

# *SYNOD 2003*

## PARISH GATHERING REPORT

**NAME OF PARISH: LUTWYCHE**

**PLACE OF PARISH GATHERING: Holy Cross Heritage Hall**

**DATE OF PARISH GATHERING: 18/11/2001**

**No. IN ATTENDANCE: 18**

## **ISSUE 1: To understand & value the spiritual treasure that the church has to offer in today's world**

Promote actively throughout our parishes small groups in which parishioners meet weekly or fortnightly in order to:

- a) Get to know Jesus through discussing a short gospel passage
- b) Compare daily life as they meet it, to the values of the gospel.
- c) Try to help and encourage one another to see what god is asking of them as Christians in the situations they encounter. And
- d) Talk over their various efforts and support and encourage one another.

These should be supported and promoted in 'bunches' of parishes over several deaneries or pastoral areas.

Establish programs that develop skills in challenging areas of interpersonal activity e.g. dealing with change, resolution of conflict, acceptance of those with different ideas, philosophies, ways of doing things.

Encourage parishioners to participate in all aspects of parish life:

- a) liturgy (readers, eucharistic ministers etc)
- b) music (choir centre organist, etc)
- c) parish groups (St V De Paul, Street groups etc)
- d) hospitality (greeting people, morning tea, be conscious of the needs of people, listening).

Bishops should speak out about social issues in the media etc.

To develop our faith through a relationship with Jesus by

- a) attending Mass regularly
- b) praying the scriptures
- c) spiritual reading
- d) having a quiet time for prayer/meditation
- e) appreciating the grace received through the sacraments and making more use of them
- f) breaking open the word/homily

To hear in homilies and see in action in the church life the addressing of issues that relate more to 'real' life and today e.g. working in it and supporting social issues like AIDS, homeless. More enthusiasm in teachings/homilies.

As I have grown in my understanding of the Catholicism taught to me I have realised and come to respect the values of other faiths – Christian and non-Christian. The man made hierarchies, rules and traditions of religions are quaint, but distracting. They are the wrapping, not the gift. Any faith tradition that values people and humanity above the temporal is worthy of my respect. I would like to learn more about other traditions, find common ground and celebrate how we can become better people.

Emphasis on Christian study – individual spiritual growth – everyday bible study of scriptures and home groups through reading, books, videos, tapes with ongoing roster to different homes highlighting the qualities of Jesus – humility, hospitality and generosity – detachment to material things.

Basic preaching of the 'good news' of Jesus victory over death – the answer to many who turn to alcohol, drugs, suicide, gloom etc, lack of peace, hope etc.

We have not convinced people of the spiritual treasure the Church has to offer as many are leaving. Teaching: Sunday homily is usually the only channel for people in the pews, so some new initiatives need to be introduced (the everyday Catholic is not interested in expensive diocesan courses or theology degrees).

Recognising God's love for each person, we see our faith as a many-faceted jewel, to be demonstrated in programs with several areas of focus e.g.

- Emphasise the significance of Mass/Eucharist and sacraments in our daily lives.
- Encourage scripture study. Belonging to the community of the church and getting to know Jesus by reading the gospels and Christian literature.
- Highlight devotion to Mary. Getting to know Mary the mother of Jesus by reading more about her and praying to her.
- Recognise the value of the practice of prayerful meditation
- Promote public demonstration of our faith e.g. prayerful gatherings.
- Acknowledge the practice of self-denial as a means of off-setting the influence of materialism.

Disseminate these programs through archdiocesan programs such as lent and advent, through deaneries, diocesan groups, parishes and in the homilies. Make use of catholic leader to advertise programs.

Communities welcoming and caring.

More religious teaching in Catholic schools.

Example in daily living – live your faith e.g the journey program and alpha.

Sermons in Mass from visiting non-Catholic Christians.

If teaching is to improve we should take a good look at the way we train our priests.

More open dialogue between priests and community about community issues to come up with a shared decision.

Get away from focusing on issues that draw attention away from church teachings e.g not focus on placing of tabernacles.

Be open to change: with help through education from the pulpit.

More teaching from our priests. Priests should give homily.

Be aware of over-dependence on materialism.

More encouragement e.g. thankyou's at church ceremonies.

Try to behave as Jesus would. Ask what Jesus would do, particularly with people we don't like.

Parish-based normative activities ongoing Basic Bible seminar, Renewal Life in the Spirit seminar, alpha course.

Increased Evangelisation by word of mouth, expression of sharing of faith through witnessing how God is working on individual's life.

Living our Christian lives to the full and fostering ecumenism.

Encourage friendly informal gatherings from church community.

Re-emphasize the profound effect that personal witness spoken to others has in revealing the treasure of life in Jesus. Emphasis on faith-sharing.

Participating in Catholic organizations such as the Catholic Women's League.

Get away from fear-based religion. Go towards hope-based, love-based, faith-based religion.

Family focus during church ceremonies.

For individuals to value/get to the core of their faith more.

When considering several different pastoral or missionary support initiatives try them simultaneously in different groups of deaneries. Resource people for these operations should not be restricted to paid employees of the archdiocese.

**ISSUE 2: To respond to the spiritual hunger of people of today, including emerging believers, Catholics unconnected to a church community, & those who have no religious faith.**

There will be times when we are called on to speak directly about our faith, but generally the best way for us individually to respond to the spiritual hunger of people about us is

- a) To try to fully live out our religion in every aspect of our daily living (e.g. always speaking up or acting in defence of the weak at work, at sport, in neighbourhood or supermarket conversations etc) and
- b) Quietly letting it be known, when opportunity offers, that our attitudes are based on the gospel.

Make hospitality a way of nourishing people's hunger e.g. Introduce yourself to strangers, talk to people & ask them about themselves, welcoming, getting to know each other.

Church to be more accepting and tolerant and seen to be accepting and tolerant of people in different life situations e.g people with mental illness, homosexuality, street workers.

Foster the inclusion of the marginalised and the oppressed in church life by openness and friendliness in e.g. extending hospitality, acknowledgement at sign of peace.

Make the clergy move alive to the REAL role of the laity.

Highlight the significance of living as a catholic in the full sense of the gospel values of love, compassion, forgiveness and acceptance not only through prayer and mass attendance, but also by everyday actions in all our relations with people in everything we do and say.

Take more 'risks' in reaching out of people. Example of church leaders is important here. Confronting the 'faithful' in areas of blindness e.g relationships with Aboriginal people.

Use small parish groups to provide mutual support, caring for the less able and the inclusion of those who are not active in parish life.

Use a range of media to promote Christian values in order to counter the constant message of materialism, individualism and rejection of moral and ethical values.

Train priests to reverse the unbalanced approach since Vatican 2 of putting most emphasis on getting people onto the altar instead of training them to carry out their mission to the world where they spend most of their time.

To look at other churches and learn from the things they do well. Cross boundaries with other churches – be very ecumenical.

Home prayer groups e.g. like rosary in the past. Emphasize home visitation by parishioners to anyone in community.

Publicize positive examples of community involvement and the exercising of care for others.

Church to continue being involved in interacting with other churches – look to other churches and learn from the things they do well.

More expansion of expressions of traditions, adaptation and integration of acceptable mainstream religious practices during feast days from other parts of the Universal Church as mainstream Australian Catholic church parish-based activities rather than personal devotions of the few. E.g. October rosary – parish-based roster rosary recitation every evening culminating in celebrations. Good Friday – procession in main streets with ecumenical participation. Easter – Archdiocesan Festival Activities to network with other Christian Churches. Devotions to the Hearts and Seminars – parish to initiate once a week mass devotions of the saints it represents, creating a pilgrimage/cult. Christ the King – expose picture of Jesus Christ on windows and doors.

Recognise Christ in everyone – look beneath the surface.  
Don't put obstacles in the way of people's spiritual nourishment by belittling or ignoring or being unsympathetic or judgemental.

Frustration and disconnection in society. The pursuit of power and money. The living of prayerful lives and living the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Church to be more proactive in the media about what the church stands for.

Reach out to people.

Provide part of the church for friendly social gatherings.

Be non-judgemental.

Trust in God and return to gospel values.

More parish activities on Sundays, varieties from social, educational, talent contests etc.

Openness of church structures – operation of the doctrine of collegiality e.g the closed dysfunctional clerical system.

Nature. Goodness in the lives of ordinary people. The presence of the Eucharist in our midst. Loving communities. Generosity of mothers in caring for their families.

Research what other churches are doing. Make the church more visible.  
Acknowledge that we are Catholics – use the media – recognised journalists e.g. Bill O'Shea.

More emphasis on the catholic faith in catholic schools.

Offering employment (paid or unpaid) through the church, for the church.

The need for more disciplined lives.

Greet and welcome people.

More interaction between catholic parishes.

Archbishop to show his face more.

Church to encourage social action activities.

Teaching kids to be assertive about their faith.

Resolve issue of married priests.

Increased vigilance on evangelisation – ongoing recruitment to anyone to seminar designed to Introduction to The Catholic Faith, short version of RCIA.

For the parish one of the many possibilities is to have parish zone teams (or others) letter box drop messages from the parish that stress God's love for every person and the importance to God of every person's daily activities or work and their little acts of friendliness etc. All these things could benefit from strong constant archdiocesan encouragement.

**ISSUE 3: To respond, engage with, and animate the spiritual life of young people.**

Encourage young people to express their ideas (e.g. in a parish youth forum). Listen to their opinions and respond positively.

Get behind the youth movements which follow the “Cardijn” method particularly as, in recent years, the Church in our Archdiocese has sadly neglected them.

Support organizations such as Young Christian workers and youth Justice Committees which;

- a) Encourage members in understanding and valuing their faith
- b) Protect/promote working rights of young people in relation to job opportunities and unjust working conditions and offer situation where injustice occurs.

Encourage young people to:

- a) Be involved in liturgy as servers, readers, in choir and music ministry, emphasising the significance of Eucharist in our parish.
- b) Formulate their own liturgies (using drama, dance, song) particularly in dealing with both joyful and distressing life events.
- c) And encourage all church members to be accepting and supportive of youth’s approach.

Promote open discussion of topics that affect young people including the prevalence of suicide, drug abuse, sexual permissiveness. And explore/expand services to support young people experiencing suicide of friends/family members, and facilitate the counselling of those at risk.

Network of social groups, parish and inter-parish to develop artistic skills and discover other talents – parish based discos, outings, recreations with adult group supervision including educational seminars on personal development.

Recruitment of youths and developing them to be leaders in Church Key positions – Eucharistic ministers, choir, administration, parish council, fund raising.

Recognise and give wide recognition to the altruism of the young expressed in activities such as Rosies, St Vincent de Paul Group, Hospital and Nursing home visitations, assisting at Meals on Wheels.

Encourage the youth to make a commitment – even for a short time.

Initiate an ‘apprentice’ group within the parish community inviting young people to join existing groups e.g. nursing home visits. Provide youth with authentic inclusive experiences giving them greater responsibilities and respect with meaningful roles and acknowledgement for their work.

Provide educational programs for older people to enlighten them to the issues facing young people today that perhaps were not part of their youths so they can be more accepting. Reversing the situation would also be a good idea.

Find ways to CHALLENGE young people to promote gospel values, particularly as they live in a society where “I” is emphasised and possessions represent our status in society.

We pray for the young people.

Young people need to be personally invited to do something constructive for the church and to be acknowledged for their efforts.

Promote amongst youth attitudes of acceptance of different cultures and races, particularly in relation to Australian Aboriginals, migrants and refugees.

Endeavour to offset TV and radio material which appears to condone drug abuse, explicit violence and permissive lifestyles, make use of lobbying tactics and promotion of programs conveying messages of non-violence and responsible attitudes to life.

Ask young people for their ideas about how to make Mass more meaningful for them and to implement these ideas where possible.

Designated parish youth mass once a month whereby every Sunday there is always an available youth mass in the deaneries.

Encourage parents to pray and go to mass with their children.

Provide more masses for youth with liturgy etc conducted by youth.

To be aware of young people and pray for them.

The church needs to have people whose responsibility is to guide, organise, encourage and support young people.

Develop and Artistic Ministry as integral to the Mass.

Support parents to involve their children in the life of the church.

Encourage the youth to take an active part in the music ministry.

Develop sacramental programs more fully so that programs are ongoing, keeping parents and children together in the worshipping community.

Give consideration to establishing a youth assembly for urban youth, along the lines of that proposed for rural youth in the Bishops Social Justice Statement (2001): A Just and Peaceful Land.

Encourage the youth who are presently involved in church to actively witness to other young people.

Let one Mass be prepared (choosing hymns etc) and ministered by young people on a special Sunday once a month or bimonthly.

Encourage the youth who are at present involved in the Church to actively witness to other young people.

Through RE programs provide young people with a knowledge of church history including the social teachings of the church.

Establish youth involvement on the Internet by setting up a Catholic Youth Information Site.

Develop activities which integrate young people with older Church members e.g. family liturgies, social justice discussion groups

Go out to a young person to welcome/nurture him or her.

Bring back groups similar to the 'Children of Mary'.

#### **ISSUE 4: To nurture the mission & vocation of the priests & people of the archdiocese.**

Develop programs which promote Christian attitudes towards issues of social justice with emphasis on the marginalised e.g. homosexuals, mentally ill, migrants, refugee prisoners, outworkers, the aged, the disabled AND gain media coverage of statements by the Church Leaders – ordained and lay – re these issues particularly when strong anti-Christian attitudes are held by Catholic community members.

More support for the young people in the Cardijn movement e.g. the YCW

Support the priest and the church community by taking part in various ministries.

Mission: Broaden the concept of vocation to acknowledge a range of callings – ordained ministry, religious life, marriage, single life and various branches or professional life.

Educate laity as to how they can become involved in the mission and ministry of the Church and personally invite them to be involved.

To accept ordained priests as community members with faults and needs but also acknowledging them in their ordained ministry.

Bring back the third rite of reconciliation.

Creation of Specialised Archdiocesan Dispute/Mediation Resolutions centre to avoid Court including discrimination and interfering in-laws.

Encourage mutual support amongst priests and provide compassionate support for those accused of behaviour inappropriate to their calling. And foster amongst the laity a recognition of the challenges experienced by priest and religious and encourage the laity's prayerful support.

Continue RCIA program with particular emphasis on continuing support and formation for new members and their families in the post-Easter period

Parish/Deanery based Domestic Violence Discussion groups for males, females and children.

Encourage our church community to be welcoming and present a joyful church.

Ensure ongoing recruitment of & preparation of lay involvement in Ministry-pastoral associates, parish councillors, liturgical ministers, encourage increasing participation & visibility of laity in their roles.

Information on church teachings and letters from the Pope or Bishop to the people should be presented in language the AVERAGE person can understand. Very rarely does clear information on the Church's views on important issues get passed along to the people.

Demonstrate & foster concerns for ecological issues developing & promoting programs regarding just & sustainable use of resources and identification of threats to the environment.

Bishops should be more realistic when setting up committees to advise them, fewer experts please and more 'grass roots' people who know what is happening.

The importance of connection between pastor and people including home visitation by parish priests especially to families.

Encouragement to prayer and study groups with the parish community.

Acknowledge the multicultural nature of our church community and of society in general and encourage liturgical and other celebration of different cultures.

Take a close look at the gospel values and challenge our people constantly to adopt them in their everyday lives.

Bring the Church out into the open; let the people know what is going on. People today don't accept everything at face value.

Archdiocesan Refuge Homes for single mothers and youths.

Education parishioners through various centres e.g. theology, Lenten programs etc.

Form basic Christian communities e.g. street groups – to include prayer or mass.

Use the sacramental programme as a means to bring young parents back to the community with ongoing personal contact and support.

Increased hiring of practising Catholic staff in the parish and Catholic Institutions and private businesses.

Greater guidance from the clergy about the practice of our Catholic Faith in today's world.

Incorporate prayer in the daily lives of each person – perhaps education programs are need to show how to do this.

To be open to inviting others to be part of ministries and other functions.

Be prepared to offer friendships and generosity in fulfilling needs of others in the community.

Establish apostolic groups in parishes (these are not prayer groups although prayer is included).

People need to feel that they can make a difference and that they are needed. Often a personal invitation is called for.

Convince Catholics lapsed and practising that they belong to church that cares about them. Many don't believe they do.

Foster/strengthen parish groups e.g. youth, family, care & concern, hospitality through small group formation based on eg. interests or location.

Perhaps the numbers of deacons could be increased from the laity to take some pressure off the priests so that they can be more visible to their parishioners.

Have a couple of special prayer days for the success of the synod.

Give a higher profile to ecumenical activities which occur at both archdiocesan and local level.

To nurture people must be welcome and feel included. It is unfortunate that the church is so slow to recognise the possibilities of ministries for women - though understandable.

The local church should explore imaginative ways to provide a structure, at parish and diocese level, to include women. We need their energy and wisdom. We need their faces in our churches in positions of power/leadership. I dare us!

Good publicity about priests and lay people involved in the church could be used to balance/counteract bad publicity.

It would be nice to see the bishop occasionally.

Parish-based roster for group corporal works of mercy, visitation of the sick at hospital, homes and aged care homes, prison.

Parish-based recreation groups – arts and crafts to create employment.

Decision-making with more involvement of the laity.

More training of priests and nuns on relationship counselling.

Parish and Archdiocesan retreat half-yearly and annually

Annual celebration of renewal of marriage vows, rectification of sacramental marriage to those on de-facto and civil marriages.

Clergy training should be carefully reviewed in order to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.