



ST MARK'S DRUMMOYNE

PARISH PASTORAL STRATEGIC PLAN (2006-2010)

**This Plan was adopted in February 2006
By the St Mark's Parish Pastoral Council**

Please follow the link at www.stmarksdrummoyne.org.au to obtain copies of this Plan and to provide any ongoing comments and feedback on its implementation in our community.

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PARISH PASTORAL STRATEGIC PLAN (2006-2010)**

Adopted by the Parish Pastoral Council in February 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this strategic plan is to:

- Provide a structure to consider Parish issues over the next 5 years and beyond;
- Identify the issues and the challenges;
- Consider the specific factors that will influence how we address these issues;
- Determine the actions we propose to take;
- Measure and report on the outcomes where possible; and
- Build on the work of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) to date in identifying a number of “imperatives” that are regarded as important for the development of the Parish. Central to these imperatives is the concept of “collaborative ministry”; that it is incumbent on us, the community of St Mark’s, to take responsibility for our current and future direction with the guidance of our pastor.

This is a working document that will change as new issues arise and factors affecting our ability to address issues change. It will be reviewed annually by the PPC, with input from the broader parish community, as appropriate.

2. WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

The Mission of the Church is to bring Jesus Christ to the world. The Roman Catholic Church is hierarchically ordered, that is the Body of Christ (the Church) consists of a community of believers led by the Bishop of the Diocese, who, in accordance with his Apostolic authority, deposes his priests to exercise leadership and authority in the parish.

The Parish Pastoral Council is commissioned to collaboratively identify the signs of the times and then take up the challenges and opportunities in a positive way so that parishioners will be encouraged and empowered to continually contribute to the mission of the Church as lived and expressed in the parish of St Mark's Drummoyne.

Based on that mission, we have developed a clear vision for St Mark's Drummoyne. The Vision Statement guides the work of both the PPC and St Mark's community as a whole:

**United in Baptism
Guided by the Holy Spirit
Nourished by the Eucharist
We form a vibrant and caring community
Living and proclaiming the Gospel
Reaching out to those in need
Journeying together
Growing in faith**

Each of these proposals contains important commitments that on their own, and taken together, give us a strong sense of purpose and faith in our work as a Parish community:

United in Baptism, Guided by the Holy Spirit, Nourished by the Eucharist

“The Church is One: She acknowledges one Lord, confesses one faith, is born of one Baptism, forms one Body, is given life by the one Spirit.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC, 866). On Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection, Christians have always met to celebrate Eucharist, which is the centre of the Church's life (CCC1343).

Sign of the Times:

“If sufficient celibate, male candidates with the requisite gifts are not found for the Australian Church, then the Church will face an even greater pressure to reassess these positions. Another factor then enters the present theological debate about these requirements is that of the discernment of the working of the Holy Spirit within the church” (Bishop Michael Putney).

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We form a vibrant and caring community, Living and proclaiming the Gospel

The Church is called to form a communion. Our mission is communion, to bring people into unity - not just with each other, but also in God.

Sign of the Times:

Dialogue is needed, and if we are serious about dialogue we must also be serious about the fact we have to change. "If you don't want to change, don't go into dialogue. But if you don't go into dialogue, you'll die" (Bishop Declan Lang of Clifton, UK).

Reaching out to those in need, Journeying together, Growing in faith.

Clergy and laity are called to work together in collaborative ministry to bring Jesus Christ to the world today. Each baptised member is to be empowered by the community to take on the level of ministerial activity appropriate to his/her particular gifts and abilities.

Sign of the Times:

The mission is for all the baptised. Members of the clergy have traditionally been the recipients of theological education, but today a wide range of theological education is available to lay men and women. The Second Vatican Council 1963-65 heralded the participation of all in the mission of the Church.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

What are the issues and challenges facing the community?

1. How do we ensure that collaborative ministry is developed?
 - How do we sustain and invigorate the ministries, especially with younger parishioners?
 - How to engage youth and young adults?
 - How can community members be more involved in pastoral and community programs - for example visitation of the sick?
 - Can members of the community participate more fully in the sacraments?
 - Is there a need for spending on training for parishioners?
2. How do we ensure we have the financial resources to maintain Parish infrastructure and projects?
 - How do we build on the planned giving program?
 - How do we encourage non-active parishioners to participate in the Parish and contribute financially?
 - How do we make our assets work best for us? Who advises us on this?

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3. There may come a time in the future when St Mark's Drummoyne does not have a resident priest.
 - Will a new (resident/non-resident) priest have a different vision for the Parish?
 - If we were to merge with another parish, how will they fit with our vision or we fit with theirs?
 - Will this result in a reduction in the number and frequency of masses in the Parish?
4. How do we educate the broader Parish community about the need for change?
 - How can the PPC communicate more effectively with the community?
 - What is the role of the Priest and the Pastoral Associate in this process?
 - How do we cater for Parishioners who are reluctant to change?
5. Are there particular groups of our community with special needs?
 - How do we identify the needs of senior parishioners and address them?
 - How do we engage those who are currently not practicing Catholics?

What are the factors that we have to work with in addressing these issues?

The Catholic Church

It is a fact that there is a shortage of priests in the Sydney Archdioceses and, on current projections; this is not expected to ease any time in the near future. The average age of priests has been rising steadily and with the intake of younger priests remaining low, continues to rise. The average age of priests in the Sydney Archdioceses is 55 years.

The church has been addressing this in a number of ways, including partnering parishes and sponsoring immigration of priests from other countries. But both of these solutions brings with it issues to be managed by the parish.

Besides their unique role in presiding over Mass and administering sacraments, priests also have a hierarchical role in the administration of the church. To fulfil this role they need to be in touch with the parish community to understand issues and provide support.

However, the challenge to Catholic communities is to position themselves to cope with either of the above scenarios through the empowerment of the laity to reclaim many roles now borne by the priest and to play a more pro-active role in collaborative ministry.

Our Parish

According to the latest Census, Drummoyne has approximately 2500 residents who describe themselves as Catholics of which around 500 regularly attend mass.

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Contact with many of those who do not attend mass on a regular basis is maintained through a number of channels including through the primary school, the catechist program and the parish-based sacramental program. Currently there are 304 children at the parish school, up from around 240 in 1998.

The parish of St Mark's has a number of characteristics that are important to take into account in developing a strategic plan:

- Parishioners are generally well educated and financially secure but busy
- There is a significant Italian community
- There has been an influx of young families over the past decade, resulting in a doubling in the size of the school. Demand for places at the school remains higher than available places.
- There is irregular attendance at mass and participation in the Parish from many at the school
- The number of people involved in ministries is around 170.
- There is a wide range of ministries but many of the same parishioners are involved in more than one.
- The Parish is financially secure with a solid balance sheet and a cash flow from Planned Giving that is sufficient to meet regular expenses. .

4. SETTING AND ACHIEVING OUR OBJECTIVES

Reflecting our Vision Statement and the background discussed above, the PPC has identified a number of areas that require ongoing work over the next five years. These relate to increasing lay participation in the Parish and ensuring that parishioners are well educated in both the faith and their role in the church.

The PPC has therefore set five objectives over the next 5 years. They are:

1. To grow a collaborative ministry.
2. To be inclusive and welcoming;
3. To engage and retain youth;
4. To develop our faith; and
5. To reach out to those in need.

These objectives are of course interrelated. Being inclusive and welcoming will help us to retain and engage youth. More involvement of youth may allow us to pursue social justice initiatives more effectively and so on.

The objectives as set out above are very broad. In order to meet them, we need to identify the results we want to see and then set out some practical strategies to achieve those results. This is done below. For each objective, we have described:

- What we want to achieve
- What we will do
- The results we want to see

Please note that each objective starts on a new page

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Objective 1: To grow a collaborative ministry.

What we want to achieve

An increased participation of the parishioners in the community. Lay parishioners have a co-responsibility, imposed by their baptism, to take responsibility for many aspects of the running of our community. The priest is central to the Eucharist and a number of other aspects of church life.

There are however many roles for which parishioners must take responsibility. We need to build awareness of these responsibilities. We also need to ensure the community is engaged in this process.

What we will do

The main strategies to achieve this objective will be:

1. To develop a better understanding of the demands on the Priest and the role that the community must play in the running of the parish; and
2. Educate parishioners on their co-responsibilities is an important strategy.
3. Develop a preferred organisational model for the Parish community

There are a number of specific actions that will be undertaken:

<u>Strategy 1</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finalise discussion paper on Priest and community tasks• Document the roles/authorities/operations of the Priest, Pastoral Associate, PPC and ministries
<u>Strategy 2</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use homily over series of weeks to educate people on their baptismal responsibility.• Publish appropriate documents and articles in On Lion, Parish Bulletin, on the Parish website and in the Annual Report which provide further information on our baptismal calling.• Organise a ministries retreat day to better co-ordinate educational initiatives and sharing of responsibility• Develop a program of “community conversations” on the objective and proposed actions• Identify opportunities to maximize audiences for education, including potential use school events• Identify limitations and constraints to participation
<u>Strategy 3</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the current Parish organizational structure• Develop a preferred Parish organisational structure, which empowers ministries and decision makers.• Develop an appropriate budget to implement structure• Develop policies and procedures for decision making

The results we want to see

- More tasks being taken on by the community
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities

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Objective 2: To be inclusive and welcoming

What we want to achieve

The objective is twofold; firstly, for the community to look after existing parishioners; and, secondly, to welcome newcomers.

We want to ensure that those who would like to meet people have the opportunity to do so. This involves both providing opportunities for mixing and encouraging a culture of introducing ourselves to people we have not met before. It will also allow for those with special needs to be supported.

What we will do

The strategies central to achieving this objective involve identification of new parishioners and those that might want to participate more but are unsure about how to do so. A continuous communication strategy will be essential to achieving this objective. Specific actions include:

Already in place:

- * Regular morning teas
- * Back to baptism day
- * Opportunities for outings for seniors
- * St Mark's feast day celebration
- * Family groups
- * Welcome kits

Further work:

Parishioners (both existing and new)	Strategy 1 (Existing)	Strategy 2 (New)
• Develop continuous communication strategy	✓	✓
• Identify parishioners with special needs and how to support	✓	
• Establish an out-of-hours emergency contact number (non-priest)	✓	
• Consider setting up a social committee, ensure representative composition and possible sub-committees	✓	✓
• Roster of Parish councillors at mass with contact details	✓	✓
• Ensure the information stand is kept up-to date	✓	✓
• Set up a parish help desk with information on ministries and available community assistance	✓	✓
• Re-invigorate family groups and resource appropriately	✓	
• Target parents at the school who do not participate by involving the children in the Parish activities, and also the children at Drummoyne Public School	✓	✓
• Set up a skills bank, identifying the relevant skills areas of participants (including youth)	✓	
• Put together more substantial Annual Report for Parish.	✓	✓

The results we want to see

- Increased attendance at mass
- More spontaneous greetings at mass and other Parish functions
- Increased attendance at parish functions
- More details on new parishioners and early contact with PPC

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Objective 3: To engage and retain youth

What we want to achieve

Under this objective, we want to ensure that contact with youth is maintained as they move into high school and young adulthood. The Parish demographics indicate a very high participation in the Parish by young children, which tends to drop of, as they become teenagers and young adults. Even if they do not regularly attend mass, we want to ensure that contact is maintained so that, when they are ready, they might come back to the church.

What we will do

The strategy will be to identify opportunities to involve the youth in Parish activities and keeping them in touch with one another and the Parish. This may require some tailoring of parish activities. Specific actions will include:

Already in place

- Keeping in Contact Kids (KICK)
- HSC mass
- Social group for teenagers
- Annual youth retreat

Further work

- Target the 6pm Sunday mass at youth more effectively
- Investigate a dedicated youth resource, including the possibility of sharing a resource with neighbouring parishes.
- Formally set up a youth committee with budget
- Calendar of youth events
- Increase off-site social activities
- Continue supporting an annual youth retreat
- Have a dedicated section in the On Lion, Parish website and Annual Report for reporting on youth activities
- Establish and maintain a database of youth in the Parish

The results we want to see

- Increase in numbers of youth at mass
- Increased participation of youth in Parish events
- Increase in number of youth in ministries

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Objective 4: To develop our faith

What we want to achieve

The aim of this objective is to increase the knowledge of parishioners about the Catholic faith and the ways of the Church.

What we will do

The main strategies are to provide opportunities for parishioners to be educated in the faith, using internal and external resources. Specific actions will include:

Already in place

- Promotion of Lenten groups
- Extend the sacramental programs to include a compulsory education session for parents
- Provide information in the Bulletin, On Lion, parish website and the Information Stand on educational opportunities

Further work

- Investigate whether a special ministry is needed for this objective.
- Identify suitable times and means of delivery to reach as wider range of parishioners as possible - homilies, community conversations, ministries, school.
- Establish a system to identify aspects of the faith where the community has questions and the need for further dialogue and communication.
- Extend invitations to faith education sessions to neighbouring parishes.
- Engage presenters with experience and expertise in the field to lead the sessions.
- Promote suitable faith education opportunities offered by the wider church.

The results we want to see

- More “stand alone” presentations on topics of interest.
- More meetings where time is devoted to an item of education.
- More suggestions from parishioners on topics.
- A better understanding by members of the ministries, and parishioners more broadly, of the church and of the word of God.

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Objective 5: To reach out to those in need

What we want to achieve

The aim of this objective is to promote awareness of the needs of others, both in our community and further a field. We are fortunate to live in this area and it is appropriate that we share our good fortune with the broader community. We need to raise awareness of social justice issues to ensure that we do not become cloistered, either from the needs of those in our community or those in the rest of the world that are not as fortunate as ourselves.

What we will do

The main strategies are to:

- Provide education on social justice issues; and
- Provide opportunities for Parishioners to practically assist those in need in our immediate and broader community.

Already in place

- Work with the St Mark's Primary School to assist other schools in need of our assistance.
- Promote and support the activities of existing Parish programs, eg St Vincent de Paul initiatives; St Canice's Kitchen; Youth off the Streets.

Further work

- Identify social justice issues and communicate them to our community through the Bulletin, Parish website, On Lion, community conversations, homilies.
- Provide opportunities for community feedback on social justice issues
- Guest speakers at various Parish events
- Links to relevant websites and publication of relevant information
- Calendar of events (encompassing events outside the Parish)
- Investigate possible synergies with other parishes.

The results we want to see

- At least one combined initiative a year promoted through the school and the Parish
- Increased awareness of social justice issues.
- Increased participation of Parishioners in Parish based activities, which assist those in need.

5. TIMETABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Consultation

This Plan has been developed over an 18-month period in 2004 and 2005 and builds upon our Parish “imperatives” originally identified by the PPC. An initial draft of the Plan was the subject of a facilitated workshop during a PPC retreat in February 2005 and was further refined with the five objectives identified. An essential part of the development of the Plan was the engagement of the St Mark's community through consultation. A staged approach that was adopted is as follows:

Stage 1: Ministries and the School

- * A draft of the Plan was circulated in July 2005 to the co-ordinators of the Parish ministries and St Mark's Primary School for feedback.
- * In addition to valuable comments being provided, the ministries and the School unanimously endorsed the concept and objectives of the Plan.

Stage 2: Community Consultation

- * The next stage involved briefing the Parish community on the Plan and providing the community with opportunities for comment.
- * The final draft Plan was provided in hard copy and on the internet to Parishioners on 12 November for feedback by 25 November 2005.
- * The draft Plan and comments received were presented at a community consultation on Sunday 27 November 2005. Feedback centred on how to implement the Plan and assisted the PPC with this part of the Plan.

Stage 3: Final Review

- * After a final review by members of the PPC at the February 2006 PPC Retreat, it was determined the Plan did not need further review given favourable comments by the community and adopted in February 2006.

Implementation

Implementation of the 2006 -2010 Strategic Plan will be ongoing. In relation to the life of the Plan, the following points are noted:

- A summary table will be developed to show how the implementation of the various objectives is being conducted over the 5-year period.
- The Plan will have a 5-year rolling cycle that is reviewed annually to ensure it becomes a routine part of the St Mark's community.
- The achievements and lessons learnt from each year will be recorded in an Annual Report of activities to be published by the PPC.
- The priority in each objective, time and resources available will be significant factors.
- Implementation of the Plan will be a regular agenda item to discuss at PPC meetings.