

Submission to the 2020 Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia

Preamble

We wish to make a group submission from the parish of St Carthages, Parkville, Archdiocese of Melbourne. The submission is in response to the invitation of the organisers of the Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia in 2020 to make individual or group submissions as part of the pre-conciliar activities.

The process for preparing and gaining parish endorsement for the submission was as follows. With the full support and participation of the Parish Priest, Fr Michael Elligate, a group of up to 25 members (12 women and 13 men) met four times at the St Carthages Parish Centre or took part through email exchanges. Over three months, its members produced ten submissions, discussed issues face to face or provided written feedback. With permission, many of these submissions were made available in printed form to parishioners. Fr Michael encouraged parishioners to read and comment on the submissions and the group convenors' contact details were provided in the parish newsletter for responses and comments.

The meeting on 19 December 2018 decided on the final content of the group submission. The group submission also draws on and includes a number of related submissions that group members made. These have been attached with the authors' names. This final group submission was made available in the Church over a four-week period to parishioners in printed form and the parish newsletter invited them to comment on the submission. No objections to the content were received.

Submission to the 2020 Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia by a group of parishioners from St Carthages Parish, Parkville, Melbourne

“You know how among the Gentiles those who seem to exercise authority lord it over them; their great ones make their importance felt. It cannot be like that with you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all” (Mark 10:42-45) (cited by Pope Francis in whole or in part four times in his [Letter to the US Bishops, 1 January 2019](#)). In that Letter, Pope Francis made the following assessment, which equally applies to our situation in Australia:

The loss of credibility also raises painful questions about the way we relate to one another. Clearly, a living fabric has come undone, and we, like weavers, are called to repair it. This involves our ability, or inability, as a community to forge bonds and create spaces that are healthy, mature and respectful of the integrity and privacy of each person. It involves our ability to bring people together and to get them enthused and confident about a broad, shared project that is at once unassuming, solid, sober and transparent. This requires not only a new approach to management, but also a change in our mind-set (metanoia), our way of praying, our handling of power and money, our exercise of authority and our way of relating to one another and to the world around us.

...a new ecclesial season needs bishops who can teach others how to discern God’s presence in the history of his people, and not mere administrators. Ideas can be discussed but vital situations have to be discerned. Consequently, amid the upset and confusion experienced by our communities, our primary duty is to foster a shared spirit of discernment, rather than to seek the relative calm resulting from compromise or from a democratic vote where some emerge as “winners” and others not. No! ([Pope Francis Letter to the US Bishops, 1 January 2019](#)).

Introduction

In the spirit of Pope Francis’ recent Letter to the US Bishops, we would like to say to the Australian Bishops: “Be humble and honest and work out what are the common beliefs you all hold which have been necessary since the beginning of Christianity. Come together on those beliefs and be honest with us all about the differences which have accrued over the centuries and how you will manage them openly with each other”. Then we can all come together honestly and freely. Without such a reform of heart and mind in our leadership, we cannot go forward in any real sense (see Attachment 1: Marie Joyce’s submission ‘Recommendations for Pre-Conciliar Preparation by the Australian Bishops Conference’).

Addressing Clericalism in the Church

Pope Francis has identified the culture of clericalism as a central flaw in the life of the church. In the wake of worldwide inquiries and revelations concerning child sexual abuse.¹ Clericalism has contributed to both the perpetrators facilitating their crimes and senior church officials (principally bishops) perpetuating the problem by covering up the crimes with the mistaken- and doomed to be counter-productive -objective of preserving the good name of the Church. In describing clericalism as an evil and a cancer in the life of the church, Pope Francis has reinforced the conclusions of the Federal Royal Commission in Australia, but the issue is much deeper than that.

By following Pope Francis in decrying clericalism and calling for an end to it, we are not decrying clerics themselves or calling for abolition of a clerical role (relevant references to the Gospels and Pope Francis are in the footnotes).² At the same time, we recognise and applaud the exemplary pastoral roles carried out by the great majority of priests in Australia. However, we have a much less complimentary assessment of many bishops in this country, and decry their collective inaction, disunity and abysmal quality of leadership. In our opinion, they have squandered their moral capital and shamed the faithful across the country.

Drawing inspiration from the gospels and Pope Francis, we want to see our Church rid of the culture of clericalism.³ Our assessment is that the general faithful, including very many priests and religious, wish to bring this about also. This awareness of clericalism as a problem for the Church is not new, let alone brought about solely by the revelations concerning sexual abuse. Rather, that revolting scandal has brought to a head the realisation that it is not a matter of a few bad apples in the barrel but a corrosive and long-standing counter-Christian pervasive cancer in the barrel itself.

What does the culture of clericalism mean to us? It means the individual and collective mindset that sees ordained clerics as not merely having a special ministry. It is a viewpoint, alien to the message of Jesus himself, that sees a cleric as being a superior type of member of the Church, given a privileged status and even obeyed unquestionably, beyond reproach and of high moral character solely by virtue of their ordination.⁴ Regrettably, this mindset has not been confined to clerics

¹ In Pope Francis' [Letter to the People of God](#), 20 August 2018, p 3, he states: 'Clericalism, whether fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons, leads to an excision in the ecclesial body that supports and helps to perpetuate many of the evils that we are condemning today. To say "no" to abuse is to say an emphatic "no" to all forms of clericalism'.

² Key Gospel references are Mark 9: 33-35, Luke 22: 24-27; Matt 20: 24-28; John 13: 3-5, 12-15; Matt 18:6. A key Pope Francis reference is *Evangelii Gaudium*, paras 102 & 104.

³ As Federico Lombardi SJ, the Pope's former media director, in a recent [background article in *Civiltà Cattolica*](#) (19 December 2018) for the February 2019 Meeting of Bishops in Rome on the Protections of Minors has noted: 'The ecclesial vision that guides Francis is the one we all recognise by now: the pilgrim people of God guided by the Spirit; a "synodal" journey, where all the faithful are co-responsible and every form of clericalism needs to be fought decisively'.

⁴ Relevant Gospel references are: Mark 6: 7-9; Luke 9: 1-3; Matt 23: 8-12; Matt 23: 2-3, 5-7; Mark, 7: 5-8; 1 Cor. 13: 1-3; and 1 Tim. 3: 1-5.

themselves, but has been accepted by many, if not most, non-ordained members of the faithful for far too long. The time for that is over.

We propose that the problem of clericalism be addressed in the short and medium term, as follows, while recognising that these changes alone will not bring about a fundamental change in culture.

Measures to be implemented in the immediate Short Term:

- Remove the trappings and external symbols of a superior class, such as: abolish titles that represent “superior class” or “superior moral status” and especially any suggestion of a “ruling class”.⁵ Examples include “My Lord” , “Your Excellency” and even “Your Grace” for bishops and archbishops, “Monsignor” (=my lord) for senior priests, and absolutely eschew any descriptions of Cardinals as “princes of the Church”.⁶ It simply cannot be imagined that Jesus of the Gospels would appropriate such titles to himself or approve them for any of his followers.

Substitute instead purely functional titles that recognise the nature of the ministry - such as “Bishop” for the bishop, “Pastor” for the priest (regardless of role within the Church), and (say) “pastor- Secretary” for a priest in a senior administrative role (except that most administrative roles - and even diplomatic roles - should be carried out by unordained persons, even in Rome).

Abolish practices of deference, such as kissing the ring of the bishop. Indeed, abolish the rings! Retain respect for special ministry, but with no undue deference or symbols of subservience.

- Minimise the use of clothing or apparel that serves to set the wearer apart from others, except where appropriate in special liturgical settings. In the case of bishops, abandon the mediaeval head-dress and the most elaborate outer garments of formal liturgical context, just as many countries have long done for legal counsel in court. Retain only the crozier (crook) to symbolise a pastoral role.
- The practice of plundering overseas dioceses to supplement the scarcity of local priests is culturally inappropriate here. It is both counter-productive in Australia and unfair on the surrendering dioceses. It must cease and be replaced by a local model, which seeks to provide local solutions.
- To change clericalism, the position of women in the Church to be addressed in a fundamental way. There is evidence that the roles women played in the leadership of early Christian communities reflected the way Jesus respected and treated women. Not so today. Women are

⁵ The relevant words of Jesus are: ‘But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no-one your father on earth, because you have one Father- the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted’ (Matt 23: 8 – 12).

⁶ Robert Mickens, Letter from Rome, La Croix International, 21 September 2018, reports that Pope Francis himself has recently taken steps to abolish the title “Monsignor”. However, he also deemed it politic to restrict his abolition to priests under 65 years of age, and to allow the title to continue for priests in the Vatican diplomatic corps as well as in the Curia.

second class members of the church at best and often silenced. (Think of the papal command to not even speak about women's ordination). Bringing women into their true place in Christ's community involves more than adding them onto committees or giving them a say in certain decision-making. The suggested process below explains some of what might be needed. Workshops and discussion sessions led by professionals with the appropriate knowledge and skills would enable Bishops to engage in reflective, discerning processes together, with the aim of overcoming archaic taboos and their consequences, and removing the barriers to women's full participation in Christ's church (see Attachment 2: Marie Joyce's submission: 'Knowing the history and roots of the Church's attitudes and behaviour towards women').

In the medium term, but developing strategies in the short-term, beginning now:

- Formally, overtly and explicitly abandon notions of the corpus of ordained persons constituting a special class, and no longer allow reference to them only as "the Church". Instead, actively foster the recognition of ordained persons as a special ministry of service and simultaneously foster recognition of the whole body of the faithful as the Church, being the pilgrim people of God.
- All persons training for entry to an ordained state, and for non-ordained pastoral roles, should undergo training in leadership. Such training should be at a level and in an environment appropriate to the person and the ministry, but involving heavy input from experienced practitioners in the leadership field from the secular world, as well as in good governance. This recommendation particularly applies to both current and future bishops, who need to abandon any notion of parishes as being fiefdoms of the archbishop, while still recognising the need for a level of collective good management of Church activities. Among other things, this would require amendment of Canon Law and amendment of the legal status of assets such as parish churches and schools.⁷
- All ordained persons should live among the community they serve, and in accommodation in keeping with typical accommodation of that community. This includes archbishops and cardinals, following the example of Pope Francis' living arrangements in Rome.
- Fundamentally re-configure the training of priests – to remove the semi-monastic living model for seminaries, and require candidates for the priesthood to study at the Australian Catholic University (ACU), where they would rub shoulders with their peers (see Attachments 3 and 4 for submissions by Margaret O'Connor and Chris Pearson for a more detailed discussion of the issues and recommendations).

⁷ As noted by the International Theological Commission, 2018, [*Synodality in the Life and Mission of The Church*](#), The Vatican, 2 March, para 84.

In the parish there are two structures which have a synodal character: the parish pastoral council and the financial council, with lay participation in consultation and pastoral planning. In this sense it seems necessary to review the canonical norm which at present only suggests that there should be a parish pastoral council and to make it obligatory, as the last Synod of the Diocese of Rome did. Bringing about an effective synodal dynamic in a local Church also requires that the Diocesan Pastoral Council and parish pastoral councils should work in a co-ordinated way and be appropriately upgraded.

Require all candidates for the priesthood to have as a prerequisite a tertiary degree or post-secondary vocational qualification and relevant work experience of at least two years, and preferably more. This personal background will make them more like their own generation. Also, having an alternative livelihood makes it easier for priests to make the choice if they decide to leave the priesthood. Require all priests to have professional training in pastoral skills and to gain experience in paid or volunteer employment in the community and/or in church service during training. Celibacy should be optional, as a special calling, not looked on as “superior to the married state”, with appropriate education and counselling for both married and celibate ministry. The minimum age for selection as a parish pastor should be thirty years.

- Accelerate a movement to promote the taking on of all non-sacramental and non-liturgical roles at local level by lay adult persons, both female and male (See Attachment 5: Chris Pearson’s submission ‘A Local Model of Priestly Ministry’). Changes should include removal of the power of a parish priest to appoint school staff and to be “in charge” of schools, and have sole charge of parish finances. This in turn, we understand, requires a change to Canon Law which now requires all positions of “power” to be in the hands of ordained persons. At present this law also precludes women (see Attachment 6: Mark Dohrmann’s submission ‘Governance reform must address parishes’).
- All bishops (including archbishops) should spend a significant proportion of their time among the ordinary people, both those who declare membership of the Church and those who do not. This should include regular visits to parishes, and to agencies assisting the poor and disadvantaged. Bishops would have time to do this if they abdicated from many of their “administrative” roles by delegating to qualified lay persons.

Attachment 1: Recommendations for Pre-Conciliar Preparation by the Australian Bishops Conference:

These ideas reflect the view that, before the Bishops' Conference can enter into an honest dialogue with the Australian Church at a Plenary Council, there are some serious matters which they would do well to commit to working on in a pre-conciliar process of foundational discernment. Bridging the divisions and healing the lack of unity within the Bishop's Conference – "that they may all be one".

Conflicts within church leadership probably go back to the very beginnings of Christianity but the cementing of these into factions which compete for power behind closed doors has been most damaging to the life of the church.

I would like to say to the Australian Bishops: "Be humble and honest and work out what are the common beliefs you all hold which have been necessary since the beginning of Christianity. Come together on those and be honest with us all about the differences which have accrued over the centuries and how you will manage them openly with each other". Then we can all come together honestly and freely. Without such a reform of heart and mind in our leadership I think we cannot go forward in any real sense.

The reason for presenting a plea for honesty of heart and mind is that uncontained rivalry, jealousy and unhealthy competition are expressed in various forms of non physical violence: character assassination, power grabbing, dominance, secret alliances and exclusion. When these conflicts continue over time (centuries) and the aspiration and public story is "One, Holy, Catholic", any expression of such a story can only come through serious scapegoating. When a conflicted group cannot resolve its great differences, it papers over the cracks and finds an enemy that everyone can get behind: we see this constantly in international affairs (wars and terrorism) and nationally in party politics. I think it is possible women have provided such an "other" to the hierarchy over the centuries.

Suggested Process: Pre-conciliar meetings should be facilitated by non-clerical people (women and men) to assist bishops in working towards a meeting of hearts and minds in openness to the Holy Spirit. Facilitators would be trained in group processes and should guide the following:

- Shared reflection on issues of disunity would identify barriers to deep listening and consultation.
- Dialogue to undo rivalries, seek appreciation of what each "side" offers and so approach the Council as united community leaders. What are their fears? What are their individual and shared barriers? We know from the political realm that Australians see right through leaders' posturing.

These ideas express further the view that, before the Bishops' Conference can enter into an honest dialogue with the Australian Church at a Plenary Council, there are some serious matters which they would do well to commit to working on in a pre-conciliar process of foundational discernment.

Marie Joyce 20/11/2018

Attachment 2: Knowing the history and roots of the Church's attitudes and behaviour towards women

There is evidence that the roles women played in the leadership of early Christian communities reflected the way Jesus respected and treated women. Not so today. Women are second class members of the church at best and often silenced. (Think of the papal command to not even speak about women's ordination).

In Jesus' time Jewish men and women were subject to "purity rituals" which had survived since the time of archaic religions. In particular, women's biological functions, including menstruation and childbirth, were particularly problematic for a religion of "purity". Because of their "impure blood" they were seen as contaminating of men and religious rituals. As there was a limited understanding of how new life came about in women's bodies, their perceived power over life was feared. This fear was intensified because women bleed and don't die. So they need to be controlled. This may sound like ancient history but elements of these attitudes have persisted, not just in the Jewish religion but in Christianity: witness the traditional separation of women from men in sacred places (synagogue and church). In churches it is men who are not physically connected to women (i.e. priests) who are set apart from men who are so connected, and from women.

The Church's attitude to the supposed impurity of women was still evident in the 1970s when the ritual of "churching" as "purification after childbirth" was offered to women so they would be "clean" to re-enter the church! Does this practice still continue?

Bringing women into their true place in Christ's community involves more than adding them onto committees or giving them a say in certain decision-making. The suggested process below explains some of what might be needed.

Suggested Process

Workshops and discussion sessions led by professionals with the appropriate knowledge and skills would enable the following: Bishops could engage in reflective, discerning processes together, with the aim of overcoming archaic taboos and their consequences, and removing the barriers to women's full participation in Christ's church. They would examine the history of these taboos, rituals and exclusions.

- They would consider the losses to the Church because of this dark history.
- They would be able to identify their own fears and mindsets in this domain.

Were bishops to engage in processes such as these it would offer hope for a prayerful and collaborative Plenary Council with honesty, grace and full participation of all participants.

Marie Joyce 20/11/2018

Attachment 3: Paper on Seminary training for Plenary Council

As a casual academic of more than two decades at Catholic Theological College (CTC), I make the following reflections.

The Melbourne seminary training is separate and exclusive; even the physical environment is symbolic, sitting behind a high wall and barred gates. There seems an active tension between a life that appears to be monastic and regulated, and the requirement to prepare men for a life lived singularly, without structure.

There is an assessment process before entering the seminary, which is questioned, when men do not appear to be meeting the needs of the contemporary church for good preachers, and sensitive celebrants and pastors. Further assessments should occur at key points, to provide active engagement in the individual's developmental journey and early identification of issues. Seminarians should engage in some form of psychotherapy and supervision, especially in the first few years, with no exemptions. Self-reflection should be normalised in the seminary, becoming integral to the subsequent lifestyle.

The seminary could be a place where men begin priestly training, perhaps for a year, then move into a parish for extended periods of time while completing studies, returning at key periods along their journey to priesthood.

The dominant emergent priest is 'special', operating from a clericalist model, evidenced by a preponderance of young seminarians and clergy who wear clerical collars. They seemingly possess little experience of life's realities. Further, cultural differences carry inflated expectations of clerical privilege and entitlement which makes integration difficult. In the main, newly ordained do not seem capable of meeting the needs of the community where they will spend their lives.

Most seminary staff are Diocesan clergy and their qualifications, role preparation, ongoing supervision and personal development are unknown.

And, in accordance with a recommendation of the Royal Commission, the Catholic Ministry Register ought to record current Australia-wide data on all seeking seminary admission, as well as those in active ministry. This would enable transparency, for bishops and religious leaders to check the background of prospective seminarians and priests and track retention and other data.

Theological studies at CTC mean very small class groups, mostly men training for the priesthood; a few women, mostly religious; and fewer lay people. A sense of difference is compounded in this rarefied academic environment. Nothing is taught at CTC that cannot be taught at ACU, where students would rub shoulders with their peers.

There are two important aspects of seminary studies – academic (B.Theol) and human. The former is well-emphasised, the latter seems less valued. Even though some 'human' education occurs in the seminary, there are unrealised opportunities to reinforce aspects within the degree.

Discussions about whether celibacy and consequent clericalism is sustainable, should be prominent at the Plenary Council. Pope Francis refers to clericalism as a cancer. A visible point of difference, celibacy is the most obvious badge of identity of the 'clerical class'. And continuing to support celibacy makes a negative statement about sex which is culturally normal.

Inculcation into the clerical priesthood may become the breeding ground to attract an individual to the power that accompanies such roles. There is evidence that those priests working in parishes exhibit reluctance in devolving non-essential priestly roles to others including women; and with fewer priests, there seems an inability to think creatively about the future.

This paper raises a number of key, urgent issues of the clerical priesthood, which needs to attract mature men with deep spirituality, and passion for community and pastoral care in an Australian society that values transparency, egalitarianism and shared leadership. People who remain faithful to the church in these troubled times hunger to be fed with the Word of God and good liturgy.

Margaret O'Connor AM

Attachment 4: Some Changes Required in Priestly Formation

Diocesan priesthood is an apostolic ministry, not a monastic one. Hence the current monastic regime of formation is inappropriate.

As Gerardine Taylor Robinson* observes: 'The current, most prevalent seminary model which has students segregated from the secular world, living and studying in a homosocial, institutionalised and highly structured environment, where, by and large, women are unwelcome and/or kept on the periphery, is dysfunctional, insular and a breeding ground for clericalism.'

The philosophical position that believes that an ordinand is ontologically changed by Holy Orders, is to be renounced. It is the basis of clericalism and fertile ground for a toxic misogyny.

The mandatory linkage of celibacy with Holy Orders was imposed as a discipline by Pope Gregory VI (1073 – 1085). Prior to this, celibacy was not enforced (even for popes!). Celibacy must be an option for those seeking ordination.

'Only those who can maturely embrace the loss of generativity implicit in a choice for celibacy and who can healthily grieve this loss, can live celibacy creatively and lovingly go on to respect and to protect children. Those who resign themselves to mandatory celibacy as a necessary "sacrifice" required at ordination are hugely at risk of sexual boundary violations because hurt people, hurt people!' (Gerardine Taylor Robinson).

The church laws, which preclude the ordination of women to priesthood, must to be changed in order to include the gifts of women in all aspects of ministry, including ordained ministry.

Further, the presumed infallibility of the statement of Pope John Paul II, regarding the ordination of women, must be challenged as it is not a statement 'ex cathedra', and therefore, not infallible.

* Address to the Australian Council of Priests by Gerardine Taylor Robinson – a clinical psychologist and expert in mental health, gave evidence at the Royal Commission into child sexual abuse.

Chris Pearson

Attachment 5: A Local Model of Priestly Ministry

The practice of plundering overseas dioceses to supplement the scarcity of local priests is culturally inappropriate and unfair on the surrendering dioceses. It must cease and be replaced by a local model, which seeks to provide local solutions. Further, the practice of eliminating parish communities of faith through amalgamations should cease and the model below adopted where parishes are living a vital Christian life with established ministries.

The Lobinger Model* for Parish Leadership and Ministry deserves serious consideration and adoption. This includes –

- A mature faith community to select a small team (3-5) elders (mature men and women) to be ordained to preside over the life of the community and its liturgies. This was the model used by St Paul (Acts 14: 23);
- The Elders continue to minister and live their lives (married with their families, or unmarried), in the parish in which they reside, and work in their secular jobs;
- These Elders would be provided with basic theological and sacramental training through the Diocese, much like part-time tertiary students;
- The elders take it in turn to share the Eucharist, using a contemporary and intelligent language translation;
- They also conduct baptisms, funerals, and care of the sick;
- The current full-time diocesan priest becomes the animator and formator (formator priests) of the Elders and parish leaders;
- The Elders govern the parish, including normal administration, through the Parish Pastoral Council;
- The Elders would not conduct individual Reconciliation but the third rite of Reconciliation is to be reinstated (which the *sensus fidelium* endorses). If individual reconciliation is required, the formator priest would be available.

Given the centrality of Eucharist to the identity of the Christian Community, the above model is a creative, even prophetic proposal worthy of serious consideration.

A Diocesan Professional Standards body is to be established to ensure that all formator priests and parish ordained Elders are educated in, and abide by, the established professional standards. While formator-priests are responsible for the oversight of ordained Elders, they themselves should have regular (bi-monthly?) pastoral supervision by an accredited practitioner – preferably not a fellow cleric.

* Bishop Fritz Lobinger in Aliwal, South Africa. He was promoting an idea that was being considered by the world's bishops in the 1971 World Synod of Bishops: *Viri Probati*.

Chris Pearson

Attachment 6: Governance reform must address parishes

Why?

Governance is the set of principles and practices which describe a parish's aims and how it works to achieve them. Its aims are derived from its mission and flavoured by its values. In this submission it is reasoned that parish reform should set the benchmark against which national reform can be judged and measured.

Why now?

The upturned church has never needed more keenly to be seen as an inclusive, humble, progressive, credible, transparent community, with active lay engagement taking genuine responsibility. This is critically true at the local level. The Royal Commission into Child Abuse clearly identified the need for reform. Few would disagree, judging by continuing commentaries in the press, church media and generally.

What sort of reform?

The Royal Commission spelt it out: the church (by implication, its parishes) should learn from the governance principles already driving its local agencies in health, education and welfare. Locally, there is an abundance of good examples in these organisations, refined and tested. They exemplify good modern governance practice and effective, measured outcomes, in line with the guidance offered by the Royal Commission and the church's own Truth, Justice and Healing Council.

When?

Now. In Melbourne, Archbishop Peter Comensoli has said that the necessary governance changes will be established by 2019. We are not confident that this will happen, given the depth of significant cultural changes needed, especially at parish level, to make the changes work. The need for reform calls for an urgent need to have structures in place in parishes that will support a healthy, continuing community, as well as a climate of positive change in the cultural values which allow the necessary governance changes to thrive.

What will it look like?

At the parish level, there should be an elected Pastoral Council accountable to the parish community. Lay responsibility should apply to a transparent management of the parish, including all its financial affairs and employment. It should be characterised by wide engagement of lay people – men and women – in liturgy, pastoral care and parish support, and excellent liturgies. Clerical habits of control and decision making over finance and administration should cease. There should be external audits and review of all finances, asset use, and of parish collaborations with external bodies. There should be good communication networks internally and externally, with well developed on-line capability.

Mark Dohrmann AM - 23/11/18