



Pastoral Planning and Implementation

51-59 Allawah Street, Blacktown, NSW 2148
PO Box 3066, North Parramatta, NSW 1750

☎ 02 8838 3460 📠 02 8838 3462
✉ pastoralplanning@parracatholic.org
🌐 faithinourfuture.org.au

Go Out into the Deep!

Unpacking the Diocesan Forum 2019, 13 July @ Novotel Parramatta

We begin a conversation that cannot end here today
We begin steps towards change that cannot end here today
We are called to be bold and listen with a humble heart

What the Forum offers

The forum calls us out into the deep with the Holy Spirit, to a place of vulnerability and surrender, a space of encounter and new possibilities. We are offered an opportunity:

1. To respond to the invitation: **Becoming the community Christ calls us to be**. To consider how the call to “Go Out into the Deep” requires us to change – both individually and as church.
2. To encounter voices from different roles/spaces within Diocese, and voices that challenge
3. To begin identifying ideas for the way forward
 - in dialogue with the plenary themes
 - affirming the good we already do
 - considering new ways of relating, new ways of deciding, new ways of being church

Who Gathered?

Approximately 240 people gather from the following general areas:

- Parishioners (105) – includes deanery/diocesan pastoral councils
- Clergy (35) includes priests, deacons, migrant chaplains
- Youth (20) includes youth council, ambassadors and seminarians
- Catholic Education (20)
- Chancery (25) including Diocesan Ministry Centre
- Consecrated Life (15)
- Other Diocesan Council reps (15)
- Other agencies (5)

What happened at the Forum?

Participants seated at “mixed” tables, based on deaneries, and assigned a plenary theme.

The day included prayer throughout, featuring scripture, hymns, good news stories, and voices that challenge. This included time for personal reflection.

1. Bishop Vincent invited us to “Go out into the Deep”. Groups discussed the need for change.
2. Engaging with their assigned plenary theme, groups develop three key ideas. During a “gallery tour”, groups gained an awareness of the ideas from five other groups
3. Each group chose one idea to flesh out and consider how to take forward beyond the day.

Additional Information

Padmi Pathinather, chair of Diocesan Pastoral Council, emceed; Sr Kari Hatherell OSU facilitated. Key Support Team for lead up and day was Pastoral Planning Office

Other supports included Catholic youth (music), IFM, Safeguarding, Communications – chancery, and volunteers for roles of welcome and facilitation. Some additional assistance was offered.

Engagement of over 100 stakeholders in the lead up to the forum to help shape both the day and post-forum process. A steering committee offered a range of ideas and feedback to help prepare for the day.

What was the Feedback from Participants?

189 respondents filled in feedback forms. They were asked to rate the following aspects of the day:

Rating	Venue/ Food/ Facilities	Speakers/ Voices from the Community	Prayer and Music	Time for Personal Reflection	Time for Discussion
Poor (1)	0	4	5	4	4
2	0	7	4	9	7
3	3	11	8	20	13
4	13	15	19	44	37
5	65	46	53	62	67
Excellent (6)	78	76	75	30	42
Average (6 = highest)	5.37	5.01	5.05	4.43	4.66

Thirty key ideas were developed during the course of the day, and overall approximately 90 ideas were identified.

The following additional feedback was requested:

- How do you believe the forum has called us to change?
- In what ways has the forum helped you explore the question of how is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church relevant to your assigned plenary theme?
- How might you be called to be different after today in order to live the mission in partnership, and what support may you need to help this to happen? And what support are you willing to offer?

This feedback is still being processed.

Participants were asked to nominate one or more post-forum approaches they support and/or wish to engage with. From the 189 responses, the following feedback was received:

Post-forum initiatives	Number Interested	Percentage Interested
Clustering with other parishes/schools/chaplaincies/agencies in our area.	75	42%
Local Community Forums (e.g. Parish, School, Chaplaincy)	59	33%
Deanery Forums	69	39%
To convene a post-forum diocesan group of representatives from deanery and diocesan pastoral councils, agencies and ministries to continue the work of this day.	69	39%

What were key ideas that emerged from the forum?

At the Diocesan Forum, in the final session, participants focused on one key area that they believe our Diocese should work towards implementing. What follows is the summary of the key area chosen by each group. Where more than one group considered a similar key idea this is noted (e.g. x 2 = two groups considered). Additional information offered by each group will be made available in the coming weeks.

1. Formation, especially in terms of understanding the strength - core - heart of our tradition.
2. Invitation to all to participate, listen to and be represented so that the whole Church is heard and in dialogue. Then there is engagement and the cultivation of the gifts of all.
3. A new pedagogy and approach to being Parish x 2
4. Building Prayer Life alongside the Mass.
5. Opportunities to support/reframe approach to the inclusion of marginalised x 2
6. Ongoing Adult Faith Formation x 4
7. Clarity of Mission - Diocesan Mission statement that supports servant leadership and to communicate this with agencies within the Diocese and the broader community.
8. Support the broad use of Alpha across the diocese by equipping and training people to run Alpha. Working together towards faith development via small groups.
9. Formation programs which are targeted, focused and on-going.
10. Witness to the joy of the gospel.
11. Models of decision-making reform - representative and power of decision making.
12. Communication and Formation.
13. Christ-centred worship.
14. More openness to lay and non-gender discriminatory ministry within the church to counter clericalism.
15. Use the different communication mediums available to tell stories of ordinary people living the joy of the gospel in everyday life.
16. Do a census of skills in the parish/deanery and diocese so that lay adult faith formation opportunities can be widely available to all parishioners and to encourage and reinforce pastoral visit by the Bishop to every parish.
17. Retreats covering current moral & doctrinal issues and how to go forward.
18. Diversity
19. Assist people to enhance their personal prayer
20. Liturgy & service for and to those who lament
21. Building community through inclusivity and acceptance
22. Opportunity for adult faith formation and discernment. Canvas the skill set in the parishes to see where the skills are and how they can benefit the wider community.
23. Invitation to all to participate, listen to, be represented so that the whole church is heard in dialogue.
24. Set a month aside for a small group of parishioners to complete an "instrument" that evaluates the homily. The data is sent to Vicar for Clergy to use in formation of clergy in homiletics.
25. Create forum groups/community gathering places where like-minded people can plan and share through collaboration.
26. Revisit allocation of resources in order to increase social justice works with families and homelessness.

What Happens Now? How do we ensure it is not business as usual?

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The forum invites us to begin a journey to “Go out into the Deep”, becoming the community Christ calls us to be. There is a temptation to simply distil the findings of the day, engage with a broader group and come up with a road map for what we do next. While such work is good and necessary, there is a deeper call.

In the Gospel (Luke 5:1-11), the fisherman initially planned and worked differently after their encounter with Jesus. They threw their nets out of the other side of the boat and caught many fish. It could have ended there... Business as usual but with greater productivity!

However, their encounter with Jesus called them to a new way of being community:

- Their **identity** was transformed as they now centred their life in Christ
- Their **way of relating** to one another was transformed, as they became one in Christ
- Their **mission** was transformed to become fruitful, so that they would “catch people”.

We are invited to continue to explore three dimensions, post-forum:



In this time of Plenary, this includes post-forum approaches such as

- Developing a Diocesan Planning Team to include representation from Diocesan Pastoral Council, Deanery Pastoral Councils, Council of Priests, Agencies and Ministries
- Enriching the membership of Deanery Pastoral Councils
- Offering Formation to give people ways to listen and engage, to identify the need for change, and to help them listen to the voices that challenge.
- Developing a road map: sharpening our purpose in Christ and the Spirit through engagement with Local Forums; Deanery forums; Diocesan Forums & Diocesan Assembly (post-Plenary)

[How might you engage in the conversation and the action beyond the forum?](#)