



Perth Archdiocesan Assembly 13 July 2024

SYNTHESIS REPORT

LISTENING AND DISCERNMENT SESSION 2



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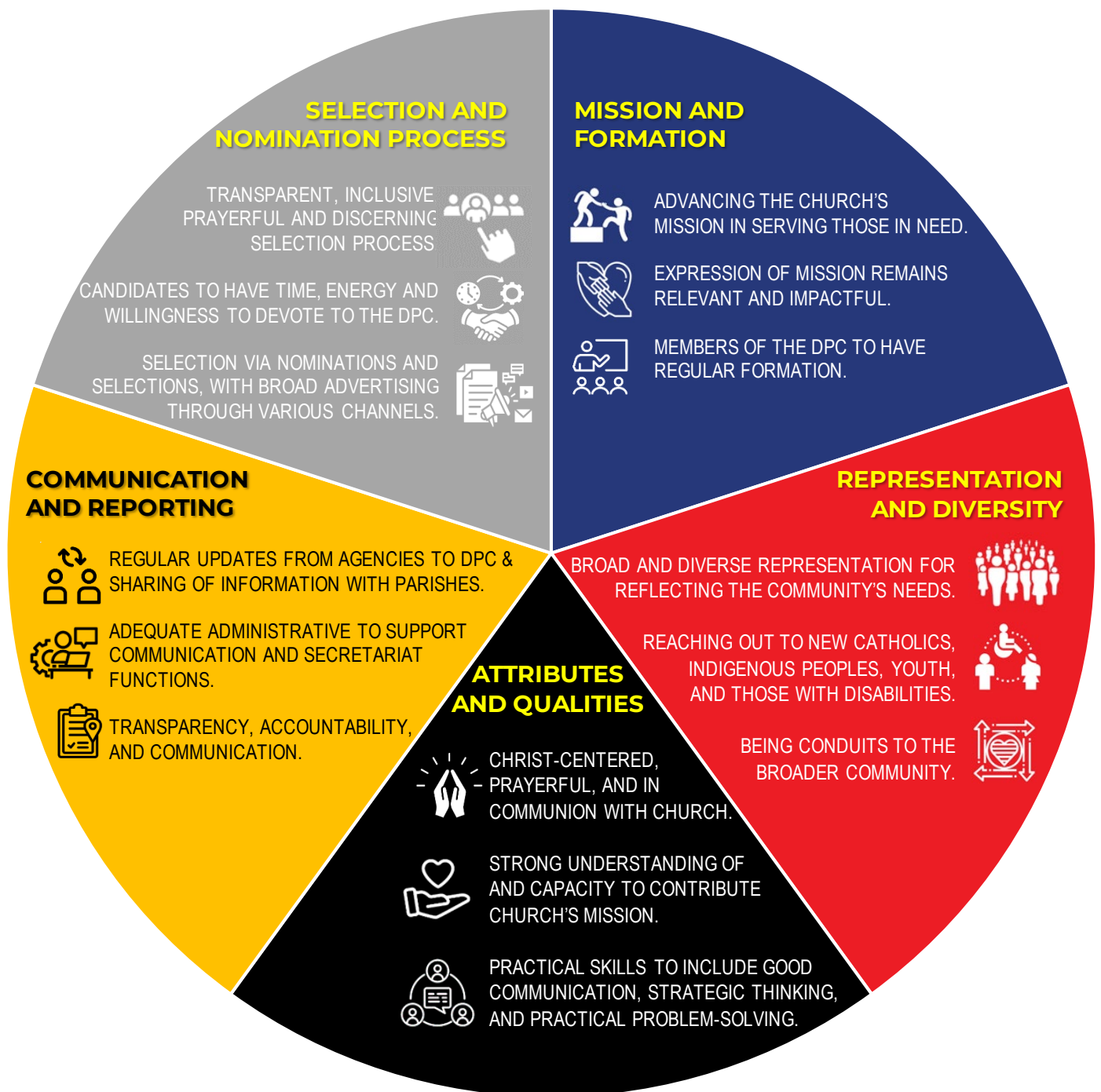
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DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL COMPOSITION

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At the Archdiocesan Assembly on 13 July 2024, delegates were asked to discern the following question, *“Considering how a Diocesan Pastoral Council could encourage greater participation in the mission of the Archdiocese, who should be considered for membership of the Diocesan Pastoral Council?”* Below is the synthesis report of the fruits of this discernment.



The re-establishment of a Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) is a crucial step in ensuring the effective governance and pastoral care of the Archdiocese. The DPC will play a significant role in advising the Archbishop and fostering collaboration across parishes and communities. While Canon Law provides guidelines regarding the structures, processes and membership of the DPC, the discernment of the Archdiocesan Assembly focused primarily on identifying the qualities and attributes necessary for its members. These qualities are essential for creating a council that is both effective and representative of the diverse communities within the diocese. The delegates of the Archdiocesan Assembly also considered the parameters for its formation, representation, selection process, communication, and operational flexibility. This report outlines key themes that were discerned.

1. Mission and Formation

The DPC's primary focus is founded on advancing the Church's mission, particularly in serving the poor, disabled, and fostering faith and prayer. Members should actively engage in helping the Church reflect on its role in the modern world, ensuring that its expression of mission remains relevant and impactful. It was recommended that members of the DPC should undergo regular formation to deepen their understanding and commitment. This could include retreats, educational sessions, and ongoing formation related to the Church's mission. Continuous development will keep members engaged and equipped to fulfill their roles effectively and will help in relationship building and maintaining the group's spiritual focus.

2. Representation and Diversity

DPC members should be capable of considering the broader makeup of the Church and its communities. While Canon Law ensures structural representation, the assembly emphasised the need for members who can think broadly and ensure that decisions reflect the diverse needs of the entire diocese. Broad and diverse representation is vital for reflecting the broader community and ensuring that all voices are heard. The DPC could encompass members from various geographical areas (urban and rural), age groups, genders, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. This diversity could extend beyond the Catholic Church to include marginalised groups, social commentators, and individuals from various professional backgrounds. Special attention could be given to reaching out to new Catholics, indigenous peoples, youth, and those with disabilities to ensure comprehensive representation. It was noted that it is impractical to have representation of all members of the community on the DPC itself, thus the emphasis on selected members being conduits to the broader community.

3. Attributes and Qualities

The canonical guidelines for DPC membership include being Christ-centered, prayerful, and in communion with the Church. The delegates of the Archdiocesan Assembly built on this by emphasising the importance of further qualities such as empathy, discernment, passion, and dedication. These individuals should be enthusiastic, good listeners, and actively involved in their faith, expressed through demonstrated commitment to the Church. Members should have a strong understanding of the Church's mission and be capable of contributing to its ongoing development. They should have an openness to new ideas, especially those willing to work at the margins of society. Practical skills to consider include good communication, strategic thinking, and practical problem-solving abilities. These qualities will support the effective establishment of a vibrant and effective DPC that remains mission-driven and Christ-centered.

4. Communication and Reporting

Canon Law requires a clear reporting structure within the DPC. The Assembly recommended processes for regular updates from agencies and encouraged the sharing of information with parishes. This ensures transparency, accountability, and effective communication across all levels of the diocese. The Assembly emphasised the need for adequate administrative support to manage communication and secretariat functions efficiently. This support is crucial for maintaining the smooth operation of the DPC and allowing members to focus on their core responsibilities.

5. Selection and Nomination Process

A transparent and inclusive selection process is crucial. The selection could involve a mix of nominations and selections, with an emphasis on broad advertising through various channels. The process should be prayerful and discerning, ensuring candidates have the time, energy, and willingness to devote to the Council's work.

The successful formation of the DPC will be best served by a careful balance between adherence to Canon Law and the insights gained from the Archdiocesan Assembly. By focusing on the qualities and attributes identified through the discernment process, and guided by the canonical framework, the DPC can become a dynamic and effective body. This council will not only serve the present needs of the diocese but will also be well-equipped to address future challenges, ensuring that all actions and decisions are rooted in the mission of Christ and the Church.