

Fanning the Flame: A Way Forward

Shaping the Assembly Recommendations

The post-Assembly taskforce met to collate and distill the many recommendations of those who participated in *Fanning the Flame*.

It chose a framework, presented at the 2009 National Conference of Pastors and Pastoral Associates,

in which to organise the abundance of Assembly material.

The framework is a well-resourced pastoral and theological model for parish and diocesan pastoral planning, centering Christian community life in the trinitarian life of God.

The framework proposes five different strands for pastoral plans:

Mission & Outreach

Formation & Education

Liturgy & Prayer

Identity & Community

Leadership & Structure.

A brief explanatory summary follows and describes each of the strands.

We trust that this framework now articulates a direction for the re-energising of our Diocesan Vision, so that *the community of believers may continue to live out the call of Baptism, through personal faith in Jesus, witnessing together to the Good News of the Kingdom.*

Identity and Community

Intentionally foster Christian community; foster hospitality, welcome and respect, and an identity grounded in 'communion'

Actions requested:

1. Form the whole diocese to live' communally' (*in communio*) our baptismal call

- explore how to live the ongoing call of our Baptism
- foster unity in diversity (*the life of the Trinity*)
- foster/skill dialogue

2. Implement Stewardship at the heart of diocesan planning, highlighting the following

- God at the heart of all creation
- all is gift
- gifts received with gratitude
- we are called to serve with love
- identifying and mobilizing of gifts and talents
- encouraging interdependence (*not independence*)
- encouragement of sustainability

3. Value the Indigenous contribution /identity

4. Value our Multicultural identity

With the diverse and changing cultural patterns across the diocese (eg. different cultures/mines) the diocese is encouraged to promote

- a continuing discovery of the diversity of culture within faith communities:
appreciating cultural differences; linking different cultures; actively reaching out; learning about difference through the forming of relationships
- an interest in harmony
- freedom from prejudice
- putting ourselves in another's shoes: not thinking of ourselves as superior

5. Foster the participation of young people in the life of the Church

- encourage dialogue with young people so as to better understand the issues of young people and then respond appropriately
- encourage young people to engage in stewardship; take ownership of their role
- build parish/school relationships, fostering conversation about ministry to young people
- make church more appealing/participative: *eg youth assemblies/councils/charters*
- utilise the following components in ministry with young people: *attending, listening, catechising, actively engaging them in community*

6. Enable the active participation of women and men in the Church

- CACW coordinators: diocese/ parish levels
- ensure a balance of female/male spiritualities
- engage in dialogue about the active participation of both women/ men in the church
- acknowledge and recognize the roles of women and men in ministry across the diocese
- ensure that future planning regarding the Diaconate considers its impact upon the lives/ ministry of women

7. Resource and form the smaller communities within the diocese

- explore how they can be maintained, experiencing a strong sense of diocesan connection

8. Nurture vocation/ different spiritualities & charisms:

Marriage and family life:

- encourage parish coordinators
- foster connections *eg. Mothers' groups, Majellan, play groups; Passionist family groups; resourcing of remote couples*

Religious Life

- maintain and communicate knowledge and history of religious life in the diocese/different orders
eg. through effective use of diocesan website
- find ways for Religious, with their rich and diverse spiritual resources, to offer support to lay people

Priesthood

- explore the distinction/relationship between the priesthood of the baptized and the ordained priesthood
- clarify the various ministries of priest, laity - exploring mutuality in ministry
- enable effective ministry support

Leadership and Structure

Foster effective Christian leadership

and develop clear and consistent communication, organizational and maintenance structures

Actions requested:

- 1. Commit to a forward plan for the diocese** *perhaps 5 years*
 - focus on engaging in the coming of God's reign
 - involve key people with financial/ pastoral/ educational expertise
 - determine the current relevance of the Diocesan Vision Statement
 - ensure wide-spread consultation with parish and diocesan communities
 - identify needs, challenges, possibilities - clarify what needs to be held and what needs to be let go
 - develop stewardship as a way of life
 - ensure sustainability at all levels of decision-making
 - (eg. *consider how to effectively/ financially sustain our present reality with limited resources; attend to the impact of our decisions upon the environment now and into the future*)
 - act ecumenically
 - develop new models of pastoral/team ministry and leadership appropriate to each community
 - identify and form good leaders

- 2. Enable and resource parishes to review their mission statements/ parish plans in the light of the diocesan plan, ensuring a clear sense of identity and purpose**

- 3. Strengthen and enhance methods of communication at all levels across the diocese**
 - ensure parishes are informed about CACW, World Day of Prayer, Inter-church matters, agency information, helpful websites etc; provide relevant bulletin notices
 - promote 'spirituality' on diocesan website: link to religious orders websites; twitter, social networking, facebook
 - find ways for people to express their needs to the church
 - continue to utilize diverse strategies for meeting and maintaining connections
 - (eg. *teleconference*)
 - develop a directory of resources that support ministry to young people
 - initiate a *Spirituality* column in local papers
 - find ways of ensuring that small communities have a sense of diocesan connection

- 4. Interconnect Diocesan agencies, parishes, schools:**
 - share knowledge, resources and education where required
 - ensure the continuing accessibility of *Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council Ministry* in the diocese

- 5. Establish /formalize new agencies/bodies:**
 - Diocesan Commission for Marriage and Family Life
 - Diocesan Ecumenical coordinator
 - Diocesan Youth Ministry structure/Council
 - Diocesan Commission for the Participation of Women
 - to further implement the recommendations of the Social Justice Statement*
 - Diocesan Social Justice Animator *to ensure integration of CST at all levels of the diocese*
 - Diocesan Coordinator for the *Assisi* Program

Liturgy and Prayer

***Gather people for prayer, sacramental and liturgical celebration
and foster a spirituality that is Eucharistic in life and worship***

Actions requested:

1. Formation in liturgy and liturgical ministries

- promote the systematic liturgical formation of liturgists and the faithful:
so that good vibrant liturgies will enhance faith communities
- form ministers, including the assembly, well
- determine whether ministers might be evaluated
- ensure lay liturgical leaders are in place and commissioned ,
and the community understands their authority and competence to serve
- foster reverence and silence
- foster the importance of using rituals well
- offer formation in the new missal and lectionary
- consider the appointment of a Diocesan Liturgical Resource Person

Emphases in formation

- The Liturgy is God's work
- The daily liturgical rhythm of the church enables the baptized to become the church;
the church to become the church
- Liturgy empowers us to be sacrament in the world
- Liturgy and life are interconnected
(*eg. full, active conscious participation in one affects the other*)
- Liturgy enables the community to celebrate what is happening in community life

2. Implement the RCIA well

- Ensure distinctive processes for the baptised and the unbaptised
- Explore how to balance the vision of the Rite with reality
- Educate whole parish in the RCIA and their central role in the process (*not program*)
- Resource communities to seek out potential enquirers in faith;
- Ensure a sense of welcome and belonging for enquirers
- Ensure a staged, unrushed process, with adequate discernment
- Ensure ongoing training and resourcing of parish RCIA teams
- Consider how to find and form suitable people for the local team responsibilities (*esp. catechesis*)
- Respect the individual adult journey of the enquirer, meeting them where they are.
- Balance regional formation processes with opportunities to participate in local parish worship/life

3. Review the Sacramental process for children

- Consider current sacramental programs in the light of vision of RCIA
- Enable pre-catechesis for children and families, based on the story of Jesus
- Offer developmental and age - appropriate sacramental material for children
- Find ways to foster ongoing connections beyond the sacramental process

- Schedule sacramental preparation to enable family connection
- Encourage 'twinning' in parishes, to support sacramental families

4. Celebrate multicultural identity

- celebrate our differences and cultures
- utilize different languages in scripture proclamation
- initiate a welcoming statement at each liturgy: inclusive, embracing of all cultures

5. Encourage and celebrate the participation of young people and families

- Parents of primary children come to liturgy. Is this an important connection?
- Find ways for children's experience of school liturgy to be life-connected and ongoing
- Consider effective use of contemporary music in liturgy and prayer experiences
- Designate a Sunday of the month as family Sunday:
 eg. offer blessings, celebrate social events, baptisms ; anniversaries; renewal of vows;
 grandparent Sunday, support new couples
- Find mass times to suit families
- Offer liturgies for children and young people

6. Be environmentally connected

- Link liturgy and seasons *eg church gardens; seasonal times for growing/pruning etc*

7. Be ecumenically sensitive

- re-issue the diocesan policy on sharing the Eucharist
- consider the situation for families of mixed religion in liturgical celebrations
- celebrate an annual Ecumenical Sunday

Formation and Education

*facilitate faith education and spiritual growth
and promote empowerment through education and formation*

1. Ensure widespread formation in Catholic Social Teaching principles

- Employ a social justice animator across the diocese to enable integration in adult education and religious education programs
- Appoint a social justice person in each parish
- Underpin adult faith learning across the diocese with a social justice conscience
- Educate people to see/attend to what is happening, “recognize signs of the times”

2. Raise environmental awareness

- Adopt the Catholic Earthcare *Assisi* program: with a diocesan coordinator
- Educate widely in environmental awareness and its relationship to CST
- Explore the impact of our decisions upon sustainable living, now and into the future
- Find user-friendly ways of communicating helpful hints or ecological information as all cannot attend seminars (eg. *bulletin tips*)
- Reflect upon the importance of the Sabbath and Jubilee years, which inspire environmental balance

3. Continue to encourage and resource ongoing learning and growth in faith

- Be aware of and cater for different stages/levels of faith formation
- Offer ongoing literacy in/ understanding of:
 - Current pastoral theology and praxis***
(with particular attention to a theology of ‘communio’ - being centered in the life of the Trinity; the meaning of tradition, leadership, authority; the ecumenical movement; implications of research into mass attendance)
 - Scripture study***
 - Spiritual growth***
(eg. Lenten and Advent programs; exposure to different spiritualities, including religious charisms; retreat opportunities for both women and men; utilise the Bishop’s *Inservice Days* to deepen understanding of the charisms of religious orders)
- Resource in evangelizing strategies/skills
(eg. effective communication and experience of the Jesus story)
- Remunerate those who travel voluntarily across the diocese to resource/educate communities

4. Resource Marriage and Family Life

- offer *Celebrate Love* weekends
- include Marriage tips in weekly bulletins
- Raise awareness of *Centacare* resources
- Involve married couples in education of secondary students

- Support young families in the living of their faith
- Offer communication skilling to children and young people

5. Culture and learning

- Encourage children from other cultures to know their language
- Offer opportunities for reciprocal learning/ mutuality with peoples of other cultures, to enable peace, tolerance and understanding
- Continue to encourage indigenous communities to be proud of their culture
- Educate the diocese and wider community in the value of indigenous people and culture

6. Suggestions for All Diocesan Agencies

- Share learning opportunities (*agencies/parishes/diocese*)
- Promote CST widely (*strong emphasis*)
- Enable a shared exposure program, including people of all agencies and abilities/disabilities
 - to develop a social justice commitment and offer ongoing support in social justice formation
- Emphasise mission and values underlying each agency's work

7. Suggestions for Diocesan Catholic Education

- Ensure ongoing formation for staff in catholic identity/ethos and faith development, *eg. Christos*
- Reflect upon the challenge of recruiting staff especially to leadership roles
- Continue to emphasise the relevance of RE teaching - educating young people about the faith, in such a way as to enable them to make informed choices
- Explore deeper school/parish connections
- Consider how to reach out to those not choosing catholic schools

Mission and Outreach

*engage people in the transformation of society,
in outreach through mercy and justice,
to build the kingdom of God*

Actions requested

- 1. Ensure that our priority is to engage in bringing about the reign of God**
- 2. Address issues of injustice, attending to special groups in the diocese – the poor, the vulnerable, elderly, indigenous, women at risk**
- 3. Continue to discover the diversity of culture within our parish and diocese - supporting all migrant communities and nationalities, not just major groups**
- 4. Use the size of our organizations to lobby government and appropriate organizations regarding matters of justice**
- 5. Consider how *Centacare* might increase its untied funding base so as to better enable the healing ministry of Jesus**
- 6. Encourage sustainable living and responsible tending of the environment**