

OLOP PARISHES INTO MISSION REPORT

11th and 12th September 2021

Thank you again to everyone who participated in the OLOP Parish Community meeting on the plan of the Archdiocese of Melbourne to cluster parishes into missions. All of your comments were collated. There was not the opportunity at the meeting of part of the Eastern Region of the Archdiocese to raise so many issues. Accordingly, all of the comments from our community have been provided in writing to Fr Joe Caddy, Vicar General of the Archdiocese, with a request for a response to each item raised.

The regional meeting was very well attended by various parishes from the Eastern Region and was presided by Fr Joe Caddy- Vicar General , Fr Anthony Kerin, Episcopal Vicar for the Eastern Region and the Proclaim Team at the Archdiocese who are there to assist parishes with the way forward.

The Objectives of the Mission are: -

1. Effectiveness in sharing the Gospel.
2. Vibrancy, Vitality and Viability.
3. Equitable sharing of resources.

What the Mission is: -

1. A leadership of at least 2 priest working as a team.
2. Intentional co-responsibility of all the people of God.
3. Strategic and operational decision making with lay leadership.
4. A pooling and sharing of resources and administrative functions.
5. A move towards shared arrangements across communities.

What the Mission is not: -

1. Driven by clergy shortages
2. Focused purely on data.
3. Creating centralized clerical leadership.
4. Aimed at closing down parishes.
5. A plan to take over parish assets and finances.
6. Aimed at destroying local community, diversity and culture.

It was emphasised at the meeting of the Eastern Region that the structure presented was based on the demographics of the area prepared by a consultancy group- Location IQ – and should be considered as an illustrative/suggested model. Nothing is predetermined - this is a long term discussion to serve our community into the future. Missions may look different in different locations. Decisions are to be made at the local level, based on the needs of the local area. What is being suggested is a starting point based on a consistent logic.

The whole of the Eastern Region which consist of 56 parishes, to be formed into 16 Missions over the next 1 to 5 years. For our Mission , the illustrative/suggested mission for our area is St Clement of Rome, Bulleen; St Gregory the Great, Doncaster; St Kevin's, Lower Templestowe; Sts Peter & Paul's, Doncaster East; and Our Lady of the Pines, Donvale - 5 parishes.

The next steps towards Mission as suggested by the Archdiocese are : -

- 1) Pray
- 2) Prepare - plan our consultation process with the other parishes
- 3) Consult and discern

There will be another meeting on the 14th of September 2021 where Our Lady of the Pines will be represented and further presentations will be made by the Archdiocese.

It is the intention of the parish pastoral council to keep you informed as developments occur, and as always your views are highly valued and welcomed. Accordingly we will have another Parish Community Meeting in the middle of October to provide feedback from the meeting on the 14th of September and to discuss matters such as:

- 1) If the Mission plan is to proceed, are we happy with the parishes in our illustrative / suggested mission. If not, what is our logic for seeking to work with other parishes?
- 2) Do we consider our parish would be more connected with our current community, more welcoming to the return of Catholics who do not currently attend Mass on a regular basis, and more welcoming to non-Catholics if -
 - A) The priests in the mission rotated around the parishes, providing a variety of relationship and homily styles; OR
 - B) The priests in the mission concentrated on two parishes developing a deeper connection with the members of the parish community at a personal level?

If you have any thoughts in this regard, would you please send them to parishmissionsatolop@gmail.com. If you prefer, you will be able to send your question/comment via our website – on ourladyofthepineschurch.org under Parish Missions.

It is critical to note that we are in a consultation/information gathering phase, not a decision making phase. No agreements will be made without further consultation with the community of Our Lady of the Pines.

Fr Jerald and Peter Given