

## **The Combined Parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary, Kyneton and St. Mary Magdalen, Trentham: Submission to the Plenary Council.**

In our Combined Parishes we had a number of group gatherings as well as “submission boxes” which were available openly in the Church for a period of time; this submission draws together the thoughts from those two sources. In addition, a small prayer and discussion group will be making a separate submission.

As would be expected, these thoughts and suggestions cover a wide spectrum. Sadly, in many ways, one person’s dream may be another person’s nightmare. For convenience and ease of assimilation, we have attempted to place them into some broad general groupings and have highlighted key points.

Have we **lost the sense of sacredness** in our secular world?

We need to set aside more **time for personal and communal prayer and devotion.**

More times for **silence** with the Lord.

Develop spirituality and prayer in the Parish – people are hungry for nourishment beyond sermons.

We need to **listen to the Holy Spirit** and be prepared to be inspired.

In the face of the negative role of government and politics, we need to **be a loud voice of hope.**

The Church must re-capture the spiritual and **healing message of Jesus Christ** and the Gospels for the modern world.

To be God like, all forgiving and to acknowledge that we can be different.

God wants us to lead all people to Him by our words and our example. **To continue His message of love:** to give to the poor; to feed the hungry; to lift up the fallen; to clothe the naked; to visit the sick; to set prisoners of all kinds free; to see Jesus in our neighbour and to be Jesus to them.

I think God is asking us to pray for emotional, social and spiritual intelligence so that we may overcome anger and hate, recognise the needs of those less advantaged and rise to a higher level of integrity, love and compassion.

God is asking us to pray each evening for the conversion of Australia (as well as for the missions).

### **How engaged are we in the celebration of the Liturgy and the Sacraments?**

Should there be **more family and small-group gatherings and Liturgies?**

Could we create **small Eucharistic Communities with family “worker priests”** within the larger parishes?

When we gather as the Body of Christ, in the presence of God, could we **please bring back some real dignity, beauty and richness to the celebration of the Mass?**

Being “popular” does not feed spiritual hunger or honour God.

Our Bishops should wear simple clothes not rich vestments.

**We should make more use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Rites of Reconciliation.**

(This could eliminate secret problems raised by the Royal Commission)

Can the Church be everything to everyone and please everyone?

Does the Church have to ban some to appeal to others?

Can the Church be broad enough to have square pegs churches and round peg churches and respect each other?

Can the Church accept Catholics regularly attending **charismatic meetings?**

Enlarge our seeing and **be realistic about the world around us;** the Church is not the hub of people’s lives anymore, it is diminishing. Change our behaviour and actions accordingly, **to be more loving, positive and welcoming rather than negative and divisive.**

**How effective is the Catholic education system as a whole?** Some schools are dedicated to teaching Christian values; others perhaps more to preserving an elitist social status. Fewer parents and children attend Mass, even after first communion. Why?

**Should we rethink the old idea of “Sunday Schools”?**

Find ways of making the Church more relevant and engaging to the young people in the Catholic community.

**Should priestly celibacy be voluntary?**

We should revisit the man-made rules, allowing priests to marry and to be more discerning regarding celibacy.

**The all-male leadership of the Church has proven to be disastrous** in the many cases of child paedophilia and extreme cover-ups! It has wrecked so many families which were once the Church. Our Church was once trusted, respected and faithful and is now fighting for survival.

Change our Church to be relevant to current times. **Nourish our Church using all the gifts God has given us, by allowing Priests to marry and to allow women to be Priests.** Confront hypocrisy – the future of the Church depends on it as young people will not accept the current vested interests of preserving the Church’s power, prestige and wealth.

Greater involvement of the laity, especially women, in ministry, ritual and decision-making. Recognise that women have an equal part in delivering His word to the world. **Women need not only to be involved, but seen to be involved in Church actions and policy-making.**

**Should we consider women Deacons and Priests?**

**Could women (lay or religious) be appointed lay Cardinals and be involved in the Electoral College?**

**Should parishes elect their Deacons and have a say in appointing their Priest?**

Enable the Church/parish to truly belong to the people.  
Same-sex couples in the Church as priests?

**We should revisit the issue of Birth Control.** So many Catholics ignore the teaching that it needs to be properly rationalised. The fall-back on abortion has become a tragedy.

**We need a simpler, faster and more compassionate process of marriage annulment.**

Not everyone gets it right the first time; a second marriage can be the one which is truly sacramental.

How connected are we to each other and to the wider community? We should be encouraged to participate more.

**Have active Church involvement in the stewardship of our planet;** the Church voice is not loud in the care of the environment and the mitigation of climate change.

We could **do more for Christian unity and ecumenism.** This is already happening, but many do not know or even approve of inter-faith dialogue.

We should **be prepared to listen and learn from the Protestants and other people of faith.**

We can **draw strength from common ground:** God/Faith; Prayer; Moral Values. We are not alone in what appears to be an increasingly secular society.

Yes, we should welcome “refugees”, but not all share our values. How do we embrace their values?

There **should be less emphasis on Church buildings, ownership and status.**

(Maybe we should close the Parish or its buildings for a year and see what happens)

We should **develop financial cooperatives**, lending to people in need and building housing for those in need.

**Programs for housing, unemployment, homelessness and sustainability.**

Provide Catholic banking and insurance to individuals not just to parishes.

Catholic inspired food production and distribution?

What or what do we as Catholics say that “God” is? “He”?

**We need to talk the language of the world we live in.**

**Revamp the language of ritual** and, where necessary, readings to be more “user-friendly” in today’s world.

Try to have a real poet on the next liturgical revision so that it makes sense and flows properly.

To be relevant to our time, our society and culture. To not be afraid of dialogue with our time.

**There should be a proper place for Liberation Theology.** To be truly Christian one should also espouse some “socialist” values.

**To really stand up for our faith and live it in the face of increasingly aggressive secular attacks.**

**Chase out the “smoke” of the spirit of Vatican II and return to a fully authentic Catholic Faith**, by restoring a proper catechesis, instilling proper supernatural faith and belief in the faithful. Stop setting the bar so low and begin taking the narrow, winding path to salvation.

If the Catholic Church, with over a billion people, stood up for the rights of bible-based people to live their faith, in all manner, including conservative dress standards, moral codes etc, it would **protect people and prevent harm in the face of an immoral secular society. It is time to be proactive, not just apologetic.**

For women to wear modest clothing and for all religious, e.g. nuns, to wear their habits again. This would show people that holiness and the sacred, being in the presence of God, are different from the profane.

**Forgive us for the abuse of children.** Send all priest offenders to prison.