



# Auckland Diocesan Pastoral Council Newsletter

The Diocesan Pastoral Council met on Saturday 17 August. Prior to the meeting opening, they gathered with Bishop Steve and two other consultative bodies, the Diocesan Administration Council and the Council of Priests.

This annual meeting was an opportunity for Bishop Steve to listen to the wisdom of a number of people serving the diocese in various ways. James van Schie (General Manager) and Sr Siân Owen (Executive Secretary to the DPC) facilitated a conversation concerning the management of reshaping the diocese in line with the vision presented previously by Bishop Steve.

Three areas were scoped.

*Pitch* – what key messages need to be given about the process?

Key influence | Bishop Steve's vision of reshaping.

*Participation* – what do people need to know in order to participate in the decision making?

Key influence | The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church – Congregation for the Clergy 2020

*Process* – what are the key steps to enable the conversations to be had to inform decision making?

Key influence | Synod on Synodality 2021-2024

Each of these areas was explored collaboratively and prayerfully. The results of this discernment were compiled to inform the next stages.



*Members of the DPC, DAC and COP with Bishop Steve at thier combined meeting 17 August 2024*



*Members of the DPC claim a seat before the start of Mass at the Diocesan World Youth Day event.*

The combined meeting concluded with lunch. Following this the August 2024 DPC meeting was opened.

The meeting concluded early so that members could join youth of the diocese for dinner and Mass at the Victory Centre to celebrate *World Youth Day, Auckland 2024*.



## Highlights from Reports

We have identified young people in the Parish to ensure we can: (i) facilitate discussion with them to identify priority youth initiatives within the parish (part of our 3-year plan) and (ii) identify opportunities for ministry.

Parish report

Our parish is like a parish family. Most of us know most of the parishioners. We have a strong sense of community... we have T Multicultural Mass at which we all sing together in 7-9 languages. Each member of the Multicultural Group is invited to share at least one hymn in their mother-tongue which they then teach to the whole group, and which is then sung by the whole congregation at Mass

Parish reports

"There are 16 male Orders, Congregations, & Missionary Societies represented in the Diocese. There are 85 Male Religious in the Diocese of Auckland

- 36 Religious Brothers
- 51 Religious Priests
- +/-50 are 80

Countries of Origin include: Australia, Chile, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Vietnam

Male religious delegatet

There is a lot of vitality in many parishes. Generally, they are doing their best to respond to needs of parishioners.

DPC Reflection.

# Listening to the Diocese

Having spent time praying with and considering reports submitted from faith communities, members entered a synodal process to consider matters of the diocese. Bishop Steve then joined them to dialogue around life and concerns in the diocese.

## Some of the Concerns of the diocese

- Financial hardship on individuals and communities.
- Lack of volunteers for ministries and long-term fatigue for regular volunteers.
  - Reality is that people are very busy putting food on the table and may be working two or three jobs.
- Ageing clergy and parishioners
- Physical wellbeing and mental health of people
- Need for Adult faith formation for adults
- Bishop Steve asked what is most important to address?

## What to celebrate in the diocese.

- Parishes are helping those who are in need
- Sacrament of Initiation flourishing in many places
- 8 men are applying from Auckland for the seminary next year 4 from Vietnam, 4 local.
- Mark Bond to be ordained at the Cathedral next Saturday.
- Work of St Vincent de Paul, de Paul House, Monte Cecilia
- Successful faith formation occurs in some areas and could be a model for others
- Awareness and actions to include young people
- Eucharist and sacraments are available to diocese – we have priests.
- There are generous people sharing time and resources.
- Some communities provide awesome activities for young people, and invite them to participate.

## Questions of the diocese

- How do we hold and engage and young people at the church?
- Is there a limit to the length of homilies?
  - 8 minutes is suggested by Pope Francis. Bishop Steve agrees.
- Directions are required on combining parishes need to be clear about what is happening.
  - Update requested about amalgamation especially Glendowie/St Helier's area
- What is the consequence of a parish not having a parish pastoral council?

Bishop Steve responded to questions about reshaping by noting that

- The diocese is starting to prepare information so that the local communities can make informed decisions
- Systems are not yet complete to begin reshaping in a synodal way.

## DPC Meetings 2024

2 November |

Reports due 25 October.

