



**SALE
DIOCESAN
ASSEMBLY**

*Sharing our story
Celebrating our faith
Shaping our future*

13-14 September 2019

Marist-Sion Hall, Marist-Sion College, Warragul

**Parish
Discussion
Resource**



SALE DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

*Sharing Our Story,
Celebrating our Faith,
Shaping Our Future.*

Preparing for The Sale Diocesan Assembly

On 13-14 September 2019, the Catholic Diocese of Sale is holding its Diocesan Assembly, the first for over 15 years. The Assembly will be convened in the spirit of the preparation for the Plenary Council 2020 in which we have already been engaged for the past eighteen months. Bishop Pat and the Diocesan Gaudium et Spes Plenary 2020 Committee have been aware that, through the feedback from hundreds of listening and Dialogue conversations held in parishes, schools and regional gatherings, there is much that can be done in our Diocese right now.

We want to hear from people all across our Diocese about the vision they have for their diocese and parishes in living the joy of the Gospel.

Diocesan Assembly Themes

Our Diocesan Assembly will focus on five major themes, which have been drawn from the many hundreds of responses from people across the Diocese during the Plenary Council's *Listening and Dialogue* stage 2018-2019.

- 1. Faith Formation & Spirituality (living out the joy of the Gospel)**
- 2. Leadership & Governance (providing leadership and structures that promote evangelisation)**
- 3. Families and Vocation (raising disciples in our families - so that they can go out into the world)**
- 4. Liturgy and Prayer (nourishing our communities)**
- 5. The Welcoming Community (a community on mission, not maintenance)**

Parish Discussions in Preparation for the Assembly

Before the Assembly commences, each community is encouraged to gather to reflect and discuss how God is calling us to be people who are living the joy of the Gospel.

The parish may decide to have one large gathering, within which small groups can each discuss one or two of the Assembly themes. Clergy, school staff and those chosen as official Parish Delegates to the Assembly should also participate in these discussions as a preparation for the Assembly so that they can reflect what is being said in their parishes.

Particular groups within the parish may also wish to meet to pray and reflect on the Assembly topics.

When meeting, please have a person to take notes of your discussion. These will be collated by the Diocese to help prepare for Assembly.

MEETING OUTLINE

- Gather
- Opening prayer and scripture
- Discuss (choose one or more Assembly Themes)
- Record your discussion (dot points)
- Closing Prayer

After your meeting please upload your discussion responses:

- Survey Monkey link on the Diocesan website www.cdsale.org.au

or

- directly to Survey Monkey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G58GMPY>

GATHERING

The meeting leader offers words of welcome and explains the purpose of the gathering.

PRAYER

We gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us take a moment in stillness to listen to God's Holy Spirit

Leader God of the journey, we are drawn by your Spirit
to look beyond the immediate horizon,
to be led to places where you wish to take us.
Like Abraham, our father in faith,
we're invited to place our trust in you
knowing that we will not be abandoned.
Like the disciples who travelled up the mountain with Jesus,
we gain glimpses of the glorious life to which you beckon us.
Help us to trust in you, Lord as we journey together
in your way of truth, light and hope.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

SCRIPTURE (Eph 3:14-21)

This is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every family,
whether spiritual or natural, takes its name:

Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your
hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through
faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints
have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth;
until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled
with the utter fullness of God.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

- Leader** Searching for God's light and love, we pray:
- Reader** For our world: for nations and their leaders, for churches and their faith communities, for institutions and societal structures, that are in need of renewal, that they may be agents of truth, peace and justice to those they serve. Together we pray:
Lord, hear our prayer.
- Reader** For our communities: workplaces, homes and neighbourhoods: that they may be transformed to become places of justice, peace and compassion. Together we pray:
Lord, hear our prayer.
- Reader** For ourselves, that we may seek and experience transformation in our lives, so that we may truly recognise the face of Christ in ourselves and others. Together we pray:
Lord, hear our prayer.
- Reader** For those who have lost hope: that they may see the glory and light of Christ shining for them, through the care and compassion of others. Together we pray:
Lord, hear our prayer.
- Leader** Loving God, you call us to bear the fruits of your love in the service of your kingdom. Help us to be hope-filled and joyful as we walk in the footsteps of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever.
Amen.
- Leader** In Christian solidarity, let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

CLOSING PRAYER *(at the end of your discussion)*

- Leader** May the Lord bless and keep us,
May the Lord shine his face upon us and be gracious to us
May the Lord turn his face towards us and grant us his peace (*Num 6:22-27*)
- All** **Amen.**

ASSEMBLY THEME 1.

Faith Formation & Spirituality (living out the joy of the Gospel)

- Faith Formation for adults
- Faith formation for children and young people
- Sacramental Preparation
- RCIA
- Understanding Church Teaching
- Prayer life

Scripture

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

You must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Messages

Seek God to find him and find God to keep searching for God forever. Often we seek as if we were blind...Our life is not given to us like an opera libretto, in which all is written down; but it means going, asking, doing, searching, seeing...We must enter into the adventure of the quest for meeting God; we must let God search and encounter us.

(Interview with Pope Francis, 30/9/2013)

Today's vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness.

(Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, #41).

Question

Reflecting on this Assembly theme, what would a parish living the joy of the Gospel be like?

ASSEMBLY THEME 2.

Leadership & Governance (providing leadership & structures that promote evangelisation)

- National/diocesan/parish structures
- Finance matters
- Parish Pastoral Councils
- Ongoing support, mentoring and professional development of leaders and staff
- Pastoral Planning
- Communication
- Roles – priests, religious, laity

Scripture

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

But Jesus called them and said: "Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

(Matthew 20:25-28)

Messages

I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity.

(Pope Francis, Interview with Jesuit magazine La Civita Cattolica)

It is impossible to think of a conversion of our activity as a Church that does not include the active participation of all the members of God's People. . . Such is the case with clericalism, an approach that not only nullifies the character of Christians, but also tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed in the heart of the people."

(Confronting the Systemic Dysfunction of Clericalism, Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, 2019, p4.)

Question

Reflecting on this Assembly theme, what would a parish living the joy of the Gospel be like?

ASSEMBLY THEME 3.

Families and Vocation (raising disciples in our families - so that they can go out into the world)

- Supporting family life in all its diversity
- Supporting married couples
- Supporting young people/young adults
- Vocations

Scripture

We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us.
(Ephesians 5:1)

And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.'
(Mark 16:15)

Messages

"Perfect families do not exist. This must not discourage us. Quite the opposite. Love is something we learn; love is something we live; love grows as it is 'forged' by the concrete situations which each particular family experiences. Love is born and constantly develops amid lights and shadows. Love can flourish in men and women who try not to make conflict the last word, but rather a new opportunity. An opportunity to seek help, an opportunity to question how we need to improve, an opportunity to discover the God Who is with us and never abandons us. This is a great legacy that we can give to our children, a very good lesson: we make mistakes, yes; we have problems, yes. But we know that that is not really what counts. We know that mistakes, problems and conflicts are an opportunity to draw closer to others, to draw closer to God."

(Pope Francis Address to Festival of Families, Philadelphia USA, Sept. 27, 2015)

What kind of world do we want to leave for the future? Let us leave a world with families. Let us care for our families, because they are true schools for the future, spaces of freedom, and centres of humanity. And let us reserve a special place in our families for individual and communal prayer. Let us pray that families, through their life of prayer and love, become ever more clearly "schools of true human development".

(Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for Families, August 2019)

Question

Reflecting on this Assembly theme, what would a parish living the joy of the Gospel be like?

ASSEMBLY THEME 4.

Liturgy and Prayer (nourishing our communities)

- Music
- Homilies
- Liturgical formation for parish communities and liturgy teams
- Liturgies, other than Sunday Eucharist
- A variety of prayer experiences

Scripture

I will praise your name forever, my King and my God. (Psalm 145)

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:19)

Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. (Jeremiah 29:12)

Messages

We cannot forget, first of all, that the liturgy is life that forms, not an idea to be learned. We know that it is not enough to change the liturgical books to improve the quality of the liturgy. ... For life to be truly a praise pleasing to God, it is indeed necessary to change the heart. Christian conversion is oriented to this conversion, which is an encounter of life with the "God of the living" (Mt 22: 32). (*Pope Francis' Address to the Congregation for Divine Worship & The Discipline of the Sacraments, Feb 14, 2019*)

Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the source from which all her power flows. (*2nd Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #7,10*)

Question

Reflecting on this Assembly theme, what would a parish living the joy of the Gospel be like?

ASSEMBLY THEME 5.

The Welcoming Community (a community on mission, not maintenance)

- Building a welcoming community
- Pastoral care
- Reaching out to those on the margins (divorced and remarried, gay community, those with disabilities)
- Reaching out to those who have left the church (resting Catholics)
- Strategies for growing parishes
- Caring for those affected by the sexual abuse crisis

Scripture

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
(Romans 15:7)

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. (John 15:16)

Messages

Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words. (*St Francis of Assisi*)

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.

(2nd Vatican Council, 'Gaudium et Spes' Pastoral Constitution in the Modern World, #1)

In life, God accompanies persons, and we must accompany them, starting from their situation. It is necessary to accompany them with mercy. (*Pope Francis, 30 Sept 2013*)

We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace.

(Pope Francis, Interview with La Repubblica 1 Oct 2013)

Instead of imposing new obligations, (Christians) should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet.

(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel, #15)

Question

Reflecting on this Assembly theme, what would a parish living the joy of the Gospel be like?

DISCUSSION NOTES

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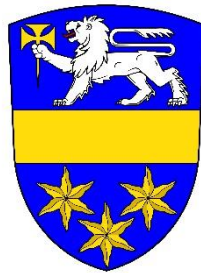
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