



DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

BRIEF REPORT ON THE 124TH MEETING

HELD ON SATURDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2015

Present: Bishop Bill Wright, Fr Brian Mascord, Mrs. Teresa Brierley, Mrs Trish Hales, Fr Kevin Corrigan, Mr Ray Collins, Mrs Pat Campbell, Mrs Judy Crittenden, Mr Lance Scriven, Mrs Irene Gover Mr Jim Curran, Mr John Donnelly, Mr James Elliott, Mrs Alyson Segrott, Sr Louise Gannon, Mrs Shirley McHugh.

Regional Reporting

Outcomes from the last DPC meeting identified that most of our regions are dysfunctional. The DPC tried to facilitate regions in working together through regional gatherings held last year in the Vineyards and Upper Hunter.

A recommendation needs to be made to Bishop Bill, suggesting how the regions could function because the numbers of regional representative are falling. Bishop Bill is attuned to the voice of the people when he does his visitation to parishes which occurs every two years.

A number of options were presented to the DPC. The DPC preferred the suggestion of an open table meeting which would involve inviting the parishes to present two issues that would set the DPC agenda for the year. The DPC and Bishop Bill could also table issues. The DPC would then act on these issues. People with relevant skills could be invited to be part of a working party that would provide appropriate recommendations for the issues. The DPC will further explore this option, and if suitable will propose this as a recommendation to the Bishop at the next meeting.

Regional Input to DPC

The key issue of regional representative vacancies on the DPC still remains a matter of concern and how to honour having a group of regional representatives across the dioceses.

Regions have very limited resources due to the geographical structure of parishes in coming together as a region. Gatherings are a great opportunity to air issues. The DPC decided to revisit the pilot paper Regional Gatherings model; exploring how this would look over two year period in conjunction with the Bishop's visitations. Information gathered at these gatherings would sit at the local parish level.

DPC Representative Structure

The current structure of regional representatives on the DPC is not working. It was felt there is a need to explore what is the best representative structure for the DPC. The vacancies could be filled by people from around the diocese with specialist skills or interest ensuring that it is geographically, gender and age balanced.

The DPC recommended the vacant positions are not to be replaced by regional representative. These vacant

positions should be replaced by people from across the diocese according to the issues on the DPC agenda.

DPC Pastoral Planning

Bishop Bill this year will meet with the Diocesan Extended Executive on the 2nd and 3rd March, to look at Pastoral Planning.

Diocesan Gathering

It was decided not to proceed with the gathering in October of this year. It was felt best to hold an event next year, to celebrate 150th Anniversary of the establishment of the diocese. Nominations to be part of the working party are to be sent to Alyson Segrott before the next DPC meeting.

World Youth Day 2016

Brian and Sue Lacey have been appointed as the World Youth Day 2016 (WYD16) coordinators. They will be attending a familiarisation session in the next few weeks. The DCMYP will be working closely with the coordinators to arrange the 2016 WYD pilgrimage.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on 29th November 2014, was accepted as accurate.

Bishop's Update

Happenings around the Diocese Clergy Movements

There will be a number of overseas priests coming to the diocese.

Father Thomas Chirackal will initially work with Fr George Mullappallil in Singleton.

A priest from the an Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross, who has maintained his Anglican Rites, will start in early May working as an Assistant Priest in the diocese.

Fr John Vo who was to work with Fr Peter Tran in, Wallsend-Sugarloaf is waiting to complete his English test.

Fr Sunny Varughese an Indian priest, who is currently in Rome, will be meeting with Bishop Bill soon.

Fr Thomas Sabu will also be coming to the diocese; it is not his first time to Australia. Fr Thomas Sabu will be able to provide the Syro Malabar Mass for that community. He will also act as an assistant priest in the diocese.

Each newly appointed overseas priest will participate in an orientation program and will be provided with a mentoring group, which will be made up of people from the parish.

Fr Greg Arnold has recently retired; his replacement is Fr Terry Horne who has been appointed as the parish priest to Blackbutt South.

Fr Greg Barker will be appointed as Administrator Pro Tem to the parish of Forster/Tuncurry.

Fr Andrew Doohan has been appointed as the Dean of Sacred Heart Cathedral and Parish Priest of Newcastle Catholic Community of St Benedict Parish, due to the recent retirement of Mons Allan Hart. The retirement of Fr Bill Burston will be effective after Easter no details of replacement as yet.

The recommendations of the Independent Panel are available on our website.

Regional/Council/Agencies Updates

Regional Reports were noted as read.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Council

The Ecumenical and Interfaith will be holding an interfaith dialogue on 2nd June. Bishops Bill Wright (Catholic), Bishop Greg Thompson (Anglican) and Shiekh Mohamed Khamis (Muslim) has agreed to participate.

Catholic Schools Office

On 10th February, Catholic Schools held their annual Call to Serve Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral. The awards given showed that everyone is important from a teacher to a cleaner in being committed to working in a Catholic School and demonstrating their faith commitment.

2015 Bishop's Synod on the Family

Recently a request from Pope Francis and the Synod of Bishops came to the diocese seeking responses to questions as part of their preparation for the 2015 Synod on the Family. Seventy people participated in either the surveys or in the discussion groups. The collated results have been sent to the ACBC for inclusion in the Australian report to be sent Rome in April.

Sacraments of Initiation Policy

A draft copy of the proposed final version of the policy was presented to the DPC members. This policy has been reviewed by the DPC and the Council of Priests and is now ready to be presented to the Bishop for approval.

Catholic Lay Pastoral Ministry Project

In December 2014 the Christian Research Association (CRA) requested a suggested possible location to conduct a research of "Exploring Lay Pastoral Ministry in the Catholic Church in Australian". Morisset parish was suggested as being illustrative of the realities of lay pastoral ministry and suitable to research. CRA has contacted Bishop Bill to ask permission to proceed with the research. Both Bishop Bill and the Morisset Lay

Pastoral Leadership Team are happy to be part of the research project.

Giveusasign

An information pamphlet was tabled at the meeting. Every Tuesday during Lent every parish, school or church are asked to display a message on their building noticeboards showing support for Asylum Seekers. The campaign is an initiative of the Hunter Social Justice Network Group. The campaign has now gone to the ACBC, Jesuit Refugee Services and churches nationally, which is a great outcome as the campaign initially began here.

Date of Next DPC Meeting 2015

The next meeting of the DPC is Saturday 2nd May 2015, in the Toohey Room, Cathedral House, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle, commencing at 9.00am.

To contact the DPC phone 4979 1117 or e-mail Alyson.Segrott@mn.catholic.org.au