



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

10 September 2021

Dear Fathers and Parish Lay Leaders,

We have now completed a series of regional gatherings where information and next steps for the transformation of our parishes, *Take the Way of the Gospel*, was presented.

This has been an important and valuable first step as we discern how missionary discipleship can best be lived out in our local communities of grace.

Take the Way of the Gospel focusses specifically on the realities of our local Church here in the Archdiocese of Melbourne at a pastoral, spiritual and practical level. It's about how we might work together co-operatively with the priests and people of the Archdiocese in strengthening and reinvigorating our parish communities as well as more effectively reaching out with missionary enthusiasm to the communities in which we live.

Sadly, the current COVID circumstances meant that it was not possible to gather in person. Whilst Zoom presentations are less than ideal, it was good at least to share the information, data and analysis that had been very professionally assembled. It is important that this material is discussed within your Parish, so that your unique lived experience might inform discernment and discussion within and between parishes.

Your views and experience are of vital importance as we move forward in a spirit of renewed missionary zeal to ensure that our "*local neighbourhoods of grace*" continue to be places of faith, life and formation as well as communities of pastoral outreach and charity in the spirit of the Gospel.

Of course, the first and most important step in any discernment process, especially one that seeks to strengthen and rebuild parish life in uncertain times, is deep prayer. We need the Holy Spirit to guide us in our efforts.

The attached Parish checklist and indicative timeline also includes some valuable prayer resources to assist us as we progress the *Take the Way of the Gospel*.

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The Archdiocese is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.

As we embark on this journey together, it is important we do so in a deliberative and a considered way, taking our time to discern future paths. In this way, we follow the evangelist's call to 'go across to the other side' (Mark 4:35), experiencing new waters that can take us beyond familiar comfort zones.

Archbishop Comensoli will also be writing to you soon and is grateful for the work being undertaken as we move to the next phase of our journey.

As mentioned at the regional gathering, there will be significant ongoing support for your parish. This includes:

- a resources pack which is being distributed to parishes;
- guides for parish meetings;
- availability of facilitators;
- opportunities for on-line feedback;
- support, networking and coaching.

Whilst further information and further updates will also be posted on www.melbournecatholic.org.au/about/mission we would encourage you to reach out and engage with your regional animation consultant during this next phase of discernment and consultation.

Finally, at this time we are deeply aware of the impact of lockdowns is having on many of our priests and faithful. We all look forward to a time when we can gather together in our parish communities to celebrate the Eucharist – the source and summit of our Christian life!

Once again, thank you for your faithful witness and service to the People of God here in Melbourne.

May God bless you and may the Holy Spirit continue to guide us in our deliberations.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Very Rev. Fr Joe Caddy AM
Vicar General



Tim O'Leary
Executive Director – Stewardship



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Director for Mission

Vicar General's Office

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