

The Nod

SYNOD 2012



July 2011

GO MAKE DISCIPLES

Celebrate the past
Engage with the present
Envision the future

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First Synod Gathering a Success

More than 130 delegates from across Broken Bay, representing the diversity of the Diocesan faithful, attended the First Major Gathering of the Diocesan Synod on 3-4 June at the Diocesan offices in Pennant Hills.

Facilitated by Mary Leahy of Integroe Partners, with assistance from Sr Christine Manning (Spiritual Advisor), the Synod Gathering aimed to look at data collected from recent parishioner surveys, Parish Pastoral Council meetings and Clergy meetings, to produce Future Statements for the Diocese, as well as planning for continued consultation over the forthcoming year.

The opening address of the Synod was given by Bishop David Walker who spoke to the Synod motto "Go Make Disciples".

During the past six months, more than 5000 parishioner survey responses have been collected in addition to valuable feedback from pastoral councils and clergy and staff meetings. It was the task of the Synod Gathering to work with this material towards draft Future Statements for the Diocese.

In considering how well the Future Statements reflected this data, participants

were invited to contribute their ideas to the wording and concepts expressed. Following these early sessions, participants were then asked to consider aspects of the Diocese that they felt would enable realisation of these Statements, and the obstacles that may need to be addressed in bringing these Future Statements to fruition.

Although the work was intensive, with the majority of people feeling quite exhausted at the conclusion of the process, there was also an overwhelming feeling of satisfaction and achievement.

The Synod gathering included a celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Diocese at a Synod Dinner on the Friday evening, where there was the opportunity for participants to reflect on the many accomplishments of the people, parishes and Diocesan organisations over the history of the Broken Bay Diocese.

"This First Synod Gathering has achieved what we set out to do, and while the work of this Gathering will be brought to a conclusion over the coming month with the completion and validation of the Future Statements," said Natalie Acton, Project Coordinator for the Synod. "The participants have done a fantastic job, and we now look forward to the next stage of the Synod."



DIocese OF BROKEN BAY

Synod Themes, developed from parishioner feedback

Integrating Faith and Life - Catholic identity, being in and of the world, relevance, inter faith dialogue, leadership in Ministry, Catholic voice, solidarity, communication, public perception.

Engaging and Participating - belonging and contributing to the community of the Baptised, leadership, sustainability, engagement of community, celebration, collaboration

Reaching Out - "Go Make Disciples", welcoming within and outside the community, ecological sustainability, social justice, living the Gospel, evangelisation, stewardship.



First Major Synod Gathering
3-4 June, 2011.
Please pray for the Synod.

The Synod at all times will ask its participants to think on three levels:

- Personal
- Parish
- Diocesan



Bishop David Walker's Synod address

In his address at the First Synod Gathering, Bishop David Walker talked about the motto for the Synod, Go Make Disciples, from Matthew 28:16-20.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of age."

Bishop David discussed the context in which the commission was given to the Disciples and the imperative action it calls for, not only from the original audience, but for all Baptised today.

Application

Jesus is with us and the Spirit is guiding us always. As Catholics, we proclaim Jesus to draw people to be his disciples. Discipleship is the goal of our preaching and the goal of discipleship is service. Service involves the transformation of our society, by the power of the Gospel. This is what our faith involves.

Being Catholic

We have the numbers to influence our society with more than 5 million Catholics in Australia, but we don't have a proportionate influence. Most people are more influenced by the world than by us, by the pressures on them rather than their own faith

Where to now?

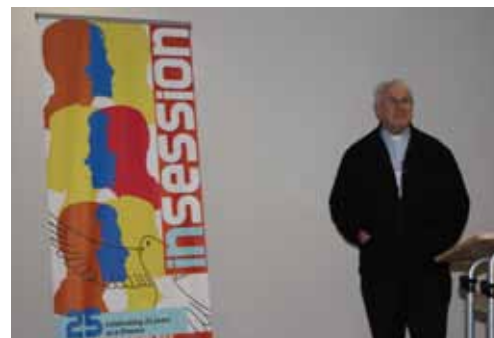
The Broken Bay Synod is far from over. The Synod now moves into its next phase, which is more consultation with wider groups, communities and individuals.

This next phase will see the finalisation of the Future Statements with the establishment of a working party to work on this part of the process, in the next month.

There will be extensive consultation over the forthcoming year to discover ways in which these Future Statements can be brought to reality, through the people, parishes and agencies of Broken Bay.

In July and August, parishes will be given a summary of their responses from the parishioner surveys which were conducted in February this year.

The Second Major Synod Gathering will be held on 25-26 May 2012, which will conclude the Synod process. From there, a list of vision statements and actions will be presented to Bishop David Walker for the future of the Diocese of Broken Bay.



commitment. This is true even within our Diocese.

Catholic Identity

We require a critical mass of mature disciples of Jesus. In Australia, the population is 60 per cent Christian, which is a majority, but not a critical mass. We can have a majority but not a critical mass, even in our parishes and organisations.

A critical mass is a group which has a defining influence on the parish or organisation, such as Religious in hospitals and schools. We may have a critical mass of mature disciples, but do we have a critical mass of mature believers? It is those with a committed and mature faith that proclaim Jesus. We, therefore must be like the apostles, come out and be proactive. We need to ask ourselves, through this Synod process, what do we need to do to bring this about?

The video of Bishop David Walker's full address can be seen on the Synod page of the Broken Bay website. www.dbb.org.au/ourdiocese/synod



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