



Diocese of Sale

DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN FRAMEWORK 2026-2030



"For nothing will be impossible with God"

Luke 1:37



our stories,
our church,
our mission.

Diocese of Sale

Prayer of Acknowledgement & Reconciliation

God of all creation,
as we journey together across this Great Southern Land,
we acknowledge the Gunai-Kurnai and Bunurong Peoples of the Kulin Nation,
Traditional Custodians of the lands on which the Diocese of Sale is located.
We give thanks for their enduring care of Country,
and for the wisdom carried by Elders past, present, and emerging.

We pray for healing, forgiveness, and unity—
that we may walk gently together,
guided by justice, compassion, and mutual respect.

Jesus, through the power of your love,
you call us to be peacemakers and truth-tellers.
Grant us the courage to listen deeply,
the humility to share our gifts,
and the strength to build relationships
grounded in mutual understanding.

Creator Spirit,
we come together in prayer and thanksgiving
for the many blessings we receive each day.
May your Spirit move among us,
renewing our hearts and minds,
and empowering us to walk together as one—
in solidarity, in hope, and in love.

Amen



Bush Tucker by Louise Numina Napanangka –
Utopia Region, N.T., Australia



Holy Spirit of Wind and Fire, come!

DIOCESAN PRAYER

Holy Spirit of Wind and Fire, come!
Startle us anew with your power and energy.
Blow fresh life through our tired dreams.
Fan into a flame the gifts you have given us.
Light up the windows of our joy and purpose.
Spark bright fires of optimism deep within us.
Reveal more clearly a vision of what is possible.

May we listen attentively
to your quiet whisper at our very core.
May we discern your call
expressed in the voices and stories of others.
May we build a Church
that radiates and nourishes our unity of faith.
May we be at one with all of humanity
and the rest of God's creation.

May we develop the courage to be people of mission,
alert to opportunities,
always on the move,
bringing Good News to our needy world,
Wind and Fire for one another.
Amen.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Pray for Us.

*Composed by
Michael Hansen
Traralgon, 2024*



Through listening and discernment during 2021 and 2022, people associated with the Catholic Church in Australia identified six ways they wanted a Christ-centred Church to be expressed in its identity and mission:

A Christ-centred Church is:

- ❖ **Intentionally missionary and evangelising**, witnessing to the Gospel message of God's reign on earth in every aspect of life.
- ❖ **Inclusive, participatory and synodal**, modelled on the Trinitarian communion of life.
- ❖ **Prayerful and eucharistic**, giving voice to all creation's praise of God.
- ❖ **Humble, merciful and healing**, following the Lord who is among us as one who serves.
- ❖ **Joyful, hope-filled and serving**, confident in the Light who shines in the darkness.
- ❖ **Open to conversion, renewal and reform**, since Christ and his Spirit are continually present and at work in the Church and the world, drawing all creation into the transforming love poured out in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord.

'Frameworks for Motions', Australian Plenary Council, May 2022; p. 4.

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**MESSAGE FROM
BISHOP GREG BENNET**
BISHOP OF SALE



"For nothing will be impossible with God" Luke 1:37

What an extraordinary year 2025 has been for the universal Church and the Diocese of Sale. The Holy Year Pilgrims of Hope has inspired, animated, and celebrated the extraordinary faith of the people of our Diocese. Every parish community has participated by hosting Jubilee events, liturgies and Masses: all of which have given expression to our faith in Jesus Christ, our Hope, who does not disappoint us (Rm 5:5). What has been marvellous to witness is the creativity, imagination and evident joy which has enabled parishes to give expression to the variety of gifts of parishioners. At that same time, we have opened doors to others in Christian hospitality – our fellow pilgrims of hope. A reminder that in sharing our universal call to baptism all are called and gifted and anointed as priests, prophets and a royal people.

The Jubilee Year has wrapped around our Diocesan Assembly held in February 2025. For the delegates it was a time of wonderful unity, hospitality, deep and prayerful reflection, energetic engagement, and openness to the Holy Spirit. There was a deep sense of urgency expressed by delegates that we needed to respond quickly to the energy which had been invested by thousands of people throughout the consultation phases. These expressions of hope were refined by the Animation Team and tested like gold in a furnace during the Assembly gathering. The final outcomes of the Assembly were entrusted to the Diocesan Mission Council to be formed, shaped and refined into a five-year Diocesan Pastoral Plan which could act as a compass for all our parishes, agencies, schools and colleges, and guide our pastoral support throughout the Diocese.

The Diocesan Mission Council were faithful to the task entrusted to them and remained ever faithful to work of the Assembly. They were determined that the Diocesan Pastoral Plan Framework would be life-giving and not a burden; that it enkindle baptismal faith, inviting the Holy Spirit to refresh our hearts and mission; and that it be applicable to all our parishes and communities in every setting whether it be metropolitan, regional or rural. Another central focus was that it needed to enable transformation of missionary disciples, and not to become an administrative exercise. A work of God undertaken by God's holy people.

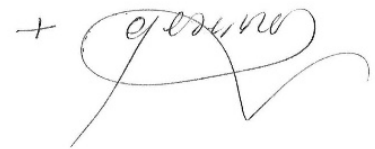
In 2025 we also lived through the death of Pope Francis who had been so instrumental in shaping and encouraging a way of being Church by animating this ancient practice of synodality. He had accepted the Final Document of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly at its conclusion on the 24th of November 2024. Unlike other synods which normally provided material for an

encyclical letter to be issued at a later time, Francis accepted the work of the synod as part of the ordinary Magisterium of the Successor Peter. Responding to the many voices of the synod - clerical, religious and laity - he welcomed and received the synod to be enacted, interpreted and implemented in local Churches taking into account different contexts, “so that the style proper to the missionary synodal Church can be ever-better learned and developed (FD, Accompanying Note, Pope Francis 24 November 2024). Pope Leo XIV, soon after his election, confirmed that as a Church we are to continue on the synodal way.

Dear sisters and brothers, your efforts, faith, reflection, sharing and invaluable contribution now articulated in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan Framework gives expression to this universal synodal way.

I am deeply indebted to Brother Tony Clark fms, Facilitator Pastoral Life and Mission Team, the members of the Diocesan Mission Council and the many others whose tireless efforts have enabled us to arrive at this moment in which we take up our pastoral journey with a common vision and set of goals to guide us.

This is an exciting time for the Diocese of Sale. We know how the people of our time need to be reminded of the beauty of the message of Jesus Christ. We know of the deep yearning in people’s hearts as they search for meaning and purpose. We know of our own need to be open to conversion, formed for mission in Christ in order to be of generous service of others. Let us be bold in our faith, constant in our prayer and open to Spirit’s movement among us and through us. There will be unexpected challenges on this journey of renewal, but we can take heed of the message of the angel Gabriel who spoke to Mary’s fears and doubts at the moment of the annunciation, assured her, “nothing is impossible to God.”

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Greg Bennet', with a small cross symbol to its left.

+Greg Bennet
10 October 2025



Let us be bold in our **faith**,
constant in our **prayer** and
open to Spirit's movement
among us and through us.

Bishop Greg Bennet - Bishop of Sale

What is a Diocesan Pastoral Plan?

A Diocesan Pastoral Plan is both a strategic and spiritual roadmap that guides the people of the Diocese of Sale in living out their mission with clarity, unity, and purpose. Rooted in the Gospel, the plan is Christ-centred and mission-driven, shaped by a synodal and collaborative spirit.

It fosters evangelisation and lifelong discipleship, inspiring renewal, and transformation within communities as they live and share the Good News. By blending practical planning with theological vision, the plan supports Catholic parishes, schools, organisations, and services in responding to their unique contexts with intention, clarity, and purpose.

More than just a document, the Diocesan Pastoral Plan is a living spiritual dialogue—a tool for conversation between faith, people, and purpose.

Who is the Diocesan Pastoral Plan for?

The Diocesan Pastoral Plan is created for the entire faith community—the People of God in the Diocese of Sale. It is intended for everyone who belongs, everyone who leads, and everyone who seeks to serve.

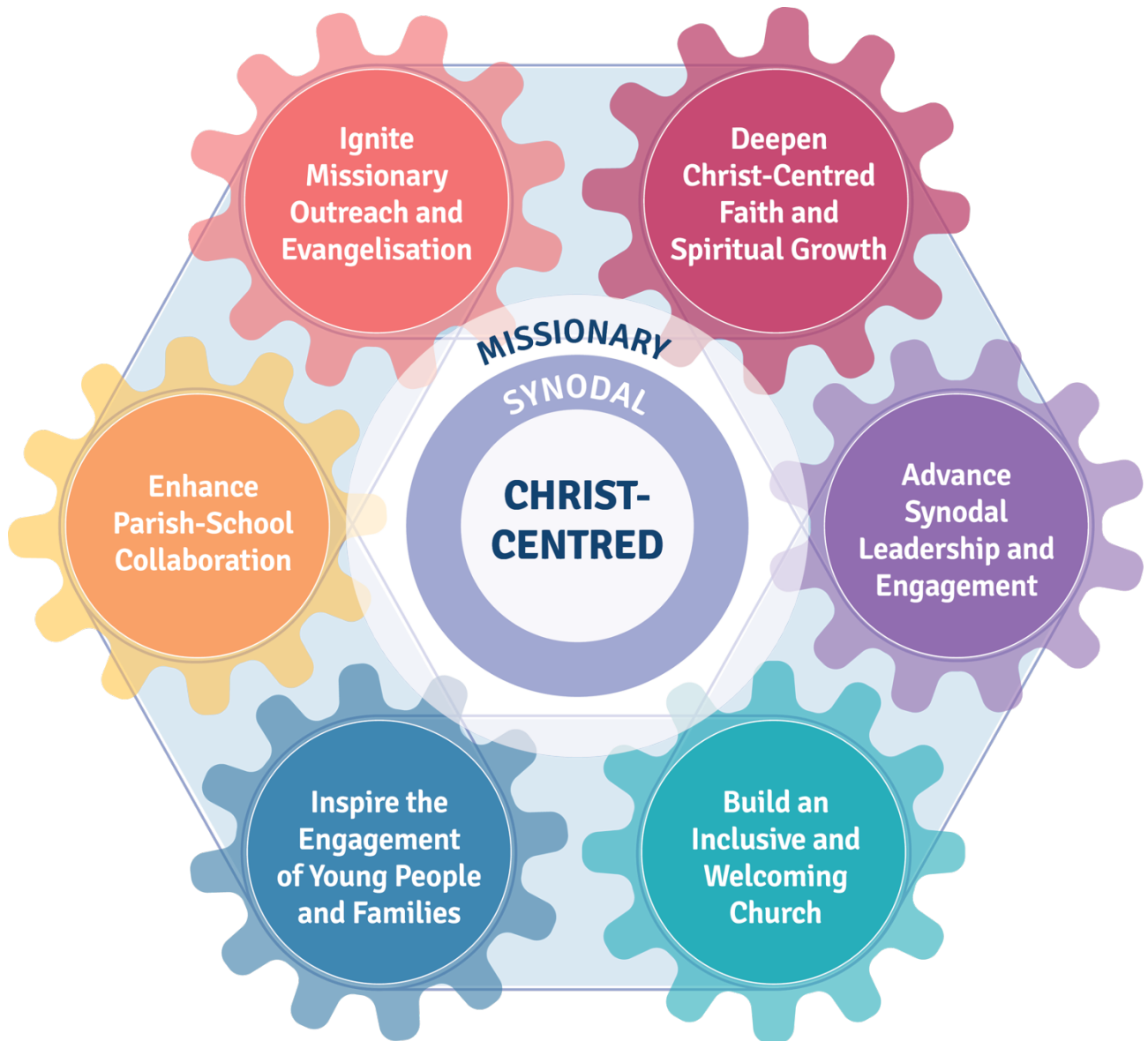
Recognising the diversity within the Church, the plan speaks to different groups in distinct and meaningful ways. Its primary audiences include:

- ❖ Parishioners and all baptised Catholics
- ❖ Parish leadership and ministry teams
- ❖ Clergy and pastoral staff
- ❖ Diocesan leaders and collaborators
- ❖ The wider community and faith and mission partners

What is the purpose of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan Framework

The Diocesan Pastoral Plan Framework aims to unite all communities in the Diocese under a shared purpose and vision, while remaining responsive to local contexts. It sets clear, measurable pastoral goals aligned with Diocesan priorities, encourages bold and creative pastoral action, guided by Church tradition and teachings, and fosters collaboration through shared resources and support. Therefore, the Diocesan Pastoral Plan Framework is not just about organizing activities; it is about cultivating a shared vision of discipleship, service, and renewal that responds to the real needs of people today.

DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN FRAMEWORK 2026-2030



VISION

Led by the Holy Spirit, the People of the Diocese of Sale are committed to walking together to nurture a Christ-centred, synodal and mission-driven future.

PUTTING THE VISION INTO ACTION

SIX DIOCESAN PASTORAL GOALS FOR FAITH & MISSION



Deepen Christ-Centred Faith and Spiritual Growth

Goal: To nurture and deepen the spiritual life of the people of the Diocese through experiences of prayer, liturgy, and faith formation that transform our Parish Communities, drawing us all into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.



Advance Synodal Leadership and Engagement

Goal: To foster vibrant communities grounded in a culture of listening, shared leadership, and co-responsible participation – empowering all, both clergy and lay, to actively engage in the life and mission of the Church.



Build an Inclusive and Welcoming Church

Goal: To be a welcoming Church that radiates acceptance and serves as a beacon of hope and a refuge for all – especially those in need – through compassionate presence, inclusive community, and faithful service.



Inspire the Engagement of Young People and Families

Goal: To engage and empower young people and families to actively shape the life and mission of the Church – through age-appropriate faith-based initiatives that encourage leadership and participation, strongly supported by the parish community.



Enhance Parish-School Collaboration

Goal: To strengthen partnerships between Catholic schools and parishes by fostering united, vibrant faith communities grounded in shared mission, mutual support and co-responsibility.



Ignite Missionary Outreach and Evangelisation

Goal: To inspire and empower all generations to live as missionary disciples, sharing Christ's love through joyful witness, acts of justice and care for all of creation.

Deepen Christ-Centred Faith and Spiritual Growth:



Goal:

To nurture and deepen the spiritual life of the people of the Diocese through experiences of prayer, liturgy, and faith formation that transform our Parish Communities, drawing us all into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." - Matthew 6:33

"I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day." - Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis, #3

Objectives to consider:

- a. Offer meaningful liturgical experiences and prayer practices that help individuals nurture a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- b. Develop and implement engaging faith formation opportunities tailored to different life stages – that encourage lifelong learning and spiritual development.
- c. Support individuals and communities in exploring diverse pathways for spiritual growth, renewal, and committed discipleship, deepening both personal faith and communal identity.

Advance Synodal Leadership and Engagement:



Goal:

To foster vibrant communities grounded in a culture of listening, shared leadership, and co-responsible participation – empowering all, both clergy and lay, to actively engage in the life and mission of the Church.

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." 1 Corinthians 12:4–7

"A synodal Church is a Church of participation and co-responsibility. In exercising synodality, she is called to give expression to the participation of all, according to each one's calling." -Synodality In The Life & Mission of the Church - International Theological Commission, 2018; #67

Objectives to consider:

- a. Encourage open, respectful dialogue and active listening across all levels of the community to build trust, mutual understanding and a sense of belonging.
- b. Actively invite and support all baptised individuals to engage in the Church's life and mission, recognising and nurturing their unique gifts, vocations, and roles.
- c. Provide formation and support for clergy and lay leaders to adopt collaborative leadership, fostering accountability, co-responsibility, and a spirit of service in all aspects of mission.

Build an Inclusive and Welcoming Church:



Goal:

To be a welcoming Church that radiates acceptance and serves as a beacon of hope and a refuge for all – especially those in need – through compassionate presence, inclusive community, and faithful service.

"Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." Romans 15:7

"This is the Church, open to bearing witness in today's world, open to faith hope and love for the Lord and for those whom he loves with a preferential love. A home with open doors. The Church is a home with open doors, because she is a mother". And in imitation of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, "we want to be a Church that serves, that leaves home and goes forth from its places of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation" - Fratelli Tutti (Pope Francis, 2020), #276

Objectives to consider:

- a. Continue to cultivate inclusive communities that actively welcome and support individuals experiencing physical, mental, emotional or spiritual marginalisation, ensuring they feel seen, valued, and connected.
- b. Pursue meaningful engagement with First Nations peoples through ongoing recognition, appreciation, advocacy for justice and reconciliation, grounded in respect and sustained commitment.
- c. Support initiatives that foster healing and reconciliation in response to past harm or division, both within the Church and the broader community, creating pathways for restoration and unity.
- d. Enhance pastoral care by developing robust, compassionate support structures that address the diverse needs of individuals and families, offering practical assistance and spiritual accompaniment.

Inspire the Engagement of Young People and Families:



Goal:

To engage and empower young people and families to actively shape the life and mission of the Church – through age-appropriate faith-based initiatives that encourage leadership and participation, strongly supported by the parish community.

"In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young people will see visions, your old people will dream dreams.'" Acts 2:17

"Dear young people, please, do not be bystanders in life. Get involved! Jesus was not a bystander. He got involved. Don't stand aloof, but immerse yourselves in the reality of life, as Jesus did". Above all, in one way or another, fight for the common good, serve the poor, be protagonists of the revolution of charity and service, capable of resisting the pathologies of consumerism and superficial individualism." Christus Vivit, Pope Francis #174.

Objectives to consider:

- a. Develop and promote accessible, meaningful opportunities for families and young people to actively participate in the Church's life and mission, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose.
- b. Cultivate vibrant faith experiences and leadership development pathways that inspire and equip young people to grow in faith and serve with confidence and commitment.
- c. Encourage and resource initiatives that nurture faith within the family context, recognising families as foundational communities of spiritual growth and discipleship.
- d. Promote meaningful connections and shared experiences across generations to build unity, encourage mutual learning, and deepen the communal life of the Church.

Enhance Parish-School Collaboration:



Goal:

To strengthen partnerships between Catholic schools and parishes by fostering united, vibrant faith communities grounded in shared mission, mutual support and co-responsibility.

"So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." - Romans 12:5

"Educating in communion and for communion expresses the centrality of relationships in the educational process. It is a question of promoting a style of educational relationships that is both human and Christian, rooted in communion with the Church and open to collaboration with families and parishes." - Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007)

Objectives to consider:

- a. Design and implement meaningful opportunities for joint liturgies, prayer, social justice initiatives, service projects, and catechesis that strengthen unity between parish and school communities.
- b. Foster deeper collaboration between parishes and schools to support the evangelisation of young people and families through shared mission co-ordinated engagement, and mutual support.
- c. Ensure that Catholic identity and Gospel values are clearly expressed and actively lived out in both pastoral ministry and education settings, shaping culture, relationships, and decision-making.

Ignite Missionary Outreach and Evangelisation:



Goal:

To inspire and empower all generations to live as missionary disciples, sharing Christ's love through joyful witness, acts of justice and care for all of creation.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

"We are a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges and encourages dialogue, a Church ever open to welcoming all those who are in need of our charity, our presence, our readiness to dialogue and our love." Pope Leo XIV, May 9, 2025.

Objectives to consider:

- a. Provide ongoing formation and practical support that equips individuals to actively live out and share their faith, embracing their call to be committed missionary disciples in everyday life.
- b. Develop and promote initiatives that reflect the Church's commitment to social justice and ecological responsibility, inspired by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the vision of '*Laudato Si'*'.
- c. Encourage respectful dialogue and active engagement with other Christian denominations and faith traditions, building bridges of mutual understanding, collaboration and unity.
- d. Strengthen digital evangelisation efforts and communication strategies to effectively share the Gospel, engage diverse audiences, and build meaningful connections in online spaces.



What has been marvellous to witness is the **creativity**, imagination and evident **joy** which has enabled parishes to give expression to the variety of gifts of parishioners. At that same time, we have opened doors to others in Christian hospitality – our fellow **pilgrims of hope**.

Bishop Greg Bennet - Bishop of Sale

UNDERSTANDING THE DIOCESAN GOALS THROUGH THE LENS OF:

- ❖ What we value
- ❖ What we expect of each other
- ❖ How we are called to act as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.



WHAT WE VALUE as a Diocese?

A Christ-Centred Spiritual Life

We value: Deep personal faith
Transformative spiritual experiences
Ongoing formation.

Synodal Leadership and Co-Responsibility

We value: Dialogue
Mutual respect
Shared responsibility
Leadership formation.

Inclusivity and Compassion

We value: Inclusion,
Compassion,
Justice,
Healing.

Engagement of Young People and Families

We value: Youth empowerment
Intergenerational connection
Family-based discipleship.

Parish–School Collaboration

We value: Shared mission
Collaboration
Integrated Catholic identity.

Missionary Outreach and Evangelisation

We value: Joyful witness
Justice
Care for creation
Ecumenical dialogue.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF EACH OTHER?

We are committed to growing and deepening faith together

*Expectation: We journey together in faith,
encouraging and supporting each other's spiritual
and faith development.*

Every person contributes to the life and mission of the Church.

*Expectation: We listen to one another,
lead collaboratively,
and take shared responsibility for the life of the Church.*

We support one another, fostering inclusion and compassion

*Expectation: We treat each other with dignity,
compassion, and respect,
creating spaces where every person feels seen and valued.*

We empower Young People and Families

*Expectation: We support and empower the next generation,
especially young people,
recognising families as vital communities of faith.*

We strengthen Parish–School Partnerships

*Expectation: We collaborate across ministries and institutions,
sharing a common mission and supporting one another.*

We live as Missionary Disciples

*Expectation: We live our faith actively and visibly,
serving others and caring for creation as missionary disciples.*

In Summary

These goals and objectives reflect a Church that expects **mutual support, shared leadership, inclusive community, and active discipleship**. They invite us to be **co-creators of a vibrant, Christ-centred Church**, where each person's contribution is valued and essential.

HOW ARE WE CALLED TO ACT AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST?

Deepen Christ-Centred Faith and Spiritual Growth

Sample behaviours:

- Recognise the movement of the Holy Spirit in everyday experiences.
- Participate regularly in prayer, liturgy, and faith formation.
- Share personal faith stories and encourage others in their spiritual journey.
- Seek out and support diverse spiritual practices and retreats.
- Engage in lifelong learning about Scripture, Catholic tradition, and discipleship.

Advance Synodal Leadership and Engagement

Sample behaviours:

- Practice active listening and respectful dialogue in meetings and gatherings.
- Invite and include others in decision-making and ministry roles.
- Support and mentor emerging leaders, both lay and ordained.
- Embrace co-responsibility by volunteering and contributing to parish life.

Build an Inclusive and Welcoming Church

Sample behaviours:

- Greet and welcome newcomers warmly at Mass and parish events.
- Reach out to those who are isolated, marginalised, or hurting.
- Participate in reconciliation efforts and justice initiatives.
- Advocate for and walk alongside First Nations peoples with humility and respect.

Inspire the Engagement of Young People and Families

Sample behaviours:

- Encourage young people to take on leadership and liturgical roles.
- Support family-based faith activities and intergenerational gatherings.
- Be present at youth events and show genuine interest in their lives.
- Create space for young voices in parish planning and decision-making.

Enhance Parish–School Collaboration

Sample behaviours:

- Attend and support joint parish-school liturgies and events.
- Build relationships between school staff and parish leaders.
- Promote shared values and mission in both educational and pastoral settings.
- Collaborate on service projects and catechesis initiatives.

Ignite Missionary Outreach and Evangelisation

Sample behaviours:

- Share your faith openly and joyfully in everyday life.
- Engage in social justice and care for creation initiatives.
- Use digital platforms to spread the Gospel and connect with others.
- Build bridges with other faith communities through dialogue and collaboration.

UNDERSTANDING THE DIOCESAN GOALS THROUGH THE LENS OF:

- ❖ What we need to know ...
- ❖ Who we need to be
- ❖ What we need to do



1. What do we need to *know* to realise these goals?

To effectively realise the six pastoral goals, parish communities need to understand:

The Vision Behind Each Goal

What is the deeper purpose behind each Diocesan Pastoral Goal?

How does each goal reflect the mission of Jesus and the Church today?

Local Context and Needs

What are the unique needs, strengths, and challenges of our parish?

Are there groups or voices we haven't yet heard or understood?

Existing Resources and Gaps

What resources—spiritual, human, material—do we already have?

Where are the gaps that need attention or renewal?

The Principles of Synodality

How familiar are we with the principles of synodality and co-responsibility?

Do we understand how these shape leadership and participation?

2. Who do we need to *be* to achieve the realisation of these goals?

This is about identity and disposition. To embody the goals, parish communities must become:

Christ-Centred Disciples

Are we growing as Christ-centred disciples?

How do we nurture our personal and communal relationship with Jesus?

Co-Responsible Leaders and synodal people

Do we embody shared leadership and active listening?

Are decisions made collaboratively and transparently?

Welcoming and Compassionate People

Are we truly welcoming and inclusive?

Who might feel excluded from our parish life—and why?

Mentors and Encouragers of Youth and Families

How do we support and empower young people and families?

Are they seen as leaders, not just participants?

Bridge Builders Between Schools and Parishes

Do we cultivate strong relationships between our parish and local schools?

Is there mutual respect and shared mission?

Missionary Witnesses

Are we living as missionary witnesses in our community?

Does our faith move us to action, justice, and joy?

3. What do we need to do to realise these pastoral goals in parish communities?

Action is key. Here's what parishes can do:

Create Opportunities for Spiritual Growth

What spiritual formation opportunities can we offer or enhance?

Are there retreats, prayer groups, or liturgical experiences that deepen faith?

Facilitate Listening and Dialogue

How can we create spaces for listening and dialogue?

Could we host synodal gatherings, listening circles, or leadership workshops?

Develop Inclusive Ministries

What ministries or outreach efforts need to be more inclusive?

Are we reaching migrants, the elderly, people with disabilities, and others on the margins?

Support Youth and Family Programs

How can we better support youth and families?

Are we investing in intergenerational programs and leadership development?

Strengthen Parish-School Partnerships

What steps can we take to strengthen parish-school partnerships?

Could we co-plan liturgies, service projects, or shared mission events?

Promote Outreach and Evangelisation

How do we promote outreach and evangelisation?

Are we visible in the community, caring for creation, and sharing the Gospel with joy?



“Dear young people, please,
do not be bystanders in life.
Get involved! Jesus was not
a bystander. He got involved.
Don’t stand aloof, but **immerse**
yourselves in the reality of life,
as Jesus did”.

Christus Vivit, Pope Francis #174.

General Guidelines for Developing Parish Pastoral Plan

These guidelines are intended to support and guide priests, Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) members, and parish leaders in organizing and facilitating the Parish Pastoral Planning process.

A. Ground the process in prayer and discernment

- It is vital to recognise and call on the guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout the whole process.
- Support the journey with both communal and personal prayer.
- Foster spiritual discernment at each stage to remain aligned with the Church's mission.

B. Establish a representative parish planning team

- Establish a parish planning team responsible for leading the organisation, facilitation, and monitoring of the pastoral planning process. The team's membership should reflect the diversity of people and talents in the parish.
- Clearly define the role of the planning team, including its accountability to the Parish Priest and Parish Pastoral Council, and establish clear lines of communication. In some parishes, the planning team may be the PPC.
- Provide training and ongoing support to build confidence and strengthen capacity throughout the journey.

C. Align with Diocesan vision and goals

- Ground the parish pastoral plan in the Gospel vision, centred on listening and discernment, communion, discipleship, evangelisation and mission.
- Translate the six Diocesan Pastoral Goals (as outlined in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan Framework) into the specific context of the local parish or community.
- Ensure the plan reflects both diocesan priorities and the unique identity of the parish.

D. Promote collaborative leadership, foster invitation and co-responsibility

- Ensure shared leadership is actively promoted between clergy and lay people.
- Invite all parishioners to participate, ensuring inclusivity and belonging - no one is left out!
- Create welcoming and accessible opportunities for meaningful dialogue and engagement throughout the development of the parish pastoral plan.
- Foster a culture of respect, trust, and transparency in decision-making.
- Encourage active participation and shared ownership of the pastoral plan.

E. Prepare the parish for the journey

- Assess the parish's readiness for planning and offer formation where needed.
- Equip parishioners with the resources, skills, and confidence to contribute meaningfully to the process.

F. Understand the local context

- Consider the unique context of the parish by drawing on Diocesan, Parish, and Census data—including Parish profiles from the National Church Life Survey—to examine local demographics and identify emerging needs.
- Allow these local realities to inform parish priorities and inspire creative responsive planning.

G. Consult broadly and deeply

- Clearly communicate the purpose and process of planning to the parish community.
- Engage all members of the parish – those who are active, less involved or currently disengaged.
- Gather diverse perspectives through using surveys, listening sessions, and intentional outreach.
- Make consultation an integral and ongoing part of the pastoral planning process.

H. Build on current strengths

- Begin by acknowledging and incorporating parish ministry programs, activities and events that already contribute to specific Diocesan goals and that the parish wishes to maintain.
- Build on current strengths as a foundation for innovation and future growth.

I. Use the ‘Conversation in the Spirit’ method

- Facilitate respectful, prayerful dialogue using this method.
- Create safe and welcoming spaces for sharing hopes, concerns, and insights.
- Treat listening as a sacred act that shapes and informs the pastoral plan.

J. Identify and use resources wisely

- Take stock of available human, financial, and organisational resources.
- Plan in ways that are both realistic and sustainable.

K. Communicate clearly and often

- Share regular progress updates through multiple communication channels.
- Keep the parish community informed and engaged at every stage of the planning process.

L. Commit to ongoing evaluation

- Schedule regular opportunities for reflection, review, and celebration.
- Celebrate successes and embrace opportunities for growth.
- Learn from experience and adjust the plan as needed.
- Treat the plan as a living document that evolves with the life of the parish.



“So in Christ we, though **many**, form **one** body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

Romans 12:5

A Recommended Process for Developing the Parish Pastoral Plan

1. Begin with prayer, reflection, and visioning

2. Establish a Parish Pastoral Planning Team

3. Understand Diocesan Vision and Pastoral Goals

4. Understand local context

5. Discern key objectives and strategic actions

6. Draft the Parish Pastoral Plan

7. Finalise, and commission the Parish Pastoral Plan

8. Implement the Parish Pastoral Plan

9. Review, reflect and renew

A Recommended Process for Developing the Parish Pastoral Plan

In More Detail

1. Begin with prayer, reflection, and visioning

- Begin with a parish-wide prayer initiative inviting the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Organise a visioning retreat or reflection day for key leaders and interested parishioners.
- Ground the process in Scripture, the Diocesan Vision, and synodal spirituality.

2. Establish a Spirit-led Parish Pastoral Planning or Animation Team

- Form a diverse and representative team, including clergy, lay leaders, youth, seniors, and ministry voices.
- Ensure the team embodies the synodal spirit—walking together, listening deeply, and discerning as one community.
- Clearly define the roles, responsibilities, expectations, lines of accountability and decision-making processes with the Parish Priest and Parish Pastoral Council.
- Provide training in synodal practices, including deep listening, facilitation and pastoral planning.
- Develop a clear timeline that outlines each step of the process.

3. Develop a clear understanding of, and be guided by, the Diocesan Vision and Pastoral Goals

- Host a briefing session to introduce the Diocesan Pastoral Plan Framework.
- Explore the focus and meaning of the Diocesan Vision & Pastoral Goals, encouraging prayerful reflection.
- Reflect on how these goals connect with the parish's current realities and future aspirations.

4. Develop a clear picture of the local context

- Review Parish data, such as the Parish profile from the National Church Life Survey and examine local demographics to identify emerging needs.
- Gather input through surveys, listening sessions, interviews and ministry reviews.
- Reflect on key questions: What are the strengths of our Parish? What are the challenges we face that call us to grow as a faith community? Where is the Spirit leading us?

5. Engage the whole parish community in discerning key objectives and strategic actions

- Consult the whole parish community to identify key objectives and strategic actions that are aligned with each of the six Diocesan Goals.
- Host open forums or “synodal conversations” to hear from all voices - Use the ‘Conversation in the Spirit’ method.
- Foster engagement through creative formats or events, such as storytelling, art, small groups, forums, or informal gatherings like ‘coffee and conversation’.
- Ensure the inclusion of marginalized or less-heard groups by offering multilingual sessions, child-friendly formats, and other accessible formats.
- Ensure all actions are **SMART**: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
- Prioritise initiatives that are Spirit-led, community owned and mission-focussed.

6. Draft the Parish Pastoral Plan

The Parish Pastoral Planning or Animation Team compiles all the suggestions gathered during the parish consultation, using these ideas to formulate a draft Parish Pastoral Plan. The plan will include:

- **Parish vision statement:** Articulate a parish vision that reflects and embodies the Diocesan Vision within your local context.
- **Goals and objectives:** For each of the six Diocesan Pastoral Goals, identify which objectives the parish wants to focus on to achieve for that goal.
- **Strategic actions for each goal:** Choose strategic actions that will help the parish move closer to achieving the goal and objective. Specify who will do what, by when, and how each action will be carried out.
- **Resources needed:** Identify the people, finances, training, and other resources required to implement the plan effectively.
- **Evaluation plan:** Outline how progress will be measured, how feedback will be gathered, and how the plan will be adapted over time.

7. Finalise, celebrate, and commission the Parish Pastoral Plan

- The Parish Pastoral Planning Team presents the draft Parish Pastoral Plan to the Parish Pastoral Council for final approval.
- The Parish Pastoral Council presents the draft plan to the parish community.
- Invite feedback and revise the plan based on parishioners’ input.
- Celebrate and commission the Parish Pastoral Plan at a parish Mass, with a liturgical blessing or a community event.
- Parish Priest and PPC submits their plan to the Bishop.

8. Implement the Parish Pastoral Plan

- Form working groups or committees to implement the strategic actions for each goal of the pastoral plan.
- Ensure working groups or committees have the resources and support they need to achieve their goal and objectives.
- Provide ongoing formation for leaders and volunteers.
- Communicate progress regularly with the parish community through bulletins, homilies and parish gatherings.

9. Review, reflect and renew

- Schedule regular intervals (e.g., annually) to review and reflect on the pastoral plan.
- Celebrate successes and thoughtfully learn from challenges.
- Stay open to the Spirit's ongoing call to growth, renewal, and transformation.

PROPOSED TIMELINE





“We want to be a **Church that serves**, that leaves home and goes forth from its places of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity to **build bridges**, to break down walls, to sow seeds of **reconciliation**”

Fratelli Tutti (Pope Francis, 2020), #276

APPENDIX 1

Conversation in the Spirit

Conversation in the Spirit, or Spiritual Conversation, is an ancient practice of the Church particularly helping all the voices to be heard when people are gathered. It can be used for faith sharing, difficult conversations, or when lots of creativity or ideas are needed. We have used it to discuss best practice in youth ministry, synodal leadership across Catholic Social Action Network, an academic conference and formation sessions for a Diocesan Assembly. It has also been used for conversations about finance, mission, working conditions, and responding to clergy sex abuse. It is an excellent tool to ground any conversation in the Spirit, open us to new voices and possibilities, and move us to action when appropriate.

Practical Considerations

Conversation in the Spirit is a strangely practical art. It relies on good communication – being able to hear and understand one another. This can impact people with poor hearing, those with English as an additional language, or those whose verbal skills are not so strong. This applies to all conversations, of course, and conversation in the Spirit is more accessible than ordinary chatting because of the slower pace and the silences. You just need to be aware of the needs of your participants.

Room set up

Small groups need to be spaced out from each other so that they can hear others from their small group clearly and not be distracted by other groups. We have found that you can have one or three plus groups in a room, as long as the room is big enough. Two groups do not work as you will be listening to the other group when you are supposed to be reflecting! Small groups work well in informal café/lounge spaces – church pews not so much...

Crafting a question

Give some time to your question. Something that encourages people to tell stories without right or wrong answers is better than diving straight into critique. This can be helped by using the word ‘how’. For example, ‘How have you experienced decision-making in the church?’ is better than ‘What’s wrong with church decision-making?’.

A Method for Conversation in the Spirit

Begin with a few moments of silence to allow ourselves to ponder the question.

First round of conversation: Each person has a chance to speak. There is no discussion in this round, and there is a time of silence to allow for reflection.

Second round of conversation: Share what struck you most or what resonated for you in the first round and what moved you during the time of silence. Once again this is followed by a pause for reflection.

Third round of conversation: Finally in the third-round participants reflect on what moved them most deeply. What new insights arise? What are the common themes or fruits of the conversations?

Good and Bad Habits

It can be helpful to share with the group before starting some habits of conversation in the Spirit:

- Listening to the views of others
- Encouraging everyone to speak
- Being aware of your own 'air-time' – keep contributions brief and to the point
- Remain curious – don't dismiss views that you don't agree with but ask why people think that. They may well have a good reason for their view.
- Keeping confidentiality. The meeting should feel like a safe place for people to be able to express their views. Share the learning, not the story.
- Being aware of time. We generally ask people to think about their own bad habit and be aware of it! Remaining curious is at the heart of this kind of conversation: even if we don't agree with one another, we can find out why someone holds a particular view, and what their story is. Confidentiality is another key element – creating safe spaces for people to speak heart-to-heart.

Silence is very important – and not everyone likes it, especially if they had to 'sit in silence' at school. For those who find it difficult, we recommend people write down their thoughts, doodle, or take their imagination for a walk and enjoy God's creation.

If the group is finding it hard not to talk over each other, you can reset with a moment's silence and a gentle reminder. Alternatively, it can be helpful to have a stone or a talking stick. Whoever is holding the stone talks and everyone else listens. The process of putting the stone down and picking it up also helps to slow the pace of the conversation and aids listening.

Although this method feels slow, giving people time to think before they speak can make for very effective conversations. All voices are heard, and with each round, the wisdom of the group is built on, and people start to see new connections and possibilities. Drawing out the fruit of the conversation in the final round brings it back to next steps and makes sure the benefits are not lost. We have found that listening to all the voices makes for a richer and more considered conversation – and better decisions at the end. As we would expect for a conversation rooted in the Holy Spirit!

APPENDIX 2

MESSAGE TO BISHOP GREG AND THE DIOCESAN MISSION COUNCIL FROM THE DELEGATES OF THE DIOCESE OF SALE 2025 ASSEMBLY

Dear Bishop Greg and Members of the Diocesan Mission Council,

We are deeply grateful for this Assembly and for the opportunity to listen, to collaborate in the spirit of synodality and to discern our future path. We recognise the goodwill, dedication, and leadership that have guided this process, and we stand with you as we move forward together.

Now is the time for bold and resolute action. The Holy Spirit is at work, and we must not allow this momentum to fade. We encourage you to step forward with courage, clarity, and conviction, translating our shared vision into a clear, actionable strategic Diocesan Pastoral Plan. This plan needs to be concise, measurable, and easily implemented across all faith communities and Diocesan bodies and organisations, such as parishes, schools, hospitals, aged care facilities and social services, that will renew and strengthen our Diocese.

We urge you to prioritise:

- ❖ *A culture of co-responsibility, ensuring that all parishes, schools, and organisations work together in a spirit of shared mission.*
- ❖ *Faith formation and evangelisation, particularly for youth and families, fostering a balance between tradition and contemporary engagement.*
- ❖ *Embracing new ways to connect with and serve our communities through digital evangelisation and outreach.*
- ❖ *The central role of liturgy and prayer, ensuring that prayer and worship remains a source of spiritual nourishment, unity, and inspiration, guiding and celebrating our faith and action.*
- ❖ *A Church that goes out, embodying Pope Francis' vision of a refuge for the broken and a beacon of hope in our world.*

We trust in your leadership and stand behind you, ready to work together in building a vibrant, mission-driven Diocese. Embrace a synodal journey that continues to listen to our communities, builds on existing strengths, communicates regularly, and acts decisively to transform inspired words into real-world impact.

The road ahead is long, but we believe in the power of faith, unity, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us go forth with courage. The time to act is now.

*In faith and hope,
The Delegates of the 2025 Diocesan Assembly*

2025 Diocesan Assembly Summary Statement

From the pastoral areas identified by each of the Table Groups as having the greatest potential to drive or leverage a mission-focused future for the Diocese over the next five years, the following statement is proposed as a succinct, clear, and cohesive summary.

The Diocese of Sale is committed to nurturing
a Christ-centred, synodal, and mission-driven future.

This strategic vision will be actualised through
the development of co-responsibility
and shared leadership within, and across,
all Catholic faith communities and organisations,
ensuring listening, discernment,
inclusion, welcome and outreach.

Our faith leaders will focus on practices that
engage youth, strengthen faith formation for all members,
and deepen Parish-School collaboration.

These efforts will be supported and enriched by prayer,
the Word of God, contemporary, meaningful Eucharistic worship,
lived faith experiences,
and digital communication.

our stories, our church, our mission.

Diocese of Sale



Diocese of Sale

www.cdsale.org.au