continuing presence through the Holy Spirit it was destined to flourish.

Today, the Church of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is the local gathering of the global Catholic Church in the Hunter-Manning. Here we encounter Christ as his beloved friends and disciples. Here we seek to grow our relationship with him and one another.

It is the community from which we reach out to share the good news of God's saving love to all and to serve the coming of God's reign in the world.

We are Catholic Christians, belonging to the community of word and sacrament in continuity with the first Christians, including strong women of influence like Mary, Priscilla, and Lydia.

We share with the first disciples the essential elements that defined them. We are faithful to the legacy of the Apostles, handed on under the leadership of their successor, our Bishop.

We seek equality and unity as children in God's family. We seek to love God faithfully, and to love others in practical service. We seek justice, mercy, and love, especially for the poor and marginalised.

We are called to be a community of "intentional disciples" who know the Lord well and warmly, who seek to follow him out of love and make him known and loved by others.

As humans we are imperfect in our attempts to be united heart and soul, to live together in harmony and to share our resources.

To the extent that we succeed, we identify ourselves as Christ followers. It is important that we as a Diocese, all of us, remember the criminal conduct, the terrible things that were done here and the failures that allowed them to go on. But there are ways of remembering, ways of caring for survivors and ways of ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable people, which help keep us committed, and make us get better as a Church through which we contribute to a better society.

Foundational Statements

We are a people of faith, “intentional disciples” of Jesus, entrusted with a mission by God – the mission of proclaiming the Good News of God’s love.

The church comes to be as the church engages in mission – as it realises that its mission is the very mission of God: to go into the world and be God’s saving, healing, challenging presence ... The church is not about the church. It is about what Jesus called the reign of God. (Stephen Bevans SVD, *The Mission has a Church*)

Take ... a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. (Pope Paul VI, *Proclaiming the Gospel*, 21)

We are called to be a welcoming, listening Church for all, attending to wounds of hurt and rejection, poor with the poor.

Love is our foundation and our destiny. It is where we come from and where we’re headed. (Richard Rohr OFM)

Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved, and forgiven. (Pope Francis, Jun 2013)

[Christians should welcome others] without classifying them on the basis of social condition, language, race, culture, religion ... mercy is that way of acting, that style, with which we try to include others in our life, avoiding closing up into ourselves and into our selfish securities. (Pope Francis on Twitter, Nov 2016)

There is a sense that we are still coming to terms with the depth of the hurt and trauma of the victims and survivors of sexual abuse, along with the distressing shock that ripples throughout the whole Church. There is a great demand to acknowledge this pain and trauma, own the consequences of this dark chapter in our story and respond with courage, humility, and tenderness. (Plenary Council Thematic Paper 2019)

We are a people who respect and support the diversity of roles and functions in the community, while maintaining the equality of each individual before God.

Diversity is valuing difference because it makes a difference: we see more when there are more of us seeing. (Margaret J Wheatley, *Who Do We Choose To Be?* 2017)

I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel* 49)

... the Church as a community of faith can never outgrow its need for conversion to greater authenticity in its faith and action. (The *Light from the Southern Cross Report 2020*, p25)

Recommendations To The Synod

1. RELATIONSHIPS

IC 1.1 That with Jesus Christ at the heart of everything, we prioritise and support whatever enables people to grow in their relationship with God, self, each other, and creation.

IC 1.2 That we strengthen our parishes and organisations so they become centres of prayer, joy, hope and service to their own members and the wider community.

2. COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

IC 2.1 That priority in our Diocese be given to building life-giving communities that reflect God's love for us and the words of Jesus: "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full."

IC 2.2 That as Catholics we grow in our identity as missionary disciples.

IC 2.3 That families be affirmed, honoured, and supported in their role in society and in the Church.

3. WELCOMING

IC 3.1 That in our parishes and organisations we review our culture, behaviour, and attitudes, to create places of inclusivity and welcome that resonate with our Australian context.

4. LISTENING

IC 4.1 That in this time of a change of an era, we all endeavour to listen and discern with the ear of the heart, open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through scripture, prayer, and story.

IC 4.2 That we seek to be open to listening and responding to the voice of those outside our experience and culture without bias or agenda, even when it is unsettling and requires us to reach out.

5. DIVERSITY OF GIFTS

IC 5.1 That we embrace and celebrate the diversity of God's gifts within our communities.

IC 5.2 That we endeavour to build a "discernment of gifts" culture by encouraging all adults and children to explore and discern their gifts and utilise them for the good of the whole community.

6. SMALL COMMUNITIES


IC 6.1 That parish communities be encouraged to develop a renewed vision of parish as a community of communities.

IC 6.2 That we encourage our Church communities to support the creation of small groups of faith and life.

IC 6.3 That we investigate and learn from the experiences of our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Acknowledgement of authorship of this paper by the Discernment of Data Focus Group, the Identity and Community Focus Team and the Synod Working Party.)

Notes:



The family gathering is often a highlight – a summit – of family life, particularly if a milestone is being celebrated – and a source of greater unity and harmony.

When a family gathers, the host/s will have taken time to plan and prepare. Some guests will also prepare a contribution while others may have to travel a distance or care for children or elderly family members and just getting there will be their contribution! Each guest will be welcomed and there may be references to why the gathering's being held and what's happened since the last gathering ... **It's a kind of family Introductory Rite.**

There are sure to be apologies – I forgot to bring ... I'm late, I meant to tell you Josh broke his leg and won't be able to do stairs ... **It's a kind of family Penitential Rite.**

There will be storytelling, and some of the stories will be new and some will be comfortingly familiar. Family members who have died will be recalled lovingly ... **It's a kind of family Liturgy of the Word.**

When it's mealtime, the collective shopping/ menu planning/cooking /table setting/ serving will all come together in a joyous, maybe raucous banquet – the kind you'd hate to miss ... **It's a kind of family Liturgy of the Eucharist.**

Before guests depart and the host begins restoring order, there will be reflections, thanksgiving and resolutions to do it all again – soon! **It's a kind of family Concluding Rite.**

Foundation 2:

Worship and Prayer

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and our Synod Listening and Dialogue spoke of the need to deepen our relationship with God, our understanding of the Eucharist, and our commitment to the mission to which the Eucharist sends us.

Respondents expressed concern about falling Mass attendance, about the language of the Liturgy, about the need for engaging homilies that speak to the lives of those listening, and about preparation for and celebration of the sacraments.

Some expressed the need for more contemporary and less structured gatherings for prayer and worship that would give people the opportunity to share their faith and life experiences and to address social concerns and national tragedies.

Some recognised the advantages that, in today's lifestyles, coming to Mass can be a challenge for families, shift workers and the elderly. Could we look for a different response, for example using technology, to create experiences to enrich faith experiences?

Our Story

The community of disciples born of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost remained faithful to “the prayers”. They went as a body to the Temple every day, worshipping God in continuity with their heritage. The Psalms rang out in their hearts in synagogue and temple worship, just as they had for Jesus.

Those who had walked with Jesus in Galilee witnessed to their experience of him at prayer. They had observed Jesus communing with his Father, often seeking solitude for this intimacy.

Jesus had taught them how to pray. He invited them in childlike simplicity to boldly and confidently approach Abba, our Father, asking God to reign in our world and provide for our needs.

These eyewitnesses told how Jesus prayed for his Father’s guidance and strength when facing difficulties and at critical junctures in his ministry. This was reflected in the practice of the infant Church that prayed as a community when confronting challenges and discerning new pathways.

The eyewitnesses related how Jesus did mighty works of healing. The early Christians therefore invoked the name of Jesus confidently, calling on him to work through them to heal.

Most distinctively of all, the first Christians met in their homes for the breaking of bread. “Do this in memory of me,” Jesus had said. Feeding with earthly sustenance was accompanied by the meal of Christ’s Body and Blood.

Like the two disciples at Emmaus, “they recognised him in the breaking of bread”. At the heart of their celebration was the unity and love that Jesus had prayed for at the last supper when he gave himself in the humble service of washing feet and in the Eucharist.

Today, prayer still unites us with God as individuals and as Diocese, and with one another in Christ. The heart of our union is the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life”. As Catholics in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle we gather at our parish Mass to celebrate the Lord’s Day.

Christ is present in word and action, in the very community he gathers around him, and in the Priest who presides, in the proclamation of the Word that sustains us and in the Eucharist that nourishes us.

We go from Mass taking all we have celebrated into our lives, and the love of God to our encounters.

As it was in Apostolic times, we celebrate birth into our Catholic Christian community. Immersion into the life of God and the life of the community is celebrated in the Sacrament of Baptism. Infants are welcomed and cherished. Adults are embraced.

The baptised are confirmed in Christian faith and fully initiated into the community of Christ’s disciples in the Eucharistic meal. Here they have access to the fullness of sacramental blessings bestowed by our gracious Lord.

As well as our sacramental and liturgical celebrations, there are within our Diocese opportunities to commune with God in the intimacy of solitude, and in the embrace of community.

Eucharistic adoration, rosary, charismatic gatherings, Zoom prayer meetings and lectio divina are but some of the devotions enriching the lives of individuals and faith communities.

Foundational Statements

We gather in community – to pray, to break open the Word, to celebrate, to encourage and support one another, to mourn our losses, to be nourished and strengthened for mission.

In the face of so many wounds that hurt us and could lead to a hardness of heart, we are called to dive into the sea of prayer, which is the sea of the boundless love of God, in order to experience his tenderness. (Pope Francis on Twitter)

Miracles happen. But prayer is needed! Prayer that is courageous, struggling and persevering, not prayer that is a mere formality. (Pope Francis on Twitter)

You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. That's how prayer works. (Pope Francis on Twitter)

We believe that our mission finds its source and summit in the Eucharist (*Lumen Gentium 11*). When lived in everyday life and celebrated in the liturgy, the Eucharist is the living symbol of Christ's life, death and resurrection and celebrates the deepest identity of the Church as a communion of life, love, and truth.

When you hear "The body of Christ" you reply "Amen". Be a member of Christ's body, then, so that your "Amen" may ring true. (From a homily by St Augustine)

We seldom notice how each day is a holy place/ Where the Eucharist of the ordinary happens/ Transforming our broken fragments/ Into an eternal continuity that keeps us. (John O'Donohue, *A Book of Blessings*, 2007)

The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open ... This is especially true of the sacrament, which is itself "the door": Baptism. The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak. (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 47)

We know that life has a sacramental dimension and that our sacramental rituals are moments of deeper communion with the God who created us for love.

We human beings need signs and symbols to express what cannot be expressed in words. (Thomas Groome, *What Makes Us Catholic: The Sacramental Principle*, 2012).

Catholic Christians tend to associate sacramentality too exclusively with what happens in Church, with the celebration of the seven sacraments ... the great sacraments are simply climactic celebrations of the sacramentality of life ... (Ibid)

... all the sacraments are symbolised by the "ordinary" of life, by bread, wine, water, oil, touch, words, gestures, and lovemaking in marriage. Each symbolises something profoundly everyday that by the power of God's Spirit continues the saving mission of Jesus. (Ibid)

We know that as a country, we are diminished without prayerful inclusion of First Australians.

You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others. (Pope John Paul II, 1986)

Recommendations To The Synod

1. PRAYER, CONTEMPLATION, CONVERSION

WP 1.1: That the Diocese develops and provides new formal and informal liturgical and prayerful experiences, to help people pray in their daily lives.

WP 1.2: That space and experiences for silence, meditation, contemplation, and mindfulness be promoted and encouraged.

WP 1.3 That formation be given in listening to and discerning the voice of the Spirit.

2. CELEBRATION OF EUCHARIST

WP 2.1 That we deepen our shared understanding of Christ's presence in the Assembly, the Presider, Scripture, and the Eucharist and the way in which this animates our Christian service.

WP 2.2 That we acknowledge and encourage the active involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Spirituality and different cultures in liturgy.

3. HOMILIES AND REFLECTIONS

WP 3.1 That homilists be encouraged to reflect with their parishioners on Sunday readings as they apply to the daily life and culture of their community.

WP 3.2 That lay men and women be trained and formed to provide scriptural reflections in various liturgical settings.

4. GATHERINGS OTHER THAN MASS

WP 4.1 That meaningful and interactive opportunities be provided for people to gather for fellowship, prayer, and worship.

WP 4.2 That communal prayer opportunities, in times of significance – bushfires, floods, droughts, war, grief, pandemic – connect our faith, social action, and life experiences.

WP 4.3 That the Diocese continues to form, and commission lay people to lead a variety of liturgical experiences.

WP 4.4 That the Diocese explores ways of utilising existing technology for those who are unable to attend Mass.

5. SACRAMENTS:

WP 5.1 That at small community level there be meaningful engagement with families who present their children for the Sacraments of Initiation.

WP 5.2 That there be a concerted effort to help people further their understanding of the Sacraments.

WP 5.3 That the Third Rite of Reconciliation be regularly available.

WP 5.4 That the Diocese commissions capable and suitably trained lay people as lay liturgical leaders in the rites of baptism, marriage, and funerals.

(Acknowledgement of authorship of this paper by the Discernment of Data Focus Group, the Worship and Prayer Focus Team, members of the Diocesan Liturgy Council and the Synod Working Party.)

Notes:



Foundation 3:

Formation and Education

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and our Synod Listening and Dialogue recognised that while the faith formation of children has been a priority, many Catholics have had little or no ongoing faith formation since leaving school.

While faith formation opportunities are available in the Diocese, few access them. There were calls for a Faith Formation Centre with adequate resources of finance and personnel to provide face-to-face and online formation opportunities in a wide range of topics for a wide range of people appropriate to their stage of faith development and their life circumstances.

Respondents expressed concerns about the role of our Catholic schools, the formation of staff and parents, and the need for better communication and collaboration between school and parish communities.

The process of selection and training of candidates for the priesthood and the enculturation of overseas priests were also issues of concern.

The intention of formation for mission is to enable

- deeper relationship with God, church, self, other, creation
- greater engagement between individuals' lives marked by "accompaniment" in the service of others
- a culture of dialogue
- stronger commitment to the ministry of teaching and parenting
- a deeper call into missionary discipleship.

A FRAMEWORK FOR FORMATION FOR MISSION, NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

Our Story

Watch the Visual Liturgy at:

www.domnsynod.com.au/building-the-kingdom

On the day of Pentecost, visitors to Jerusalem were gripped by a life-changing experience.

They heard Peter and the apostles preaching that a crucified Jesus had been raised to life.

Many were convinced by Peter's witness, accepted what he taught, and were baptised. They were immersed in a community in which they would learn to know, love, and follow Jesus Christ.

Guided by the Holy Spirit they found Christ, the Wisdom of God, foretold in their scriptures.

They came to know him in a new way, which upended presumptions about power and success.

They discovered a suffering messiah to whom they would cling for his promise of fullness of life.

As Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit reminded the disciples of his words and deeds. They were able to grasp their full significance, and to pass on this wisdom to the community being formed.

The Lord's counter-cultural Beatitudes; his admonitions to turn one's cheek; to love enemies; to forgive seventy times seven; to welcome sinners; to wash feet; to embrace crosses; to die in order to live – all these now yielded their true wisdom and formed new hearts and lifestyles.

Knowing the crucified and Risen Jesus as God's wisdom, power and love enabled them to embrace him in personal relationship, and then make him known to others.

The Holy Spirit enlightened and formed the infant Church as they grew in the Lord, discerning their evolving identity and their mission to take the knowledge of Jesus to the world.

Today, through the same Holy Spirit, we too learn to know Jesus who, in all he said and did as a human being, revealed the fullness of God's faithful love. When we ask, "What must we do?" we likewise are told to see things in a different way and to immerse ourselves in Jesus.

Today, our local Church, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, forms and teaches us as she proclaims Jesus as Son of God, the second person of the Trinity who was made man, who died and rose again to save us from sin and for the fullness of life with God.

Our Diocese teaches the doctrines that relate to Christ and to his Church, and the practices and behaviours appropriate to Christ's followers. More importantly, it provides the formation that makes us one with Jesus as disciples eager to share the good news of God's love.

Our celebration of the Eucharist is at the core of forming us in Christ. We come to know him in the Scriptures. We are formed most profoundly as we participate in the Last Supper, Calvary, and the Resurrection. We are formed most intimately as we receive Jesus in Holy Communion.

Our Diocese provides children with holistic education in a thriving school system and a growing pre-school network. Age-appropriate formation in Christ is fundamental within this endeavour.

State School catechesis and Sacramental Programs provide a Christian education for some children. The Diocese supports parents to be the first and best teachers in the ways of the faith.

For adults, faith formation courses and learning experiences are provided at diocesan level along with learning and formation initiatives in small groups within parishes.

In every instance the goal is to produce Catholic Christian disciples who are well-informed about their faith and well formed in Christ.

Foundational Statements

We believe formation in faith is an essential and life-long process and the heritage and responsibility of every Christian.

Formation (and not just information) ... is not for a select few, but for the faithful generally. As Church, we need to give priority to this. (Br Peter Carroll FMS, 14 Jul 2020)

For lay leaders assuming leadership for governance roles in the Church, especially for those whose expertise has been primarily in the commercial world, formation is needed to ensure a comprehensive understanding is acquired of the nature of the Church and the servant leadership required for service within the Church, either as an employee or as a member of a board. (*The Light from the Southern Cross*, p89).

Children and young people grow in awareness of themselves and search for meaning and purpose in their lives and in the world around them. Children begin this journey enabled by the nurturing love of parents and families. (*Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools*, 2017, p5)

We understand that formation for mission is respectful, experiential and relevant, building on participants' personal stories and everyday realities.

The questions of our people, their suffering, their struggles, their dreams, their trials and their worries, all possess a ... value that we cannot ignore if we want to take the principle of the incarnation seriously. Their wondering helps us to wonder, their questions question us. (Pope Francis, Sep 2015).

Unless we train ministers capable of warming people's hearts, of walking with them in the night, of dialoguing with their hopes and disappointments, of mending their brokenness, what hope can we have for our present and future journey? (Pope Francis, Jul 2013)

When [formation] brings faith into dialogue with life it has the capacity to be a source of wisdom, a stimulus to lifelong learning, a means to personal transformation and a call to missionary discipleship. (*Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools – National Catholic Education Commission*, 2017, p5).

We are nourished and inspired by formation that is scripturally rich and ecclesially grounded, and deepens our relationship with Jesus, the living Word of God.

It is absolutely necessary for us to take into account the heritage of faith that the Church has the duty of preserving and presenting it to the people of our time in a way that is as understandable and persuasive as possible. (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 3)

For the Catholic school to achieve its objectives, it needs people who are committed to this faith-filled vision, confident in their understanding of the Christian faith as it comes to expression in the Catholic tradition and eager to do their best to help their students grow in their own understanding of the presence of God at work in their lives. (*A Framework for Formation for Mission in Catholic Education – National Catholic Education Commission*, 2017, p3)

Recommendations To The Synod

1. BETTER FAITH FORMATION

FE 1.1 That parish communities and diocesan agencies give priority to formation aimed at encouraging and enabling all to understand and participate in the life and mission of the Church.

FE 1.2 That the Diocese provides opportunities for a wide range of people to be accompanied in their faith formation in ways that are appropriate to their life circumstances and their stage of faith development.

FE 1.3 That a network of formation teams be established across the Diocese to encourage, communicate, and promote available faith formation opportunities.

2. CAREFUL, WELL-PLANNED PROGRAMS

FE 2.1 That research be carried out and a report prepared to determine what future face-to-face and online opportunities the Diocese could finance and support.

FE 2.2 That diocesan ministries and agencies collaborate to create, adopt, or adapt programs for specific groups that are invitational, accessible, Christ-centred, theologically sound and connected to contemporary life.

3. RESOURCES

FE 3.1 That priority be given by diocesan leadership to the establishment of a Diocesan Formation Centre and a dedicated, engaging, and attractive faith formation website.

FE 3.2 That effective communication methods be improved to ensure ongoing formation opportunities are well known and promoted.

4. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

FE 4.1 That the diocesan community at all levels, through dialogue and mutual support, develops a better understanding of the mission and goals of Catholic schools in the life of our Church in today's world.

FE 4.2 That dialogue at diocesan, parish and school levels includes consideration of the need for life-long faith formation, the role and needs of parents, carers, and teachers, the needs and safety of children, the nature of Religious Education programs and the need for effective communication.

5. FORMATION FOR PRIESTHOOD

FE 5.1 That women and men be involved in the selection of candidates for the priesthood, seminary formation and the review of their ongoing formation as disciples and ministers.

FE 5.2 That the initial and ongoing formation of priests prioritises servant leadership, collaborative ministry, and the dangers of clericalism.

FE 5.3 That initial and ongoing formation emphasises the role of culture, wholistic human development, healthy relationships, and sexuality in the Australian context.

(Acknowledgement of authorship of this paper by the Discernment of Data Focus Group, the Formation and Education Focus Team, members of the Adult Faith Formation Council and the Synod Working Party.)

Notes:



Sometimes, I speak of the Church as if it were a field hospital. It's true: there are many, many wounded!

So many people need their wounds healed! This is the mission of the Church: to heal the wounds of the heart, to open doors, to free people, to say that God is good, God forgives all, God is the Father, God is affectionate, God always waits for us ... we have to help and create organisations that help in this: yes, because the Lord gives us the gifts for this. But when we forget this mission, forget poverty, forget the apostolic zeal and instead, place our hope in these human means, the Church slowly slips into becoming a non-governmental organisation, it becomes a beautiful organisation: powerful, but not evangelical, because it lacks that spirit, that poverty, that power to heal.

POPE FRANCIS HOMILY, FEB 2015

Foundation 4:

Mission and Outreach

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and Synod Listening and Dialogue recognised the need for us as a Church to look at ways of raising awareness about significant social issues, of collaborating with other social justice-minded groups, of reaching out to the poor and needy, those suffering isolation, loneliness, discrimination and mental health issues, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, homeless people, people with a disability, gender diverse people, those of other cultures and faiths, as well as all families, young people, the elderly, and volunteers.

Some respondents called for our Church communities to be a more visible presence both at local level and diocesan level in addressing social issues such as the gap between rich and poor, the care for creation, the defence of human rights and religious freedom, and the physical and spiritual needs of those on the margins.

Some called for the need to recognise, support, and collaborate with Catholic health, aged-care, and social services organisations.

Our Story

Watch the Visual Liturgy at:

www.domnsynod.com.au/building-the-kingdom

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit thrust the apostles out of a small room. They evangelised, proclaiming Christ's death and resurrection, bringing many to discipleship in the new-born Christian community.

They kept on testifying to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, with the result that the numbers of men and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily.

One of their first acts addressed a scandal within. Certain widows were neglected and starving. The infant community reached out to them, appointing seven "deacons" to care for their needs.

Two of the seven are reported immediately on mission, unable to be constrained to table service. They boldly and effectively declared the message near and far. Philip "proclaimed the Good News in every town as far as Caesarea". "The word of God continued to spread and to gain followers."

Peter, compelled by the Holy Spirit, preached to pagans – the Roman centurion, Cornelius, and his household – and had them baptised in the name of Jesus Christ.

Paul, tireless apostle to the gentiles, dominated the mission of the early church. "Woe to me if I do not tell the good news," and he would say: "The love of Christ compels me." His missionary outreach extended to Rome. The commission to make disciples of all the nations was symbolically fulfilled.

God's mission of love was embodied in his Son. Jesus' mission to all is embodied in his Church.

The coming of Christ's Church to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the Hunter and the Manning 200 years ago was not the good news Christ would have it be. Dispossession and dehumanising were the norm. Little effort was made to evangelise or reach out in a humane or Christian way.

With the passing of time, outreach in charity and justice has been the prominent face of mission. It found expression in the corporal works of mercy, in educating the poor, and caring for the sick and suffering. It was an evangelisation based on actions speaking louder than words.

Today, our Diocese evangelises through the good works of the St Vincent de Paul Society; through outreach to the needy by CatholicCare; through care of the sick, the elderly, the dying, in hospitals, nursing homes and hospice. It evangelises through chaplaincies to seafarers and prisoners.

Perhaps most effective is the evangelisation by those who live their faith attractively in everyday encounters and dare to personally accompany seekers on their journey. Good listening, along with words and deeds of understanding, acceptance, and affirmation, are Good News to those in need.

Evangelisation is a work of attraction. It draws people to Jesus the way he did – by compelling personal integrity and caring manner, by a vision of wholeness matching the longings of the heart. Joyful and grateful disciples can bring others to Jesus in the embrace of his community.

Foundational Statements

We regard every individual as having equal dignity and worth and because we believe the Spirit is at work throughout the world, we respect those whose beliefs differ from our own.

If I encounter a person sleeping outdoors on a cold night, I can view him or her as an annoyance ... a problem for politicians to sort out, or even a piece of refuse cluttering a public space. Or I can respond with faith and charity and see in this person a human being with a dignity identical to my own ... an image of God. (Pope Francis, *Rejoice and Be Glad* 98).

Christ has no body now on Earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world. Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which he is to bless his people. (St Teresa of Avila, 1515-1582) .

We acknowledge and seek to be enriched by the history and wisdom of Indigenous peoples while acknowledging that reconciliation for past injustices remains a goal rather than an achievement.

The Church in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others. (Pope John Paul II speaking to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory in 1986)

To achieve an authentic Catholic Church in Australia, the gifts of perseverance, culture and spirituality of First Nations Catholics should be fully embraced. This goal can be achieved through education, participation in decision making and a comprehensive commitment to fostering mutual respect between First Nations and non-Indigenous Catholics. (*The Light from the Southern Cross*, p74)

Because we believe the Spirit is at work throughout the world, we respect those whose beliefs differ from our own, and seek to deepen our bonds with them.

The pluralism and the diversity of religions, colour, sex, race, and language are willed by God in his wisdom, through which he created human beings. (From a document on human fraternity signed by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb)

The strength of what unites all of us as Christians is supremely important. We can be so attentive to what divides us that at times we no longer appreciate or value what unites us. (Pope Francis, *Beloved Amazon* 108)

As co-creators we are called to be stewards who nurture, share and are responsible for God's gifts.

Given the state of our planet, given the climate change we already experience, given the devastating loss of species, given the terrible burden of ecological disaster on the poorest people of Earth, I think Pope Francis's *Laudato si'* may well be the most important church document of the twenty-first century. (Denis Edwards, *Deep Incarnation: God's Redemptive Suffering with Creatures*, 2019, p128)

Recommendations To The Synod

PUTTING GOSPEL VALUES IN ACTION

MO 1.1 That any missionary or outreach activity be grounded in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and the desire to build genuine relationships within our communities.

MO 1.2 That evangelisation be given priority through setting a vision and broad strategy within our Diocese, appropriately resourced with funds and personnel.

SOCIAL ISSUES

COLLABORATION

MO 2.1 That in the spirit of the vision of Many Parts One Body One Mission we explore ways to create localised collaborative hubs that would provide a holistic caring response to social needs.

MO 2.2 That national and diocesan structures research and advocate on matters of social justice, working in dialogue with others across society as well as with all parts of the Church.

CARE OF CREATION

MO 2.3 That our diocesan community undertakes actions that demonstrate our commitment to integral ecology and ecological conversion as articulated in *Laudato si'* and other Catholic social teaching.

MO 2.4 That across the Diocese we connect with community environmental groups and participate in activities supporting education, research, and advocacy around the environment.

MO 2.5 That the Diocese reviews our environmental footprint and impact with a view to educating, reporting, improving, leading, and modelling.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

MO 3.1 That our Diocese listens to and embraces the spiritual, ecological, and cultural wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

MO 3.2 That our Diocese, in consultation and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministry and the wider community, commits to developing tangible mechanisms to embed their rich culture and spirituality in the life of the Church.

THOSE OF OTHER CULTURES

MO 3.3 That we acknowledge, welcome, support and embrace the various cultural groups that make up our local Catholic Church.

MO 3.4 That our communities create mutual authentic opportunities for the sharing of cultures.

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

MO 3.5 That we continue to resource and support the work and outreach of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Council and that parishes are encouraged to connect with other Christian denominations and Faith traditions in their local areas.

MO 3.6 That we collaborate and stand in solidarity with other faith traditions on social issues.

MISSION TO YOUNG AND OLD

MO 3.7 That we engage with young people, recognising the gifts they bring and together reimagine the Church's ministry to them.

MO 3.8 That parishes be places where the young and the old are welcomed, accompanied, encouraged to lead, supported, and embraced to feel valued and wanted.

MO 3.9 That initiatives to animate the young and the old, provided in other dioceses, communities, and other faith groups be explored.

PEOPLE ON THE MARGINS

MO 3.10 That parishes and the agencies of the Diocese embrace the teachings of Pope Francis regarding those on the periphery.

CATHOLIC HEALTH, AGED-CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

MO 4.1 That the Diocese appreciates the vital contribution of Catholic health, aged-care and social services and commits itself to supporting their work.

MO 4.2 That all parts of the Diocese deepen their dialogue with each other to ensure all work together and celebrate service to the community, love of God, love of neighbour, generosity of spirit and justice.

COMMUNICATIONS

MO 5.1 That our tools of communicating internally and externally seek to promote God's mission through the good works of the Church.

MO 5.2 That we tell stories of our mission and outreach through a variety of mediums to effectively promote the quality outcomes of various services in our Diocese – community, education, health, social services, early childhood, aged-care.

(Acknowledgement of authorship of this paper by the Discernment of Data Focus Group, the Mission and Outreach Focus Team, members of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Council, the Social Justice Council, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministry Group and the Synod Working Party.)

Notes:

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." MATTHEW 20:25-28



Foundation 5:

Leadership and Structure

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and our Synod Listening and Dialogue recognised the need at all levels for servant leaders who are open to conversion, renewal, and reform. In particular, respondents called for renewed leadership, reformed governance, accountability, and transparency.

They want leaders who demonstrate dialogue, discernment, accountability, humility, inclusivity, transparency, and effective communication.

Respondents want a Church whose members work collaboratively and co-responsibly to address the pastoral needs of Australian Catholics and the broader society.

They want a Church whose members actively support those who are on the periphery and provide stewardship of creation.

They also spoke of the need to address clericalism and institutionalism, the equal participation of women and just remuneration of lay ministers.

Many expressed gratitude and encouragement for our clergy. Indeed, some are recognised as role models of Christian life and leadership.

Respondents spoke of the need to address our personal and institutional failures and the resulting shame, loss of credibility and trust in our Church. They asked for recognition of what the Diocese continues to do to support victims and survivors.

Our Story

Watch the Visual Liturgy at:

www.domnsynod.com.au/building-the-kingdom

Peter is to the fore on the day of Pentecost. The other apostles were “with him” as he proclaimed the Good News boldly and taught with authority in Jesus’ name, calling the crowd to repentance.

Peter had earlier taken the lead to ensure the integrity of “the Twelve” in God’s new structure. He initiated the prayer and the process for electing Matthias to replace Judas as witness to Jesus.

“The Twelve” saw to the commissioning of “the Seven” to meet a need identified by members of the community, the neglect of certain widows. They called a full meeting of “the disciples” and put their proposal, which “the whole assembly” approved and enacted to benefit the growing organism.

Peter, the Rock, and the other apostles are affirmed in their leadership and authority in the first community. All disciples, the whole assembly of the infant Church, are actively involved in Church life and closely united with their leaders in prayer, discernment, decision making and practice.

Paul established structured communities in the localities he evangelised. Women leaders, Lydia and Priscilla, feature in this story. Legitimate teaching authority was a prime concern for the late-comer “Apostle”. He appointed leaders to pass on what he had passed to them, the teaching he had received.

Paul himself deferred to the authority of the founding Church community. He travelled to Jerusalem to submit an account of his teaching and practice concerning admission of pagans to the Church. He was welcomed by the Jerusalem community and gave an account of what God had done through him. Some strongly opposed him. The outcome Paul sought was supported by Peter, ruled on by James, concurred with by “the whole Church” and “decided by the Holy Spirit and by ourselves”.

Peter had earlier given the apostles and “the brothers” an account of his boldness in baptising Roman pagans. His “point-by-point” details of the Holy Spirit’s intervention convinced the community of the rightness of his course of action. They could only defer to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Leaders at the service of mission and community featured prominently in the early Church.

Equally characteristic was prayerful communal discernment resulting in consensus decisions on major issues that determined the future direction of the Church.

The people of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are successors and inheritors of the first Christians.

We have heard the Good News of the Father’s love for us and have taken it to heart. We have united with Jesus and all who are one with him through Baptism. We live out our faith in communal and personal prayer, and through communal and personal service to one another and our society.

We have a variety of ministries and roles, and a variety of talents and charisms, all contributing to the building up of our unity in faith and love as members of Christ’s Body.

As Christ’s community we are not dominated by, but served by, those appointed to ministry. We are not dictated to but are led to discern together (*Sensus Fidelium*) the way of Christ into the future.

Our Bishop has surrounded himself with consultative forums, such as the Council for Mission and the Council of Priests, which enable him and us to identify and address issues concerning the life and mission of our local Church. All of us together, immersed in the life of God through baptism into our Church community, are inspired and endowed to share in the mission to all humanity which Jesus received from his Father.

Foundational Statements

We seek to discover the signs of God's presence and purpose in our world. This includes being open to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church through the hearts and minds of God's people.

Our world needs to be healed not only of the present virus, but also of the social ills of inequality, injustice and exclusion that afflict so many of our brothers and sisters in the human family. (Pope Francis, 30 Sep 2020)

I am conscious of the effort and work being carried out in various parts of the world to come up with the necessary means to ensure the safety and protection of the integrity of children and of vulnerable adults ... Together with those efforts, every one of the baptised should feel involved in the ecclesial and social change that we so greatly need. This change calls for a personal and communal conversion that makes us see things as the Lord does. (Pope Francis, Letter to the People of God, Aug 2018)

Clericalism flourishes in contexts where the lay faithful are excluded or marginalised and adopt a posture of subservience. (*The Light from the Southern Cross*, p65)

We see leadership as a ministry of service, emulating the servant leadership of Christ.

The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them ... It must not be so among you for whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve ... (Mt 20:25-28)

Since the primary responsibility of all governing bodies in the Church is to nourish and serve the mission of the whole community, those who exercise authority in the Church must always be open to a deeper conversion to the grace of the Holy Spirit. (*Light from the Southern Cross*, p31)

The shepherd has the ability to go in front of the flock to show the way, stay in the middle of the flock to see what happens within, and also be at the rear of the flock to make sure that no one is left behind. (Pope Francis, Sep 2019)

Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path? If you don't ask those questions, your governance will not be good. (Pope Francis, We Need You, in Washington DC, 26 Sep 2013)

We welcome Pope Francis' insistent call for a synodal Church that involves the whole People of God in its life and mission.

In the light of Christ's teaching, we have seen the importance of solidarity, subsidiarity, and respect for human dignity for the shaping of a society in accord with the values of God's Kingdom, a society that gives priority to its poorest and most vulnerable members, and to the responsible stewardship of the goods of creation. (Pope Francis, 30 Sep 2020)

...we need to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church. Because the feminine genius is needed in all expressions in the life of society, the presence of women must also be guaranteed in the workplace and in the various other settings where important decisions are made, both in the Church and in social structures. (Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel 103)

We embrace the principle of subsidiarity: involvement and decision making belong as close as possible to those the decision affects.

The Synod process begins by listening to the people of God ... according to a principle dear to the Church of the first millennium: what touches all should be considered and approved by all. (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium Light to the Nations 12)

To emerge better from a crisis, the principle of subsidiarity must be enacted, respecting the autonomy and the capacity to take initiative that everyone has, especially the least ... this principle allows everyone to assume his or her own role for the healing and destiny of society ... (Pope Francis, General Audience, 23 Sep 2020)

We seek to arrive at decisions that all can accept gracefully and support wholeheartedly – even if some wish the decision had been different – because they know the group honestly searched together for the Spirit of God in and for the life of the community.

Discernment of the Spirit ... listens to others so as to learn, is sensitive to all approaches, encourages collaboration rather than competition and aims not at majority vote but consensus. It recognises that each participant has a part of the truth and a share of the wisdom by reason of each one's unique experience of God in life, union with Christ, and gifts of the Spirit. (Archbishop F Carroll, Canberra-Goulburn Synod, 1989)

How can we know if something comes from the Holy Spirit? The only way is through discernment, which calls for something more than intelligence or common sense. When we seek to develop it through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel, then surely, we will grow in this spiritual endowment. (Pope Francis, Rejoice and Be Glad 166)

We accept individual and communal responsibility for our decisions and actions, our personal gifts, and the gifts of creation.

Stewardship is integral to the mission of the Church; it is a fundamental tenet of the Church's spirituality. Stewardship does not suggest "ownership" but a responsibility for service that aims to nurture a gift from another, from the God who initiates the relationship of friendship with humanity. (*The Light from the Southern Cross*, p2)

Contemporary standards of good governance require that the Church's structures and practices of governance are more accountable, more transparent, more meaningfully consultative, and more participatory, including at the diocesan and parish level. (*The Light from the Southern Cross*, p50)

Recommendations To The Synod

CHANGE/TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURE

LS 1.1 That the Diocese develop leadership and governance principles and guidelines that reflect our listening and dialogue processes, scripture, tradition, and teachings of the Church.

LS 1.2 That these principles and guidelines acknowledge and affirm women's participation in leadership, decision making and ministry.

LS 1.3 That the principles and guidelines reflect the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and those on the periphery.

LS 1.4 That the principles and guidelines recognise the interconnection of all living things and foster stewardship of the creation.

LS 1.5 That the principles and guidelines direct cultural change, spiritual reform, and formation and training for leadership.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

LS 2.1 That a commitment to reform of leadership and governance adopts the principles of synodality, dialogue, discernment, accountability, humility, inclusivity, transparency, and effective communication.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

LS 3.1 That the Diocese acknowledges and affirms the innate dignity and equality of women by virtue of their baptism and their right to participate in leadership, decision making and ministry.

FORMATION OF LEADERS

LS 4.1 That formation programs be implemented for lay and clerical leaders, consistent with the principles and guidelines for renewed leadership, reformed governance, accountability, and transparency.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

LS 5.1 That leadership and governance be externally audited and reported annually.

LS 5.2 That all management structures be reviewed and reformed in accordance with diocesan governance principles and guidelines.

LS 5.3 That guidelines for parish governance and management be developed in line with diocesan principles and guidelines.

LS 5.4 That a robust feedback and appeals process be established.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARISHES

LS 6.1 That relationships between parishes and all aspects of diocesan life be reviewed and reformed.

SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE ROYAL COMMISSION

LS 7.1 That we accept and honour the findings and recommendations of the royal commission.

LS 7.2 That diocesan structures are founded on service to the people of God.

LS 7.3 That the diocesan community acknowledges the great damage done by sexual abuse and cover-up, seeks reconciliation and healing, and commits to keeping people safe.

BRINGING THE CHURCH INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

LS 8.1 That the Diocese, its agencies, and ministries engage in open dialogue regarding the positive points and challenges of our modern secular age.

LS 8.2 That the Diocese deals with contemporary issues from a Christ-centred empathic perspective, openness to a plurality of views and new ways to educate and explain Church teaching.

LS 8.3 That the Diocese be open to better community engagement practices.

PLENARY COUNCIL PROCESS

LS 9.1 That the Synod process inform our responses to the Plenary Council.

(Acknowledgement of authorship of this paper by the Discernment of Data Focus Group, Leadership and Structure Focus Team, members of the Governance Guiding Principles and Documentation Focus Group and the Synod Working Party.)

Notes:

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