

22 parishioners attended the AGM, chaired by Constant Mews, and including from the Pastoral Council Claire Renkin, Penny McCann, Sean McManus, and Michael Pirotta.

1. Report from the Chair of the Pastoral Council (CM). After acknowledgement of country, CM presented a report of parish activities over the last year, thanking a wide range of individuals who have made key contributions to the Parish. The report covers three main fields of activity, within a context of greatly reduced regular mass attendance (with regular participation of around 140 people as compared to over 900 pre-Covid some 3 years ago).

(1) **social and pastoral outreach:** CM stressed the need to welcome new or returning parishioners, and invite them to send their contact details to the parish office, and spoke of the role of events like a trivia night (now scheduled for **Sat 13 May**, the eve of the feast of St Carthage) and the parish dinner in shaping a sense of community.

(2) **sacramental and liturgical activity:** CM acknowledged various people involved in hospitality, readings and post-communion reflections at particular periods (at Advent, Lent and Mothers/Fathers Day, at present), and the difficulty of maintain activities with current numbers, as background to the difficult question of continuing with the Sunday 5pm mass.

(3) **educational and spiritual development.** CM reported a range of activities supported by individuals within the parish: Spirituality in the Pub (Dennis Green/Richard Olive), Feminist Theology (Claire Renkin speaking on behalf of convenor, Margaret Rush), St Vincent de Paul (Maree Rabach, who has taken over from David Forrest as chair of the Parkville Conference), the Meditation Group (Liz Dohrmann) and a proposed group relating to the forthcoming referendum about recognition of an indigenous voice in the constitution.

2. Report from Finance Council Chair MP reported that the post-Covid decline in numbers has many consequences on parish finances, meaning that we simply cannot afford extra items that we have been able to support in the past. Among regular parishioners, however, there is still an unusually high participation in planned giving (averaging \$18 a head, weekly), which is still better than many parishes. MP concluded by announcing that the Pastoral and Finance Councils should combine in planning a brainstorming event, soliciting ideas for potential further sources of income, increasing involvement in the parish.

3. Report from the parish priest Joe Caddy spoke of the range of activities going on, but the difficulty of recruiting individuals for various key activities within the parish. For its size, the parish was doing well. He explained that with a regular weekly participation of around 140 people, it was simply not viable to run three masses as in the past, including the Sun 5pm, as the least well attended). In the light of any marked improvement in numbers, the Pastoral Council had taken the difficult decision not to offer Sunday 5pm mass after Palm Sunday.

4. Discussion and suggestions. There was serious discussion of the consequences of this decision with an eloquent statement delivered by Roger Rassool, who spoke of the history of his long involvement with the 5pm mass. While accepting its inevitably, he lamented its passing and emphasised the importance of creating an alternative. There is a need to beef up our communication skills (with work needed on market segmentation, use of social media, clarifying benefits, offerings of use, events, etc.)

There was an offer from Jeffrey Fox, keen to assist promoting discussion groups in relation to *Laudato Si*, the papal encyclical about the environment.

5. Activities. There were presentations about various activities in the parish:

(a) *Spirituality in the Pub*: Convenor Dennis Green greenden125@gmail.com reported that this group is actively supported by St Carthages. This group has close connections within Garratt Publishing/Coventry Press and St Andrew's Hotel 128 Nicholson St, Fitzroy. After a period of inactivity imposed by Covid, a very successful meeting was held at the Hotel on 1 March with John Warhurst speaking about the renewal in the wake of the Plenary Council. The next activity, involving Fr Frank Brennan speaking about the Voice to Parliament, is scheduled for **Wed 12 April 7.30pm** at St Andrew's Hotel.

(b) *Feminist Theology Group*: Claire Renkin claire.ren@optusnet.com.au on behalf of the convenors of the Feminist Theology Group, thanked Margaret Rush for her convening a group that has been meeting for over ten years: "We are faithful Catholic women who gather to share our hopes and our struggle to create a more just and inclusive church. We gather to pray and reflect on a book, article or event that challenges us to imagine what a church that values and respects women's baptismal call and gifts might look like. Our practice is to meet monthly in the evening." Further details will be posted shortly.

(c) *St Vincent de Paul*: Maree Rabach <maree.rabach@bigpond.com>, who has taken over from David Forrest as chair of the Parkville Conference, reports that they are currently a group of 16 individuals, engaged in providing assistance to needy families in the Parkville region. For further details contact Maree Rabach.

(d) *The Meditation Group*: Liz Dohrmann reported that the group meets regularly on Zoom every Wednesday 5.30pm for a 30 minute meditation, with a monthly meal together in person. For further information contact lizdohrmann@gmail.com ph 0418 136915.

(e) *The Voice Group*: Sean McManus seantmcmamus@yahoo.com proposed creating a group in the parish to campaign for the Yes vote in the forthcoming referendum on constitutional recognition of a Voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities. The group would only exist for the 7 months or so till the Referendum, and would seek to work with other like-minded Church groups. For more detail contact Sean McManus.

The meeting closed at 11.20am.