

Diocesan Synod - Celebration Responses



Building a Kingdom of God Together

Saturday 23rd November 2019
Diocesan Office and
Sacred Heart Cathedral

Diocesan Synod - Celebration Responses



MISSIONARY AND
EVANGELISING

Missionary and Evangelising

As disciples of Christ, what needs to happen in our hearts and in our minds and in our community for us to be a Christ-centred Church that is missionary and evangelising?

- What needs to happen in our hearts and minds and in our community for us to be a Christ-centred Church that is Missionary and Evangelising?
- Recall and live the final words at the Eucharist – “Go out and live the Gospel by your life”. Our life is our prayer
- Evangelisation and Mission - Pope Francis talks of “Facilitators”, “Tariffs” and “guards”. What does he mean?
- Catholicism should not be only for the “privileged few” who can afford a Catholic education. We should put our resources into evangelising in SRE too
- To be a Christ-centred church, we need to keep the sanctity and reverence at the centre of our celebrations. We also need to be more welcoming of newcomers. We also need to be open to change for our church to grow
- All that comes from God is a gift, rather than a right or reward, but must go with responsibility
- Personal change first. “Bloom where you are planted”
- The desire and need for a conversion of heart and mind to be more attentive to (joyfully) share what I receive
- Mission is God
- To recognise that we always stand on Holy Ground, wherever or whomever we are with; that God’s grace is evident and at work in everyone
- Eucharist must be lived: sharing the Love, companion of Jesus
- God is a gift for everyone. What are we doing to ensure that all humankind see His beauty and grace as a gift
- Missionary --> go out there --> flag our love of Jesus to those who wish to receive
- Be welcoming face, compassionate hands
- Celebrate goodness in the world where we see it
- To become an evangelist is filled with joy
- In our minds and hearts and community, we need to move forward with hope, without blame, and without judgement
- An evangelising community is filled with joy as part of our daily concern to spread goodness

Missionary and Evangelising

- Welcoming, life-giving showing God's presence in the world, centering from Eucharist and then going out into the world
- As disciples of Christ, what needs to happen .. for us to be a Christ-centred church that is missionary, etc, is to be happy people who are conscious of the gifts we have been given, that looks beyond itself, to be welcoming to everyone
- Going together. Keeping holy the Sabbath Day. Be attentive to God's word The gift of God unites past, present and future. Be accepting of all people
- We need to change the culture of our people - We need motivation by inclusion of accepted expectations – members of organisations/clubs have agreed expectations when they join – do we?
- Welcoming, Inclusive, Caring, Expressive
- As a disciple of Christ, we need self-transformation
- A change of heart and mind to focus more on God's love that is faithful, constant, and unconditional. His grace is encompassing – He is our Creator, Saviour and friend, and this is the good news that we should share to everyone
- Institutional church changes - expressing genuine as opposed to legalistic apology for all the abuse and lack of compassion, this is a huge block that is not going away
- Be open, Inclusive, accepting
- Christ has been taken out of Catholic Care, St Vincent de Paul / now Vinnies, Catholic Schools. Organisations employ a lot of non-Catholics
- The church needs to address the reality that many of the Sacraments have little practical result in, or relationship to discipleship. Specifically, we need to address infant Baptism and Confirmation
- Witness:
 - Allow faithful to use their gifts in their own way
 - Remember that love is central
 - Eucharist is meaningful for us all
 - Live our lives and parish lives in faith and love
 - Only God can judge
 - We may never know how effective or not we are
- Strengthen and affirm what is already present:
 - this is the Body of Christ
 - You are the Body of Christ
 - Be the Body of Christ

Missionary and Evangelising

- Proclaim the message of mercy -compassion and forgiveness at our Eucharist, then. Go out and live that in the world
- Listen – reach out – be the face of Christ in the World embodying Love, Joy, Hope
- We feel that not all aspects of the church's life bear witness to our relationship to Christ and the Spirit, eg, when our family members of other faith persuasions are not encouraged to receive the Eucharist at a funeral or Nuptial Mass
- If we are to believe the dogma of the Eucharist, the explanation of the function of the Eucharist should be more often talked about
- To help people know their own gifts and to give them the opportunities to use them
- Missionary – The church to be attentive to the changes in times in order to fulfil our own Eucharistic graces
- Look outside ourselves – to others. Be missionary – welcome all (eg Communion). How do we feel about welcoming all to Communion – not discriminate
- We need to be more welcoming
- The Diocese has a “business” presence in Catholic Care, pre-schools, schools (labelled as Catholic, so a little different) and Aged Care. Is part of evangelising saying that we do this as God's mission (to show love to the world)? We seem to be Government-funded generic 'helpers'. Is this our mission?
- Eucharist must be lived – sharing the love and compassion of Jesus. God is a gift for everyone. What are we doing to ensure that all humankind see his beauty and grace as a gift. All that comes from God is a gift rather than a right or reward but go with responsibility
- Widen the understanding of 'What is Mission and Evangelising' within the church – clergy and laity – much more than only one solution or answer
- How do we become more open, humble and missionary (mission is the good news of God's love incarnated in the witness of a community for the sake of the world) to those not present today
 - Families
 - Young adults
 - the missing generations
- Families are the cell of society and the heartland of the church. Supporting children, young people in public schools

Missionary and Evangelising

- Participatory, welcoming
- We, the church, need to look at ourselves
- Redemptive love
- Life and everything is a gift from God
- Our diocesan community needs to develop humility and own its brokenness and incompleteness through/by welcoming all into the presence of Eucharist, especially its children who are fully graced and pilgrims in their own right
- Open our hearts and minds to welcome people to our community
- Parish conversion – how can this be achieved?
- Outreach to our Catholic schools, teachers and parents. How can we reach the generation which has walked away from the church?
- The basic challenge: The need to encounter Jesus to know that we are loved. How do we get our communities to understand this?
- The need for formation of the faithful in understanding Eucharist and the formation of all ministers of Eucharist
- Need for parishes to move from maintenance to mission
- The love of the “holy friendship with Jesus” is basic to our longing for Jesus in Eucharist
- We need to be more welcoming and accepting
- Looking out – not just inward
- We are called to be missionaries in our own parish community
- We need to make God available to people – spending time with people in dialogue
- Connect to local community – environmental, local park, etc – make links with other groups

Missionary and Evangelising

- Formation
 - what is missionary
 - what is evangelisation
 - Formation in part of unlearning, learning, relearning
 - Formation of teachers/staff on how to mission/evangelise
 - There must be a welcoming/open accepting of people
- For us to be helped to appreciate more the richness of the Eucharist - a felt understanding of Fr Richard's handout "Eucharist and Mission" the distinction between the Eucharist which is celebrated and Holy Communion.
- Learn to be attentive to God present:
 - To have a heart that is present to the world and open to the other's story
 - How I understand (define) being human, being redeemed
 - Grow in love as Jesus loves
 - Working with what is good in social society
 - New or other models of priestly ministry in the Christian community
- In school (high school) particularly to have R.E. teachers who are faith-filled (with) love for God and hope in God to pass on his word. Teachers should be living their lives for God. More Masses and liturgies at school. Speakers who can witness to the youth about their conversion to God
- We are prepared to have a look at ourselves and we are open to change
- We should go out and meet people
- Good liturgy needs - Good preaching and good music
- A celebration people feel inspired by
 - Liturgy
 - a weekly debrief
 - time to stop and think
- Listen with open minds to awaken to new ideas and to the real need of those in need, not my opinions (sic)
- Reach out
- Listen - e.g. form small groups, inviting (eg Passionist family/parish group) Have a heart that is open to other's stories, meet them where they are
- Be far more welcoming as Parish Communities
- Engage quality music in our liturgies
- Eucharist – thanksgiving. Look at who I am? What are my gifts (reflection)? Taking a step forward. Be brave. It's in the little things

Missionary and Evangelising

- Acceptance that God's power can effect reform of church. Being open to what works in other churches. Create / Recreate our parishes as attractive, joyful and authentic communities
- Action, not words – be practical. Be sensitive to the present reality. We'll never get it right or perfect. Mission is a journey, not an end
- Everyone needs to be a witness. Subsidiarity – local actioning in practice. We restrict people not to use their gifts – allow faithful to use their gifts. Focus on Gratitude and joy in our faith practice
- Act for justice according to Gospel values. Form an adult faith - resource adult faith development programs. Strengthen the Pastoral Placement Program in the Diocese
Join existing programs – e.g. Emmanuel Spiritual Formation Program – Adamstown Uniting Church
- Create a welcoming community. Share our individual gifts. Encourage and acknowledge others to do the same. Don't ever be discouraged. Be ecumenical. See others' needs – and do the deed

Diocesan Synod - Celebration Responses



INCLUSIVE, PARTICIPATORY
AND SYNODAL



Inclusive, participatory and synodal

As disciples of Christ, what needs to happen in our hearts and in our minds and in our community for us to be a Christ-centred Church that is inclusive, participatory and synodal?

- Need to reach out to disconnected (whatever the reason) eg parents of children in Catholic schools, teachers in Catholic schools
- Is it time to review current Parish Pastoral Council/ Parish Teams model?
- Need to address lack of connection between diocese and parishes eg no connection between Council For Mission and parish/parish councils
- Talk to other community groups about their mission statements, mottos and purpose
- Improving relationships and communications between the Diocese, parishes and congregations – be more open and transparent
- I believe the church needs to more transparent and open to change, Jesus would not want us to turn our back as regard to sex preferences
- If only we were brothers and sisters ...
 - A truly welcoming church
 - divorced people
 - priests who have married
 - young, refugees, poor
 - Priests
 - end clericalism
 - end celibacy
 - problem of cultural differences with overseas priests
 - Women
 - equal share in ministry
 - decision-making
 - deacons/priests
 - Gifts
 - encourage all to use their gifts – involvement of laity at all levels
- Priests need to be more spiritual
- What needs to happen in our hearts Church that is inclusive, participatory and synodal, a genuine commitment to making our church relevant, not rule-driven and following outdated edicts, e.g. criticising liturgy, let things change, listen to people and learn new ways, in a variety of areas

Inclusive, participatory and synodal

- In regards to what the church might look like and issues -
 - If we have married priests, is it fair on his/her family to be told to move due to Diocesan requirement and who will pay for the family upkeep
 - Is it fair if priest is called out and kids need them?
 - We need to address where we as “the church” stands in relation to Gay Movement and let the congregation know
- Listen –
 - to those still there
 - to those who have gone
 - to the youth still involved and how to attract others who are not there
 - to any group that need outreach (all cultural groups)
- Catholics must be more knowledgeable and discerning of the word of God – the Bible. We must engage children and young adults to become part of the “kingdom of God” ie – us. Any change must be consistent with what the Gospels, Apostles and Saints say. Not all-inclusiveness, or participation, is appropriate or morally correct
- Listen to the disillusioned Catholics who attend church, the 93% of Catholics in our diocese who no longer attend church, the “nones”, the secular and the atheists
- This church would not be structured around “ordination” but on discerning the call and gifts that all people (women, men, children) bring to the community, and supporting and encouraging these gifts to be used for the good of all
- When churches are open, put up a sign saying “Everyone is welcome to come in and pray, not only Catholics”
- Challenge – we need to change
 - we need to be more welcoming
 - unlearn exclusiveness, become inclusive
 - Listen
- Priests need to be more open to their parish community, going out to the locals as a group to speak and invite people to join us. Parents need to ask their children and grandchildren what they see the church as. Go out to the local community to include locals into our faith and participate in our faith journey
- Are the people of the church really open to change? Why do many see the church as a moral fortress rather than as a welcoming community of their own creation? We have gifted clericalism to the church ourselves at the expense of embracing ourselves and ignoring our own inclusion
- Change needs to start at the Vatican

Inclusive, participatory and synodal

- Lapsed Catholics need to hear they will be received with open arms and without judgement
- As community, we need to invite and share our desire for all to feel welcome to the church, to our church
 - It is for everyone
 - If all those parishioners went out and invited face-to-face people who feel they are not accepted, ie gay, divorced, indigenous, blameless, poor, the young and old, and accompany them to their church, the church as a whole would be richer, inclusive, participatory
- Christ-centred church is one that will be able to welcome all, - eg- the elderly, poor, different faiths, young, gay, single parents, where all feel they are values as people of God, ie no discrimination
- A Christ-centred church
 - should welcome everyone to share its Mass, there should not be exclusivity based on judgements
 - should have laity as well as religious making decisions about the future of the Church
- The parish church needs to re-embed itself in the community where it is based. It needs to address the realities of the lives of the parishioners from childhood to the grave, involving itself in their needs to be of service. More involvement with Primary school and the local church
- Recommendations from past Diocesan Assemblies should be implemented, especially paid training and careers for lay people in pastoral ministry
- Parish priests should not be able to override the will of the people – the Bishop should arbitrate where consensus can't be reached
- Leadership is crucial to our carrying back to parish the notion of inclusive, participation and synodal movement. Greater involvement of women is essential at every level of governance and leadership. Careful selection of priests and others for parish leadership is essential. The danger of clericalism is with us still.
- Need for many more small groups in the parish church community to address the needs of the community it sits in
- Welcome in the "other" in every respect
 - How culturally sensitive
 - Open the church to wonderfully divorced people

Inclusive, participatory and synodal

- Be inclusive of all people: divorced, gay, culturally diverse
 - Welcome back people who were told they were not allowed to receive communion
 - Allow married priests, women in clergy
 - Welcome all aspects of our community
- We need to change our attitudes
 - We need more inclusion in the community, parish, diocese and nationally
 - Ministry to include women, married men who had to leave their role as priests, and remove the role of celibacy in our priesthood (allow married priests)
 - So full inclusion of all people who have a calling to deacon or priest
- Listen to the Spirit of the Law, and be freed from the letter of the law
- The nexus between ordination – open to a tiny % of the people of God – and leadership based on the gospel needs to be abandoned – It's not working
- When consultations are to be, make it a consultation, not an imposition of ideas. People need to be informed and decisions made.
 - Can the clergy come to trust the lay people?
 - Or recognise the education of lay people today?
 - Or their call to more than administrative tasks?
- Our church needs to include women priests and deacons, divorced, homosexual laity in decision making, and to abandon "Catholic Church is the only one true church". Unity to all churches is imperative
- Like Jesus in the Gospels, we go out to all (we're all broken). Don't exclude but somehow embrace our brokenness/messiness
- Invite – Affirm – Celebrate Difference. Every well-intended action that is led by the Spirit is Life-Giving
- Open Pastoral Communication to all – it is totally important that there are many inclusive "Emmaus" journeys over our Synodal period. Leadership must of necessity be, Pastoral first and foremost. We are more than a business corporation
- Asking our young people to take an hour or two at school time to provide their input and perspective on what the church needs, that's relevance to our lives
- As a church, we need to be aware of a need for change; we have to want to change to open our hearts and minds to new possibilities and ways of thinking and undertaking God's work.
- How can people who ask questions do that in a better way so that others will be more inclined to listen to any wisdom in those questions?

Inclusive, participatory and synodal

- Governance of the church in the hands of the congregation
 - All sectors of society to be included
 - Women to have complete equality
- What about the laity having a say in governance?
- The church (us – cleric and laity) should be open to change. Accept people as they are – gay, divorced. Women priests and deacons part of our church.
- A church that has the vision of Francis – open and inclusive – ready for change
- Until we change the structures we have in our parishes, it is no use inviting young people because they won't come.
- The church needs to be more welcoming. Start small:
 - Say hello to other parishioners
 - Learn their names and include them in social activities
 - Try to introduce teenagers and young people in church
- Following the greatest commandment – Love God and love your neighbour
Synodality = accompaniment (primacy of Pastoral)
= participatory
= inclusivity
- Take down the barriers – gays, divorcees, other rules. Less formal setting, take out the pews and replace with chairs. More social justice and more good works.
- Openness to the Holy Spirit first, inviting the Spirit to change our minds and hearts when they need changing, so we do not impede the work of the Spirit, but rather embrace it.
- Loosen up the liturgical Norms, if we wish to welcome the broken and separated, what heals is more important than what conforms to the rules – eg music for funerals.
- Inclusive
 - welcome back divorcees, priests who left to be married
 - Ordain married men
 - Promote women to deacon and then to priests
- We have to have the heart and mind (of) Jesus to be the real church in this world. We have to care about the body of Christ, specially the wounded part of the body. Clericalism is a roadblock in the pilgrim journey
- Lay people should be able to participate in church life on all levels of decision-making. It hasn't been done before to the extent we are now asked to do. Ask lay people how they think – they can contribute on all levels of decision-making

Inclusive, participatory and synodal

- Heal wounds first, then check general health. Take the dualistic attitudes out of the church eg prayers that declare us unworthy, which deny the Baptismal status of the “in Christ”, baptised into Christ, and anointed by the Holy Spirit
- Transition is a changing thing, important to be relevant to our time, willingness to move to the needs of our time
- Do we really need a structural church, or a community of faithful? To be fully inclusive, participatory and synodal, women should be able to be deacons and priests
- Be a welcoming church – I should speak to people and say “hello”
 - Accepting differences
 - Culturally sensitive, disabled people, etc
 - Truly welcoming and meaning it
 - We need to be open to all, in our hearts
 - Examine in our hearts why things are, and how we can improve under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God
- Our church buildings should be reviewed to ensure that they are accessible to all
- Chaplains and churches should be identified for “fringe” members of our church formally – homeless, gay, divorced, disabled with weekly gatherings
- Active discernment into prejudices and self-perspective to move towards change
- Move with the times
- Open our church to all
- Move away from clericalism and authoritarianism of the clergy in parish
- We need to let go of what has been in the light of the institutional church's betrayal of the People of God (of Royal Commission) and find new models based firmly on the gospel
- Hope for an inclusive church - Transparency in everything
- Shift thinking on who we give value and authority to
 - Power to the people
 - Female priests, bishops, pope, deacons
 - Greater interfaith opportunities among Christian churches
 - Lay preachers
 - Communion for all the baptised
 - Acceptance of all community members
 - Greater evangelising presence in communities

Inclusive, participatory and synodal

- Actively go out to poor, disabled, LGBT, divorced, youth to “love they neighbour”
- How to restructure clergy's part in parish decision-making
- To be willing to discern the will of the Holy Spirit and brave enough to make changes that allow the church to be truly the sign and sacrament in God's mission to the world today
- We will be an inclusive and participatory church when we stop judging people and excluding on the basis of our judgements, and accept into our communities those who are
- All inclusive – no conditions on being/belonging to the people of God
 - Women to have role in governance, decision-making
 - Women deacons
 - Acknowledge *Sensus Fidei* – listen to the Holy Spirit in pilgrim peoples
 - More local decision-making
 - Invite all people to collaborate in renewal planning
 - Review priesthood – married priests
- Need to be more attractive eg attractive music.
- To reconsider a theology of love to allow the church to show the radical inclusivity that was demonstrated by Jesus in the gospels
- Are we culturally sensitive? Do we ask how we can be more inclusive?
- Participation in community service regardless of theological background
- People with Spirit are everywhere – we need to re-connect,
- Church needs to incorporate best management practices into the church structure
 - Priests/bishops should be evaluated
 - Identify “high performing” parishes and priests – share best practice
 - Need to measure “engagement” levels of parishioners (Hewitt survey used by 1000's of corporations)
 - Set goals and objectives for each parish/priest, publish and share these and then measure performance

Diocesan Synod - Celebration Responses



HUMBLE, HEALING AND
MERCIFUL



Humble, healing and merciful

As disciples of Christ, what needs to happen in our hearts and in our minds and in our community for us to be a Christ-centred Church that is humble, healing and merciful?

- Learning to be more self-reflective and self-aware. Know your own limitations
- Open acknowledgment by priests at Mass, of sexual abuse
- To encourage a sense of worth and belonging in everyone we encounter
- Allow the Third Rite of Reconciliation
- A "sorry statement" about sexual abuse from church hierarchy (National/Diocesan)
- Priestly formation to be open and pastoral to needs of community
- Ongoing and frequent liturgies of apology, forgiveness and mercy
- Educate and empower laity to become more active, and leaders in the church community
- National level: Admit women to role of deacon
- I have hope that we/I become an ember to light other fires
- Outreach to Catholics who no longer attend church
- Promote the church via networking eg TV, Christmas and Easter, Children's choirs etc
- Suggest that all leaders in the church are educated in emotional intelligence – constructive
- Let us earnestly entreat the Holy Spirit to increase the gift of healing in our church
- Formation program for permanent deacons in Australia/Maitland-Newcastle
- We need to be a deeply prayerful community church
- To take the opportunity to welcome and recognise the marginal, homeless, refugees, etc and work with the groups who are already doing this
- To be less judgemental, we need to listen to people's stories to know who they are and what is happening in their lives today and to know and understand their value and give them a place to belong
- Statements on parish billboards: "We are sorry for judging you. You are welcome here."



Humble, healing and merciful

- We can bear witness to Jesus' teaching of acceptance and outreach at individual level.
- Statement from national and diocesan church: "We are sorry we have judged and excluded you (eg gay, divorced, etc..) All are welcome here."
- Challenge (with love) the structures which restrict/limit/block mercy, humility and healing
 - Outreach to marginalised
 - Prayer community
 - Become involved in support groups

Diocesan Synod - Celebration Responses



**PRAYERFUL AND
EUCHARISTIC**

Prayerful and Eucharistic

As disciples of Christ, what needs to happen in our hearts and in our minds and in our community for us to be a Christ-centred Church that is prayerful and Eucharistic?

- Slow down
 - Listen – fall in love with God
 - Rule 101 – shut my mouth!
 - Demonstrate love listening
 - Do not interrupt God with noise
 - Reaching out, not in
 - Be seen as Body of Christ
- The importance of formation of ourselves, and then others, moving to the whole church community and hierarchy
- Time and mindfulness are essentials to establish a Grateful Relationship
Our culture eschews both Eucharist and Prayerfulness – particularly in our youth
WE don't often show love for ourselves- so much depression and suicide
We have also lost the skill to develop relationships with others and God – too “me” focused
- Engage in faith formation that includes
 - Head
 - Heart
 - Hands
 - Meet people where they are at – families/children
 - Receive Jesus joyfully, believe that Jesus is present in the Eucharist
- Live by positive example
 - Be Christ-like in our actions
 - Let the Holy Spirit do the work
 - Create opportunity and atmosphere to experience Jesus
 - Make Christ the centre of our lives
 - Be Christ-like - help others – don't ignore
- Teresa of Calcutta: we only recognise Jesus in the poor if we see Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Any grateful relationship requires both time and mindfulness. These are things our culture lacks, particularly our younger generations. This is an important area requiring formation. We need to learn from each other. “I wish my parish priest was here – he would learn a lot”
We need to focus less on the externals of our Faith and more on the values evident to those “on the outside” through our behaviours

Prayerful and Eucharistic

- Create atmospheres where “Aha” moments can happen, where people can have the opportunity to hear God. What formation can be held to bring people to gather?
- Unlearn – let go to reform in formation – more open to the Spirit of the Lord.
- Start with “self”
 - Become prayerful and eucharistic by adopting an “attitude of gratefulness”, seeing and celebrating the positives
 - Be a joyful people
 - Recognise Christ in self, others and be in love with self, neighbour and God
- Faithful Relationship – self/others/God
 - Have a prayerful attitude
 - Make the Spirit accessible to young people – unpack the meaning
 - Check for understanding - “Catholic jargon” can be a barrier to knowing/belonging for youth, English as second language, and converts
- Reach out to visitors, welcome warmly, invite. Pray for God's grace to work in us
Work together – families/schools/parishes – to teach the youth about the Mass
- Careful and well-planned formation
 - Parish formation for ministries/ministers
 - Delivery of formation – small groups, teachers
 - Adopt e-learning methods
 - Respect everyone
- Start with self-transformation in our relationship with God.
- Being welcoming, loving, caring, accepting, “check on your neighbour” – love your neighbour as yourself
- Facilitating others to be Prayerful and Eucharistic – help them learn
- Congratulations for the opening of the new café at the Sacred Heart Church today – I didn't know that we can take our food and enjoy them at God's House of Prayer – how sad
- Valuing the opportunity in renewing my own relationship with God from which will flow our relationships with others and God
- To be excited in anticipation for that one moment in time in receiving the Eucharist – Christ in Us
- To live a life of gratitude and love. Keep nurturing your relationship with God

Prayerful and Eucharistic

- For our church to encourage us to find time for contemplative prayer, to build our individual relationship with God
- Symptoms are about problems and what caused – addressing each of these cannot be solved:
 - Prayerful – everyone prays differently
 - Which scripture do you go to?
 - He endures, John's scripture about love – love yourself first, and then love your neighbour, but if you can't do this, you can't love God
 - Prayer is about a meaningful relationship
 - Eucharist is an awareness in ourselves, then it is thanksgiving. See Chapter 14 of St John and Paul's letter to the Corinthians
 - We need the knowledge in the heart and seek his presence in ourselves and in our relationships
 - We need to change ourselves
- Make time – go aside with the Lord – in the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle
- “Do this in remembrance of me, You are that living Eucharist and living temple of God”
“You are the church”
- The Catholic Church must make people aware of its teachings, beliefs and traditions so that Catholics have a foundation on which to base their faith. Base their relationship with Christ
- To better our prayerfulness we should consider removing collections from after communion. This would allow us to communicate with Jesus as we prepare to go out into the world each week to live our lives prayerfully and respectfully
- Unlearn, learning, re-learning
- Formation in prayer, retreat / workshop / missionary, casual get-togethers meal / gatherings after Mass which discusses homily / readings. Younger generation needs exposure to types of prayer in a welcoming environment.
- Is God “really” present in the Eucharist? Have we placed too much emphasis on this teaching? When I told the group of my disbelief they were shocked and wanted me to believe. Is it really that important/crucial?
- Individuals need to develop deeper appreciation of meaning of Prayer and Eucharist as relationship with God so that others can recognise Jesus in them.
- Within the context of wider being Prayerful and Eucharistic, it is important that those who have special ministries in “doing Eucharist” on Sundays, do these to the best of their abilities to make the liturgy meaningful
Important to realise that the Mass belongs to all of us, not just the Presider.

Prayerful and Eucharistic

- Formation
 - of the Spirit within us
 - in the sense of loving one another as disciples of Christ
 - how to understand more what the church teaches
- Stronger homilies at Mass, Children at school taught the catechism, Catholic teachers only in Catholic schools (Practising catholic teachers)
- Stronger formation toward true belief in the True Presence of Christ. This knowledge must lead to conversion of the heart and true love of neighbour as self
- Encourage retreats and formation in parishes:
 - Listening
 - Using our own gifts
 - Prayerful experiences
 - Encourage groups and other individuals
 - Cell groups
 - Individuals take initiative
 - Awareness of what's available on Social Media
- To honour and respect each other and their differences by seeing Christ in myself and each other. Welcoming Committee and to be more personally welcoming. Benefits of "cuppas" and conversations after Mass. Allowing conversations before Mass to allow a person to feel welcome and part of "Mass"
- The apostles asked Jesus to show them how to pray – the church needs to do the same thing (no single way alone). The meaning of the Eucharist must be emphasised
- The call to deepen my friendship with Christ
- Mission – children and parents – to involve them in church and school, Children past Year 3. All begins with us. Lead by example
- Great strengths in unity – we have to speak with a unified voice
- Liturgy that builds relationships between people
- Declutter our lives and minds. Make room for others and the care and concern for them
Encourage our young to live the gospel in their way
- Be comfortable in our relationship with God and love God, our neighbour and ourselves
- Invite lay people to present a homily – perhaps share their struggles in their faith lives

Prayerful and Eucharistic

- Details, "issues" are symptoms - underlying in each person
 1. loving and accepting yourself
to
 2. love and accept your neighbour
to
 3. love Godand thus seeing God/Christ in everyone including yourself.
How? Teaching self-love through prayer – "AHA"
- HOW: Recognising Christ in the Eucharist --> Teaching thanksgiving --> Teaching Self-love --> Teaching Humanity + living that teaching
- Bishop Greg spoke for ½ hour, but words were very powerful and authentic
As a primary school teacher, I agree that prayer and Prayerful Eucharist are central to my life and my vocation. Bishop Greg reminded us that Jesus prior to his death needed God "My God, my god, why have you abandoned me" – Jesus needed God and God needs us. We do have to find Jesus and build relationship with him. I loved the connection with Eucharist through the quote "Just (as) I am with you, you will be in me."
- To ensure our liturgies reflect the life, events, and other aspects of the community... One strategy, or platform to assist parishioners to be welcoming of the new would be to include an "experience sharing session" where someone is invited to share with the congregation some experience or story where God's blessing or help has been evident in their life. Such form of sharing will likely serve to 'chip away' at the "quiet (passive) Catholics." This will help the broader effort to celebrate Mass in a joyful way, and which will help us look more like we've been saved!

Diocesan Synod - Celebration Responses



**A JOYFUL, HOPE-FILLED AND
SERVANT COMMUNITY**



Joyful, hope-filled and servant community

As disciples of Christ, what needs to happen in our hearts and in our minds and in our community for us to be a Christ-centred Church that is joyful, hope-filled and servant community?

- Locally, make our services “joyful and hope-filled”
- Finding a way to allow interaction on the homily – either during or after Mass – will encourage service
- Connecting parishes to Catholic services to support parishes in their growth and change
- A national platform that allows people to connect with others of interest – projects; missionary services
- A national program of servant leadership for our emerging lay leaders
- Prepare resources for parishes to help them open up to others, be more welcoming and inclusive
- Focus on young people and empower them to lead the changes we need to rejuvenate the church
- Promote and extend Passionist Family Groups
- Focus on where our successes are, and how this was achieved, and use these successes to implement more changes along these lines/structures
- Alpha program – ecumenical
- Fellowship dinners to get to know each other
- Family groups – Passionist Fathers
- That our Diocesan community unite in practical achievable ways to communicate solidarity and practical ongoing support to rural Australians suffering drought
- Adopt principles and practices of models of successful businesses; they need to continually evolve to be successful, relevant and needed to their customers. Likewise, the Church needs to/is called to continually evolve to keep Christ relevant in the world.
- Parish assemblies – a call to ministry, sharing your gifts and talents – bi-annually
- Praise and worship sessions for young and for all
- No one person amongst us has all the answers, but the answers are amongst all of us working together
- Cells of evangelisation
- Tell the story of the reach and impact of our Catholic services – a celebratory doco that links us all up



Joyful, hope-filled and servant community

- People (who are good communicators) from Gary Christensen's department (CatholicCare Social Services) going to speak once a year at every Catholic parish at every Mass re works and volunteer possibilities, and offer to be there after Mass if someone would like to ask more (and leave a contact) just as we currently have a Catholic Mission Rep speaking – instead of a homily for the day
- Desperately we need to investigate Parish programs that are working to make Parish life more alive e.g. Family Groups (Passionist Model) or how to involve young people doing outreach in Catholic Schools (faith in action) to be part of Parish life
- Strongly promote Passionist Family groups throughout the diocese
- The joyful servanthood is to know Jesus personally and intimately and we become the exemplary Eucharist, in knowing, reaching and touching others' lives
- Introduce the Alpha program into Parishes
- ACYF for children under 14
- The need of the hour or at the moment we have two major Natural Disasters namely the drought and the bushfires. Our Catholic School Students should be made aware of doing the needful (?) for the people affected. Teachers, Parents and Students should be included in serving This may (bring) joy to the affected people:
 1. Supplying water bottles
 2. Supplying tents
 3. Food and clothing
 4. Some could pray for them
 5. Donating some financial support
 6. Sports. Games, Recreation
 7. Making aware with Skits and Play
- Meeting people where they're at...
- Assisting people in their sense of self belief, and confidence to identify their gifts given by God to contribute to the Faith Community's life and mission.
- That people will have the confidence to come forward to answer the call to service, if they are assured that their commitment is not open-ended; ie people need to know that their broader life commitments won't be compromised... ie people need the assurance of a structure for healthy joyful service that is supported, encouraged, and has an exit plan!

Diocesan Synod - Celebration Responses



**OPEN TO CONVERSION,
RENEWAL AND REFORM**

Open to conversion, renewal and reform

As disciples of Christ, what needs to happen in our hearts and in our minds and in our community for us to be a Christ-centred Church that is open to conversion, renewal and reform?

- Recognise the church as a pilgrim people rather than a power hierarchy or institution
Be genuinely open to the voices of others, new collaborations with wider community
Reading the signs of the times to attract new members
Make the gifts of women available and known to the church, female leaders
- De-institutionalise. Return to faith/gospel bound way of life
- Conversion/renewal/reform. Openness to change. Respond to "signs of the times"
Acknowledge "we are a pilgrim people"
- Promotion of groups within parishes where everyone is included (whether allowed to go to communion or not). Interaction with school/parish
- Groups within parishes where everyone is included
- Training for community development. Remove sexist language
- Collaborate to create a vision for the Church
Surrender traditional power hierarchies to the people
Create new structures that empower the community
Allow lay people more opportunities
Proclaim the word in the community
- Always begin with yourself – query what you think, say or do, and the real motives behind them. If you have a problem, you are the problem, and know that you are the solution
Here you will soon find discernment of what is right. Know that Christ is the very act of being itself in which we participate. What you do to others you do to me - Saul says why do you persecute me?
- Overcome influences of social change - both parents working. A church inclusive and sensitive to needs of women – gender equality in all leadership roles. More women deacons in a paid position – much better than any thoughts of married priests
- Promote interaction with school/parish/groups. Be more welcoming (to) new parishioners. Overcome influences of social changes supplying meals, visitation of families and newsletters - privacy

Open to conversion, renewal and reform

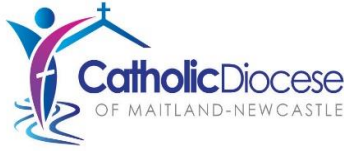
- Women deacons, after all women do a lot of sacramental actions in parish communities
- Become less enthralled by clericalism. Laity need to be involved in real decision making e.g. finances. Listen and act
- Local open days. More ecumenical sharing. Third rite of reconciliation, as some distanced Catholics may be nervous about personal confession
- To directly engage with disaffected members of the church through active listening
- Even something small can make a difference
- Voting in Plenary must be more balanced
Laity – 50%
Clergy – 50%
Major resolutions to be passed with 60% majority
- Parishes could hold an annual ritual/liturgy to celebrate conversion and repentance and commitment to Christian life
- Eucharist is a gift for everyone - divorced and re-married, attending Anglican or other Church and receive communion. Women's role in the Eucharist. Married priests and the Eucharist
- A church that is more inclusive and sensitive to the needs of women, so they can be respected and listened to, and a part of Church leadership
- A church that is more inclusive and sensitive to the needs of families, so families are respected and listened to
- Make sure there is affirmative action in all institution boards of equal gender.
- To be Christ-centred is to be like Christ
People who are merciful, loving, accepting
Change church rules to reflect acceptance of all – gay, marginalised, outcast
- In everyday living, be open to 'the other', by listening, respecting, learning, converting
- Church hierarchy needs to devolve power to a broader sense of Church
Voting needs to respect laity much more
- Laity 50%
- Clergy 50%
Resolutions 60% majority
- Continue with women leadership as experienced in the opening liturgy this morning

Open to conversion, renewal and reform

- Pope to appoint a woman cardinal
- Pope needs to take a risk in order to change the stance on married priests and women in ministry
- Be courageous, speak up against wrongs, needs
- Develop pathways to ministry. Fund pastoral lay ministries in local parishes
- We need not to be too hard on ourselves, accept praise
- Put the church back on its pilgrimage on mission by sorting the deeper issues from the peripheral/consequences
- Courage to say the Roman Catholic Church has not got the monopoly of God. Break the walls, we want a Church, not a prison, or a Museum
- Listen to others, to be open in mind/heart so as to unlearn attitudes/mentalities that prevent us connecting with others. To hear/heed the Gospels in ways that relate to the modern world. To directly engage with disaffected members of the church through active listening
- The Catholic Church (hierarchy) is on the verge of extinction in western society (-> museum). In order to survive, the church structure needs to allow women priests, bishops, cardinals, pope. It needs also permit married (male/female) priests, etc. Christianity will survive these times and the future, but Catholicism will die out if change does not come soon. Please listen
- Diocese should encourage and support Renewal Movements like Cursillo
- Change the culture of parishes from “we need” to “we have earned”, and not supply a priest or resources to a parish that continues to “exist”
- Create a system that enables the skill set of the priest and the specific needs (having identified strengths and weaknesses) of a parish to be closely matched. This should also include the possibility that a parish be lay-led or under an administrator
- Diocese should encourage the formation of small Faith Sharing Groups in the Parishes
- Our Group Summary:
 - Courage to speak like prophets
 - Courage to break the walls of the church's prison and museum
 - Courage to go back on our pilgrim journey
- Encourage and support Ecumenical/Interfaith initiatives.

Open to conversion, renewal and reform

- All of life is evolving so respect others for where they are in their path – be open and listen. Develop pathways to Ministry – finance and support pastoral/lay ministries. Allow married clergy. Recognise contribution of women and create pathways for increased pathways to decision-making. Make youth know they are needed
- Strong leadership in inviting people into an open exploration of the image of God/Christ out of which we live our lives
 - open Sunday homilies to other than ordained clergy
 - language of Liturgy needs to be reformed .. it presently portrays a very limited way of thinking about God
- Missionary and Evangelising
 - the saving of souls was never mentioned
 - change should not be advocated without reason
 - Eucharist not confirmed as the Body and Blood of Christ
- Unlearn judgemental God
Learn a God of Love offered to us in Eucharist, and
 - relearn
 - relearn
 - relearn!
- Involve as many people as possible in making liturgy and participating – relating our community worship to today's lives, suffering, hopes, etc. Work to build relationships
- More youth activities, e.g. at mass
- Keep on-going discussion within a parish to share experiences on your understanding and possible actions that lead to open conversion and renewal
- Interpret gospel readings as relevant guidance to today's problems
- We need to acknowledge what the church has failed to achieve in order to move forward
- Be welcoming to all and be pastoral people
- On a personal level, strive to improve as Christ has taught us. Invite God into your heart.
Seek Holy Spirit's guidance on your thoughts and actions
- We, "The Church", have to be open and accepting of all people – God made us all. To accept all people to our Eucharist table, we have to allow God's love and mercy to flow to everyone without expecting them to confess their sins. Allow God to forgive them



Open to conversion, renewal and reform

- For myself to learn from people who have little or no connections with the church community. For the Parish community, to be welcoming and also to listen to, and learn from, those not involved in church
- To start with myself, loving and reverencing the Eucharist
- We would like to see a Christ-centred community develop in our midst, by having a FORMATION CENTRE for promoting spiritual development through growth in prayer and ever-deepening relationship with God. This needs to have a live-in community of people educated in spirituality and having a regular prayer regime
- Put in place the "Making Jesus Real" philosophy in every school within the Diocese
- Conversion Reform – we can suggest different ways of doing things
- Who are the needy people? Lots of little actions and examples. Not just one thing. How do we reach out to those with mental illness, etc?
- Love each other at any level. Be grateful. Acknowledgement of sexual abuse
- Conversion in my life; renewal and reform in community life. We have to find them before conversion. Where do we find them in our life outside the formal church?
- In our hearts and minds, find a practice that opens us to allowing the Father and Jesus to grow in their presence within us (each person = an individual journey) eg. Prayer-life, bible reflections, retreats, listening and reflecting on others' experiences. In our communities, identify needs and desires e.g. Forming child playgroups after school, and God's word into these situations
- Open to renewal, conversion and reform:
 - Conversion
 - the Bishop, clergy and all need an ecological conversion, assisted by the appointment of an eco-officer to the Diocese, with responsibility across all agencies to educate, assist and implement this process
 - Reform:
 - Bishop could recognise an emergency across the Diocese of not enough priests to offer confession at regular times and convenient locations so as to involve alternate rites of confession under current rules

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

841 Hunter St, Newcastle West 2302

Phone: 02 4979 1111 Fax: 02 4979 1119

Visit us online: www.mn.catholic.org.au



Social Services
Hunter-Manning



Catholic
Development Fund



Office of
Safeguarding



St. Nicholas Early Education

DARA | DEVELOPMENT
AND RELIEF
AGENCY.