



Perth Archdiocesan Assembly 13 July 2024

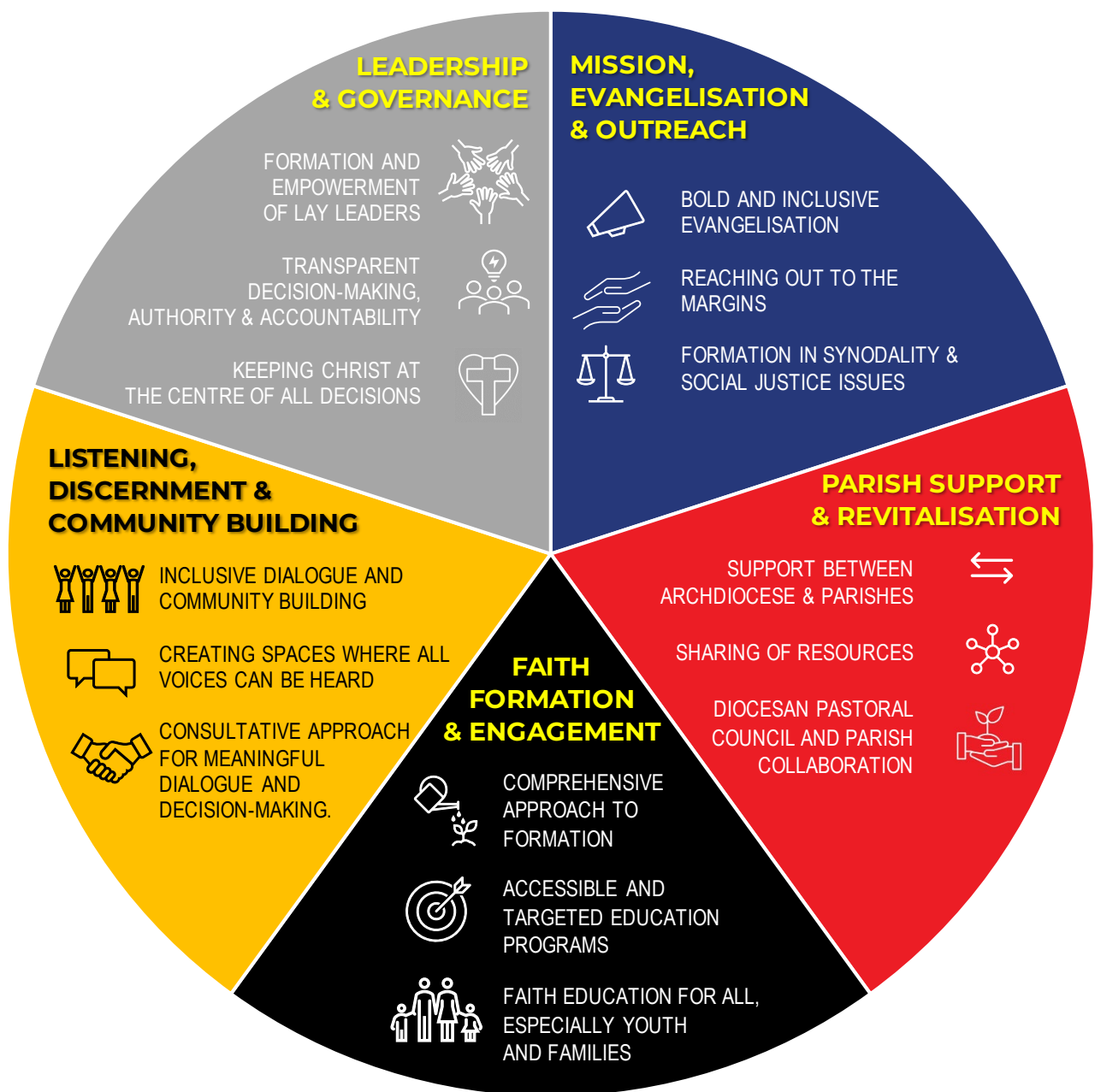
SYNTHESIS REPORT

LISTENING AND DISCERNMENT SESSION 1



DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL PASTORAL MATTERS

At the Archdiocesan Assembly on 13 July 2024, delegates were asked to discern the following question, *“In light of the reflection and discernment so far, what are the pastoral matters that the Diocesan Pastoral Council should address at this time?”* Below is the synthesis report based on the fruits of discernment.



The delegates of the Archdiocesan Assembly have undertaken a comprehensive discernment process to outline pastoral priorities for consideration by the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC). These priorities seek to reflect the mission of the church and to guide the DPC in embodying the principles of synodality to foster a vibrant Church. They address the current needs and aspirations of our parishes and the broader Catholic community. The key themes that emerged during the assembly have been synthesised and they offer insights that encapsulate the core of the Assembly's discussions.

1. Mission, Evangelisation, and Outreach

The DPC should prioritise engagement within the Archdiocese to enable all members of the Church to feel valued and included. This includes a focus on bolder evangelisation efforts and outreach to marginalised groups, such as First Nations communities and those who feel disconnected from the Church, aiming to reconnect with Catholics, practicing or otherwise. The DPC could also emphasise the importance of engaging young people and integrating the diverse cultural backgrounds present within the Archdiocese. By fostering a more inclusive environment, the DPC can help create a Church where everyone feels welcome and able to contribute to the mission. Priests and lay leaders should be formed in synodality and social justice, allowing them to engage more effectively with contemporary societal issues. The DPC's approach to evangelisation should reflect the church's mission to serve all people, particularly those at the margins.

2. Parish Support and Revitalisation

A primary pastoral priority for the DPC is to strengthen the support and connection between the Archdiocese and its parishes, particularly smaller metro parishes that often feel under-resourced. The DPC could focus on fostering a more vibrant and engaged parish life by encouraging collaboration through parish hubs and networks and supporting lay involvement and engaging volunteers. These hubs would allow parishes to share resources, wisdom, and personnel, creating a more cohesive and supportive diocesan community. The DPC's role would include facilitating these connections, ensuring that parishes are not isolated but part of a collaborative and thriving network. The DPC must work collaboratively with parishes, addressing issues and needs of parishes and ensuring that they are supported.

3. Faith Formation and Engagement

It was recommended that the DPC should prioritise ongoing formation and education as a key pastoral priority. Faith engagement and formation are central to the church's mission, requiring a comprehensive approach that reaches both practicing and non-practicing Catholics. A well-formed clergy and laity are essential for the Church's mission to evangelise and serve the community. The DPC could advocate for accessible and targeted education programs that cater to different demographics, helping all members of the Church to grow in their faith. Lifelong faith education must be accessible to all demographics, with special attention given to engaging youth and supporting families. Recognising the family as the domestic church and where evangelisation begins is crucial, and creative approaches to family catechesis could be a focal point. These efforts will help deepen the understanding and love for God across all age groups.

4. Listening, Discernment and Community Building

To strengthen connections between parishes and the Archdiocese, the Assembly highlights the importance of inclusive dialogue and community building. Listening and discernment are essential aspects of synodality, and it was recommended that the DPC should prioritise creating spaces where all voices can be heard. This involves listening to parishioners, church agencies, academics, and those on the margins of society. The DPC could adopt a consultative approach allowing for meaningful dialogue and deeper understanding of the Church's mission. This process will be critical in addressing the complex pastoral challenges facing the Archdiocese and ensuring that the DPC's decisions are informed by the lived experiences of the community.

5. Leadership and Governance

Effective leadership and governance are critical to achieving the diocese's pastoral goals. The Assembly recommends prioritising the formation, training and empowerment of lay leaders. Transparent decision-making processes, clear lines of authority, and accountability would be important to ensure that the DPC operates efficiently and effectively. Keeping Christ at the centre of all decisions and actions will help the church remain focused on its mission. Addressing pastoral and societal challenges while operating with clarity and purpose will also be critical. Recognising the strengths and limitations of the DPC will allow for more focused and strategic action, aligning the council's efforts with the needs of the community.

The pastoral priorities recommended by the delegates of the Archdiocesan Assembly provide a suggested approach to guide the work of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The DPC's mission is to provide strategic advice to the Archbishop on the most critical pastoral needs of parishes and the wider Catholic community, ensuring that all actions and decisions are grounded in the centrality of Christ. By focusing on support and connection to parishes, engagement and inclusivity, listening and discernment, formation and education, and effective governance, the DPC can create a vibrant, inclusive, and spiritually enriched church environment for the Archdiocese of Perth. This strategic direction will help the DPC fulfill its role in fostering a dynamic, Christ-centered community that is responsive to the needs of all its members.