



Sacred Heart Parish Koorngal

Plenary Council Submission 1



Introduction

After two initial gatherings of parishioners to 'listen to what the Spirit is saying', four main areas of concern emerged. These were (1) a need to reform the liturgy, (2) clericalism, (3) gospel values vs rules and regulations and (4) adult faith formation.

Follow up meetings were then organised to specifically look at each of these areas. What follows is a summary of those meetings and the basis of Koorngal's parish first submission to Plenary 2020.

We are distributing the information and invite comment/reflection from anyone who couldn't attend the meetings or thought they had nothing to offer.

Please send any comments, further reflections or new ideas you would like submitted to shkparishcouncil@gmail.com by 31 December 2018. These can also be left in the suggestion box at the back of Sacred Heart Church.

The document is also being made available to the Sacred Heart and Mater Dei primary school community as well as Mater Dei College community and we invite them to also offer comment on "What is God asking of the Catholic Church in Australia today?"

Reform of the Liturgy

What is God asking of the Church in Australia today, especially in the area of Liturgy.

- The use of the Directory for Masses with Children should be mandatory for all school masses and family masses at which many children attend.
- Give up the latest translation of the Mass and return to a translation that is less verbose and more understandable.
Better still, start again completely and review the whole structure and formulation to make it more meaningful to people today and flexible to reflect our indigenous brothers and sisters, our understanding of theology in light of scientific discoveries over the last couple of hundred years.

Allow for flexibility

- in the readings: the number of them, the translation of them, the language of them
- in structure: where the consecration occurs, before or after the readings
- in the delivery of the homily: discussion, videos, chat over a cuppa.

Enhance 'The Dismissal' to explain its significance as a command to go out and live what we believe.

- Allow the laity to have a far more active role throughout the Mass. In theory the priest only has to say the Consecration. Let the laity give the homily and lead many of the prayers.
- Bring back the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation as a matter of urgency.
- Mass shouldn't be the only main celebration. Allow for, and encourage family liturgies, youth liturgies and informal celebrations of our faith and beliefs. If this is done properly, these can be great teaching opportunities to make the mass more meaningful.
- The annulment process is degrading and insults the offspring of marriages that are annulled.

Clericalism

What is God asking of the Church in Australia today, especially in the area of clericalism.

- The ordained must stop seeing themselves as members of an exalted and elitist club that protects the interests and privileges of its members.
- This must also stop being taught as a matter of fact in our seminaries, especially the Wagga one.
- Seminary training should take place in a far more open setting. Seminarians should live in the community, go to their lectures and have part time jobs to support themselves, like most university students. They must be kept immersed "in the world" so that they are realistic in their understanding and appreciation of the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the parishioners they will be ministering to.
- The leadership of the Church (the bishops) must start emphasising and teaching that the Church must see itself as "a pilgrim People of God, incarnate in the world. It is a new paradigm – one that is based on mutuality not exclusion, love not fear, service not clericalism, engagement with the world not flight from or hostility against it, incarnate grace not dualism. It is the Church going out of itself as opposed to closing in on itself." (Bishop Vincent Long)

- Clergy must concentrate on their pastoral ministry, the spreading of the love of God through the joy of the gospel.
- The laity must be given far more say in the administrative running of parishes and dioceses, in line with their baptismal dignity and responsibilities as set out in Vatican 2.
- The ability of a newly appointed priest or bishop to throw out everything he doesn't like must be ended.
- Women must be given far greater recognition, responsibility and leadership in decision making of Church, Diocesan and Bishop commissions.
- The whole process of appointing priests and bishops needs to be thrown open and allow genuine lay participation and input into the decisions. The system used by the Anglicans would be a great starting point.
- Titles must be used appropriately. Titles like My Lord, Your eminence etc are not needed. Nor is the demand to address every priest as Father.
- Female deacons would make an enormous difference to the culture of the institutional Church and would be a great step along the way to female clergy.

Gospel Values vs Rules and regulations

What is God asking of the Church in Australia today, especially in the area of living out the Joy of the Gospel, ie a religion based on love and not on rules and regulations.

- All theology must come back to and reflect the simplicity of the Gospels.
- Our Church has to be characterised and guided by a spirit of love and service rather than adherence to rules.
- The Church must be more Inclusive and welcoming. Exclusion is to be avoided.
- A formed conscience should always take precedence over man made Church rules.
Unfortunately, some people have not had, or sought, adult education, so are still governed by childhood faith.
- Our faith is now in a God of love rather than a faith of fear.
- Mass format is "for adults". It should be made more suited to children. (That format is already there – school masses)
- Gospel values are not reflected in harsh marriage / divorce rules.
- While the Church used to be at the forefront of community support, and still is to some extent, many non-Church groups also reflect gospel values.

Non-church goers are very active here, as are church goers, both giving gospel witness.

- Contraception. Harsh rules led to scruples for some. Threats of excommunication. There is a great need for compassion and guidance of conscience.

Need for Faith Formation

- Areas in which Faith Formation could be offered
 - Liturgy
 - Scripture
 - Social Justice
 - Teachings of Vatican II
 - Role of the laity
 - Primacy of conscience
- Recent papal teachings
 - Creation
 - The environment
 - The Joy of the Gospel
 - Amoris Laetitia
 - Gaudete et Exsultate
- Means of Offering Faith Formation
 - Offerings should be ongoing, not random
 - A parish library
 - Book club / study groups
 - Personal testimonies
 - Discussion during homily time at mass
 - Catholic men's shed
 - Reflection days
 - Yearly theme for a parish
 - Videos
 - Guest / visiting speakers
 - Sr Margaret – Breath of Life – Sophia circle
- Gatherings with other denominations