

Diocesan Assembly Theme 2 Leadership and Governance

Reflecting on this topic, what would a parish or diocese living the joy of the Gospel be like?

1. Transparency and openness Feedback from Bishops about their Ad Limina visit. We need to understand the big picture.
2. People need to be engaged and understand the parish and church at all levels. E.g. Finance and accountability. Feedback at all levels - Parish Councils to parishioners. Professionalism and accountability are our friends, not enemy.
3. Clericalism- need to respect the priestly role, but equip and empower lay many and women with professional expertise. Clericalism that encouraged hierarchy needs to be addressed and diminished.
4. Use money to invest in people not infrastructure. Parishioners are more likely to financially contribute if they feel engaged and part of the decision making. Professional development and formation as an ongoing and embedded part of all those in ministry. Flatter structure rather than hierarchical structures. Communities will flourish when they feel empowered and trusted and involved. Role of women. Not just 'Fathers helper'. Women bring different talents. Leadership needs to reflect the reality of the demographics.
5. Women deacons need to encouraged. Separate this from women priests and recognise the role of deacons as a distinct calling. Married priest need to be encouraged and supported. This could reinvigorate our church and address hierarchical structures.
6. Roles of parish priest, laity and religious need to be strengthened. Priest can no longer be the final decision maker. Parish council needs to be the ultimate responsibility.
7. Parish Council needs to be balanced with professional expertise and accountability. Can't be just tokenism and advisory. Draw in and trust the people who live in the parish. This is their home and they need to collaborate in real ways. Parishioners outlast the PP and need to take ownership and responsibilities. Many are not aware of their parish council and what they do. Are the Parish Councils democratic, selected or open? Do they have a constitution, terms of reference, minutes? Are they public and available? Need to be inclusive and transparent. Pastoral plan needs to inform the finance council and decisions.
8. Cultural awareness that comes from a clash of experience and expectations.
9. Humble leadership needs to be at our heart. Leadership that reflects a humble servant church.
10. Need to look at how we accommodate growing parish. Need to develop better connections between parish, primary and secondary schools.
11. Homilies need to be relevant: social justice, sexual abuse response, asylum seekers. Use this to educate and cause reflection on current issues and our Christian response. Too many homilies bear no relevance to daily life and current issues.
12. Use silence and reflection rather than just talking.
13. What happens after we leave mass? Are we inspired to do something?
14. Leadership and Governance very important is the core of this discussion in light of being a new parish, we have a parish council, pastoral council needs to be stronger, also on the administrative side. The church needs to most of HEAL WOUNDS, there are many different wounds, what are they and how to heal it. What are the practical measures? What if we are caught up in this ourselves? We definitely need to work more closely together the pastoral and admin together and are low on numbers. Look at the notion of Leadership and the notion to serve. Priests don't have all the answers. When you have people who we can acknowledge the gifts and talents that they have got, we need to develop this. Have very clear guidelines of what the Parish Pastoral Council is and the roles within this. We need to discern together and have consensus. Leadership is service, stewardship and authentic.

Authentic leadership we need to be authentic and accountable to be the 'keeper of the fire'. Formation to commit my time, have a plan and address our needs. It needs to be a team approach. Look at healing as 21st Century Catholics, the need to WELCOME others. We need to be inclusive and a need for belonging. We need to lead with a vision. Leadership is about relationships and focusing on youth. There is a disconnect between Parish and Schools. Do we all have a shared vision? Schools will have a youth minister in the schools 25% of the time and in the parish. Looking at accreditation for teacher in RE to invite member of our parish. Leadership without authority, invitational. Having a plan or goal to increase people to come to church. It is challenging, there are time tabling issues or time management issues., even access to school halls. Very big responsibility to manage in a macro climate not micro. Looking at the responsibility of people on committees to be able to speak up and ask the challenging questions.

15. Mechanism that provides feedback on whether we are meeting our goals? Are we welcoming parishes? Are we nourishing people's faith?
16. Pick up themes e.g. white ribbon day to create links with the community. The cares and hopes of the world are the cares and hope of the church.
17. Need a transparent church
 - leadership breaks down mystique (as opposed to mystery)
 - develop leadership that seeks out the lost and missing
 - leadership that encourages community – e.g. small groups that stay in contact with people
 - identify roles for all - train people that priests cannot do everything and do not need to do everything. Train lay ministers so that they can fulfil their roles well.
 - *needs to be a certain coherency in the parish - so that we know what is going on. Change our communication channels - work out what works.
 - advertise what people are doing – e.g. write about the people who are performing liturgies, people who prepare funeral liturgies with bereaved families.
 - our culture has changed - need to have leadership that is aware of changes.
 - Canonical body is the finance council., not the parish council. Parish councils need authority - roles and responsibilities. Bishop can put statues in place for parish council - identify such structure of council, identify its role and authority and it fits in with the priest - how it supports
 - Pastoral plan - designed to support parish life, parish life not structured to the plan, identify where we are going, what resources do we need, what formation is needed? What roles do people have? Do we need to change attitudes somehow? Do we need to change structures? How do we communicate - paper, electronic? Who do we communicate to? The people in the church? The people in the schools? Those we who don't see us anymore? Identify the roles of parish, diocese and national bodies for supporting parishes.
 - Leadership will involve all people.
 - People learn to do more for themselves.
 - Parish Pastoral Council Handbook could be a useful resource.
 - Find greater liturgical & leadership roles for women. lead liturgies, require female spirituality
 - Leadership need to make decisions – e.g. if a particular liturgy is offered in your community (parish) that is where you need to be. If liturgy of the word with communion is offered, then that is the liturgy not go to another parish for mass.
 - need audits and reporting - leads to responsibility and transparency. how many meetings do the people on leadership teams attend? Minutes of meetings to be distributed. How many people contribute to the planned giving - how many families in the church?
 - lead our parishes in social justice. Local leadership for social justice - we rely on Melbourne to organise events
 - Engage young people on our leadership committees. Find creative ways to engage them.

- Faith is caught not taught - we require leaders who will help us catch the faith.
 - Advertise local successes
 - *encourage people to bring their ideas forward - provide a mechanism that allows them to do this. E.g. Bairnsdale - parishioner suggested bereavement group that is facilitated by the person who suggested it. Bereavement covers all loss - loss of job, breakdown of family, death. This is an ongoing, regular activity
18. Need to lead and manage people from all over the country and the world. Our leaders need to bring out the best of everyone - this cannot be the role of one person as it is too big - we need communal leadership in this. Our culture changes so that we need to meet this too. Leaders need to think multicultural.
 19. We need leaders who are prepared to lead change. These leaders are called from all the baptised." Humility required for the leadership in the Church. Priest, prophet & king what roles can the lay faithful fulfil in the community regular formation is structured and provided to the ministries. Provide the empowerment for how laity can take up roles that provide more to the community. There is greater empathy within the church to connect with the people and their needs. Finance council is controlled within the Parish council not primarily the PP so the mission of the church remains unchanged throughout PP changes. Communication structures between leadership down to the local level are more transparent so forward planning is focused on the right parts. Everyone does one ministry, many hands make light work. Youth ministry teams are led by youth and guided/mentored by adults and have a representative on Parish Council. All demographics are represented on Parish council
 20. "Our Diocese and Parish would tap into the skills and abilities of ALL and be an inclusive community which engages the full diversity of parish life (including women). Offering equal formation for men and women and consulting women in the Council of Priests (some changes have already been made for example: Parish secretaries and priests meet together as part of their training).
 21. The Parish Pastoral Council has a plan and identifies the needs of the Parish and enables and seeks parishioners to fill these needs (with a focus on service and humility). There is a recognition that a lot of the administrative task currently undertaken by the clergy could be centralized (following the model of DOSCEL for Education) thus freeing up the Clergy for more pastoral work. Appropriate personnel selected (or head hunted) for Parish Councils so that the needs of the Parish can be met. Communicate the needs of the Parish with its Parishioners so there is a shared vision and understanding of its needs and its priorities.
 22. Diocesan wide formation process so that PPC and Finance Councils meet the particular needs of their groups and plans that meet the needs of the group are implemented. Perhaps include accountability where Parishes submit their plans/aims and these are supported (and coordinated) at a Diocesan level (within reason).
 23. Baptism promises: Enabling all to live out their baptismal call. Serving others at all times. Forming missionary disciples. This is driven by the Holy Spirit. The attending of mass is not all that is needed. We have to be involved. We need to awaken our inner selves.
 24. The clergy needs to own the structure. The individuals to need to contribute to the building of the church. We need to be joyful and happy people. We need to attract people. There has to be discipleship. We all at different stages of our life faith journeys. Gaining the trust of the lapsed catholic. Hospitality, is a great thing to be considered; it's a way of getting people together.
 25. There are very practical difficulties with priest offering services in communities where there are large areas to be serviced and we the community need to acknowledge this and help and support. We have to be in unison with them.
 26. Ecumenical church comes together so we show our unity.
 27. Selflessness; Humility (from members of the Pastoral Council). Priests and members of the Pastoral Council remembering that they are servants to parishioners therefore being humble

about it. Priests taking the initiative to connect with their parishioners. A parish with leaders who exhibit the appeal to equality. Parishes with clear communication channels between the levels of the clergy and levels of authority. Leaders who prioritise service and not over-exercising power (servant leadership). Open-ended. The community members all have a role, not just the clergy.

28. Each of us should develop the ability to heal wounds, to forgive others. Listening, taking time, being patient - don't have to give solutions necessarily. We need to be present in our community - break into smaller groups, to form connections. It helps if priests support what has previously been effective in the Parish. Priests need to be approachable and welcoming - ongoing formation to help them.
29. We need to generate the joy of the Gospel at Mass to take home. We need to catch them and create a positive experience at baptisms, 'tea and tissues', etc. Build positive connections between schools and parish
30. Make it a joyful Diocese. Leaders express the values of the communities in which they live - and need to form the young people into the leaders we need for the future. This enables joy in the community, we don't have to do it all. Succession planning is important e.g. finance committees. Ask 2-3 people to join, be proactive.
31. Overseas priests are happy to be here because the Bishop and priests look after them well.
32. It's important for the congregation to stay and connect with each other for a little while after Mass. Morning teas are great because they encourage connection and community. Communication with young people needs to be given priority, we need to look at new ways to engage with them including changing the language and using technology. Communicate more outside the Parish. It helps when priests give the congregation a short time to introduce themselves to each other at the start of Mass. Sometimes it can help to let the congregation to engage in dialogue during the homily. It helps to have the names of the readers etc. visible (whiteboard? bulletin?) so people can learn each other's names. Name tags can also help. Welcomers can help by inviting newcomers to morning tea after Mass. After newcomers are welcomed, they can be made to feel at home. Afterwards, they can be invited to take a leadership role.
33. 6 priests in 3 years in one parish; needs to be clarity. Some priests are autocratic and override what has been working in the parishes previously. A lack of servant leadership in some cases. Depends on the personality of the priests. Sometimes they use Canon Law as an excuse to overpower the community. Is the priest alone leading the parish? Parishioners need to have a role to help shape the culture of the Parish. Servant leadership is about empowering, not overpowering. The laity can provide leadership if they are enabled, and in this way they can support the priests in their work. If priests don't stay in the presbytery with the local community there can be a feeling of disconnection between the priest and the community he doesn't live with, under the Parishes in Partnership model.
34. Young people don't necessarily have the same friends at school and at Church.
35. What is the link between the hospital and the local Parish (John of God Berwick)? This is a Diocesan Hospital. There is a chance to enhance the links between the Church and patients and those who are supported in the hospital. The dedication of the Priests who faithfully serve the Hospital in Berwick - on rotation they are on call and quickly go when there are needs.
36. That we would all be leaders in a parish with the role of bringing out the good in others. A place where people are skilled and prepared to use them, e.g. open thinkers, good planners, budgeters, people with excellent people-skills. A place where young people are invited and encouraged to governance, not simply as a duty, but for the satisfaction of service and growth of the Church.
37. That people on governance bodies are well prepared and formed, so that governance bodies work more effectively. Perhaps the diocese could provide this formation. This may include

conversations and set criteria around the selection of those wishing to serve to ensure the best. There would be the possibility of training/mentoring of priests and deacons in their work of leadership, particularly those from different cultures and language backgrounds. Do those in governance positions have enough care for the level of faith knowledge of the regular parishioner in the pew? PPCs would be clear on their roles. Our priests need our support (additional parish administrators).

38. Social activities such as new parishioners ' dinner on a regular basis. Social media would be better used in positive ways, along with letters, bulletins and more conventional forms of communication. The personal touch remains important. It would be non-judgmental. People would enjoy being part of the Church. Outreach is important.
39. There would be welcomers at Sunday Mass. Everyone should feel welcome. The Parish Council would be an active group in the parish. The Parish Council would be involved with implementing various programs. The Parish would be a safe place for all, especially children. The priest would be respected but also a servant of the parish rather than being 'on a pedestal'. There would be a balance between what is currently relevant and the traditions of the Church. The role of women within the Church would be strengthened. Perhaps female Deacons in the Church. Older parishioners would mentor, and witness to, younger parishioners. Some priests 'hold on' to their leadership. They should be prepared to share the parish leadership in an appropriate manner." "An organic church that uses actions that are ongoing and always changing. Active participation at all levels.
40. A church that acknowledges the past and looks to the future. Welcoming and inclusive of all groups and inviting them to play a part at all levels i.e. PPC, Finance etc. All voices heard. Clergy and laity have a co-responsibility in sharing the load of the parish i.e. sacraments etc Have plans for the future and have them laid out, working together on the same mission. With achievable goals worked on in increment's so as not to be overwhelming. Structure that isn't ""top heavy"" Parish assemblies so the people still feel heard. Giving authority to a group to implement the mutually agreed mission of the parish. A parish that remembers it is part of a family and the other parishes are part of that family that have a common goal they are working towards. Where gender shouldn't define your worth. Finance should be transparent, open and clear. A committee decision not just the priest. A committee made up of all groups. When leadership changes it's important there is a continuity of the laity roles in the handover process so as not to change what isn't broken.
41. COMMUNICATION! and transparency. Minutes being made available to all parishioners. Using various platforms to communicate from newsletter to web to social media. Updating the platforms as they change but keeping it accessible to all. Open dialogue at a diocese level about the changing face of the roles of women, deacons, religious and clergy. Sharing roles.
42. Making a pool of talents amongst our parishes and our diocese as a whole and using them to help with professional development."
43. "Everything involves the Priest, we need to have the laity to be involved, but they need to have the skills to do this in working together. But rules of the Church needs to change. Schools have a formation of leadership with the reduction of religious, we can do a similar thing for parishes that focuses on the gifts of people in the diocese. People participate because they want to, their needs to be a trust in the laity and bring forth the leadership of others, this needs people who are trained. Be gender inclusive particularly in the area of leadership in parishes and Diocese - inclusive language is important here as well that assists in conveying meaning.
44. The diocese needs to determine what sort of role you want leadership to have in parishes, an excellent spiritual leader may not be a good administrator gifts of people need to be used well in parishes. It's not about power it's about being of service.
45. Canon Law needs to be examined in relation leadership models

46. The amount of money and infrastructure within the parish is dependent on the PP when they leave you can have nothing or if it has been managed well then things can go on.
47. Power to the parishioners is paramount in making sure there is Sustainability in the parish beyond the individual priest. The Holy Spirit works with everyone both clergy and laity. Parishioners need to be addressed directly when trying to get readers and ministers, rather than a general call from volunteers.
48. How do we tap into young people where are they? We're not promoting ourselves to young people by selling the fact that they can build their skills by being volunteers through service in the parish. Once young people see the service that can be provided they would happily join. Some parishes could benefit from a presence in Facebook or twitter to engage the whole community including young people. It's not about information it's about engagement. Hospitality with food and music should not be underestimated as a powerful tool for engaging people particularly the young. We could look at some of our parishes that are growing in the West that have cultures where services are more colourful and musically active. We tend to be more restrained in our worship.