



Catholic Archdiocese of  
**Canberra and Goulburn**

# **A Diocesan Pastoral Council**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
August 2022

## The Year of Walking Together Icon



*I humbly walk with you and our people as these people walk with theirs and Jesus to Emmaus. Colours and gestures express the mystery of walking with God, others, and nature. Therefore faith and culture, past and present...form who we are today. With deep gratitude "we walk humbly with God" in doing justice and loving tenderly (Micah 6:8).*

### COLOURS

**Gold:** kingdom, Australia, peace...

**White:** life, new life, resurrection, Holy Spirit...

**Red:** Divinity

**Blue:** humanity

**Rose:** youth, cheerfulness...

**Green:** hope, Australia

**Yellow:** fire, Australia

Red, Blue, Yellow are three primary colours, originally created by God. He calls us to multiply from these three to hundreds of other to make life colourfully, praise the Lord.

### GESTURES

- Walking together
- Listening to each other
- Wondering, contemplating, questioning, responding, living, faith in...
- Jesus eyes look passionately at human hearts.
- Others eyes looking at Jesus, searching for life.
- Mission rolls on their hands, Jesus mission roll is revealed and opened to everyone.

- Old man, old generations, the church, human history in the past and present.
- Young person, male and female, present and future.
- The road is opened for these and all by Jesus,  
" I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"
- (Jn14:6). The earth is rough and wild.
- The youth tries to touch Jesus ' cloak (Mk 5:27).
- Jesus' stola, the cross of His Father's will (red).
- Any followers of Christ " carry a cross and follow Me"(Mt 16:24).  
Both people carry a stola, cross on them.
- Scripture quotes on Jesus s life and mission, also on our Synodal journey.
- The Holy Spirit, white colour, hovering over Jesus and others.
- The fire, light, wisdom inspire hearts and minds. Jesus'  
hallow surrounded by red (God, cross).
- Jesus' right hand ring finger crosses the thumb create an  
X = Christ, and points at his heart.
- Wounded nail holes are only Jesus' character.

## **ICONOGRAPHY**

An early Eastern church tradition. It conveys a deep meaning and inspiring spiritual reflection beyond the painting itself. It creates a dialogue between it and the prayers.

It's detailed in writing clear and sharp. Each brush stroke is a prayer, that why monks and sisters like doing it. Also we can't find signatures and writer (painter) names on them. They want the observers to focus on God and spiritual aspects.

## Preface

The Second Vatican Council in its Constitution on the Church defined the Church as the People of God with the task of being the sacrament of Christ to the world. The Council identified a three-fold task for the People of God: to proclaim the salvation brought through the Risen Lord (n. 8); to bring people together in participation of the divine life (nn. 2 and 48); and, to pursue a life of faith, hope and charity (“follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ”) (n. 41).

In this way the Council explored two elements of the Christian mission: to proclaim Jesus the Christ throughout the whole world (Mk 16: 15) and the detail of that proclamation to bring the Good News to the poor in word and action (Lk 4: 16 – 20 and Mt 25: 31 – 46).

To be a light to the nations in this Archdiocese requires reading the signs of the times and asking deeply and consistently, ‘what is God asking of us today?’ This prophetic dimension – examining the ‘times’ and proclaiming the Gospel – is at the heart of the mission of the Archdiocese.

In reflecting on the needs of the Archdiocese at this point, its people and communities and the Christian imperative to proclaim Jesus, Archbishop Christopher has himself reflected on his first words to the Archdiocese. The Gospel which we proclaim poses a primal choice: that we can sit on the shore of life content with what we have or we can take the risk of fishing in unchartered waters (Prowse, 2013, Installation Mass p. 4). Given the wide and numerous challenges of our times he has also reminded us to be aware that in all our endeavours, *“that the immensity of the power is God’s and not our own. We are subjected to every kind of hardship, but never distressed; we see no way out but never despair”* (2 Cor 4:7-8)

This report responds to the Terms of Reference provided by the Archbishop to consider whether and how to establish a Diocesan Pastoral Council to enliven and further our mission as a Church in this Archdiocese.

## Executive Summary and Recommendations

(Page references below are to pages in the full report)

### SUMMARY

1. On 12 April 2022 Archbishop Christopher Prowse created a Working Party to move towards re-establishing a Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) for this era in our Archdiocese. He asked the Working Party to consider and advise on:
  - past attempts at a DPC – our legacy
  - The present context and needs; and
  - options for a workable DPC. (pp. 4 -5)
2. The broader Church context for underpinning this work included the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the associated report From the Light of the Southern Cross and the Archdiocese’s Response to this Report, the considerations of the Plenary Council and the forthcoming Rome Synod of Bishops in 2023. (pp 5 – 8)
3. The Working Party examined canon law on diocesan pastoral councils, as well as the previous reports, minutes and publications related to earlier DPCs and the two Diocesan Synods (1989 and 2004) held by the Archdiocesan Archives. It called for opinions and ideas from across the Archdiocese and it met with some of those who had been involved in the past DPCs. It also conducted preliminary consultations with interested parties, including a range of priests and those calling for the re-introduction of the DPC. It has also researched international experiences which may be useful to this Archdiocese.
4. The Working Party concluded that the Archbishop and the Archdiocese would benefit significantly from reforming a DPC. It formed the view that such a body would need to be constituted differently from Councils of the past in order to be successful. A DPC will benefit the Archdiocese because it provides a broad but co-ordinated forum for issues and ideas involving parishes, priests, Archdiocesan agencies and other important Catholic entities within the boundaries of the Archdiocese. Bringing all these interests to one table enhances opportunities for listening and learning together as well as developing responses which take into account the very different experiences they bring to the evangelising mission of the Archdiocese.
5. The Working Party found that previous DPCs had a mixed legacy, with the reports of those considered most effective identifying the key factor as being a broadly representative body which was still small enough to deliver an effective work program. (pp. 11 – 14)
6. The Working Party concluded that, to be effective a DPC needed to have clear goals and workplan. In light of the recent Plenary Council, it is suggested that the initial goals should be assisting in the implementation of the Plenary Council decisions (as applicable to the Archdiocese) and being part of the planning for the forthcoming Diocesan Synod (which the Plenary Council has signalled should take place within 5 years).
7. To develop ongoing goals and work plan, the Working Party proposes that, the work of the council would be enhanced by receiving annual advice from the Archbishop on his key priorities for the Archdiocese. (p. 36)
8. Previous iterations of the DPC experienced issues with communication between the Council and the parishes, especially when conveying the work of the Council across

the Archdiocese. Consequently, the working party considers it a high priority for the new DPC to publish and widely disseminate an annual report.

9. To effectively fulfil its canonical mandate, a DPC needs to be representative, equitable and skilled. There are many options for its makeup which fit these requirements but the Working Party concluded that the fairest composition for *parish* representation would be based on the four deaneries for the Archdiocese. It then recommends nominees from the Council of Priests, religious sisters and brothers, Catholic agencies such as MarymeadCatholicCare and Catholic Education, as well as other entities like the St Vincent de Paul, the Women’s Taskforce, the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. It is also recommended that other formal instruments of governance and consultation within the Archdiocese are represented, for instance Vicars-General and the Chair of the Finance Council. In addition, the Working party believes that the DPC would benefit from the appointment of **up to 8** people who have specialist knowledge or skills by representing groups who might not be well represented, such as those living with disabilities, the aged, youth and families, First Nations Catholics, and those calling for church reform and caring for creation.
10. In total this would result in 27 appointments linked to specific representation and up to 8 more as self-nominations, reaching a maximum of 35. This is in line with the earlier experiences of the DPC which indicate that a smaller body is most effective and workable over time.
11. It is accepted that even this number is large and that to be effective a much smaller ‘executive’ comprising the Archbishop, Chair of the DPC and 3 – 4 others would meet regularly to progress the agenda of the DPC.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Working Party recommends a Diocesan Pastoral Council of up to 35 members with the following composition:

- Twelve parish representatives: two each from the Eastern and Western Deaneries and four each from the Northern and Southern Deaneries;
- All representatives from each Deanery will be members of their PPCs, preferably their Chairs and at least half of the representatives from each Deanery will be female.
- Half of the representatives of the Northern and Southern deaneries will be from Canberra;
- Two from Council of Priests;
- Four from Catholic entities: One each from Catholic Care, St Vincent de Paul, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the Women’s Taskforce;
- Four from Religious congregations
- Two from Catholic Education, one urban and one rural
- **Up to Eight** Archdiocesan self-nominations to enhance a broad representation and the range of required and desirable skills;
- Ex officio members would be Vicars-General and the chair of the Finance Council
- The Financial Administrator and the Chancellor would attend meetings as advisors rather than members.

R2. DPC Executive

- Even with a limited membership, an Executive of the DPC would be necessary to ensure consistent workflow and timely advice.
- It is suggested that such an Executive comprise no more than 5 people including the Chair of the DPC and the Archbishop
- This group would meet regularly and be empowered to progress the work of the DPC between meetings.

R3. That the Council adopt the Draft Terms of Reference:

1. Identify and monitor the pastoral needs of the Archdiocese through a synodal process.
2. Support and advise the Archbishop on matters he puts before it and on those matters brought forward by delegates. This support and advice will focus on discerning the pastoral direction and priorities for the Archdiocese, identifying the needs and necessary plans for the future.
3. Advise the Archbishop on the implementation of the decisions of the Plenary Council and their implementation in the Archdiocese, in conjunction, where necessary, by particular law emanating from a Diocesan Synod.
4. Advise the Archbishop on the implementation of the recommendations of the Light from the Southern Cross.
5. If appropriate, advise the Archbishop on the implementation of decisions of the 2023 Rome Synod.
6. Provide an effective forum for parishes through-out the Archdiocese to deeply listen to one another and to learn from each other about issues, problems and solutions concerning pastoral affairs. As well as a tangible way of joining together in pastoral ministry and prophetic proclamation.
7. As necessary, refer issues of concern to appropriate bodies for consideration; for example, the Council of Priests or the Archdiocesan Finance Council.
8. Advise and assist the Archbishop in the conduct of Archdiocesan Synods at regular intervals and to guide the implementation of their recommendations.
9. Overtime, assist in the preparation and guide the implementation of a rolling 5-10 year Archdiocesan Pastoral Evangelisation Plan, once considered and endorsed by the relevant Archdiocesan Synods.

R4. That, overtime, the DPC assist the Archbishop to prepare a draft **Synodal Evangelisation Plan** from broad consultation throughout the Archdiocese and published in time for consideration and endorsement at each Archdiocesan Synod. The Plan should include strategies to:

1. Identify and describe the core mission of the Church in the Archdiocese – Evangelisation – and articulate what this means for parishes, schools, clergy, families and individuals;
2. Describe current trends and set goals which can be set and measured.
3. Clearly state the priorities of the Missionary task. For example, in 2022 – 2027 a high priority would be to support and assist the implementation of the Uluru Statement and Voices for the Heart. Other priorities would include the implementation of the *Laudato Si'* – Caring for Creation goals, responding to the challenges of catholic

education and those for young families, structural change in aged care and meeting the needs of those living with mental illness.

4. Identify the resources required to achieve the priorities and their budgetary implications.
5. Consider and recommend the construction, sale, or re-purposing of the Church's physical assets to achieve the Archdiocese's goals.
6. Recommend on the appropriateness of the Archdiocesan structure for the achievement of its goal and priorities.
7. Outline the recommended timing for the implementation of the Archdiocesan Synodal Evangelisation Plan.

R5. That the Archbishop announce his intent to celebrate a Diocesan Synod within 3 years. Further that he ask the Council to provide advice about the agenda and conduct of the first Synod. In line with the recommendations of the Plenary Council, it is proposed that further Diocesan Synods be celebrated at five year intervals.

R6. That the Archbishop advise the Council each year of his priorities.

R7. That an evaluation strategy for the DPC be developed within the first two years and that it be undertaken by an independent group of specialists at arm's length every five years.

R8. That the Archdiocese provide for adequate staff resources to conduct research, prepare Council papers, assist the Chair as necessary and support the work of the Council, including in the implementation of its media strategy and communications.

R9. That the Council be allocated a travel and accommodation budget.

R10. That the Archdiocese provide an on-going formation program for the members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

R11. That the Archbishop share with the Council the annual financial reports of the Archdiocese.

R12. As part of its statutes, the Diocesan Pastoral Council will ensure its members report back to their parish or church communities preferably after each meeting, but at least, annually.

R13. That the Chairs of PPCs in each deanery meet regularly to exchange information, ideas and outcomes of the DPC.

Questions for Consultation:



1. Should the Archbishop constitute a Diocesan Pastoral Council?
2. In your view what role might a Diocesan Pastoral Council play in the life of the Archdiocese?
3. To fulfil its synodal mission, a Pastoral Council should be both representative and skilled – what advice can you offer to the Archbishop about how best to achieve these goals?
4. Are there elements/issues that you believe this Summary or the full Report have missed that are important for the Archbishop to consider?

**Feedback to be provided to the Working Party at [workingparty@cg.org.au](mailto:workingparty@cg.org.au) by 28 October 2022.**

**If Parishes believe that they would benefit from meeting with members of the Working Party, this may be possible. Again, please contact the Working Party at [workingparty@cg.org.au](mailto:workingparty@cg.org.au) we will do our best to accommodate all requests.**