



# BAYSIDE CATHOLIC MISSION

Under the patronage of St John Paul II

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022

In August 2020, the Bayside Catholic Mission (BCM) was formed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM) due to priest retirements and resignations in a number of the Bayside parishes and a wider strategic change towards parish groupings in the Southern Region. The local communities welcomed Parish Priests Fr David Cartwright and Fr Dean Mathieson working 'in solidum. Fr James Baptist was appointed as Assistant Priest and there was support from retired priest Fr Barry Tobin.

The newly formed Mission grouped the following local parishes: St James Gardenvale, St Joan of Arc Brighton, St Mary's Hampton, Sacred Heart Sandringham and Nazareth Parish Rickett's Point (St Joseph's Black Rock and Stella Maris Beaumaris).

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, resulting in shutdown of the churches and exacerbating a general lack of clarity and communication from CAM on the Mission structure and reasons for moving towards parish groupings.

In March 2022, following the easing of restrictions, a belated process of consultation with parishioners commenced and a **working group** formed (with representatives from each community) to begin development of a **Pastoral Plan** and **Financial Plan** for the Mission. Parishioners were asked to identify current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and to examine what their hopes were for the future of Bayside Catholics.

The key messages that came through were:

1. **Reconciliation and healing:** the upheaval and uncertainty generated by the Mission formation cannot be overstated and there is a real need for acknowledgement, healing and reconciliation
2. **Faith, resilience and strength:** we have strong, resilient faith communities
3. **Financial transparency and viability:** the financial situation is generally understood to be 'asset-rich' and 'cash-poor' with priority work required to address ongoing declines in stewardship income. The reality is that all of our parishes are running at a loss and several cannot afford to pay their bills.
4. **Leadership, inclusion and consultation:** the lack of consultation of the communities by CAM on such a significant issue such as Mission structure should not be repeated. We need a framework for leadership and genuine parish participation in the decision-making process as we move forwards. Difficult decisions await us.

Accordingly, the working group has commenced drafting a pastoral and finance plan and have attached an outline of the **pastoral priorities** and the **current financial statement** to be shared with the parish communities for information and feedback. In the coming weeks and months, as more detail is developed, further consultation will occur to cover Vision statement, Mission structure, long term growth initiatives and projects.

We ask for generous support of prayer, time, patience and optimism in this critical planning phase for the future of our Bayside Catholic communities and encourage you to reach out to your local representatives to provide feedback and suggestions. Thank you.

**Bayside Catholic Mission Working Group** Bernard Negline (St James, Gardenvale), Anne Larkins (St Joan of Arc, Brighton), Shaun Le Grand (St Mary's, Hampton) Kristin Allen (Sacred Heart, Sandringham) Joe Brick (Nazareth, Rickett's Point), Michael Staunton (Nazareth, Rickett's Point) Fr David Cartwright, Fr Dean Mathieson.

## Identity & Vision

- Build upon the identities and strengths of our local communities to form a unified Mission identity that is appealing to our community and beyond
- Develop a vision for the Mission that is clear, Catholic and viable long into the future with a well-articulated Vision Statement and Communication Plan

## Leadership

- Develop and implement a model of leadership that is representative, collaborative, transparent and faithful and considers all members of the community
- Develop and implement an efficient and effective model of parish administration formed around the pastoral priorities and financial plan
- Implement an effective and efficient model of Safeguarding

## Worship & Prayer

- Prioritise the liturgy and develop a range of ways in which the laity can worship, participate and engage in the spiritual life of the Mission
- Build a sacramental program which will enhance the life of parishioners and attract new parishioners.

## Community

- Build strong relationships between the communities to grow the unified Mission
- Share strengths, help in weaknesses and foster a spirit of cooperation and collaboration
- Build relationships between church and school communities to grow in faith, trust and vibrancy

## Outreach

- Increase support to our existing parish outreach programs including aged care and St Vincent de Paul
- Develop and promote Mission wide outreach programs that are supported across the Mission to encourage cooperation, collaboration and promotion of Catholic identity, values and support in the Bayside community
- Increase community awareness of our outreach programs so that it is known that we are people of Christ and inspire and invite participation

## Formation

- Provide a hub of education and formation for all ages within the Mission
- Use a range of tools, materials and technology to provide education and formation

## Stewardship

- Develop and implement a Stewardship Plan to enhance the giving of time, talent and treasure
- Develop a Financial Plan to support the pastoral priorities and growth initiatives including forward estimates and asset management considerations and structures.
- Develop and issue an Annual Report to provide transparency, promote key initiatives and programs and enhance sense of community across the parishes.