



Encountering Christ, *Sharing Our Joy*



Pastoral Plan for the
Catholic Diocese of Cairns
2016 - 2019



A life of faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love.

(cf. Evangelii Gaudium 7, 39)

MESSAGE FROM BISHOP JAMES:

Under the leadership of the Diocesan Synod, the Catholic Diocese of Cairns has developed a Pastoral Plan (2016–2019) to provide direction for our vision and mission of “Encountering Christ, Sharing our Joy”. The purpose of this document is to help motivate and direct parish and diocesan pastoral planning. It draws from Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel), in which Pope Francis reminds us of the centrality of our encountering Christ and sharing the joy that emerges from the encounter.

I commend this pastoral plan to the faithful of the Cairns diocese for reflection and implementation.

Yours in Christ



SYNOD LANDSCAPE (2008 - 2015)

The ongoing Synod process is a gathering together with our Bishop and clergy, representatives of the parishes and diocesan agencies. This process recognises that we are all called to the mission of the Church, which is to build the Kingdom of God. The Synod recognises that as we plan for the future we need to address personal, community and cultural changes.

Five Key Pastoral Priorities have been identified through a seven-year process of consultation in the Synod. Each pastoral priority has a set of goals and strategies that will guide pastoral planning and which will be reviewed and reported on annually in the Synod.



KEY PASTORAL PRIORITY

Formation of the Baptised

Being able to articulate and share our faith better enables full participation in the life and mission of the Church.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
1. Faith formation opportunities be accessible across the Diocese.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a coordinator to support diocesan and parish based faith-formation initiatives. 2. Develop a user-friendly website to assist in co-ordinating faith-formation resources and to host a calendar of all opportunities. 3. Allocate specific parish and diocesan funding for programs that foster the faith-formation of the baptised. 4. Share professional development opportunities in ways that are accessible to more people (e.g., as "Twilight retreats").
2. Lay leadership in parishes be developed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train and provide formation for parish leaders to enable the parish to respond to local circumstances. 2. Establish a Leadership in Pastoral Ministry course across the diocese to support lay leadership.
3. A coordinated approach to Sacramental preparation (for Sacraments of Initiation) across the Diocese.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>A committee is already engaged in this, learning from the revised Brisbane policy, with Deanery consultations underway in 2016.</i>
4. Our sense of Catholic identity be enhanced.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage in the "Catholic Identity in Parish" (Leuven) program. 2. Promote understanding of Catholic social teaching.

I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation.

(Evangelii Gaudium 27)



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KEY PASTORAL PRIORITY

Building Our Sense of Community

Fostering communities that offer welcome, respect, and love to every person.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
1. Parishes are places of true worship to nourish and inspire the whole community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare for and celebrate Sacraments of Initiation with the whole parish, in accordance with the Rites. 2. Reflect social and cultural diversity and the needs of our local communities in liturgies. 3. Continue to engage in liturgical renewal which addresses the changing circumstances in parishes.
2. Leadership and ministry in parishes is collegial and collaborative.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Officially endorse lay leadership and support with appropriate resources. 2. Ensure that parish governance reflects collaboration between priest and parishioners. 3. Use programs/initiatives that stimulate and support stewardship. 4. Ensure that parish leadership engages in interfaith initiatives, especially in responding to local needs.
3. A sense of belonging and welcome are hallmarks of parishes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accommodate the needs of children and families in parish life. 2. Develop and maintain a Census in each parish so as to facilitate pastoral care and contact. 3. Develop hospitality ministries and initiatives that foster a sense of belonging to the parish. 4. Foster connections between ethnic groups and our parish communities. 5. Develop initiatives to reach out to the disengaged Catholics in the parish. 6. Engage in interfaith dialogue and initiatives.
4. Parishes plan for a sustainable future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In pastoral planning, adopt ways to learn from successful activities elsewhere. 2. Collaborate with other parishes. 3. Use technologies to communicate with disengaged Catholics and the wider community.
5. Parishes and their schools work in close cooperation toward shared goals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop joint plans for mission and outreach. 2. Invite School Boards to consider how to support their parish. 3. Develop communication strategies that benefit parish and its school(s).

[The parish must be] in contact with the homes and lives of its people, and... not become a useless structure... It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey.

(cf. Evangelii Gaudium 28)



KEY PASTORAL PRIORITY

A Call to Our Youth

Recognising that our communities need to reach out to young people in new and creative ways

GOALS	STRATEGIES
1. Youth experience the joy of the Gospel.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present the gospel in a way that is authentic, realistic and relevant. 2. Invite youth to participate in justice and care and other outreach initiatives of the Church. 3. Provide attractive and meaningful parish, regional and school youth liturgies and other events.
2. Youth are welcomed, valued and nurtured by parishes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify youth from our parishes, schools, families – particularly those with gifts of leading. 2. Develop methods of outreach to youth. 3. Approach and offer support to youth in need. 4. Involve youth in identifying and pursuing their own needs and priorities. 5. Identify active parishioners to be youth advocates in parishes to uphold their interests. 6. Promote youth-to-youth parish hospitality and ministry. 7. Continue the funding and development of youth networking.
3. Youth find identity and meaning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foster a sense of youth as current participants alongside others in our parishes, that is, not just in its future. 2. Identify persons, opportunities, and resources for youth formation. 3. Link with, and promote, young people's passion for social justice and concern for the environment. 4. Encourage older parishioners to nurture youth in their faith and life journey. 5. Parishes and schools assist their youth, regardless of religion, in forming their identity and finding meaning in life. 6. Foster relationships with youth of other churches, and with their youth ministries/initiatives.
4. Youth are engaged in all aspects of parish life.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include youth in parish activities (Parish Pastoral Council, liturgical ministries, outreach, parish community events, fundraising, outreach to the elderly, the homeless, etc.) and support them to fulfil their roles and ministries. 2. Encourage parishes to liaise with school chaplains, APRE's and principals, to enhance the relationship between parishes and schools. 3. Support those already working with youth or who have a gift/ministry for such work. 4. The Diocese continues to support and fund the Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator.

An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it.

(Evangeliu Gaudium 183)



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KEY PASTORAL PRIORITY

Outreach and Evangelisation

Parishioners are aware of and are formed in their commitment to mission and evangelisation.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
1. Parishes are welcoming and demonstrate a spirit of inclusivity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider and accommodate the needs of children and families in pastoral planning. 2. Develop more opportunities for school families to engage with parish life. 3. Engage with the recognised elders of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
2. Parishes focus on deepening personal faith in order that it may be shared with others.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nurture a common and coordinated vision for evangelisation across parishes and ministries to share best practice and facilitate collaboration in formation and service delivery. 2. Review, enhance and promote existing RCIA and other programs that foster an encounter with Christ. 3. Provide retreat and other renewal opportunities that foster encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. 4. Identify opportunities to share faith-deepening resources e.g. book reviews in bulletins or website. 5. Encourage and develop practices of personal prayer. 6. Provide a coordinated diocesan approach to nurturing vocations.
3. Diocese and parishes embrace the Church's mission to evangelise.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide faith education and skills that encourage and enable all of the baptised to share the Gospel. 2. Review and enhance our approach to key moments where we can welcome visitors, i.e. Christmas, Easter, sacramental preparation and celebration. 3. Identify and create opportunities for parishioners to share their faith stories.
4. The Church will be known for its mercy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise the profile and awareness of existing Justice and Care initiatives in our diocese, especially by featuring them on the diocesan website. 2. Deepen our sense of mercy through Year of Mercy formation activities (2016).
5. Parishes recognise their special duty to care for the poor and marginalised.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance the profile of, and encourage participation with, existing outreach ministries and services within the diocese. 2. Identify needs not presently addressed by the work of the Church. 3. Coordinate the delivery of aid programs at deanery level and with other churches and organisations.

A missionary heart... always does what good it can, even if in the process its shoes get soiled by the mud of the streets.

(Evangelii Gaudium 45)



KEY PASTORAL PRIORITY

Enhancing the Role of Diocesan Agencies

To strengthen the service provision of Catholic Education Services, Centacare, and Diocesan Finance & Administration agencies in meeting needs across the diocese.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
1. Diocesan Agencies collaborate to further their mission and ministry.	1. Seek to understand and support each other's work. 2. Develop strategies to link with parishes.
2. Agencies are strong in their linkages with parishes and the broader community.	1. Ensure regular communication between parishes and agencies. 2. Agencies raise the capacity within parishes to respond to their own needs. 3. Incorporate the Diocesan Pastoral Plan into strategic planning policies. 4. Develop a coordinated plan for promoting the work of the agencies.

The Church will have to initiate everyone – priest, religious and laity – into the ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other.

(Evangelium Gaudium 169)



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Photos courtesy of Terry Power, Gunnar Risla and Catholic Education Services.