

Community Discussion re Parish Vision & Buildings

Sts Peter & Paul Church – 15 August 12.00pm to 1.30pm

16 parishioners present + Paul B, John L & John K

Discussion began with a reading and short reflection on Acts 2:42-47

The group were presented with the key themes re buildings from the Archdiocesan Synod

Summary of Discussion:

- St Francis of Assisi heard God's call to 'rebuild my Church' and took it to mean that he had to physically repair the church of San Damiano – he later realized that God was asking him to attend to the identity and well-being of the wider church rather than repair one stone structure. This is a good reflection for us.
- We need to ask: 'What is the legacy we want to leave behind?'
- "People are the most important" ... we have a new opportunity to create something new that is responsive to the needs of our own community and the wider community – especially those on the peripheries. (Uniting Church model & Salvation Army model)
- When there are so many needs around us, including people with no houses and other social issues, how can we justify owning three buildings & three large properties that are not fully utilized – how does this sit with our call to care for those on the peripheries?
- It would be more manageable to have one purpose-built site from which we can minister to those in need while also providing a sacred quiet space for prayer and liturgy. Do any of our current buildings allow us to do this? The building/s must be attractive.
- Any new building must be flexible and open – able to adapt as the needs of the community, Church and other, continue to evolve, as they will. We must not just build / adapt just for the now.
- Any new church might not look like a church from the outside.
- The surrounding areas are growing as more houses are being bought.
- We need to be clear about our mission.
- We need to focus on being one community rather than three churches – the former parish boundaries are arbitrary lines on a map.
- We need to move beyond our attachments to this or that building or site, whatever its history and whatever our emotional attachment.
- Sts Peter & Paul site is the most central, but its buildings are not exactly suitable for the sort of parish vision we envisage.
- Johnsonville provides a 'Catholic site' with Challenge 2000 and Brigidine flats.
- We are a community of communities and our buildings should support the many different community groups – more than 30!
- Transport considerations and access are important.
- What will attract young families?
- What will attract young people – how to create a welcoming community.
- The elderly are important – the needs of the home-bound and sick.
- We may not need a new, beautifully designed church at great expense. In some parts of the world Mass is celebrated under a roof supported by four walls
- We do not want to incur a big debt that we can't service – "it's not about building a place that we will be buried from".
- A new building complex should have an overall ultimate plan for the site that need not be built all at once - but which can be built in stages and with flexibility to respond to changes in society or our community which might call for changes to the original plan
- How can we consult and hear more from our young people?
- Prayer for discernment is important.

- The buildings - and our people - must be open! So that anyone looking in can see what is happening (like the church in the Dunedin parish which had large glass windows installed on the street side)
- We need to identify our needs:

What are our needs – suggestions from the group

- worship & sacred quiet space, including place for Blessed Sacrament – must be attractive and inviting
- provision of emergency accommodation
- social housing
- soup kitchen – good kitchen preparation area
- Op Shop – St Vinnies
- foodbank
- ecumenical activities
- refugee support
- social activities
- preschool children – child care
- young mothers support
- meet the needs of youth
- good gathering space/s that can be used by wider community groups as well as church groups
- music room
- auditorium – show videos/presentations
- café – will bring in people – open on a Sunday for Church attendees (cf garden centres, Arise Church, crypt of SMOA)
- parish offices
- car parking – lease or rent out during the week for income - underground - charging facilities for electric cars
- additional gathering space for St Brigids
- garden of remembrance for ashes of those who have died
- technologically fitted out
- meeting rooms
- leasable office spaces (multi-level building)
- access for disabled