In Response to the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia

Executive Summary
In the words of Jesus asking his people: “Who do you say I am?”, the essence of this question propelled greater dialogue and discernment when the bishops of the world gathered in Rome for the Second Vatican Council – pondering a similar question: “Who and what do you say the Church is?”.

In continuation and commitment to the Holy Spirit and in preparation for the Fifth Plenary Council in October 2021, called by the Australian Bishops and ratified by Pope Francis, Australian Catholics were invited to respond to the question: “What do you think God is asking of Australia at this time?”. The significance of this question in the wake of the deliberations after the scandal of the child abuse crisis in the Church of Australia, saw over 222,000 number of participants who gathered in a Listening and Dialogue encounter, in a hope to awaken our spirit filled life, and as captured by Pope Francis in Evangelii Gaudium – this was not about incremental change but rather that of transformational.

‘I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.’

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 27

Many forums and channels for listening and open dialogue were formed, facilitated by the various Diocesan and Deanery Pastoral Councils, which resulted in a national report being produced from those submissions, and a Report for Diocese of Parramatta providing specific insights from across our 47 parishes.

It was interesting to note the submissions were categorised into 6 themes, namely:

| A Joyful, hope-filled and servant community | Missionary and evangelising |
| Humble, healing and merciful | Open to Conversion, Renewal and Reform |
| Inclusive, participatory and synodal | Prayerful and Eucharistic |

In contrast to what the Spirit had awakened in our people, and as expressed through these themes, the Agenda published for the Plenary Council seems to diminish the original richness and breadth of those themes.

The DiPC of Parramatta, in consultation, listening and discernment have gathered the following responses to the Agenda Questions. With the delegates, we pray that the Holy Spirit ever present in this ancient land, will open our hearts and minds to God’s invitation, calling us through the voices of the faithful, especially those who are ignored, silenced, excluded and disenfranchised.

Plenary Council Workstream on Behalf of DiPC – Parramatta

Natalia, Claire, Catherine and Padmi
CONVERSION

- Live the Gospels in the context of today, i.e., by showing the face of Christ through Inclusivity, which means including everyone, and not being judgemental.
- Find authentic ways of deep listening to the abused to restore trust to learn from the mistakes of the past and not impose solutions from without.
- A sincere apology from all levels of the Church Authority; so that all victims can be heard, to enable true reconciliation.
- How can we bring about change in regards to the privilege and power structures within the hierarchical Church that enabled the perpetrators to abuse generation after generation?
- How can we as a Church become a humble and contrite Church; to avoid triumphalism?
- Apology must be accompanied by practical support to victims to demonstrate accountability.
- Deepening an authentic way of listening and talking will assist in this long and torturous journey of healing
- Listening Circles have a simple rationale. They provide time, space and an authentic audience for the voice of those who have been impacted by deliberate systemic abuse and consistent denials, to speak and be heard.
- Wounds of abuse have spoken to us; we need to change the way we are operating as a church.
- Affirm and explicit inclusion of those who feel unwelcome; marginalized and vulnerable community members including those who were sexually abused and traumatized, those who are excluded from the church community (LGBTIQ), refugees, asylum seekers, ATSI and people with disability, women, divorced and remarried, survivors, disenfranchised
- Ongoing Apologies / recognition of the hurt and shame it has caused and to continually seek forgiveness; this needs to be transparent alongside Safeguarding processes and policies
- Our current context, could we review all our teachings, doctrine and theology in the light of the times we live in, modern science, cultural mores, psychology and recent history?
- Provide real care, counselling, support and financial recompense for the abused.
- We need to be more welcoming and inclusive
- Adopt the concept of Dadirri, deep listen to the story and culture of Aboriginal people
- Become more active advocates; consult first with our indigenous brothers and sisters to develop Indigenous spirituality in our parishes and indigenous prayer within our liturgical celebrations.
- Promote justice for Aboriginal peoples both within our localities and nationally including a voice within our constitution.
- Engage in ways to become more aware and active in integrating Aboriginal culture and identity into our parish, deanery and diocesan settings
- We need to challenge racist attitudes and stereotypes towards Aboriginal people
- Listen and learn from the wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Street Islanders: their care of country, use of fire and respect for water.
- Note their discernment in bringing together the many nations of this land and forming The Uluru Statement from the Heart. We could learn from their model of discernment.
• Invite indigenous leaders to Welcome to Country and acknowledge country when indigenous leaders are not present. Publish acknowledgement on diocesan/parish publications
• express and promote a commitment to an ‘integral ecology of life’ in all its dimensions, with particular attention to the more vulnerable people and environments in our country and region
• advocate amongst ourselves and others, including government bodies, to take care of the earth and its creatures and model such care as individuals, and within parish and diocesan Communities"
• Understand ecological conversion’/ ‘integral ecology of life’
• Understand and implement Laudato si goals and immerse ourselves in ecological education
• Recognise our oneness with our home planet as God’s kingdom, resolve to work even harder to do our best to return it to the harmony of nature that God the Holy Spirit intended
• Need to act now with prophetic urgency. We have the vision and willingness in the Bishop, a collective wisdom from many leaders in the ecology and justice organisations and networks in and beyond the diocese.
• Need to advocate amongst ourselves and others, including government bodies, to take care of the earth and its creatures and model such care as individuals, and within parish and diocesan Communities
• The Church in Australia might respond by advocating ‘ecological conversion’ to governments and councils on behalf of vulnerable people and environments in our country and region. The Church needs to advocate for Government decisions which place the sacredness of the earth at the centre of deliberations. The Church in Australia could lead by example with parishes using green energy, cutting down on waste, recycle and promoting “ecological conversion” to its parishioners. Church groups need to model environmentally sound practices in all they say and do.
• Maintain and support the Office of Safeguarding to respond to issues of abuse.
• Need to re-invigorate ecumenism in our diocese
• Critical to ensure we welcome all and share the Eucharist with our brothers and sisters
• The Plenary question we are addressing is calling us to engage in profound change.
• Humility and relationship with one another and learn to listen more deeply to one another in our councils, conversations and contexts
• The Church needs to present the compassionate face of Jesus to people, whatever their circumstances.
• More collaboration with Catholic EarthCare
• Church’s teachings on conscience and social justice issues need to be spoken about more openly and widely
• Peace studies have shown that two things are essential for reconciliation and a change of heart: listening and humility. St Benedict suggests “listening with the ear of the heart”
• Recognise the systemic problems in the culture of the Church that have given rise to the abuse of such power
• It about relationship!! Partnerships are more successful in funding.
• Publicise and encourage people to engage in community gatherings on the environment
• Encourage Catholics to review Investments – are investments supporting sustainability
PRAYER

Q1 How might we become a more contemplative people, committing more deeply to PRAYER AS A WAY OF LIFE, and celebrating the liturgy of the Church as an encounter with Christ who sends us out to “make disciples of all the nations”?

Our prayer must be grounded in INCARNATIONAL SPIRITUALITY by which we understand that

- we live in the presence of God and God lives in us, embracing us in love
- through prayerful reflection we learn to recognise the presence of God in our lives
- the Scriptures, especially the parables of Jesus, must nourish us daily
- praying with others in smaller groups is important, encouraging and energising us for mission
- the experience of liturgy is unsatisfactory and even enervating for many (see Q2)

Q2. How might we better embrace the diverse LITURGICAL TRADITIONS of the Churches which make up the Catholic Church and the cultural gifts of immigrant communities to enrich the spirituality and worship of the Church in Australia?

Liturgy is commonly experienced as less than life-giving. A number of suggestions were made to enhance the experience of our Eucharistic liturgies:

USE THE GIFTS OF THE FAITHFUL to:

- provide good music, dance, drama, proficient use of technology to engage all age groups
- break open the Word in homilies/reflections relating to life
- celebrate children’s liturgies (and thereby catechise parents)
- use an inclusive language version of the Missal and Lectionary

FORMATION

- Provide opportunities for the faithful and the clergy to have ongoing faith formation at the local level.
- We need to reach out to our parishioners and provide them with regular formation to keep them up-to-date and enthusiastic about the Catholic faith and its liturgies. We need to provide them with strong support, involvement and formation arising from the New Pentecost following on from Vatican II.
- Important to receive quality formative experiences to assist us in understanding why we believe what we believe that stresses the importance of fellowship and communion.
- Our parishes need to be more concerned about making every parishioner feel as though they belong. True friendship should be offered with a family like atmosphere. Community and formation at all age groups should be available.
- Formation around Laudato Si is profoundly needed; to bring this element of Catholic Social Teaching to begin an ecological movement within our Church
- Continuous formation is the key. Jesus’ expression of ministry with the people was depth in an embrace of radical inclusivity, restoration of lives and accompaniment in all aspects of the journey. Any leader in this profound role needs to find continuous formation.
- Important to support and promote women leadership. We need to remove barriers that hinder the flourishing of girls and women into the future. So crucial to connect and inspire girls to become more engaged in our Church.
The program for seminaries need to better equip seminarians to have a range of life experiences. Perhaps not start seminary students until they have had more experience outside school and family.

Important to openly discuss the problem of Clericalism. It is elitist and very damaging to the whole Church community. It is another way of ignoring the gifts of the Spirit within the people of the church.

It would be better if pastors could live a more human life by being allowed to be married.

Emphasis on the call of Baptism; not something that stops at birth

Personal faith formation that addresses current topics; diocesan videos/materials addressing current issues such as legalising abortion, LGBT, religious freedom, and the current view of what the church teaches is needed.

We need to develop programs that allow God to attract people. We need prayer groups, Bible study groups and programs that increase and develop an authentic spirituality in parishioners.

Faith formation should be part of the normal parish activities, but needs to be supported by the Catholic education office and other diocesan agencies.

We need to learn again that God loves us, that he is real and that he wants a close relationship with us in the normal course of our daily lives and regularly does things for us every day.

All of these actions must be inclusive, especially of Women active in Ministry. Women’s voices must be heard and they must be included in doing the practical guidance & spiritual nourishment of our Faith Communities, for example, Pastoral associates and female Deacons

Priests could demonstrate a more personal relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit and how God enacts this personal relationship with us each day of our lives.

There also needs to be offered training for Seminarians and for those Priests being considered as potential Parish which includes leadership coaching. We expect that our Ordained Leaders will, through the breaking open the word of God, lead the people under their care to a greater understanding of God’s love’

How do we raise faith-filled disciples within each parish?

It is necessary that training in the seminaries be updated to meet both the demands of contemporary pastoral situations and the management of parishes as well as the important selection of competent parishioners and office staff to positions and duties within the parish.

How might we better form leaders for mission – adults, children and families, couples and single people?

Provide formation in theology, liturgy, the changes that Vatican II brought to our contexts, scripture studies, group dynamics at a local level for all.

We all need to face up to and openly discuss the problem of Clericalism. It is elitist and very damaging to the whole Church community. It is another way of ignoring the gifts of the Spirit within the people of the church.

Ordained ministers need to be part of teams, not one-man bands. Ordained ministers have much to offer but they cannot be expected to be the source of all wisdom. This isn’t fair to them, and it certainly does not allow for the vision of a collaborative, synodal church which Pope Francis is advocating.

Theology should be taught through universities so they can mix with ordinary people and witness life in all its forms thus becoming well-rounded. Candidates for ordained ministry should have had a significant amount of experience in the workforce before beginning their training.

Formation for ministry needs to take place in an inclusive and diverse learning environment which includes women. People in ordained ministries need to be well supported in their ministry after their initial training. The concept of ongoing supportive and reflective
supervision (similar to that of psychologists, social workers etc.) needs to be incorporated into the practice of all clergy (including bishops). Such a practice would allow ministers to reflect on their practice with the assistance of a suitably skilled and qualified professional. Ministers would need to have some say in the choice of “supervisor”, but such supervision should not be optional. Many of the terrible decisions of the past might have been avoided if those in positions of power had such supervision from an appropriate person.

- Practical formation is required. How to build and lead a faith community. How to lead formation programs.
- Bishops need to reconnect to Parish life. They need to be exposed to their flock at a Parish level. They should be spending time living in a Parish 2 – 3 weeks a year. They are too disconnected from the “coal face” of their Parishes.
- Leaders need to be formed well in all aspects of their faith and must live their faith. They should also receive spiritual direction so they stay on the right path.
- Priests need to have a fervent daily prayer life and attend the sacraments. They need regular on going spiritual formation and spiritual direction from a spiritual director.
- "Adult faith formation needs to be Affordable, Easily accessible, Wide ranging, Not limited to ‘ministry’, Ability to learn alongside seminarians in their courses/units. Formal and informal

INSTITUTIONS

Q1 How might we better see the future of (all) Catholic education through a missionary lens?

Responses called for a strategic ‘MISSION FOCUS’ at all levels of Catholic education to assist students (and their parents) to continue to find a loving Creator God in a rapidly changing world.

it is important across all arenas of Catholic education

- To claim the values of our Good News/Gospel faith as a sure guide to living well
- To pray together, share the Scriptures and be challenged by the invitational Word of God
- To make/deepen the connection with Jesus – Emmanuel, God among us, who comes to meet us in our own lives and in the world beyond our immediate experience
- To ‘grow’ the adult faith of staff through targeted formation programs
- To contextualise the expression of our faith – our rituals, language, customs and practices - for a 21st century world

In our Catholic Schools, it is important

- To maintain inclusive enrolment policies where all are welcome
- To provide good quality teaching and learning opportunities
- To effectively address the pastoral needs of students and families
- To develop RE curriculum and resources that recognise the need for new and different ways to encounter the incarnate God in these new and different times
- To strengthen the connection between the Catholic Primary school and the local parish
- To commit to shared programs between primary school and parish that effectively evangelise the whole family
- To provide opportunities for students of all ages to be engaged in social action, especially via links with organisations like Jesuit Refugee Services, Vinnies, Smith Family...
- To provide students with immersion opportunities among peoples and cultures unlike their own. Such experiences, when carefully managed, can be life-changing, opening students to difference of culture and experience and often, to real and lasting personal connections.

**STRUCTURES**

**Resource Management**
- Local parishes need greater support for administrative resources that can be combined across parishes for greater efficiency and cost savings. The staff at local parishes are often gatekeepers and at times it is difficult for the community to present ideas to the priest.
- The Leaders of our Church must spend more time Listening to the needs of local Parishes and Deaneries. We must break down the Silo Mentality of Parishes – Bishops must encourage more sharing of resources (Personnel, Expertise, Liturgical ideas, etc.). Avoid duplication of efforts.
- We must reconsider how we use our existing resources/groups/faith structures to promote: Spiritual growth and development for all believers National, Diocesan, and local action on contentious social issues.
- Parishes can take advantage of lay people who are well formed in the faith to help form others. This may be in the form of classes or courses. Missionary discipleship can only come about when people have a regular prayer life and want to impart the faith to others.
- Bible study talks about aspects of the faith can all help others to want to learn more about their faith.
- Religious orders are very few and can’t be relied upon to help all parishes. The parish priest could organize courses, bible study or classes. He has to either teach these himself or find suitable people to do so. We must remove administration from the priest so that they can focus on the word of God - write better homilies.
- Community activities such as a neighbourhood morning teas or invitations to parishioners who aren’t practicing coming for a meal or an activity may help them feel included.
- The Diocese could assist by having suitable courses or programs to be used in Parishes.
- We must also consider the ongoing pandemic with our church building closed - whilst many have tuned into online mass - yet the sense of community worship is moving further away. Previously many would come to church and sit in the pews without much interaction with priest nor the community, and now this has been exacerbated due to online mass. Ask ourselves, is the terminology of missionary disciples understood by all Catholics.

**Collaborating, Listening and Learning**
- Dioceses need to support rigorous theological options formation, theological discussion and presentation rather than just small, well-meaning groups offering their idea of formation. Formation for different age groups and different people in the parish. Different formats for formation e.g. webinars, Zoom etc.
o have a process to listen to the voice of the parishioners - empower the parishioners, be connected, co-create and communicate effectively - learn with each other, ideate, discover and collaborate
o Better collaboration between diocese/parish and other catholic entities such as SDVP, CatholicCare, etc
o There needs to be true collaboration between the various levels of institutional hierarchy - Bishop, curia, diocesan pastoral council, deanery pastoral council, parish pastoral council
o Clergy at all levels need to acknowledge and honour the expertise of the lay
o Explore different models of collaboration which genuinely includes the laity
o There are various Institutions within the Catholic Church whose charism is that of formation and animation of all the faithful both ordained and lay.

o Diocesan level the promotion and encouragement of the missionary endeavours of these catholic Institutions at the parish level would greatly assist the parish priests in their instruction of the lay faithful and, with the grace of God a renaissance of the faith within the parishes.

o Diocesan level there are catholic Institutions which can provide serious Catholic formation for Ordained Ministers by way of seminars, recollections and retreats enabling the renewal of the Diocesan Ordained Ministers.

o The introduction of a form of Professional Development Program for the Diocesan Ordained Ministers to attend a minimum number of hours in specific Catholic formation such as traditional Catholic recollections and retreats can only be of great benefit to the Ordained ministers and the laity they are ordained to have the spiritual care of.

o Small Christian communities/groups within parishes gathering together to pray and learn eg family groups, prayer groups, rosary

o Using technology to access resources to share as online communities and face to face gatherings

o A variety of formation opportunities eg retreats, discussion groups, more than just gathering for Mass

o The Leaders of our Church must spend more time Listening to the needs of local Parishes and Deaneries. Faith formation should be part of the normal parish activities and not just left to the Catholic Education Office, the Institute for Mission and other diocesan agencies. Specific “Train the Trainers” style programs would need to be put in place by the Diocese Bible study groups are a great means to encourage each other in the faith.

o The Church in Australia needs to model the lessons learnt from not only from the Royal Commission, but also from the Plenary Council process and the Second Vatican Council. As mentioned in my Conversion section, the signs of the times are right in front of us; ecological conversion needs to take shape sooner than later. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has highlighted this need. (https://www.ipcc.ch/)

o Have more links and support between the parishes and groups and the Diocese. Both of these parts of the Body of Christ have something to learn from each other

o Re-evangelise the whole community firstly using pre evangelisation strategies

o Enable the community members to recommit their lives to Jesus and his mission

o Provide formation the whole community, the community to prioritise the choices of mission/outreach
- Have effective, family centred, dynamic and experiential Sacramental Preparation processes for all the Sacraments of Initiation, First Reconciliation and infant Baptism as these are unique opportunities to build active and enthusiastic disciples of Jesus not just with the children but also with their parents,
- Do not have head knowledge style Sacramental” Programs” where participants just learn about Sacraments usually using a workbook
- Small groups for both parents and families is the best way to model community during Sacramental preparation

**Structures and Reporting Lines**

- A further aspect of structures needs to be the reporting line of all Catholic Religious Orders and other faith communities. It is important that these parts of our Christian Community must have a report line through the local Bishop. This is especially so in relation to the Safeguarding of the marginalised and those likely subject to abuse. This equally applies to the National scene and must be considered high on the agenda by all within the Australian Church
- As well as the Parish Priest, Lay ministers are appointed to each parish
- Australian Catholic Bishops Conference to be renamed Australian Catholic Leaders Conference with lay membership as well as Bishops
- Diocesan Pastoral Council in every Diocese
- Deanery Councils in every Deanery
- Parish Pastoral Councils should be compulsory in every parish
- Every parish has a Parish Leadership team rather just a Parish Priest, emphasis on co-responsibility.
- The structure of the Church in Australia must be adjusted to include a greater proportion of women in ministry. This includes special Ministers to assist in Parishes to encourage greater attendance in Parish celebrations, as Pastoral Associates and as Ordained Deacons.
- The creation of diverse, discerning group of equal representation of laity, clergy, gender (leaders) is essential to devise future structures that enable the Spirit of God and Christ to be at the centre of our planning, implementation, piloting and evaluation. These groups could be at the parish, deanery, diocesan level. This could avoid the corporatisation of the church and enables all to listen to the Spirit of God and the invitation to respond faithfully, in response to the needs of the people of God; before the concerns of money, status or power.
- Implement Vatican 2 changes. These provide the direction parishes, etc., need to move forward to fulfil the Gospels and show the face of Christ to its members and the wider community.
- The Church needs to become more synodal and collaborative if it is to better achieve its mission (which needs to be clearly articulated). All parts of the Church need to work together towards common goals and not be fragmented.
- Heal the divisions in the Church to achieve greater unity, with focus being the proclamation of the Gospel to the modern world. This involves being “part” of the modern world and not seeing itself “apart” and “superior”.
- Re-evangelise the whole community firstly using pre-evangelisation strategies • Enable the community members to recommit their lives to Jesus and his mission • Provide formation for the whole community
- The community should prioritise the choices of mission/outreach.
- Have effective, family-centred, dynamic and experiential Sacramental Preparation processes for all the Sacraments of Initiation, First Reconciliation and infant Baptism, as these are unique opportunities to build active and enthusiastic disciples of Jesus, not just with the children, but also with their parents.
- Do not have head knowledge style Sacramental Programs where participants just learn about Sacraments usually using a workbook.
- Small groups for both parents and families are the best way to model community during Sacramental preparation.
- Parishes might become better local centres for the formation and animation of missionary disciples by firstly defining what mission is, then inviting guest speakers to talk on subjects relevant to mission. For me mission is living the Gospels in the context of today.
- Parishes need to clearly articulate what their mission is and how it might be achieved. Ongoing education and support need to be provided for both laity and clergy. Laity needs to be empowered to take on ministries based on their gifts/talents, and to work as part of parish teams to achieve specified goals.

**GOVERNANCE**

- "Light from the Southern Cross" is a catalyst for conversation in Church governance. It is a report which opens the Church to true accountability, transparency and responsibility. It is a document which embraces the vision of Pope Francis in a synodal Church disengaging clericalism. Avenues for the voice of the laity is vital for the life of our Church. I applaud all Diocese who have created spaces for such voices through Pastoral Councils at all levels in the Diocese. These Council are not head nodding people agreeing with parish priests, Deans or Bishops but people of Church lived experience passionate for renewal and change. Pope Francis also reminds us what Pope Benedict once expressed that the church is not a museum of stored relics. The Light of the Southern Cross document has highlighted excellent recommendations for review and implementation for parish and diocesan contexts.
- Governance of any organisation is key to sustainability. Typically, many organisations are governed by an independent Board of Directors. There needs to be an external set of stakeholders / directors who aren't part of the church system, who can objectively provide feedback and direction. This can't be seen as a one and done type of an event or inquiry - this needs to be an ongoing commitment of a Board made up of lay (outside of the system) and ordained who meets to discuss matters of formation, risk and compliance, legal, finances, human resources and strategic direction.
- Representation of our community and be open to listening to all views and approaches no matter their background, views or sexuality.
- Parish Councils should work with democratic principles and not be merely advisory. Hopefully, consensus will be operative, but if that is not so, a majority should decide initiatives. Pastor should not have the final say.
- We all need to remember that we are all equal disciples of Jesus through our Baptism when we baptised priests’ prophets and kings.
- The above is a wonderful statement about our right to belong to the church as equals but the language reflects the unequal participation of women.
- Women should be in decision making roles, and roles of service at every level of Church alongside their brothers both clerical and lay.
- Open and transparent communication, dialogue, implementation, planning, evaluation
- We serve each other, servants of the Church
- Shift from top down to round table
- Parish council be involved in the appointment of the Parish Priest
- Involve lay baptised and clerical at every level of governance.
- There needs to be a greater role provided to Parishioners in the overall governance of their parish and as a consequence the Diocese. Having a role in the administration of the local Church does not mean a takeover of total responsibility, but a shared role in the continuity of the local Church. It will provide continuity within the Church, so that when changes occur at the leadership levels, we do not discard good programs that have been put in place by the previous Pastoral Leader. This will allow a consistent proclamation of the Word.
- Through transparency, collegiality (Synodality), discernment and above all leadership
- Lay people should be involved in all decision-making bodies within the church hierarchy. The need to provide co-responsibility is extremely clear in all of the Plenary documents forwarded by this Deanery. Where parishioners are to be appointed to pastoral management positions, it is important that the parishioners be able to elect/appoint people to fill these positions
- There needs to be a recognition of equality within the church with all members, by virtue of their Baptism, having both rights and responsibilities. Decision making needs to be truly collaborative and not just pay lip service to “consultation”. The ordained need to be an important part of teams which bring the Gospel to life in our modern world, but not dictators within teams. The concept of inclusive teams needs to be made a reality across all aspects of Church life and should not be optional.
- Teams (e.g. PPC) should have authority in their own right and, while the ordained play a vital role in these teams, they should not always have the final say in decision making.
- The authority of the Catholic Church in preservation of doctrinal and faith is reserved to the Magisterium of the Church. Outside of this the Lay Faithful may have a role in the Governance of the Catholic Church in an advisory capacity provided it is carried out with a sense of serving the church.
- The laity should be guided by their priests and never replace their role in any way. The laity can go out to their friends and family and bring them through prayer and example to the faith. They can teach and assist the priests in whatever is suitable for a lay person. The religious can also help in teaching and giving guidance. Prayer is the only way to be more effective. God is the one who actions our prayers.
- We need to showcase Diocese of Parramatta Governance Review as commissioned by Bishop Vincent eg the full process, the scope and the on-going implementation. The report highlighted that there was a good governance process and recommendations were presented to improve. This governance review cut across the administrative staff, the clerics, the agencies, the lay ministries and that is what governance is - balances the need of the multitude of groups.
- Explore different models of collaboration and leadership
- Training for lay leadership
- Values and ecclesiastical governance principles + “He sent them out in twos”. Lone rangers in ministry are dangerous. +Collaboration (Pauline literature) – Paul never travelled alone.
+Communio dominant image of Vat II +co-responsibility co-responsible governance +Dialogue – that buzz word of Vat II, lost a under JPII and Benedict, renewed by Francis. +Synodality +Transparency +Accountability, (We are a very Latin organisation!!! No equivalent word for accountability in latin languages. Closest word responsibilita Latin languages)
• Supervision and KPIs for all in ministry. Optional appraisal for clergy!!! (My friends in the corporate world thought it was a joke!

• Clerical culture is the only social structure I know that has no rewards and punishments

  Implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission +Royal Commission Recommendation 16.20 In order to promote healthy lives for those who choose to be celibate, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and all Catholic religious institutes in Australia should further develop, regularly evaluate and continually improve, their processes for selecting, screening and training of candidates for the clergy and religious life, and their processes of ongoing formation, support and supervision of clergy and religious.

• Parishes should be accountable for not meeting certain standards. For example, why does MQOF not want to acknowledge country at each liturgy service and why did the clergy make this change before informing the community and seeking their approval? Parish changes should be made after engaging the community and gauging interest, not at the whims of the clergy and their Yes ministers. Parish income and expenses should be published periodically and not just stated briefly at the AGM for those who attend. Parish council decisions can be published in the parish bulletin or read out in the notices after mass so the parish as a whole is aware of developments and feels engaged.