



Perth Archdiocesan Assembly 13 July 2024

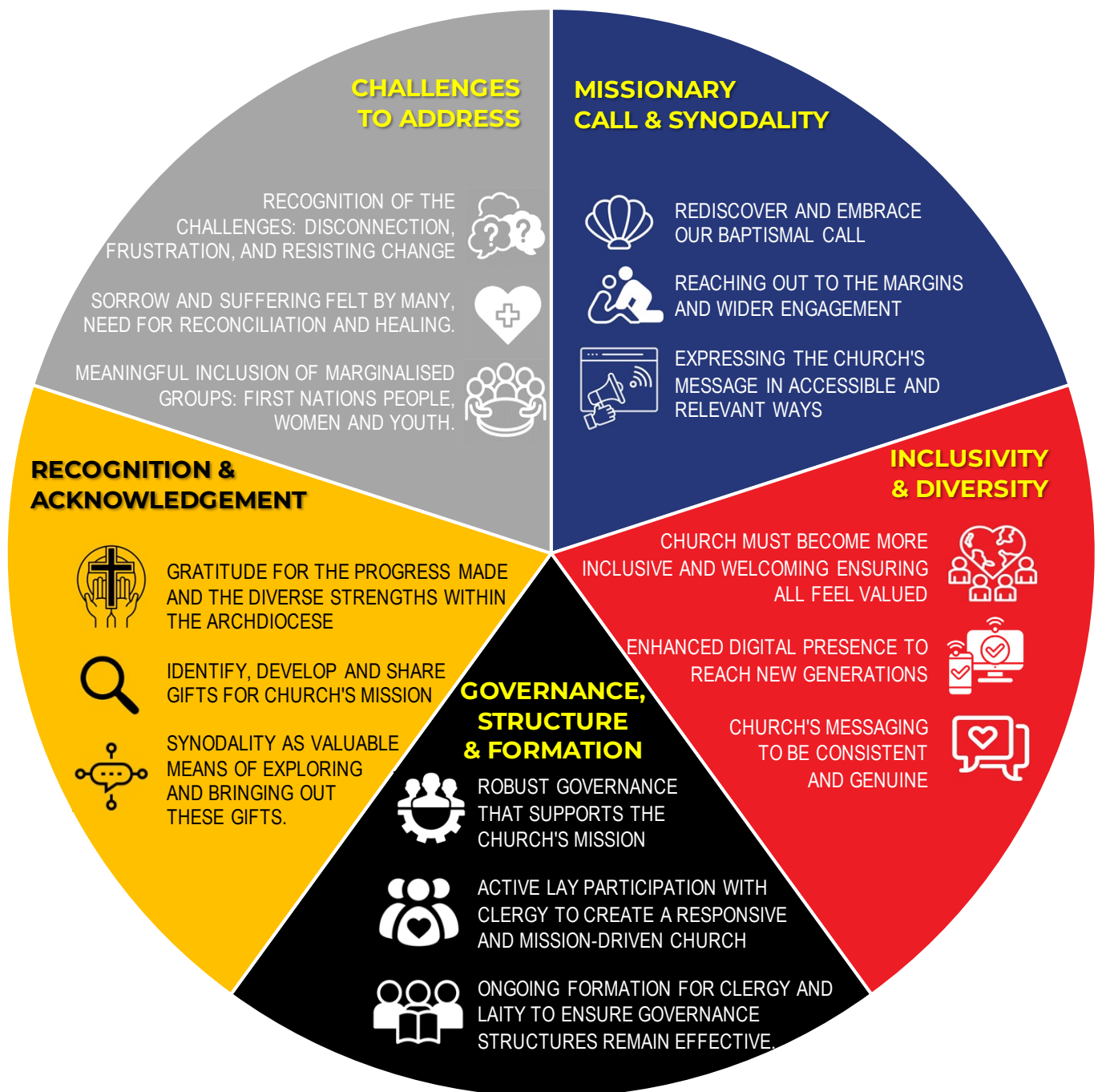
SYNTHESIS REPORT

REFLECTION SESSION



'JOURNEYING TOGETHER LED BY THE SPIRIT'

At the Archdiocesan Assembly on 13 July 2024, delegates were asked, "Reflecting on the Scripture passage (1 Cor 12:1, 4-11) and attuning our hearts to the synthesis reports of the journey we have been on during the last 12 months, what speaks to you most?" Below is a synthesis report on the fruits of this reflection.



The Archdiocesan Assembly has been a profound journey of collective discernment, guided by the Holy Spirit, as delegates from diverse backgrounds came together to reflect on their shared mission within the Church. This synthesis captures the key themes that emerged from these discussions, highlighting the recognition of progress, the centrality of mission and evangelisation, the importance of gifts and talents, the challenges and opportunities faced by the Church, and the need for a church grounded in community. Each theme reflects the Spirit's movement among the delegates, calling for a renewed commitment to the Church's mission in today's world.

1. Missionary Call and Synodality

The call to mission and evangelisation was at the heart of the Assembly's discernment. Delegates were challenged to rediscover their baptismal call and to embrace the charism of eternal newness that comes with it. The need to reach those on the margins, including those who have left the Church or feel disconnected, was identified as a critical aspect of the Church's mission. Synodality offers a pathway towards a collaborative ministry and is seen as a conduit to wider engagement. The delegates also discussed the importance of defending human dignity and advocating against social norms that threaten it. Ultimately, the Assembly called for a return to the basics of understanding scripture and expressing the Church's message in accessible ways, relevant in contemporary society.

2. Inclusivity and Diversity

Inclusivity was a deeply resonant theme throughout the Assembly, with a clear recognition that the Church must become a more welcoming and inclusive community, bearing witness to hospitality in demonstrable ways. Delegates discussed the importance of ensuring that all people feel valued and included in the life of the Church. This includes a specific focus on the inclusion of marginalised groups, such as Aboriginal communities, migrants, and those who may feel disconnected or unwelcome within the Church. The Assembly called for intentional efforts to build a vibrant community that ensures everyone has a place at the table. The importance of the Church's digital presence was highlighted in a world that communicates in varied platforms and reaches new generations digitally. Furthermore, the Assembly called for the Church's messaging to be consistent and genuine. The Assembly stressed the importance of living out the Church's mission with integrity, ensuring that words and actions align in a way that truly welcomes and includes all people.

3. Governance, Structure and Formation

The theme of governance and structure emerged as a critical focus of the Assembly's discussions. Delegates underscored the need for robust, yet flexible, governance structures that support the Church's mission without becoming burdensome. There was a strong call for a Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) that genuinely adds value to the Archdiocese. The importance of active lay participation, especially in partnership with the clergy, was highlighted as essential for creating a Church that is responsive and mission-driven. Delegates also emphasised the need for ongoing formation and resources for both clergy and laity to ensure that governance structures remain effective and aligned with the Spirit's guidance. The Assembly also addressed the need to support women's roles within the Church, acknowledging the unique gifts they bring to ministry and governance.

4. Recognition and Acknowledgement

A recurring theme throughout the Assembly was the recognition of the Church's journey so far. Delegates expressed gratitude for the progress made and the diverse strengths that have been cultivated within the Archdiocese. There was a collective sense of appreciation for the contributions of all participants, with particular emphasis on the fruits of the discernment sessions. The Assembly recognised the vast array of gifts and talents present within the Archdiocese and spoke of the need to identify, develop, and share these gifts for the benefit of the Church's mission. The process of synodality was seen as a valuable means of exploring and bringing out these gifts, fostering wider engagement and inclusivity. The Holy Spirit was acknowledged as the source of these gifts, with a call for humility in recognising and utilising them.

5. Challenges to Address

The Assembly was candid in its recognition of the challenges facing the Church, including disconnection, frustration, and resistance to change. While progress has been made, several critical challenges remain that require attention:

- **Marginalisation and Loss:** Many feel disconnected or uncared for by the Church, particularly considering the sexual abuse crisis, which has caused deep sorrow and suffering. There is a pressing need for prophetic action, reconciliation, and healing.
- **Inclusion and Representation:** Ensuring meaningful inclusion of marginalised groups, including Aboriginal communities and those who have left the Church, is vital.
- **Women's Roles:** The Church must better recognise and incorporate the unique contribution that women make in the life of the Church including where important decisions are made.
- **Youth Engagement:** The future of the Church depends on effectively engaging youth. Creative approaches and authentic witness are necessary to retain and attract young members.

There was also a call to be open to the signs of the times, along with the need to make space for the Holy Spirit in the Church's structures and processes.

The Archdiocesan Assembly was a powerful experience of collective discernment, guided by the Holy Spirit. The themes that emerged—missionary call and synodality, inclusivity and diversity, governance structure and formation, recognition and acknowledgment, gifts and talents, and challenges and opportunities—reflect the deep commitment of the delegates to the Church's mission. As the Archdiocese moves forward, these themes will serve as a foundation for continued growth and renewal, ensuring that the Church remains a vibrant, inclusive, and mission-driven community. The journey is ongoing, but the Spirit's presence in the Assembly offers hope and direction for the future.