

Conversation/Topic: CHANGE IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY

Convenor: Sean Scanlon

Scribe: Sean Scanlon

Other Members:

Garry Muirhead, Robert Lucas, Oscar Aguiar, David Butterworth, Michael Maloney

Discussion Notes, Key Understanding, Outstanding Questions, Observations:

- Understanding the structure of Diocese – parishes, schools, etc.
- Sustainable financial environment
- Not just about money, but also aspects such as Care
- Overcome the barriers to change
- Link between Church and environment – draw in younger people
- Environmental sustainability is part of our responsibility as Church
- Issues around Canon Law
- Communication is an important part of the process

Action/Strategies:

- Improved communication between Diocese, parishes, schools
- Assessment of existing structure to identify changes.

Ongoing Conversation:

Interested Participants:

Conversation/Topic: CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Convenor: John Casey

Scribe: John Casey

Other Members:

Adrian Banister, Ursula Kauter, Wayne Hicks

Discussion Notes, Key Understanding, Outstanding Questions, Observations:

- Continuity of activity, involvement and parish culture when Pastoral Plan changes (is sometimes damaged)
- Some involvement in decision making in some parishes, none in others

Action/Strategies:

- This group did not really reach an objective conclusion.

Ongoing Conversation:

Interested Participants:

Conversation/Topic: LAY LEADERSHIP

Convenor: Geoff Mulhearn

Scribe: Greg Belcher

Other Members:

Discussion Notes, Key Understanding, Outstanding Questions, Observations:

- Need for education and formation for leadership
- Need to face obstacles to lay leadership identified by many participants as reluctance/resistance of many priests
- To reach agreement about the relationship between the roles of lay leaders and clerical leaders – co-leadership
- Address the issue of power that may arise
- Find ways to pay for some leadership positions
- Concept of team leadership/leadership by pastoral associates
- More dialogue at all levels of the Church about lay leadership
- Leadership through gifts – spiritual, knowledgeable, discerning, capable of relating to and encouraging others

Action/Strategies:

- Encouraging groups to work together
- Interested participants to meet to move the topic of lay leadership forward. Meet face to face, but also by other modern communication methods.

Ongoing Conversation:

Interested Participants:

Greg Byrne, Greg Belcher, Sr Margaret Valentine, Sr Anne Moylan, Carrie Hollis, John Hayes, Fr Geoff Mulhearn, Carmel Noonan

Conversation/Topic: PARISH MODEL

Convenor: (Not identified)

Scribe: (Not identified)

Other Members: (Not identified)

Discussion Notes, Key Understanding, Outstanding Questions, Observations:

- Council/team model has not caught on, is not working.
- There is a problem with people not coming forward to take on leadership roles – why?
- Chisholm already feels they are floundering. They already consider themselves as a super-parish and they have a *regional* office.
- Is the Deanery model what we are going to do? Are we working with Deaneries or Regions? Regions are not Canonical.
- There is negativity about going to a Deanery model.
- Shortage of priests – how many priests do we need under Canon Law requirements?
- Healthy Diocese only possible if the parishes are healthy.
- Average parishioner age is 65+
- Finance Council will be required to provide leadership.
- Parishes should be looking to dynamic parishes for example.
- Upper Hunter Region is currently sharing their priests.
- Different regions have different types of challenges – e.g. challenges of distance.
- Parishes are struggling to form Parish Councils.
- Need a new style of Church, which taken to the people rather than the people coming to the Church.
- People worried about losing their sense of community with the formation of super-parishes.
- Even in close geographical areas, people are finding it difficult to become one parish.
- Require flexibility around the very model of parish in the light of a mobile population.
- No communion service permitted when Mass is available within a reasonable distance.
- Would a deanery model replace regions (they cannot co-exist).

- Would a deanery model have a 10-15 year plan (like the Wineskins document)?
- How would new models sit within pre-existing protocols and statutes?
- Deaneries should include the Catholic schools within their boundaries.

Action/Strategies:

- Need standard job descriptions for each of the roles within a parish.
- Many challenges to be faced with the shortage of clergy – why not move NOW in a unilateral way for the creation of super-parishes? May be painful, but will happen eventually whether we like it or not. Better to be acting now than for each region to be forced to “go it alone” when an existing parish priest can no longer be of service.
- Currently four deaneries – perhaps move to six? The structures can be formalised now.
- Action required from the bottom to the top.
- How to develop protocols for people to work effectively, with accountability?

Ongoing Conversation:

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Interested Participants:

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