



DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

BRIEF REPORT ON THE 119TH MEETING

HELD ON SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2013

Present: Bishop Bill Wright, Mrs. Teresa Brierley, Mrs Trish Hales, Mr Lawrie Hallinan, Fr Kevin Corrigan, Mr Ray Collins, Mrs Ruth Trappel, Mrs Judy Crittenden, Mr Bal Gato, Mrs Joan Wilson, Mr Andrew McGinlay, Mr Kevin Thornton, Mr Lance Scriven, Mr Ray Keast-Jones, , Mr John Donnelly, Mr Elroy Aguiar, Mrs Bev Hincks, Sr Louise Gannon.

Sacraments of Initiation Policy

John Donnelly explained the Sacraments of Initiation Policy has been circulated to other advisory bodies such as the Council of Priests and invited the DPC representative's to provide their comments.

John explained that the Working Party felt that the family unit ought to have primacy in the preparation and celebration of Sacraments of Initiation for Children. There was considerable discussion about whether some Sacraments of Initiation should be held over until the recipient is an adult. For instance it was suggested that Confirmation could be delayed. The early Christian order of Sacraments of Initiation was explained (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). This led to the suggestion that maybe a new ritual was needed where an adult reaffirmed their commitment in faith. The counter view was that all people grow into their commitment to Christ and that children should be able to continue to receive the Sacraments of Initiation. The additional suggestion was made that Parishes could incorporate a commitment to discipleship for all their members each year (e.g. at Pentecost).

John would make changes to the policy as suggested by the DPC members and present at the next meeting.

Special Religious Education Annual Report

John Donnelly showed an audio visual presentation prepared by Wollongong Diocese to promote and recruit catechists which has been provided to Parishes; John has used the resource when speaking at Parish Masses.

There is no SRE teaching in secondary schools in the diocese as there is a shortage of SRE teachers, and as a result the diocese is struggling to provide SRE teachers in primary schools. The diocese has two school chaplains, funded under the school chaplaincy program.

Trish Hales thanked John for the report and asked him to pass on the DPC's thanks to the SRE teachers.

Baptism preparation/follow up programs review

Due to illness, workload and time restraints in gathering resources, the review is still being developed

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on 19th October 2013, was accepted as accurate.

Bishop's Update

Happenings around the Diocese

The diocese will be building a new school in Chisholm the first in many years. The school is partially funded by the Australian Government of just over 3 million dollars to assist in building the school. Chisholm will incorporate a small chapel which could be used for worship on Sundays.

Fundraising is underway to stop St John's Chapel in Maitland from further decay. The external wall will be refurbished, but the existing internal ceiling will remain.

Bishop Bill explained that the night care van is not in service currently due to WH&S issues and the cost involved in running the van even though there are a lot of volunteers who assist with the running of the van. It is hoped that funding for the van will be available soon.

A major study in the teaching of RE in secondary schools has completed its first stage. A program has been designed to assist teacher's who teach RE in Secondary Schools, as well as providing specialist training to assist teachers to gain professional qualifications to teach RE in secondary schools.

Bishop Bill noted that he had been reading advertisements for secondary positions and was hopeful that some time in the near future there would be positions advertised for specialist teachers of Religious Education and Studies of Religion. Secondary School Principals will be asked to encourage existing teachers to teach more RE.

Royal & Special Commission of Inquiry

Bishop Bill said The NSW Special Commission is still going, Detective Fox had a public hearing and in-camera hearings are continuing. The commission is continuing to call for more documentation. Margaret Cunneen, the Special Commissioner is scheduled to submit the final report to the Governor on 28 February 2014. Most of the Special Commissioner's report is expected to be released by the NSW government shortly thereafter. It is hoped that the Diocese will be made aware of any adverse findings prior to the report being made public.

The Royal Commission commenced with investigations into the YMCA and is now looking at Towards Healing; there have been four particular cases, some old and

some new ones. The Royal Commission has increased its staff due to the number of people coming forward for in-camera interviews. The Truth, Justice and Healing Council has been providing submissions at the invitation of the Royal Commission and has provided a written submission to the Attorney General's Office asking them to consider a national compensation scheme for the victims of child sexual abuse.

Overseas Priests Program

Bishop Bill tabled a draft copy of Policy for Working with International Priests and asked the DPC members to read the policy and provide feedback to Fr Brian Mascord by 1st February 2014.

Regional/Council/Agencies Updates

Regional Reports

Trish Hales noted that Foster Tuncurry have provided their Parish Pastoral Plan for 2013 to 2015.

Toronto parish have launched a Facebook page. Morisset have nominated seven lay leaders. The process is being refined and is an ongoing formation and training as the lay leadership model develops.

Council Reports

Diocesan Council for Ministry with Young People

Eighty people from the diocese attended the Catholic Youth Festival, held in Melbourne. Elroy said it was a fantastic experience, for young people to gather together in Australia, as many young people feel isolated at their own parish mass. Bishop Bill felt the Festival was a great success and felt that another one would be held every second year. DCMYP will hold its retreat in March next year.

Vatican Family Survey

About twenty people have commented on the disappointment of the language used, but people show great respect to the church and the complex living in society today. A number of responses were received and collated with a copy of all the responses presented to Bishop Bill.

Regional Councils Proposed Pilot Project – Twelve Months

Teresa explained that the tabled amended Discussion Paper – Regional Council has been presented to the Council of Priest's. Bishop Bill invited the regions and PP to partake in the project. Two parishes from the Vineyards region are happy to be involved. The City Region has indicated they would like to participate. The Upper Hunter Region would participate, but as they hold regional meetings it would be done in a different way. The DPC members are asked to discuss with the PP's in their region to see if more regions would like to come on board.

Date of Next DPC Meeting 2014

The next meeting of the DPC is Saturday 22nd February 2014, in the Toohey Room, Cathedral House, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle, commencing at 9.00am.

To contact the DPC phone 4979 1117 or e-mail

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