



Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council

Meeting 8

22 and 23 November 2024

Meeting Report

Members: Bishop Shane Mackinlay, Very Rev Joe Taylor VG, Mrs Alana Brennan, Rev Vijay Bandanadam ALCP/OSS, Rev Stephen Bolling, Mr Mick Chalkley (Chair), Mrs Jobelle Collier, Mrs Angela Finn, Ms Kate Fogarty, Mr Stephen McKinley, Mr Michael McLinden, Mr Jean-Marie Mupenda, Mr Miggy Podosky, Rev Jackson Saunders, Mrs Libby Dowling, Mrs Christine Sebire.

Officers: Dr Chris Cotter, Executive Officer, Mrs Leslie Cooper, Administration.

Formation

A formation session was facilitated by Dr Chris Cotter on Friday evening based on the Synod Retreat Meditation by Rev (Cardinal-elect) Timothy Radcliffe OP ["Searching in the Dark" John 20:1-18](#). The retreat meditation provoked thoughtful reflection and conversation for members of the Council.

Mass and Commissioning

At the celebration of Mass on Saturday morning Ms Kate Fogarty and Mrs Libby Dowling were commissioned as members of the Council.

Parish Visitation Program (PVP) Pilot – Report

Dr Chris Cotter gave a brief overview of the Parish Visitation Program, the three phases (Preparation, Visitation and Follow-up) and its purpose and indicated the groupings of parishes that participated in the Pilots (Eaglehawk-Inglewood/Marong and Wangarrata-Wangaratta South-Moyhu).

Bishop Shane's shared his reflection on the Parish Visitations. Key points:

- Parish life is busy, and the Parish Visitation Program allows the parish to step back, reflect and consider what needs to be done in the long term.
- Bishop Shane indicated that by the time he arrived at each parish, he had the benefit of reading the Parish Report which allowed him to arrive informed and to propose questions that were relevant and hopefully valuable during the visitation.
- Each visitation was a good mix of formal visits, liturgy, conversations and social time with parishioners. This allowed for constructive conversations to help the parish move forward.
- Future Parish Visitations will incorporate the Strategic Mission and Pastoral Goals. Parishes will be asked to consider the Goals in their review, assessment, report, goal setting and future planning.
- Dates are being set for Visitations across the diocese for 2025 through to 2029.

Synod for a Synodal Church: Report by Bishop Shane

Key points:

- The Synod experience was overwhelmingly positive. There was a sense among the delegates that the Synod was a very worthwhile exercise.
- Pope Francis had commissioned 10 study groups to focus on some of the topics from the First Session's Synthesis report, which allowed the Second Session to have a more focused agenda. The Synod delegates were free to have dialogue with the study groups and input into the topics.
- The presence of four Indigenous delegates at the Synod Assembly from Oceania (Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea) is important to note.
- The consensus that emerged in the voting for the Final Document was a strong endorsement of the Synod and was very significant, as it involved broad agreement of a very diverse array of bishops, cardinals, lay people and priests from across the world.
- Pope Francis has stated that the Final Document of the Synod participates in the ordinary Magisterium of the Successor of St Peter and has asked that it be accepted as such.

Sandhurst Strategic Mission and Pastoral Goals

The [booklet version of the Goals](#) was tabled at the meeting.

Jubilee 2025: “Pilgrims of Hope”

Five diocesan pilgrimage sites have been chosen for the Jubilee: Sacred Heart Cathedral, grave of Fr Backhaus in Bendigo, grave of Fr Galen in Wangaratta, Mass Tree in Wahgunyah, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Garden and Heritage Trail in Numurkah. A prayer card is in development with a brief guide to the 5 pilgrimage sites and a QR code which will direct to diocesan webpage with further information. The purpose is to inspire members of the faithful to participate in a local pilgrimage to one or more of the five pilgrimage sites. A Sandhurst Jubilee hashtag will be developed to encourage online engagement.

Recruitment

The diocese has placed advertisements for a Youth Ministry Team Leader and an Assistant Director, Mission and Pastoral Life. The advertisements closed on Monday 25 November. Interviews will take place during the first week of December.

New Chair of Council of Priests

Fr Adi Indra was elected Chair of the Council of Priests for the next three years at the recent Council meeting (21 November). His current appointment is in the Wodonga Ministry Team. The Council of Priests meet twice per year and all priests with a ministry appointment in the diocese are members.