

Auckland Diocesan Pastoral Council Newsletter

On 9 March the Diocesan Pastoral Council met for the first time this year. The meeting began with a formal welcome to Tiraroa Bucknell-Webb the new urban Māori delegate.

The Council then heard from two diocesan leaders. Alison Munro is the Chancellor of the diocese working in the Bishop's Office. This is a new position for Auckland. Alison introduced herself and explained a little of her role and responsibilities.

James van Schie is the General Manager of the diocese. He presented information about the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care. James talked about the expectations of when the final report will be published and its implications for the Catholic Church. He gave some guidance on responding to matters that are raised regarding these issues and answered questions that arose.

How are we a Synodal Church in Mission?

The Council spent time reflecting on the Synthesis document **How are we a synodal Church in Mission?** Concrete actions using the lens of Chapter 5 "out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation" resulted. Many of the actions from the discernment are 'cultural centred' but also serve to give a framework to welcome others who are on-the edge and feel unwelcome. Some are already in place others are suggestions.

- Be welcoming through smiling, greeting, taking an interest. Be able to do this before and after Mass and not asked to be quiet.
- Name Tag Sunday so that all feel they are named and important.
- Visitors, those new to the parish to stand and be welcomed. People to follow up after Mass.
- Look at the language we are using and that it is accessible in our messages and liturgy.
- Incorporation of cultural aspects within the Eucharist.
- Different communities 'host mass' and do morning tea afterwards.
- Invite and celebrate the ethnic community choirs.
- Welcome before Mass happens in more than one language or other dominant culture.
- Parish new migrant ministries team
 - Invite new migrants for a fun and information night.
- Celebrate cultural diversity through cultural evenings.
- Invite mix of people to ministries or to do something practical.
- Ensure parish pastoral council/finance council representatives reflect the diversity of the parish.
- Engage the ethnic youth groups together in particular activities.
- Inter-parish, inter-denomination, inter-faith activities of service, meeting the needs of others under common purpose. Let's people learn about each other.
- Support and enhance the diocesan ethnic festival.
- Do simple accessible (especially financially so) that welcome all. Potluck meals - people share from their culture Parish family gatherings such as picnics.

A Warm Welcome

Members of Te Whanau Tapu parish accompanied Tiraroa Bucknell-Webb to her first meeting of the Council as the urban Māori delegate. The Council led by Vicar for Māori Manuel Beazley officially welcomed Tiraroa. During evening Mass Bishop Steve commissioned Tiraroa as a Councillor. Welcome Tiraroa.



Bishop Steve and other members of the DPC bless Tiraroa as she is commissioned as a delegate to the Council.

The Importance of Communication



One of the recurring themes of the meeting was the importance of communication. It was felt that the National Catholic Church's voice was mute and that it was important as the report of the Royal Commission that this be resolved.

One suggestion was made about using technology such as zoom to communicate with the wider diocese through huis where significant information was shared by Bishop Steve, James van Schie,...



Highlights from Reports

Life Teen Camp drew out the spirit and confidence in our kids as new friendships started to form and soon enough, we felt like one big family. The kids being so happy to reunite at the first social night of the year is indicative of this special bond they built on camp

Youth delegate report

Once a month we invite a guest speaker to come and share their life of faith experience with the community. We started this last year. There is shared lunch afterwards, and people can continue their conversations with one another. This helps build up a sense of belonging to the Parish family.

Parish report

A weekly note of school activities in the Parish Bulletin provides a welcome link for parishioners.

Parish report

The Parish Council is offering 4 "Opportunities for Synodal Conversation" during the Sundays of Lent. 18 people attended the first one, which focused on prayerful listening and discernment around communion and mission

Parish report

A Children's Lenten Retreat is being offered.

Parish report on Lenten initiatives.

Pyjama Drive, where parishioners donate new pjs/nightwear/slippers which are then distributed by Catholic Social Services

Parish report on Lenten initiatives.

Listening to the Diocese

Having spent time praying with and considering reports submitted from faith communities, members broke into spiritual conversation groups. Following the process of 'what I heard', 'what you heard' 'what are we hearing?' each group prepared a short oral report to present to Bishop Steve. Bishop Steve then facilitated a dialogue around matters arising.

initiatives being offered to the faith community over Lent to build their faith

Most parishes are doing some form of additional Lenten activities - variety varies, most offering at least the Stations of the Cross. Good to see that additional activities are being offered and that people are attending.

How do we know these are successful?

- Growth in numbers attending including new people.
- People are participating more - e.g. offering to lead Stations of the Cross
- parishioners express that the activities have enriched their experience of faith.

Bishop Steve asked the council *What should Lent do for us?*

- Renew faith.
- Make us more compassionate and aware God is calling us to as disciples of Jesus.
- Reflect on our relationship with God, pause, reflect, renew.
- Grow and deepen what faith we have.
- Strengthens us for mission.

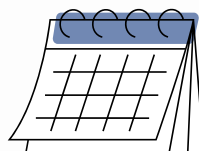
A further question was asked| Are devotions something we do to make ourselves feel better or actions to deepen? We continually need to ask ourselves what our motivation is, are we just ticking boxes?

Numbers of catechumens and candidates:

Some parishes have large numbers of catechumens and candidates and other parishes (even adjoining parishes) have none. A general question was asked why is that? We are a missionary church, and some parishes seem to be doing it really well and others not so well. If a school is attached to a Church then numbers of candidates and catechumens seems to be higher.

DPC Meetings 2024

Date reports due to delegate



22 June | Reports due 14 June.

17 August | Reports due 9 August.

2 November | Reports due 25 October.