

## **Our Lady of the Southern Cross Plenary Council Session, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**In attendance were 38 Parishioners representing all ages and cultures in our parish.**

**Headings are relevant to the main topics discussed.**

### **Youth/Children**

- Engage our youth in programs that speak their language
- Create more open opportunities for youth from different churches to meet and fellowship.
- More open approach to modern day praise and worship to draw in more youth to church.
- Bring back general celebrations for World Youth Day!
- REVIVE THE YOUTH
- Begin programs for more young adults to learn how to become Youth Ministers
- Give the Youth more vocal recognition in future investments of the Church.
- More opportunities for the Youth.
- Making Catholic School fees less expensive so more children brought up in the faith can attend.
- Youth programs to capture their attention – Future Church
- Education for older parishioners to connect with the Youth of Parish
- Word not changed in the Mass – how do we bring in Youth
- Investing money for young children (sport, languages)
- Ministering the young
- Catholic Schools impart the faith to students as an important subject
- Our youth is our future church: they see a church run by ‘old’ detached men from overseas in another country
- Set a solid foundation of faith at all Catholic Schools
- Youth engagement and formation in the parish

### **Evangelisation/Faith formation**

- Creating more programs like Alpha for Church communities and Catholic education.
- Parish Revival and Missionary Church
- Outward focused; Make disciples; ways and methods; Equip
- The Church must grow and spread out its boundaries. How?
- On-going faith formation of children, youth, adults of different age groups.
- To Continuation of Catechism – after communion – all community
- All parishes should have an alpha program
- Our Church must not dilute the word of God as a way of bring members into the church
- To make it easier for people from other denominations to change to Catholicism
- Bring awareness of God into people’s lives
- Evangelization – to spread his Good News to others by using the Alpha program
- Giving opportunities to ‘outsiders’ to experience a transformational encounter with the Holy Spirit

### **Welcoming Culture/Community**

- Welcome EVERYONE... regardless of their faith.
- Create a greater connection and relevance with the broader community
- Engage in the wider community.
- Acceptance of everyone and anyone who wants to join the church!
- Culture – helping sinners
- Unity with other Christian denominations so as to be an “ethical” voice in the community
- A great community where everyone feels they belong, loved and heard
- Calling all Catholics back to Church to speak up
- Church as welcoming
- A welcoming Church to all
- Churches to be welcoming to everyone, without diluting the word of God

### **Inclusivity/Equality**

- Solidarity – People of same belief but different religion will come together as one.
- Reconcile & Evangelise with the Jewish People in Peace as the Gentiles were to remain Gentiles so the Jews are to be Jews.
- How do we as a church go after the Lost Sheep, including all especially same sex couples?
- Embrace lepers of today – LBGTIQ, Divorcees, etc, etc
- Stop making his LBGTQIA+ Children run from and hate Him
- Seek the lost
- Greater awareness and responsibility in the Churches preaching to individuals. E.g. So it is not increasing depression and suicide
- Why does the Church make you feel so alone and not included when you live in a suburb that is not a part of the catchment area.
- How does the Church help those who feel marginalised more welcomed and encouraged.
- Love and respect for all people regardless of personal choices and circumstances
- Equality of opportunity for all people
- Listen attentively to what people are speaking, especially the one has no voice in the church
- Uniting Church – seeks to support lay organisations and projects; embrace everyone and not force their beliefs

### **Transparency/Accountability**

- Clericalism is addressed and solved
- The question makes me think of how Adam, who hid from God after partaking of the forbidden fruit must have said to Eve: ‘What is God asking me this time?’ Who formulated this question must be in the same situation.
- Be accountable to the community for its activities and spending
- Change culture

### **Relevance/Modernity/Social Justice**

- Teach Catholic Sacraments in simpler terms and teach how they apply to everyday life.
- Spread GOD'S Message through social MEDIA.
- Aim to be relevant to the millennials who are exposed to social media every day.
- Church in Australia be more relevant to current times and strategies to the future generation.
- How to make the Church relevant to people
- Social Justice issues
- Meaningful Church – meaning in our everyday lives
- Invest in local community 'Hubs' – places where people can be introduced to Jesus, Places that make church relevant in people's lives
- Be more vocal on social issues without fear
- The church to stand up and speak against social issues which are contrary to God's laws. E.g. abortion
- Engaging Church – engages the parishioners at 'Grass roots level'
- Relevant Church - relates to parishioners' everyday lives and experiences
- Using relevant communication tools i.e. Social Media
- Renewal

### **Family/Relationships**

- Being a good example to others. Start in your own backyard. What example do you exemplify in your family, with your friends and with people around you!
- Heal broken relationships
- That priests, bishops will make time to pay family visits to their parishioners, to be their shepherd and know them outside the boundaries of the parish and Sunday Mass time.
- Instil in young people the holiness and dignity of the body, the proper attitude to sexuality and also chastity
- Promoting the gospel – values on the dignity of life, marriage and family.
- Family base formations
- Church not moving with the times: They have not moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century in their decision making around many family issues

### **Love/Community**

- Peace in all that we do...
- Continue providing a place of faith and love and community
- Ask not what God can do for you, ask what you can do for your God
- Personal Challenge – What can I do myself?
- More compassion
- A safe Church

- Love of God and love of one another lie as the core of every traditional religion. Love not only permeates those religions, it transcends them and binds them together. Divine love embraces everyone and everything.
- We need to be more forgiving and love one another
- Speak humbly to the people; be present with people
- Engage to other people of other faiths
- I think God is asking of us in Australia at this time to Love, not just Love but a more ordered love. “Orderly Love” “Intentional”

### Jesus Centred

- Return to the belief of the early Church. Jesus and God is who we follow. The church is the vessel to get there but the church is not to be worshipped as Paul would not let sacrifices be made to him, so the Church must be a servant.
- The leaders of the church have assumed the position of Pharisees in Jesus’ times. The leaders of the Church are to be the Humblest Servants and not Assume Righteousness. As the Pharisees knew Jesus and what was right they wanted the power and so the current leaders are to humble
- We are to follow the early believers and go back to the simple Principal. Traditions that do not specifically demonstrate the basic way to Christ should be changed/removed!
- God is asking us what he has always asked us: Love god and love your neighbour. Love is selfless and is to focus on the other. Traditions should be kept and respected if they enhance this. Church should also be open to ideas and movements as long as again this is based on the “True Loving”. There is no ‘I’ in love.
- To consider for a moment who are as the Catholic Church, and what defines us as being part of the religion. My interpretation is that our religion of Christianity was found in the basis of love, which as the main teaching Jesus preached differently from the other religions, and is what truly defines who we are as Catholics. I think God is calling us to remain true to our Catholic Sentiment, and to continue to serve everyone around us, but to always keep in mind that we serve people, not to fulfil their selfish desires, but in the hopes that we may spread the goodness and convince them to serve others out of love too.
- A church that looks more like Jesus!
- To be less Roman, and to be more Catholic. To transform from a religion into the Catholic Church of Christ.
- Witness to Jesus “Christ as Centre”
- Spread the Good News. As a Catholic Church we’ve stopped speaking to people about Jesus.’
- God is asking us to ‘mobilise’ Get moving, collaborate with all Christian denominations to bring people to Jesus
- Jesus to be a central focus on all activities at church

### Mass/Worship

- No really slow songs, 5-10 min homilies
- The Holy Spirit is asking “The Bride of Christ” (the Church) to return and live faithfully!
- Trust more in the Intercession of Mary, Our Mother

### Outreach/Charity

- Protection and voice for those in need
- Assist members of its community, faith and other
- How to make the Church more involved with the poor and vulnerable part of society?
- The church is out there
- Invest more in serving the poor and homeless in our church communities
- Commitment of Church to the homeless and poor
- Kindness and assistance to families struggling and helping the poor and homeless
- helping talented people who struggle with health
- Helping people where there is war, (and in) poor countries

### Leadership

- Growing; equipping the baptised in leadership and utilising their talents
- Parish leadership is a team of which a Priest is a member
- Leadership training fund for parishes to encourage study for laity
- That parishes form leadership teams to support Priests and avoid isolation of Priests.
- Why not the church be more apostolic rather than ministerial in its approach to the flock!  
Lay flatten the hierarchy!
- Empowering Lay Leaders – Grow – Nourish – support. Vocation of Lay leadership
- Raise more leaders amongst the parish
- Radical changes – look at the structure of the Church – leadership in the Church; Church as a building; how do we look at Church’s mission; formation of the laity

### Women

- Women in leadership roles in our Church
- Let the Voices of women be heard in worship, in leadership and in decision making
- That women be admitted to greater decision making bodies to advise leaders.
- Women’s voices are heard and appreciated in our Church
- How is the church helping mothers of the church today? We are the trees who bear fruit for the future of our church. E.g. women’s group.
- Allow women to be priests
- Inequality in the sexes – Equality is what they want, but they do not allow women to play important roles in the church such as female priests

### **Priestly Life**

- Promotion of awareness and discernment to the priestly and religious life, especially support from Parish and parents.
- Proper training for priests not only on spirituality, scriptures but also the human side of the person
- Decline in Priesthood or priesthood formation
- Allow our priests a choice to be celibate or to have a wife and family

### **Financial structure**

- Vatican is supposedly financial. Do they assist poor parishes? Why do we need to pay back monies lent to us to build our church, lent by Archdiocese?
- That the Church provide money to parishes to pay a just wage to suitably qualified people.
- God is asking us to identify that our way of life in Australia is underpinned by Christian Values – Health access for all; education for all; a welfare system as a safety net – exemplifies the relevance of the Church in our lives.

## Summaries from Small Group Discussions

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Public Apology
- Inclusive Church (Sinners, women, non-believers)
- Discipleship/ Love
- Revive the Youth
- Relevant
- Engaging
- Meaningful
- Uniting
- Family & marriage
- Emphasizing the human relationship with and between people (i.e. youth, lost, LGBTQIA+) for the sake of something greater – bringing people to Christ and the Gospel
- How to make our church be more inviting/relevant inclusive to the marginalised/ outsiders (i.e. LGBT, ex-offenders, divorcees, etc)
- Leaders of the church to be humble and to communicate and listen to the people. Do not talk down to us
- To evangelize all people, from children to adults including other faiths to a welcoming, Christ centred community
- Catechism – Continue after communion for children. Also education for parents and greater community – ongoing knowledge. How do we encourage the youth to come and stay (presentation)
- Unity among all Christian denominations and other faiths.
- To be more inclusive to the marginalised, to be welcoming, show more passion and listen attentively to people of Australia with one voice.
- Relevance to the greater community including – gender equality in leadership, current social needs, poverty etc.