

A SYNODAL CHURCH ON MISSION

2026 Archdiocesan Synod
FINAL DOCUMENT

**"AS THE FATHER SENT ME,
SO I AM SENDING YOU"**

(JOHN 20:21-22)



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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Document Title</u>	<u>Issued By / Year</u>
BCT	<i>Being Church Together: a theology, vision and guiding principles for the Parish-school relationship</i>	Archdiocese of Adelaide, 2023
EG	<i>Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)</i>	Pope Francis, 2013
FD	<i>For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission - Final Document</i>	Synod of Bishops, 2024
DJG	<i>Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel: Formation in the Archdiocese of Adelaide</i>	Archdiocese of Adelaide, 2023
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)</i>	Vatican Council II, 1964
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)</i>	Vatican Council II, 1963
LS	<i>Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home</i>	Pope Francis 2015
DT	<i>Dilexi te</i>	Pope Leo XIV, 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of this country and especially acknowledge the traditional owners on whose lands we live and work throughout the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide.

We also acknowledge Elders, past, present and pay tribute to those who have contributed to the social, economic, cultural, political, and spiritual life of our community.

This acknowledgement affirms our commitment to social justice and the importance of healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

ARCHDIOCESAN VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

VISION

The Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide strives to be a welcoming, Christ-centred community of believers serving others.

As missionary disciples, we are committed to building up the Body of Christ by listening, discerning and growing in the Spirit, journeying together.

MISSION

As followers of Jesus, loved by God, nurtured and formed in community we are called to be:

- *Sharers of faith, hope and love*
- *Builders of bridges*
- *Healers of broken relationships*
- *Agents of transformation in our world.*

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

KEEPING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND ADULTS AT RISK SAFE

The Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide is committed to the care, dignity, and protection of children, young people, vulnerable adults, and is dedicated to fostering deep cultures of safety across the Archdiocese. We uphold a zero tolerance approach to all forms of abuse and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and is central to how we listen, dialogue, and walk together as Church. Our safeguarding practice is guided by the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and is embedded in all aspects of our mission, ministry, and community life.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I am pleased to share with you the *Final Document* of our 2026 Archdiocesan Synod. This document is the result of many years of consultation and discernment. Our three Diocesan Assemblies (2021, 2022, and 2024) coincided with the 5th Australian Plenary Council and the 16th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, more commonly known as the Synod on Synodality, laid the foundation for our own Archdiocesan Synod. In June 2025, five writing groups developed papers exploring the key themes to be discussed and discerned at our Synod. These papers became the *Working Document* of the Synod.

In February 2026, the *Working Document* was shared across the Archdiocese for consultation. Dialogue Week (22-28 February 2026) was an opportunity for people in parishes, schools, communities and diocesan agencies to reflect on the *Working Document*, dialogue together using the method of *conversations in the Spirit* in order to provide feedback to the Synod members for the Synod deliberations. This feedback is a gift to our Archdiocese in its own right and will continue to be discerned.

At our Synod Sessions in May and June 2026, Synod members reflected prayerfully on the *Working Document* and the feedback from Dialogue Week as we sought to discern together God's plan for our Archdiocese in the coming years. The result of that discernment is 30 recommendations for Archdiocesan consideration. These recommendations will inform our pastoral activity in the Archdiocese of Adelaide at every level.

I invite you, and every 'pastoral arena', to read and reflect on this *Final Document* and how the recommendations might be further discerned and implemented in your local parish, school, community or agency.

The Synod *Final Document* will be accompanied by official decrees and an implementation strategy. In the coming months and years there will be additional resources and support mechanisms to assist in implementation and evaluation of the Synod.

As I said in my final reflection on the Synod, "As I convoked the Synod last Year, I used the passage from St John, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." (John 20:21). We know that the needs are many and are real and they are waiting. So I say to the Archdiocese and each Parish, School and agency and Pastoral arenas, you are invited to set sail, and set sail together, and you are given your commission, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." We take the next steps in prayer, in gratitude to all who have brought us this far, and in confident trust in the Holy Spirit who goes before us. May we have the eyes to see the hand of God in everything, and the courage to follow where it leads, for God is Good, Good indeed."

In Domino,

+ Pat O'Regan

+ Patrick O'Regan DD
Archbishop of Adelaide



STATEMENT ON ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is the foundation of trust, integrity, and effective leadership. It requires individuals and organisations to take responsibility for their actions, decisions and outcomes, in accordance with valued beliefs and principles. Accountability enables affirmation for progress, discernment of next steps and challenge where action is required but not initiated.

We all assume accountability for the development of a Synodal Church – a church that emphasises collaboration, active listening and shared decision-making among its members, through the gifts of baptism and membership of the Church community.

Accountability is a foundational aspect and activity of all within a synodal church. All areas for development within the paper, *A Synodal Church*, will incorporate a statement on accountability within their recommendations. This is directly linked to the post-synodal implementations (see 122).

PROCESS OF COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT

Our Synod journey is undertaken in the context of discernment.

Discernment is a spiritual process of seeking, recognising and responding to God's call in this Archdiocese at this time.

Authentic discernment is rooted in prayer, scripture and an openness to the Holy Spirit.

Through the Spirit's presence and enduring action, the "tradition which comes from the apostles progresses in the Church" (DV 8). Calling on the Spirit's light, the People of God, who participate in the prophetic function of Christ (cf. LG 12), "works to discern the true signs of God's presence and purpose in the events, needs and desires which it shares with the rest of modern humanity" (GS 11). This discernment draws on all the gifts of wisdom that the Lord bestows upon the Church and on the sensus fidei bestowed upon all the Baptised by the Spirit. In this Spirit, the life of a missionary and synodal Church must be re-envisioned and reorientated." (FD, 81)

Our Synod emphasised communal discernment, that is discernment experienced with others, through mutual listening, shared prayer and reflecting on the Word of God together.

"In the synodal Church "the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on taking pastoral decisions" (ITC 68) for mission. The way to promote a synodal Church is to foster as great a participation of all the People of God as possible in decision-making processes." (FD, 87)

True discernment requires that we are open to conversion.

“Synodal conversion calls each person to enlarge the space of their heart, the heart being the first place where all our relationships resonate, grounded in each believer’s personal relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church” (FD, 110).

“Encounter and listening are not ends in themselves, leaving everything as it was before. On the contrary, whenever we enter into dialogue, we allow ourselves to be challenged, to advance on a journey. And in the end, we are no longer the same; we are changed.” (Pope Francis, 10 October 2021)

We are also mindful of the universal nature of the Church. We are worldwide a people of faith, united together transcending specific locations, cultures and languages, journeying as one pilgrim people. We join with the universal Church as we discern our path forward conscious of the continuing work at the Global Synod.

We are also mindful that our journey involves all of humanity and God’s Creation. Our discernment must also be mindful of the needs and realities of others.

The recommendations in the Final Document of the 2026 Archdiocesan Synod are to be discerned by everyone in the Archdiocese for their implementation. These recommendations are not static, they must be interpreted for each local context. We must each be open to how these recommendations might reflect our experience of Church, here in Adelaide, nationally and globally.

Further work can be recommended for further discernment in post Synod implementation

For more on synodal discernment, see Part III – “Cast the Net” The Conversion Process from the Final Document XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *For A Synodal Church on Mission: Communion, Participation, Mission*.

INTRODUCTION

1. “As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.” (Jn 20:21) With these words, the Risen Christ commissioned his disciples to continue his mission. Filled with the peace and the power of the Holy Spirit, they were sent to proclaim God’s liberating mercy and love to all the world. It is this same mission to which we are called and sent by Christ as the pilgrim People of God in this time and place. In our baptism, we become members of God’s holy people and we too are filled and gifted by the Spirit to actively participate in this mission. “Like those first disciples, we are sent into a world marked by fragmentation, inequality, ecological devastation, and spiritual hunger. We are called to be bearers of reconciliation, instruments of healing and heralds of hope.”¹

2. It is for the sake of God’s mission that our Synod in the Archdiocese of Adelaide was called in 2026. Our Synod was more than a gathering of the faithful from our Parishes, Schools, and communities. It was the next step of our synodal journey following our Diocesan and Regional Assemblies, the 5th Australian Plenary Council and Global Synod on Synodality. Archbishop O’Regan expressed his hope for the Synod to be “both a moment to listen deeply – to the Word of God, to one another, and to the cries of the earth and of the poor. It will be a time to ask how might we become a Church that reflects more clearly the face of Christ in our time”²

3. Although the events of our Synod have concluded, the work of the Synod continues. It is simply the next step of our shared journey. The Synod itself was an opportunity to reflect on the consultations, listening, dialogue and discernment of recent years. Our Synod also required us to commit to decisions and actions to better our Parishes, and indeed, the whole Archdiocese. In other words, our Synod continues to invite us to discern how we in the Archdiocese of Adelaide are to be *a synodal church on mission*.

A CHURCH TOGETHER ON THE WAY

4. “In recent years, the global Church has been invited by the Holy Spirit into a renewed understanding of *synodality*—a way of being Church that listens, discerns, and walks together. The late Pope Francis spoke of synodality not as a temporary theme, but as the ‘path God expects of the Church in the third millennium.’”³

5. While the word may be new to us, the characteristics, practices and structures of *synodality* have been active in our Archdiocese since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65): Diocesan and Parish Pastoral Councils, Diocesan Leadership Teams made up of clergy and lay women and men, diocesan assemblies and gatherings, various advisory councils and commissions, investment in lay pastoral ministry, formation for pastoral leadership, listening structures and pastoral initiatives in Parishes, Schools and communities.

¹ Archbishop Patrick O’Regan, *Pastoral Letter on the Occasion of the Convocation of the 2026 Archdiocesan Synod* (Adelaide: Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide, 8 June 2025), 1.

² O’Regan, *Pastoral Letter*, 4.

³ O’Regan, *Pastoral Letter*, 3.

6. We have recently re-engaged with this path “through three Archdiocesan Assemblies [and seven Regional Assemblies], marked by prayerful listening, shared discernment, and bold dreaming. These gatherings have been moments of grace—signs of the Spirit’s quiet but powerful activity among us. They have called us to rediscover the richness of our baptismal call and to listen with the heart to the joys and sorrows of our communities.”⁴ Similarly, we have made significant contributions to the 5th Australian Plenary Council and the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (referred in this paper as the Global Synod on Synodality). Each of these experiences has deepened our practice and understanding of *synodality*, we are learning more of what it means to be a Church that listens, discerns and walks together.

7. Our 2026 Synod not only calls us to a deeper commitment to synodality in our Parishes, Schools and communities, but it is a call to action. Therefore, we must take what we have received through the listening and consultation processes of the past several years to discernment for decisive action.

8. Our recent assemblies have not been mere ‘talk fests,’ rather they have resulted in many small but not insignificant actions. Some of these actions include: the re-establishment of a Diocesan Pastoral Council; the development of the Archdiocesan Vision and Mission Statements (2022); the reorganisation of Archdiocesan pastoral services to respond to key Assembly recommendations (2022); the establishment of the Diocesan Formation Commission and the publication of *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel: Formation in the Archdiocese of Adelaide* (2023); the joint publication of *Being Church Together* with Catholic Education South Australia and the Diocese of Port Pirie (2023); the development of a Parish Pastoral Council Handbook (2023); gatherings of Parish Pastoral Council Chairpersons and Parish Priests; gatherings of members of Archdiocesan Councils and Commissions.

This is not an exhaustive list, but each of these actions has helped to lay the groundwork for the 2026 Archdiocesan Synod and the decisions made in the 5 Key Themes.

KEY THEMES

9. The 2026 Synod explored 5 Key Themes, each with the aim of enhancing our ability to be a *synodal church on mission*.

1. Becoming Missionary Disciples

2. Formation for Mission and Leadership

3. Catholic Education and Being Church Together

4. Communion in Grace - Sacrament to the World

5. Structures and Planning for Communion, Mission and Participation

⁴ O'Regan, *Pastoral Letter*, 3.

10. The themes themselves are an outcome of the listening and consultation processes of recent years. Each theme is explored in greater depth in this document and includes a description of the theme, the current realities facing the Archdiocese, a theological reflection and Recommendations for implementation. These Recommendations were discerned and deepened through the Synod processes including Dialogue Week and the Synod sessions in May and June 2026. These now ‘become recommendations to the Bishop for his consideration as possible actions appropriate to the needs of the Diocese. The Bishop then has responsibility to draw up decrees and statutes based on these recommendations. He does this conscious of the needs, wishes and desires of the People of God, but also of the general law of the Church.’⁵

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

11. Now that our 2026 Archdiocesan Synod has come to a close, it is up to all of us to implement the recommendations. “We stand at a crossroads – indeed a threshold. We are invited to dream not just of a better Church, but of a more faithful one: faithful to Christ, to the Gospel, and to the Spirit who renews all things... The Synod must not be an event but a process, not an end but a beginning—a Pentecost moment for our local Church.”⁶

12. Let us “pray for a deepening of [the] Spirit in our hearts and communities. We must be willing to be disturbed, to be challenged, to be renewed. This is the path of synodality. It is also the path of discipleship. Let us walk this path together – not as individuals or isolated Parishes, but as a pilgrim people, united in Christ and led by the Spirit.”⁷

⁵ Archdiocese of Adelaide, *2026 Synod Directory* (Adelaide: Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide, 2025), <http://www.togetherontheway.au/resources>.

⁶ O'Regan, *Pastoral Letter*, 4.

⁷ O'Regan, *Pastoral Letter*, 6.

KEY THEME 1:

**BECOMING
MISSIONARY
DISCIPLES**

INTRODUCTION

THE CALL FROM JESUS

13. There are many examples in the Gospels where Jesus actively teaches about being missionary and gives us many images of missionary discipleship: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37) the Samaritan woman who becomes a witness after her encounter with Jesus (John 4), the disciples sent out two by two (Luke 10), the call to “cast the net on the other side” (John 21), “when you do to the least of my brothers and sisters” (Matthew 25:31-46) and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). These Gospel passages show that mission is both internal (our transformation in Christ) and external (our witness in the world).

14. A missionary disciple is first and foremost someone who meets Jesus and is changed by that encounter. We meet Jesus in many ways: through the Gospels, through liturgy, through other people and through our everyday experiences. The Gospels show us this dynamic again and again: people meet Christ, their lives change, and they are sent to share what they have experienced.

15. Missionary discipleship is not a special calling for a few, but the vocation of all the baptised. This means we should bear in mind that we are in this together with all the baptised. This indeed has important implications for mission at the Parish level. Missionary discipleship is grounded in the very nature of God’s creation and mission. We are created in God’s image and likeness, and in baptism we are called by name to share in God’s mission.

16. To be a missionary disciple means to listen, to be open and to allow ourselves to be sent. It is a dynamic process: we meet Jesus, we grow in relationship with Him, and we respond by sharing His love. The call of missionary discipleships is a call to live in the world and respond as Christ would.

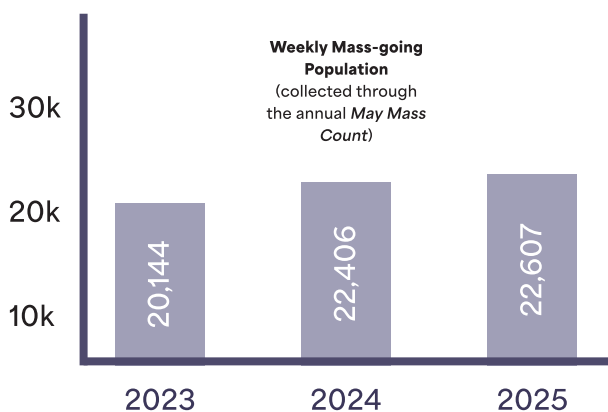
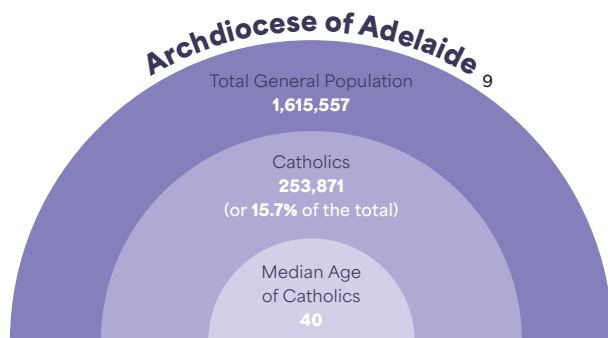
17. The Parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10: 25-37, helps us understand the call to be missionary disciples.

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life? He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’ He answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.” Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’

18. Recently Pope Leo XIV concretely explained this parable:

“How we look at others is what counts, because it shows what is in our hearts. We can look and walk by, or we can look and be moved with compassion. There is a kind of seeing that is superficial, distracted and hasty, a way of seeing while pretending not to see. We can see without being touched or challenged by the sight. Then too, there is seeing with the eyes of the heart, looking more closely, empathising with the other, sharing his or her experience, letting ourselves be touched and challenged. This way of seeing calls into question the way we live our life and the responsibility we feel towards others.”⁸

CURRENT REALITIES



19. We are blessed with many communities of faith and places of mission: Parishes, worship centres, Schools, chaplaincies, Centacare and countless outreach services. These are places where the Gospel is lived, often in hidden and humble ways.

20. The *2021 Diocesan Assembly Recommendations* encouraged “taking the decision to become missionary communities” and suggests pathways for growing as missionary disciples: Parish forums; small groups (for example for young people, families, children, married couples, single adults, etc.) and ecclesial communities that may foster the lay apostolate. These pathways provide supportive spaces for prayer, formation, fellowship, and mission animation. The document also proposes research to identify where missionary activity is thriving. Consistent support has been shown for the pursuit of new models of engagement with young people and families, encouraging initiatives in youth ministry, peer support and evangelisation, as well as support for the domestic Church.

21. Pope Francis has described four key characteristics of an evangelising Parish:

- it is “in contact with the homes and the lives of its people”
- it is “an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration”
- it “encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers”
- it is “a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach.”¹⁰

⁸ Pope Leo XIV, *Homily*, (Vatican, 13 July 2025), <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/homilies/2025/documents/20250713-omelia-castelgandolfo.html>

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census

¹⁰ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 28.

22. There are many positive examples of groups and gatherings that exist at Parish level. For example, there are many Parishioners responding to the call to mission through visiting the sick at homes and in hospitals, accompanying people through the RCIA, running youth groups and other groups for people to gather socially, as well as many participating in the weekly celebration of the Eucharist.

23. Many outreach services are provided through many agencies, religious orders and Parish and Schools therefore enacting God's mission in the world.

24. As an Archdiocese we maintain a commitment to integral ecology inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, we have developed our own *Laudato Si' Action Plan* and we have a Council for Integral Ecology who oversees this important work.¹¹ We also voluntarily report our modern slavery risks through an annual Modern Slavery Statement.¹²

25. Centacare Catholic Community Services remains an important part of the Archdiocese's mission and strives to support people in the community who have been marginalised and who are experiencing hardships and challenges in their lives. They provide many community services in South Australia and each year, supporting more than 20,000 people, within a strong ethical framework informed by the values of Catholic Social Teaching.

26. The Archdiocese also actively supports Catholic Charities which was founded in 1941 by Archbishop Beovich to help people in our community. Charity is at the heart of Living Catholic. Catholic Charities is the Archdiocesan umbrella organisation that supports the following agencies working with the most vulnerable in South Australia.

27. The agencies supported by Catholic Charities are:

Hutt St Centre	<i>Hutt St Centre is a place of connection and support, where people facing homelessness are empowered to rebuild their lives, and rediscover their identities.</i>
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry	<i>The Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in Adelaide is housed in the Ngani Pari-Arra Cultural Centre (formerly the Otherway Centre).</i> <i>Community-based organisation that works to improve the lives of those in need. Mass is also held weekly in their chapel.</i>
Our Lady of La Vang & St Patrick's Special Schools	<i>Purpose built Catholic educational facilities for students with a diagnosed global developmental or intellectual disability, multiple disabilities and complex personal and health care needs.</i>
Centacare Catholic Community Services	<i>Supporting people in the community who have been marginalised and who are experiencing hardships and challenges in their lives.</i>

¹¹ Archdiocese of Adelaide, *Caring for Our Common Home: Laudato Si' Action Platform*, (Adelaide: Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide, 2022) https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/_files/ff/145352/LSAP%202022%20web%20ver.pdf.

¹² Archdiocese of Adelaide, *2024 Modern Slavery Statement* (Adelaide: Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide, 2025) [https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/_files/ff/254007/\(FINAL\)-2024%20Modern%20Slavery%20Statement-Doc-PST.pdf](https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/_files/ff/254007/(FINAL)-2024%20Modern%20Slavery%20Statement-Doc-PST.pdf)

28. The work of course is not limited to our Parishes and services of the Archdiocese but many aligned groups and organisations carrying out the work of mission:

- St Vincent de Paul
- Caritas Australia
- Catholic Mission and many other organisations grounded in the Catholic tradition.

29. At the same time, there are missing voices – people who may not always be heard or represented: young people, First Nations peoples, those socially undervalued or invisible and those who are not regular Mass attenders although they identify with being Catholic. We maintain our commitment to those who still need to be welcomed into the conversation.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

30. Pope Francis reminded us of our missionary purpose through *Evangelii Gaudium*:

“I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself.”¹³

31. Missionary discipleship is grounded in the very nature of God’s mission. We are created in God’s image and likeness, and in baptism God calls us by name to share in Christ’s mission. Jesus of Nazareth is our best example of being missionary – God’s definitive self-revelation – **sent** to proclaim Good News to the poor, liberty to captives. (Luke 4:18).

32. *Dilexi te* (re)affirms very strongly “Love for the Lord, then, is one with love for the poor.... Contact with those who are lowly and powerless is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history. In the poor, he continues to speak to us.” Thus, “the Church, if she wants to be Christ’s Church, must be a Church of the Beatitudes, one that makes room for the little ones and walks poor with the poor, a place where the poor have a privileged place.”¹⁴

33. We are also called to practical dialogue with our fellow Christians, as individual Catholics and in our Parishes. Our mission includes praying with and for each other and collaborating on issues of common concern, social justice, peace, and care for the environment. This requires structures at the Parish level for dialogue and communal prayer.

34. Missionary discipleship is a journey, not a destination. It calls us to keep meeting Christ, to let ourselves be changed, and to be sent again and again. It is dynamic, relational, and always grounded in God’s mission.

Together, as one Church, we are called – and **sent**.

¹³ Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, ‘*Evangelii Gaudium*’ (2013) no. 27

¹⁴ Pope Francis, *I Have Loved You ‘Dilexi te’* (2025) nos.5 & 21

RECOMMENDATIONS

35. Formation and accompaniment for missionary discipleship.

Missionary discipleship is the vocation of all the baptised. It begins in personal encounter with Christ. Each person is called to ongoing conversion and holiness. What begins as personal conversion is then lived through ordinary actions for the transformation of the world. Formation for missionary discipleship equips people to live their baptismal call with confidence, joy and practical skill. This recommendation is developed further in Key Theme 4, *Formation for Mission and Leadership*.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. A clear, plain-language explanation of ‘mission’ and ‘missionary discipleship’ so that all people can understand what it means in daily life.
- b. Lifelong formation including:
 - i. Reflection, guidance and accompaniment on the baptismal call to mission throughout life;
 - ii. Learning about Catholic Social Teaching
 - iii. formation in Scripture, prayer, the teachings and tradition of the Church, discernment of God’s call and practical witness.
- c. Programs that build confidence in sharing faith, including programs that can connect with or complement RCIA / OCIA, sacrament preparation for children, and other pathways of initiation.
- d. Culturally appropriate formation and training (e.g. migrant communities, language groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, etc.).
- e. Parish priests and Parish leaders to further develop their capacity in leadership in service of a synodal church.¹⁵

36. Deep Listening, Accompaniment and Missing Voices

Deep listening is essential to becoming a missionary Church. In the Archdiocese we will strengthen ongoing listening, accompaniment and dialogue, especially with those whose voices are often missing, unheard or marginalised.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Structured ongoing conversations with those who are on the peripheries of Church and society¹⁶ and creating safe spaces for honest conversation, respectful speaking, faithful listening and discernment including key pastoral and sacramental moments in parish life.

¹⁵ See paragraphs 4-8 and the *Leadership in Service of a Synodal Church* document.

¹⁶ For example: First Nations communities, young people, elderly people, rural communities, people not regularly engaged in parish life, adult professional and formation groups, cultural communities, people living with disability, neurodiverse people, LGBTQ+ people, those served through chaplaincies, Centacare, Catholic Education and other Catholic or community services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considerations for Implementation

- Mapping and documenting the depth and breadth of the Church's missionary works.
- Incorporate, celebrate, share and document stories of ordinary people who live as missionary disciples in daily life as a resource to support growth and development in mission.
- Expanding the May Mass count or developing complementary measures to better recognise missionary activity beyond Mass attendance alone.
- Acknowledging past failures of individuals and the institutional Church for harm or abuses through means such as liturgies of lament or an open letter of apology.

37. Partnership, Inclusion and Advocacy for Mission

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen partnership, inclusion and advocacy so that the Church becomes more clearly invitational, welcoming and mission-oriented.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Formal endorsement and use of the Archdiocesan Welcome to Country Guidelines.
- b. Adopting NATSICC's cultural competency training throughout the Archdiocese which includes the "Cultural Competency in a Catholic Context" online course and face-to-face / on-Country training where available.
- c. Commendation of NATSICC's position paper "Embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Life of the Catholic Church" (received and accepted by the Plenary Council's First Decree, Reconciliation: Healing Wounds, Receiving Gifts) as the parish reconciliation roadmap.
- d. Developing mechanisms for listening to ecological wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and incorporating it into Laudato Si Action Plans.
- e. Parishes, schools and communities to develop local Laudato Si' Action Plans and to commit to the goals of the Archdiocesan Laudato Si' Action Plan.
- f. Developing and implementing an Archdiocesan Disability Inclusion Plan.
- g. Examining the Church's own barriers to inclusion, including language, culture, assumptions, structures, accessibility, leadership patterns and participation practices.

Considerations for Implementation

- Parishes, schools, communities and agencies to identify specific missionary goals appropriate to its local context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

38. Ecumenical and Interfaith Partnerships

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen partnership, inclusion and advocacy so that the Church becomes more clearly invitational, welcoming and mission-oriented.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Praying with and for each other.
- b. Collaborating on issues of common concern, including social justice, peace, care for creation, support for families, service to the poor and community wellbeing.
- c. Collaborating in pastoral planning where appropriate, especially in rural and regional areas.

Considerations for Implementation

- Creating opportunities for dialogue, shared prayer, service and community-building with other Christian communities and interfaith partners.

39. Bearers of Good News in the World.

In the Archdiocese we will support parishes, schools, families, communities and agencies to become visible bearers of Good News in a culture where many people are no longer engaged with parish life but may still be searching for meaning, community and God.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Recognising and supporting family life, the Domestic Church, as the first place where missionary disciples are formed.
- b. Parishes to be visible centres of missionary activity.
- c. Families and households in all their forms to be places of prayer, hospitality, faith-sharing and service.
- d. Young people to be part of the missionary action of the Church as leaders, witnesses, ministers and co-responsible participants.
- e. Finding new ways to communicate the Good News through digital and other communication methods, in connection with the communication and technology supports in Key Theme 5.

Considerations for Implementation

- Encouraging new missionary initiatives such as pop-up outreach, small groups, local mission experiments, public witness, community gatherings and other 'new nets' for mission.
- Identifying, supporting, promoting and celebrating faith communities whose charism is the formation of families in the faith, with a particular focus on young people.

KEY THEME 2:

**COMMUNION IN GRACE
- SACRAMENT TO
THE WORLD**

INTRODUCTION

40. Pope Francis reminded us that the Church is for everyone and must not become inward-focused or exclusive. *“Everyone can share in some way in the life of the Church; everyone can be part of the community, nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason. This is especially true of the sacrament which is itself “the door”: baptism.”*¹⁷

41. The Church is called to be missionary, to go out beyond the walls of our churches to be a sign and sacrament to all the world¹⁸, inviting all of humanity into loving communion with God and one another.

42. Initiation of new members, whether infants or adults, is of vital importance to the faith community. *“Baptism is the foundation of Christian life. This is because it introduces everyone to the greatest gift, which is to be children of God, that is, to share in Jesus’ relationship with the Father in the Spirit. There is nothing higher than this baptismal dignity, equally bestowed upon each person.”*¹⁹ If we have ‘put on Christ’ we have also accepted a share in his mission to bring Christ to all people by the witness of our lives.

43. As members of Christ’s Body, every baptised person is blessed with gifts to share and is called to respond to God’s mission in different ways, either for ministry *within* the Christian community, or beyond, for the good of the wider community, and indeed for the whole world.

44. *“The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed [and] the source from which all her power flows.”*²⁰ This is true when they express the life of the community, enable us to celebrate our joys, sorrows, gratitude and suffering, as they nourish and strengthen us for mission.²¹ *“The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak...the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.”*²²

45. The Body of Christ is home for all, to women and men, lay and ordained, to young and old, to the abled and those living with disabilities, the neurodivergent, those in LGBTQI+ communities, and the divorced and remarried - everyone. *“In the Church, there is room for everyone. Everyone. In the Church, no one is left out or left over. There is room for everyone. Just the way we are. Everyone.”*²³ And so, as a Church carrying out Christ’s mission, every person is to be the focus of our attention.

46. *“The Parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.”*²⁴ *“All within the Parish, including the community that gathers in and around the Sunday Eucharist, ... the Parish school community [and those in social services and other areas of ministry and outreach] are called to participate in [God’s] mission.”*²⁵

47. Our experience of liturgies, sacraments and Christian mission takes place within community, and normally in the context of the Parish. Within liturgical celebrations there are a variety of roles and responsibilities in which women and men, ordained and lay, young people and children contribute. *“The celebration of the Eucharist, especially on Sundays, is the first and fundamental way the holy People of God gather and meet... in the ‘full, active and conscious’ participation of all the faithful, in the presence of different ministries and in the presidency of the Bishop or Priest, the Christian community is made visible.”*²⁶

¹⁷ *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 47.

¹⁸ Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church ‘Lumen Gentium’*, (1964) no. 1.

¹⁹ XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *For A Synodal Church on Mission: Communion, Participation, Mission* (2024), no. 21.

²⁰ Vatican II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy ‘Sacrosanctum Concilium’*, (1963) no.10.

²¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 2.

²² *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 47.

²³ Pope Francis, *World Youth Day Welcome Address* (3 August 2023) <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/august/documents/20230803-portogallo-cerimonia-accoglienza.html>.

²⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 28.

²⁵ Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide, *Being Church Together: A Theology, Vision and Guiding Principles for the Parish-School Relationship*, (2023), 5.

²⁶ *Final Document*, no. 26.

48. Faith is also expressed personally. Every baptised person, with the support of the faith community, has a responsibility to cultivate their own spiritual life. The Church is full of a diversity of prayer practices, devotions and pieties, often related to cultural and migrant communities. *“By expressing faith through simple gestures and a symbolic language rooted in the culture of the people, popular piety reveals God’s presence in the living flesh of history, strengthens the relationship with the Church and often becomes an occasion for encounter, cultural exchange and celebration.”*²⁷

CURRENT REALITIES

49. The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod is asked to discern ways we will express our faith and life in Christ Jesus as a synodal Church on mission. We first acknowledge that the Archdiocese, and indeed each of our Parishes and Schools, is a community of communities, rich in history and diversity with a variety of cultures, liturgical expressions, spiritualities and experiences. This diversity is a gift, therefore a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach or attempt toward uniformity is not helpful.

50. While there are signs of vitality shown through the increase of interest for Adult Christian Initiation in recent years and the increase in migration to South Australia, which has greatly enriched the Catholic community, there are also many challenges which need to be acknowledged and addressed. The ‘rapid cultural changes of the last sixty years’²⁸ have impacted Parish and Archdiocesan life significantly, for example:

- Declining Mass attendance
- Ageing priests and a lack of vocations to the priesthood and religious life
- An increase in administrative and compliance tasks
- A declining volunteer base
- The impacts of the Royal Commission into Institutional Sexual Abuse and the COVID-19 pandemic, reflected in drastically decreased Mass attendance and, for many, insecurity around Catholic identity

51. There is some frustration about the lack of co-responsible and collaborative leadership with laity in many aspects of Parish life. The Final Document of the Global Synod on Synodality stated that priests have the responsibility of *“ensuring it (the liturgy) is celebrated in the best possible manner, with particular regard to the homily and to the ‘active participation’ of everyone, [which] is decisive for synodality.”*²⁹ Among the most recent liturgical ministry initiatives of the Church is the expansion of those of Lector and Acolyte, open to lay women and men. These ministries *“have as their basis the common condition of being baptised and the royal priesthood received in the Sacrament of Baptism”*.³⁰ These stable ministries, are a call to liturgical leadership, preparing and animating others for service at the Eucharist and beyond.

²⁷ Pope Francis, Address at the Closing of the Congress ‘La Religiosité Populaire en Méditerranée’ (15 December 2024) <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2024/december/documents/20241215-ajaccio-congresso.html>.

²⁸ Archdiocese of Adelaide, *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel: Formation in the Archdiocese of Adelaide* (Adelaide: Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide, 2023) 6.

²⁹ Final Document, no. 142.

³⁰ Pope Francis, *Motu proprio, Spiritus Domini* (January 2021) https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20210110_spiritus-domini.html.

52. Feedback from the recent Diocesan and Regional Assemblies has revealed that there is a strong desire across the Archdiocese for Parishes and liturgies to be more welcoming and inclusive, cultivating a sense of belonging and meaningful participation. Liturgical celebrations need to be relevant to people's lives, and expressed through high-quality music, preaching and lay participation in liturgical leadership, especially women and young people. All of which, at the same time, are experienced as being prayerful and spiritually sustaining. Further, there is a desire to collaborate ecumenically, to reflect the cultural diversity and heritage of Parish communities, and to celebrate the gifts of members, empowering them to develop and share these with others.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

THE EMMAUS STORY: ENCOUNTER THAT LEADS TO MISSION (LUKE 24:13-33)

53. After the death and burial of Jesus, two of the disciples of Jesus were returning home to Emmaus from Jerusalem. They were dismayed and confused about all that happened. While they were walking and talking, a stranger came near and began walking with them. He asked them, 'what are you discussing as you walk along?' They explained all that had happened to Jesus and how they had heard that women in their group could not find Jesus' body when they went to the tomb that morning. The stranger then began to interpret all that had happened through the lens of the scriptures.

54. When they came to their village, they urged the stranger to stay with them. They went inside and sat down for a meal. "When he was at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him." It was Jesus, the Risen Christ who had been with them on the way. "They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' Immediately, they returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the Good News of the Risen Christ to the other disciples. "They told what has happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread."

55. Like the disciples after the death of Jesus, it is possible to become overwhelmed by the challenges facing the Church. It is easy to become focused on the problems of the world and disappointments of unmet promises. But it is through a personal encounter with the Risen Christ, in the dynamic opening up of the Word of God and the Eucharistic action, that we, like the disciples in Emmaus, are renewed with a passion for mission – to proclaim the Risen Christ.

56. Our Synod is an opportunity to respond to desires of the People of God in the Archdiocese of Adelaide to make our liturgical celebrations, and sacraments truly reflective of our communities and the world around us; to be welcoming and hospitable to all; to celebrate with joy and dignity in a way that honours the movement of the Spirit and sends us out as missionary disciples – as Sacrament to the world!

RECOMMENDATIONS

57. Liturgical celebrations are moments of encounter with Christ, opening us to God and neighbour. Nourished by God's Word and the Body and Blood of Christ, people of all ages and backgrounds are empowered to share their gifts for the good of the community and are sent on mission to proclaim the Good News with their lives, bringing Christ's healing, justice and liberation to the world.

58. Welcoming and Inclusive Parishes and Communities

Parishes and communities will become more visibly welcoming, inclusive and accessible, so that all people can encounter Christ and find belonging in the Body of Christ.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support :

- a. Parishes and communities to be inviting environments that cultivate belonging.
- b. Publicly affirming that families, children and people of all ages and life circumstances are welcome.
- c. Using inclusive, accessible and life-giving language in liturgies, Parish and Diocesan communications and publications.
- d. Making liturgies more accessible for people with disability, neurodiverse people, children, elderly people, cultural communities and those less familiar with Church language or practice.
- e. Assisting in the discernment of gifts (charisms) of people in the community and opportunities to participate in the life and mission of the Church.
- f. Promoting prayer in all contexts including communal, family and personal prayer.
- g. Fostering a culture of vocations understood as the call of every person to follow Jesus as a way of life.

Considerations for Implementation

- Sharing liturgical leadership with various groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, migrant and cultural communities, LGBTQ+, neurodiverse and those with differing abilities, to develop appropriate responses or solutions to meet their needs.
- Proactively invite and form new and diverse people into liturgical rosters, ministries, planning teams and visible parish roles, especially children and young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

59. Rich Liturgies and Eucharistic Celebrations

In the Archdiocese we will promote rich liturgical and prayer life, including Eucharistic celebrations and other forms of prayer that flow from and lead back to the Eucharist.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. A diversity of liturgical expression, prayer and spirituality across parishes and the Archdiocese (e.g. Liturgy of the Word, children's liturgy, prayer services, reconciliation services, devotional prayer, cultural prayer forms, music events and prayer beyond Mass).
- b. Ongoing formation for liturgy committees, clergy, liturgical ministers, musicians, readers, acolytes, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and those involved in children's liturgy.
- c. High-quality preaching, including homilies by ordained ministers, and appropriate reflections or testimonies from lay women, lay men and young people.
- d. Theological, scriptural and pastoral formation for those who preach, lead prayer or offer reflections.
- e. Feedback processes for liturgical celebrations, preaching and parish prayer.

Considerations for Implementation

- Providing special consideration for Masses and liturgies with children, using language, music, participation and structure appropriate to their developmental age as outlined in the *Directory of Masses with Children*, and similarly for secondary school-aged young people.

60. Co-responsible Liturgical and Sacramental Leadership

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen co-responsible leadership between ordained and lay people in liturgical and sacramental life.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Clarification of what co-responsibility between ordained and lay people looks like in liturgical planning, sacramental preparation, parish welcome and parish ministries.
- b. Priests to lead a culture of welcome, collaboration and delegation.
- c. The formation of lay women and men, young people and culturally diverse members of the community for liturgical leadership roles and ministries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

61. Liturgical Celebrations as Encounter and Mission

Liturgical celebrations are moments of encounter with Christ, opening us to God and neighbour. Nourished by God's Word and the Body and Blood of Christ, people of all ages and backgrounds are empowered to share their gifts and to go forth as missionary disciples.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Liturgies that are prayerful, beautiful, accessible, inclusive and connected to people's lived realities.
- b. The proclamation and breaking open of Scripture so that the Word of God becomes meaningful for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- c. Liturgical celebrations to include a clear mission-oriented dimension that sends people out to live the Gospel.

Considerations for Implementation

- Encouraging active involvement in planning and preparing liturgical celebrations, with appropriate collaboration between clergy, liturgy teams, families, schools and parish communities.
- Learning from community gatherings, civic rituals and cultural events that successfully gather people, build memory and form community, while remaining faithful to Catholic liturgical tradition

62. Sacramental and Faith Formation Pathways Across Home, School and Parish

In the Archdiocese and in partnership with Catholic Education South Australia we will develop more consistent and unified pathways of sacramental and faith formation across home, school and parish. This recommendation also aligns closely with Key Theme 3.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Sacramental preparation that is embedded in the life of the Parish, School and home.
- b. Families to journey through sacramental preparation as a genuine part of Catholic Education and parish life.
- c. Consistent approaches to sacramental preparation across the Archdiocese while allowing appropriate local adaptation.

Considerations for Implementation

- Inviting families to explore faith with their children, recognising that Catholic schools are often an entry point into the life of the Church.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Supporting children-led liturgies and prayer, including opportunities for children to pray in their own language where appropriate.
- Providing support for school-age baptism, especially for children whose sacramental formation may have been disrupted by COVID or other circumstances.
- Developing post-Confirmation programs that link school, parish, family and youth ministry.
- Reviewing the pastoral and formational configuration of Confirmation and First Eucharist, including the question of age, in consultation with parishes, schools, families and appropriate diocesan bodies.

63. Baptism, Participation and Mission

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen the celebration of and preparation for sacraments as moments of encounter with Christ, participation in the Church and mission to the world.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. An understanding that the sacraments of initiation for children and adults is the responsibility of the whole community.
- b. The development of Archdiocesan resources to assist everyone to understand baptism, baptismal dignity, charisms and the responsibility of all the baptised for participation and mission (See recommendations for Key Theme 1 and 4).
- c. Baptismal preparation in the home and in the parish community.
- d. Naming and strengthening the missionary and communal dimension of all sacraments.
- e. An understanding that baptisms, weddings, funerals, reconciliation, anointing of the sick and sacramental preparation as privileged moments of listening, welcome, accompaniment and evangelisation (See related recommendations in Key Theme 2).
- f. Sacramental celebrations reflect the local context.

KEY THEME 3:

**THE MISSION OF
CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND
BEING CHURCH TOGETHER**

INTRODUCTION

64. Catholic Education has always been about more than providing a good education. The mission of Catholic Education is grounded in the mission Jesus gave his disciples: “Go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you,” (Matthew 28:19-20). Catholic Schools enact this mission by helping young people grow in knowledge, faith, and character, so they can live with hope, compassion, and wisdom. This means that the goal of Catholic education is the formation of the whole person – mind, heart, and spirit – so that young people can see the world not only as it is, but as it could be.³¹

65. The Church teaches that Catholic Schools should be more than learning centres. They serve to create communities shaped by the Gospel, where students learn to live with freedom, faith, and love.³² Catholic Schools in South Australia participate in the Church’s mission through:

- Developing student knowledge, skills, faith and values
- Forming students who can contribute to society with compassion and justice
- Helping young people to encounter Jesus in prayer, service, and community

66. Parents and caregivers who entrust their young person to a Catholic school can feel assured that all students will “have the opportunity to engage with a range of formative and educative experiences that support their overall development and growing religious self-understanding and spirituality.”³³

OUR HISTORY

63. Catholic Education in South Australia began in November 1844, when Bishop Francis Murphy brought Mr and Mrs William James from Sydney to open the first Catholic school in Adelaide. It was housed in a temporary chapel in Pirie Street, which served both as a church and a classroom. This first school was set up to meet the needs of the Catholic community at that time, namely:

- To pass on the Catholic faith and values
- To support struggling families
- To build community strength
- To give young people hope and opportunity

67. By 1866, Catholic Education had begun to grow beyond the city with a Jesuit school at Sevenhill, and Father Julian Tenison Woods and Sister Mary MacKillop starting a school in a stable in Penola. Sr Mary and the Sisters of St Joseph went on to educate children throughout the State, especially the poor and those in remote areas. Most early South Australian Catholic Schools were run by religious sisters, brothers, priests, and Parish communities. Their vision was clear: to provide an education grounded in faith, service, and care for the most vulnerable.

68. In 2025, we celebrated 180 years of Catholic Education in South Australia. This anniversary was a chance to give thanks for the past and to look to the future with fresh energy for our participation “in the life and mission of the Church and its ongoing renewal.”³⁴ Our story continues to be one of resilience, service, and hope.

³¹ National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper: Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools*, (2018), 6.

³² Vatican II, *Declaration on Christian Education* ‘*Gravissimum Educationis*’, (1965) no. 8.

³³ *RE in Australian Catholic Schools*, 5.

³⁴ *Being Church Together*, 5.

CURRENT REALITIES

69. Catholic Schools continue to be a choice for many families in South Australia who enrol their young person for a variety of reasons, many of which are not religious.³⁵ In 2025, Catholic Education South Australia (which includes the Diocesan of Port Pirie) includes 101 Schools and 119 campuses, with more than 56,300 students – the highest number until this point in time. Another 5,000 children are in Catholic early learning centres and preschools.

70. It is widely recognised that Catholic Schools today are one of the main ways families connect with the Church. For many people, the local Catholic school is their main connection to Parish life. Because of this, “the Catholic school community experience for children, young people and their families is a real and valuable experience, albeit limited to the years of connection with the school.”³⁶ There are a variety of “interrelated components of the Catholic school’s work of evangelisation; its Catholic identity, charism and culture, the religious life of the school, classroom learning and teaching of religion, and an overall curriculum imbued with a contemporary worldview.”³⁷

71. What’s working well?

- Our Schools are growing and constantly working to respond to community need
- Our families find them welcoming and inclusive
- Our teachers are committed and dedicated, often going above and beyond in teaching and learning, and in pastoral care of young people
- Our students are involved in service, social justice, and multicultural initiatives

72. What are the challenges and opportunities?

- To be more “responsive to changing social, [church] and educational contexts” as the diversity of our Catholic school communities continues to grow³⁸

37%

of students are identified by their parents as baptised Catholics

16%

of students are identified by their parents as belonging to other Christian denominations/churches

10%

of students are identified by their parents as belonging to other religions

26%

of students - their parents have specifically written “No religion”

11%

of students have no religious affiliation stated - section in the enrolment form left blank

12%

of Schools are in rural areas

13%

of students have English as a second language

30%

of students have a recognised disability

2X

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments have doubled in the last ten years, thanks in part to scholarships

³⁵ RE in Australian Catholic Schools, 8.

³⁶ Being Church Together, .5.

³⁷ RE in Australian Catholic Schools, 6.

³⁸ RE in Australian Catholic Schools, 5.

- To offer more support to teachers and leaders in understanding a dialogical approach to Catholic identity and mission
- To connect more purposefully with young people who experience a ‘Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous’ (VUCA) world, where faith can seem less relevant³⁹
- To help Schools and Parishes recognise and further foster points of connection for mission through collaboration and resource sharing, in light of the above points

73. These insights remind us that Catholic Education is more than just excellence in teaching and learning – it’s about sharing our faith in ways that invite students to know something of Jesus, pointing them beyond their own flourishing to also prioritise that of others. It is about building relationships and creating communities of hope to inspire in young people an outward manifestation of Gospel values in the world.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

BEING CHURCH TOGETHER

“We are aware that the Catholic educational network has a unique reach. It is a constellation that spans every continent, with a particular presence in low-income areas: a concrete promise of educational mobility and social justice. This constellation demands quality and courage: quality in pedagogical planning, teacher training and governance; courage in ensuring access for the poorest, in supporting fragile families, in promoting scholarships and inclusive policies. Evangelical gratuitousness is not rhetoric: it is a style of relationship, a method and an objective. Where access to education remains a privilege, the Church must push to open doors and invent new paths, because “losing the poor” is equivalent to losing the school itself. This also applies to universities: an inclusive outlook and attention to the heart save us from standardization; a spirit of service revives the imagination and rekindles love.”⁴⁰

74. In contemporary society, “the traditional face of the Church, the Parish worshipping community, represents a distant reality for many people ... while many are drawn to Catholic Schools because these Schools maintain the spirit, values and sense of community found in the gospels”.⁴¹

75. We also know that Catholic Schools are not separate from the Church. They are part of it. The phrase “Being Church Together” reminds us that Parish communities and school communities share the same mission, albeit while honouring the unique roles each plays.⁴² We recognise that “mutual respect and support of the complementary and distinctive roles” of the Parish worshipping community and the school community can help to promote each group’s agency while working together for the common good of young people.⁴³

³⁹ VUCA is an acronym that is applied to the changing state of the world and its effect on people, including the development and growth of young people. It stands for: Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous.

⁴⁰ Pope Leo XIV, *Address to Educators on the Occasion of the Jubilee of the World of Education*, 31 October 2025.

⁴¹ *Being Church Together*, 5.

⁴² *Being Church Together*, 4.

⁴³ *Being Church Together*, 10.

76. It is important to also acknowledge that both the Parish community “and the religious life of the Catholic school are expressions of a wider partnership with parents – the primary educators of their children.”⁴⁴ Catholic Schools in South Australia “provide support to parents and families in fulfilling their primary responsibility for their child’s education in faith,” by “complementing the religious formation of young people in a Parish.”⁴⁵

77. “Being Church Together” means:

- Remembering our origins – the first Catholic Schools were Parish Schools, supported by clergy, religious, and lay people together
- Working in partnership – Schools, Parishes and families must share the mission of forming young people
- Showing welcome and acceptance – of all in our communities
- Seeking strategies for authentic connection – between Schools, Parishes and families
- Recognising that everyone has a role in building community– students, families, principals, teachers, school support staff, Parishioners, religious and priests
- Understanding Schools as places for mission – where faith can be shared, renewed, and lived out, in dialogue with the diversity of young people present
- Being mindful that Parishes today are networks of communities beyond Sunday Mass attendance or geography – Catholic Schools are central to those networks and are vital to the life of the Church

78. Pope Leo XIV in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexisti te*, reminds us:

“For the Christian faith, the education of the poor is not a favour but a duty. Children have a right to knowledge as a fundamental requirement for the recognition of human dignity. Teaching them affirms their value, giving them the tools to transform their reality. Christian tradition considers knowledge a gift from God and a community responsibility. Christian education does not only form professionals, but also people open to goodness, beauty and truth. Catholic Schools, therefore, when they are faithful to their name, are places of inclusion, integral formation and human development. By combining faith and culture, they sow the seeds of the future, honour the image of God and build a better society.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ RE in Australian Catholic Schools, 6.

⁴⁵ RE in Australian Catholic Schools, 8.

⁴⁶ *Dilexisti te*, no. 72.

RECOMMENDATIONS

79. Our Church, as “a community of believers, a community of memory, narrative, and celebration, has an enduring mission to serve the faith, by transforming the world for the betterment of humanity”⁴⁷. This mission is enacted necessarily in distinct yet complementary ways by Catholic Schools and Parishes, in partnership with families, across South Australia.

80. Catholic Education as Mission Beyond the School Fence

Catholic Education is part of God’s mission and is broader than Catholic schools alone. It includes Catholic schools, early learning, preschools, families, parishes, public school students, homeschooling families, students in other denominational schools, tertiary students, alumni, sacramental formation and lifelong learning.

The recommendations for the future of this mission are underpinned by these principles:

- a. Catholic Education is part of God’s mission and participates in the evangelising mission of the Church.
- b. That Catholic Schools “embody and find expression for the love of God” that can speak clearly to young people, assisting them to learn to live faithfully in today’s world⁴⁸.
- c. Catholic Education cultivates communities of hospitality by welcoming all families with love and by providing intentional moments for young people to encounter Jesus.
- d. Catholic Education celebrates stories of faith, hope, service and transformation in our communities.
- e. Schools, parishes and families share responsibility for developing and sustaining the faith life of young people.
- f. Catholic Education reaches beyond Catholic schools to include families and young people in public schools, homeschooling, early childhood settings, tertiary education and other educational contexts.
- g. Families in all their forms are essential partners in Catholic Education and Being Church Together.

81. Strengthening Parish-School-Family Partnerships

In the Archdiocese and in partnership with Catholic Education South Australia we will strengthen meaningful, ongoing and fruitful dialogue between parishes, schools and families, with a focus on relationship-building, connection and shared mission.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

⁴⁷ Tomas Halik, *The Afternoon of Christianity: The Courage to Change*, trans. Gerald Turner (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2024), 184.

⁴⁸ *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, 5.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Collective exploration of the publication Being Church Together.
- b. Regular Being Church Together dialogue groups for parish and school leadership to develop and share mission plans.
- c. Shared school-parish faith formation events for families, including families connected with Catholic schools, Catholics in the public school system and families not currently connected to parish life.
- d. The inclusion of the perspectives of families, parishioners, clergy, students, school staff and school communities in governance and consultation structures.
- e. Communication between parishes and schools about parish life, school life, shared mission and opportunities for participation.
- f. Cooperative resource sharing across parish and school.

Considerations for Implementation

- Focusing one Catholic Education SA Leaders Forum per year, with the support of key Archdiocesan staff, on the theology and practical implications of Being Church Together, tailored to principals, parish priests, and APRIMs.
- Catholic Education should be accessible, including through better communication of financial assistance for Catholic families who may believe Catholic education is unaffordable.
- Developing practical models of support and shared mission between parishes and schools.

82. Supporting Educators, Leaders and Staff in Catholic Identity and Mission

The Archdiocese and Catholic Education South Australia will prioritise collaborative, intentional and well-resourced formation for all those who contribute to the mission of Catholic Education.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Mentoring and practical support for principals and school leadership to lead mission dialogically in communities of growing diversity.
- b. Prioritising and resourcing formation for APRIMs, Religious Education teachers and leaders, supported by both the Archdiocese and Catholic Education South Australia.
- c. Developing teacher capacity to integrate the Catholic identity of the school and parish into their work, to better support students' exploration of faith and spirituality.
- d. Every teacher, Catholic or not, to understand how they contribute to Catholic identity, mission, formation and the religious life of the school.
- e. Evaluating and strategically addressing the professional, spiritual and faith formational needs of Religious Education teachers and leaders.
- f. Further supporting and resourcing the education and formation of students with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considerations for Implementation

- Providing formation in liturgy, Christian spirituality, charism, Catholic Education, Catholic identity, mission and Religious Education.

83. A Continuous Lifelong Formation

Catholic Education is a lifelong process, from birth to death, and should form young people and adults as missionary disciples.

Considerations for Implementation

- Developing R-12 formation pathways, with stronger attention to secondary students.
- Involving young people in the faith formation of their peers through witness, youth ministry, leadership and service.
- Supporting student voice, student leadership, service, social justice and peer witness as expressions of mission.
- Providing chaplaincy and formation support for tertiary students.
- Celebrating and remaining connected to alumni of Catholic Education, including through old scholars networks, mentoring, mission partnerships and witness.
- Exposing seminarians to Catholic schools as part of their formation.
- Strengthening partnerships between parish and school in the ongoing faith formation of families.

KEY THEME 4:

**FORMATION FOR
MISSION AND LEADERSHIP**

INTRODUCTION

84. For every member of the Catholic community of the Archdiocese of Adelaide, faith is an ongoing journey into the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ, a journey that encompasses the whole of our lives, from our earliest days. The 2023 Archdiocesan statement on formation, *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, commits the Archdiocese to “foster the faith formation of the people of God in this place—that is, to provide opportunities that draw Catholics into a closer encounter with Jesus Christ, and thus ensure that we are ‘permanently in a state of mission’”.⁴⁹ Integral elements of this formation are the development of our human capacities, prayer and the sacraments, encounter with the biblical word and the tradition of faith, and our engagement with diverse voices and those on the margins.

85. Pope Francis urged us to go to the margins, to be, at heart, a missionary community. Not only does this involve proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth, but it also involves families, Parishes, communities, agencies, and Schools—indeed, every part of our Archdiocese—taking the first step, being converted to the infinite mercy of God, and reaching out to serve those most in need.⁵⁰ The whole of the faith community, then, and each of its members are called to grow as missionary disciples. Faith formation is intrinsically missionary.

86. Our participation in the mission of Jesus is a call to service. Each of the gospels, in its own way, highlights Jesus’ mission as one of service—“For I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27). Leadership as service is the dynamism of every Christian life, and the primary call for leaders in the Archdiocese—lay diocesan leaders, chaplains and pastoral associates, educators and school leaders, and deacons and priests.

87. Faced with the major cultural shift in the place of religion in Australia over the past six decades, faith formation is an urgent task for the church. Leading sociologists speak of people today being more “seekers” for religious faith rather than “dwellers” in the mode of believing of a past age. In this context, then, it is essential that the Catholic community find ways of living and expressing our faith in response to the searching hearts of their neighbours, so that those neighbours might be drawn further into the mystery of God’s love revealed in Jesus Christ.

CURRENT REALITIES

88. A substantial range of formation programs, reaching back decades, have been offered in the Archdiocese. They include the JOCist Movements (YCW, YCS, NCGM, TYCS), Catholic Adult Education Service (and its previous iterations), the Diocesan Pastoral Renewal Program, the Ministry Formation Program, and the formation of priests and deacons, and more.

89. Today, faith formation takes place throughout the diocese—in families, Parishes and Parish groups, Schools, and in the work of Centacare, other diocesan agencies, and community groups.

90. The number one priority discerned at the 2021, 2022, and 2024 Diocesan Assemblies has been “Faith formation and spiritual development,” including formation for leadership and mission.

⁴⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 25

⁵⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 24

91. In response to a recommendation of the 2021 Diocesan Assembly, the Diocesan Formation Commission was established in 2022. This commission has published a diocesan statement on formation, *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, and is developing a five-session formation program for small groups in Parishes and communities, entitled *Living the Joy of the Gospel*, which will run in October 2026.

92. A Review of the Ministry Formation Program in 2023 identified the need to approach formation for lay ministry in a new way.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

93. The appearances of the risen Jesus to the disciples after his death are the foundation of Christian faith. The early community gathered in the light of their encounter with him. The Gospel of John conveys that reality powerfully in the passage from which the biblical inspiration for our Archdiocesan Synod has been drawn—“As the Father sent me, so I am sending you” (Jn 20:21-22). When Jesus enters the house where the disciples are locked away, fearful after his death, his presence overwhelms them. They suddenly realise that although he had died a traumatic death, the Father had raised him up. They finally understand the meaning of his ministry; they are led to recognise his deepest identity—God has been transforming the world through him. Jesus then addresses them with the word “Peace” Shalom (Jn 20:20, 21), offering them the fulfilment that only God can bring. He breathes the gift of the Holy Spirit on them. Through this encounter and because of it, the disciples are sent out by Jesus to join in his mission: “as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”

94. This is the formative dynamism of Christian faith— stirred by the presence of the Holy Spirit, Christians are led to deeper faith through encounter with the risen Jesus. He sends them on to continue his Spirit-inspired work to the ends of the earth. Embracing that call, the church is a “community of missionary disciples”⁵¹, as Pope Francis puts it. Mission is responding to Jesus’ call and joining in God’s transformation of the world.

⁵¹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 27

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2023 diocesan statement on formation, *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, commits the Archdiocese to “foster the faith formation of the people of God in this place that is, to provide opportunities that draw Catholics into a closer encounter with Jesus Christ, and thus ensure that we are ‘permanently in a state of mission’”.

95. Archdiocesan Formation Strategy

In the Archdiocese we will develop and implement a comprehensive formation strategy that equips parishes, schools, communities, agencies and ministries for lifelong formation in missionary discipleship, leadership and service.

This formation strategy will ensure the following:

- a. Clear explanation of what formation will be offered, how it will be delivered, who will implement it at Archdiocesan and local levels, and how it will be resourced.
- b. Diverse models of formation that includes spiritual, theological, scriptural, pastoral, liturgical, missionary, synodal, operational, administrative, technological and leadership formation.
- c. Formation that is Archdiocesan-aligned and supported, but locally governed, co-designed and implemented according to local community needs.
- d. Formation that connects parishes and communities around shared goals and common mission.

Considerations for Implementation

- A review and audit of current and recent formation programs, including what is active, what has ceased, what has worked well and what can be learned from earlier credible formation programs.
- A needs and gaps analysis across the Archdiocese, including parishes, schools, communities, migrant communities, agencies, ministries and leadership groups.
- Clear identification of who formation is for, including clergy, parishioners, lay ecclesial ministers, teachers, school leaders, APRIMs, RE teachers, parish staff, PPC members, Finance Council members, volunteers, youth leaders, chaplains, pastoral associates and diocesan leaders.
- Multi-level and multi-modal formation, including face-to-face, online, small group, parish-based, regional, school-based and Archdiocesan opportunities.
- Formation opportunities for cultural and migrant communities, mindful of Catholic traditions specific to their spiritual practices.
- Explicit support and formation for English as a Second Language lay people, clergy and leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

96. Formation for All the People of God

In the Archdiocese formation will support all to grow in faith, communion, mission and participation.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Formation in Scripture, prayer, sacraments, Catholic teaching, Catholic Social Teaching, discernment, charisms, mission and service.
- b. Formation in practical witness, evangelisation, accompaniment, listening, inclusion and engagement with contemporary culture.

Considerations for Implementation

- Formation that helps communities ask: What is working well? What is challenging? What support is needed to grow?
- Formation that prepares people to engage seekers, young people, families, those on the margins and those who are not regular Mass attenders.

97. Parish and Community Formation Strategies

Every Parish Pastoral Council, with support from the Archdiocese, will develop a local formation strategy based on Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel and aligned with the Archdiocesan formation strategy.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Every Parish Pastoral Council developing a formation strategy and evaluation process for their parish or community based on the Archdiocesan statement Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel: Formation in the Archdiocese of Adelaide.
- b. Communities with limited resources or limited leadership capacity.
- c. Local formation that includes the voices and needs of people on the margins.
- d. Family ministry and associations that promote the Domestic Church, recognising that faith begins and is nurtured in families.

Considerations for Implementation

- Co-designing local formation plans with the people who will participate in them.
- Conducting local needs analysis in parishes, schools, communities and ministries.
- Identifying local formation priorities for missionary discipleship, leadership, liturgy, service, outreach and participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

98. People and Culture Plan for Ecclesial Ministry and Leadership

In the Archdiocese we will develop a comprehensive People and Culture Plan to support lay ecclesial ministry, clergy, parish staff, volunteers and all ecclesial leaders.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Recognition of lay and ordained ministers and leaders as co-responsible partners.
- b. Adequate remuneration for paid lay ecclesial ministers.
- c. Formation and professional learning for lay and ordained ecclesial ministers which includes pastoral, spiritual, theological, human, academic, administrative and leadership learning.
- d. Regular performance development, review, evaluation, and professional learning processes for all ecclesial leadership, including clergy, parish secretaries, Parish Pastoral Council members, Finance Council members, pastoral associates, chaplains, youth ministers, parish staff and diocesan leaders.
- e. Pastoral supervision, reflective practice, accountability, wellbeing support and ministry review for ordained and lay ecclesial ministers.
- f. Conciliation processes with visible authority and clear pathways for addressing conflict.
- g. Clergy needs, especially clergy from overseas, in collaboration with Key Theme 5.

Considerations for Implementation

- Employed youth ministers or chaplains in schools and parishes where feasible and appropriately resourced, to support youth formation and reduce pressure on teachers, parish priests and staff
- Formation in operations and administration where these are necessary for mission, including governance, finance, communication, compliance, WHS, safeguarding and parish systems.
- Formation in ethical and effective use of AI and associated technologies for mission, communication, administration and learning.
- Explore the Ministry of Catechist, as instituted by Pope Francis in *Antiquum Ministerium* (2021), to strengthen evangelisation, faith formation and missionary discipleship across the Archdiocese.

99. Leadership in Service of a Synodal Church

In the Archdiocese we will continue developing the *Leadership in Service of a Synodal Church* framework as the foundation for parish, school, community and diocesan leadership development.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Formation for leadership as service, grounded in baptism, discipleship and mission.
- b. Ministry and leadership of women in the church through access to women's leadership programs, mentoring, professional networking etc.
- c. Pathways that identify and invite new and diverse leaders, especially people not already involved in existing structures.
- d. Leadership development opportunities for young people, culturally diverse Catholics, people with disabilities, people from rural communities and other under-represented groups.
- e. Formation for parish priests and lay leaders in shared decision-making, co-responsibility and synodal leadership.

100. Formation Team, Funding and Collaboration

The Archdiocese will fund and support a Formation Team to enact the Archdiocesan formation strategy and People and Culture Plan.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Funding within the Archdiocesan budget for formation leadership (staffing), resources, delivery and evaluation.
- b. Scholarships or financial support for people who need assistance to access formation, including women in leadership formation and emerging leaders from communities with fewer resources.

Considerations for Implementation

- Collaboration between the Formation Team, Clergy Life and Ministry Team, Catholic Education South Australia, Centacare, parishes, schools, communities, other dioceses and relevant Catholic agencies.
- Ongoing support when new methods of teaching, learning, technology or pastoral practice are encountered.
- Formation programs guided by and administered with the support of people with appropriate formation expertise and high-level formation backgrounds.
- Meaningful mentors for people moving into ministry and leadership roles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

101. Synodal Methodology in Formation

Formation programs throughout the Archdiocese will adopt a clearly defined synodal methodology.

Synodal methodology includes:

- a. Prayer, Scripture and openness to the Holy Spirit.
- b. Deep listening and respectful speaking.
- c. Inclusion of voices from the margins.
- d. Dialogue, discernment and shared responsibility.
- e. Attention to baptismal dignity and the gifts of all the People of God.
- f. Feedback loops, accountability and transparent communication.
- g. Communal discernment that informs decision-making for mission.
- h. A willingness to be converted by what is heard and discerned.

KEY THEME 5:

**STRUCTURES AND PLANNING
FOR COMMUNION,
PARTICIPATION AND MISSION**

INTRODUCTION

102. The theme of Structures and Planning for Communion, Participation and Mission arises from Pope Francis' vision for the Global Synod on Synodality (2021-2024), which calls us, the Church, to rediscover ourselves as the pilgrim People of God, journeying together through listening, dialogue, discernment, and shared mission. The Synod process highlights that communion, participation, and mission must come before structures, with governance, Parish boundaries, and administrative systems built to support these foundational principles.

Our Archdiocese has made a commitment to strengthening synodal practices across Parishes, communities and Schools.

103. Communion:	Communion is the unity of the Church as the People of God, grounded in baptism and the Trinitarian life. The Global Synod on Synodality emphasised that the Church is a pilgrim people journeying together, where relationships, mutual support, and shared faith are central. Pope Francis highlighted that communion does not mean uniformity; the diversity of gifts, cultures, and experiences strengthens the Church, and all members share responsibility for its life and mission.
104. Participation:	Participation means that all baptised members have a role in the life, decision-making, and mission of the Church. The Global Synod on Synodality stressed the importance of structures that enable lay people, women, youth, and marginalised groups to contribute meaningfully to dialogue, planning, and leadership. Pope Francis called for a co-responsible Church in which everyone is invited to take part, speak, and act in harmony with their gifts and vocations, recognising that participation is both a right and a duty.
105. Mission:	Mission is the Church's purpose – to bring the Gospel to all, particularly the marginalised. The Global Synod on Synodality highlighted that mission flows from communion and participation, and Church structures should serve the mission by freeing leaders from excessive administration to focus on pastoral care, outreach, and service. Pope Francis stressed that the Church must be outward-looking, engaged with society, and attentive to the needs of the poor, always accompanying people with mercy, dialogue, and witness to Christ.

106. The *Final Document of the Global Synod on Synodality* (2024), *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel* (2023), *Being Church Together* (2023), and *Light from the Southern Cross* (2020) all emphasise the need for synodal, participatory, and mission-oriented structures that embed communion, participation, and mission at every level of Church life.

CURRENT REALITIES

107. Structures exist throughout the Archdiocese for Parishes, Schools, Diocesan offices, and ministries that support governance with an ultimate goal to serve communion, participation and mission. However, many people have limited understanding of their purpose and function (see *Appendix D: Archdiocesan Structures*)

108. Strengths: Commitment of clergy, religious, and laity; established Parish traditions; growing openness to synodal dialogue.

109. Many challenges exist that limit or restrict our focus on mission. These include:

- Heavy administrative burdens on clergy which includes but is not limited to legislative requirements: WH&S, integrity and safeguarding
- Limited financial and human resources
- Parish and deanery boundaries may be misaligned with current demographics
- Insufficient integration between Parish worshipping communities and Schools
- Parishioners often under-prepared for leadership roles
- Ongoing changes in demographics and societal changes
- Structures and practices that reflect the status quo of those who have been actively involved in the Church for a long time to the unintended exclusion of those on the peripheries

110. That being said our Archdiocesan Synod provides opportunities to realign towards mission through:

- Considering regional or cluster-based models to support decentralised collaboration
- Encouraging stronger integration of Parish worshipping communities and Schools focusing on mission and governance (see *Key Theme 3: Catholic Education and Being Church Together*)
- Ongoing formation for mission to ensure leadership succession (see *Key Theme 4: Formation for Mission and Leadership*)
- Review of existing structures to ensure they are designed with the pastoral imperative in mind to prioritise mission over maintenance
- The further fostering and promotion of subsidiarity
- Clear explanation of governance rules, Diocesan policies, and Parish responsibilities to align with the mission. Ensure a focus on mission and then increase the understanding of policies and responsibilities among Parishioners
- To reflect synodal principles of co-responsibility and dialogue that encourage deep listening and facilitate good decision making and that embed principles of trust, accountability and transparency
- To increase ownership and understanding of governance, Parish responsibilities, and structures among all members of the People of God

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

111. Communion:	Grounded in baptism and the Trinitarian life, communion is the foundation for all structures. Parish councils, diocesan assemblies, and regional gatherings should reflect unity in diversity and foster collective discernment. Church teaching, particularly <i>Lumen Gentium</i> (Vatican II), emphasises that all members of the Church are called to live in communion as the Body of Christ. The Final Document of the Global Synod on Synodality stressed that each local Church manifests communion in Christ and highlights the Parish as the primary setting for experiencing relationships, welcome, discernment, and mission.
112. Participation:	Baptism calls all faithful to co-responsibility. Structures must allow for genuine dialogue, leadership opportunities, and integration across ministries, including Schools. Church teaching underscores the universal call to holiness and the active role of laity in mission.⁵² The Final Document of the Global Synod on Synodality and <i>Light from the Southern Cross</i> recommend greater involvement of lay people, women, youth, and people with disabilities in governance, decision-making, and discernment processes, reinforcing participation as both a right and responsibility.
113. Mission:	Mission is the ultimate purpose of all structures. Mission-oriented planning ensures structures support outreach and pastoral care rather than bureaucratic maintenance. <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> and <i>Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel</i> call for structures that facilitate pastoral conversion, ongoing formation, and active engagement with the world. Mission involves all the baptised, discerning charisms, ministries, and needs within communities to ensure structures are responsive, inclusive, and adaptable.
114. Governance:	Canon law, civil legislation and Diocesan policies provide necessary frameworks. Governance should reflect stewardship, accountability, and transparency while enabling mission, participation, and communion. Leadership structures should clarify roles, responsibilities, and the integration of mission personnel to build capacity and succession planning, consistent with Church teaching on hierarchical communion, subsidiarity, and collegiality.⁵³ Participatory bodies like Diocesan and Parish councils, finance councils, and pastoral assemblies are essential for synodal functioning and effective discernment.⁵⁴

⁵² *Lumen Gentium* nos. 31-32; Vatican II, *Decree on the Laity 'Apostolicam Actuositatem'* (1965) no. 4.

⁵³ Vatican II, *Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops of the Catholic Church 'Christus Dominus'* (1965) nos. 10-12.

⁵⁴ *Final Document*, nos.103-105, 114-117.

RECOMMENDATIONS

115. Diocesan and Parish Structures for Communion, Participation and Mission

Appointment of a Diocesan and Parish Structures Group to review current structures and explore new or other ways to increase communion, participation and mission through:

- a. Explanation current governance, consultation and participation structures at diocesan, regional, parish and school levels, and identify how these might be strengthened.
- b. Review of structures in light of baptism, the People of God, synodality, co-responsibility, subsidiarity, stewardship, accountability and governance for mission.
- c. Committing to parish, regional and diocesan assemblies as regular practices of synodal listening, discernment and planning.
- d. Mandating the Diocesan Pastoral Council and Parish Pastoral Councils as best synodal practice.
- e. Supporting current initiatives including:
 - i. Providing Church support to form, renew and sustain PPCs where parishes need assistance.
 - ii. Promoting and updating the Parish Pastoral Council Handbook.
 - iii. Conducting combined, quarterly DPC, Parish Councils Chairs and Parish Priest Gatherings and using these structures to explore ways of strengthening communion, participation and mission, at all levels.
 - iv. Conducting joint gatherings of all Archdiocesan Councils and Commissions with the Archbishop. Currently gathering at the beginning of year with the purpose of exploring our shared mission.
- f. The Terms of Reference for this group to be approved by the Archbishop, through consultation with the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Bishop's Council of Priests.

Considerations for Implementation

- Archdiocese to create a health and aged care Archdiocesan commission to develop stronger synodal connections with Catholic health and aged care providers who employ 8,000 people in SA.
- Ensure adequate representation across communities within parishes, including cultural communities, young people, families, elderly parishioners, schools, people on the peripheries, and those with pastoral, professional, administrative or governance gifts.
- Identify barriers to participation, including lack of invitation, childcare, transport, meeting times, digital exclusion, lack of confidence, upskilling needs, volunteer fatigue and shortage of people.
- Clarify how subsidiarity will be embraced: what decisions should be made locally, what belongs regionally, and what requires diocesan coordination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

116. Parish, Regional and Resource Planning for Mission

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen parish, regional and diocesan planning so that structures serve mission.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Regional or cluster-based models that reduce administrative burdens and enable collaboration across parish boundaries.
- b. Assessment of regional models according to parish vitality, financial sustainability, organisational capability, volunteer capacity, pastoral mission, administrative burden and inclusion of peripheral groups.
- c. Exploration of appropriate financial joint ventures or shared resource models between parishes, regions or Catholic entities.
- d. Collaboration with all entities within the Catholic Church Endowment Society and at parish level.
- e. Stronger parish-school integration, including the possibility that schools can support parishes more in mission, communication, family engagement, leadership and resources.

Considerations for Implementation

- Continuing the Parish and Deanery Boundaries Project⁵⁵, ensuring it is adequately resourced and reflects mission priorities for growth.
- Ensuring parish and regional planning recognises the shortage of active volunteers and works realistically with the people available.
- Supporting structures that enable more lay people to participate in one-to-one sharing, accompaniment, pastoral outreach and local mission.

117. Parish Administrative, Compliance and Digital Support for Mission

In the Archdiocese we will ensure that administrative, compliance and digital systems support mission and ministry.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. The recognition that administration is a charism and that people with gifts in HR, WHS, finance, governance, risk, compliance, IT and communication contribute to the mission of the Church.
- b. Diocesan support so that all parishes have the right resources to undertake required administration.
- c. Funding, templates, risk assessment tools, compliance guidance, safeguarding support and shared services where appropriate.

⁵⁵ The Parish Boundaries Project is supported by the Archbishop's Office to map and confirm existing parish boundaries for pastoral planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- d. Compliance, safeguarding and legal responsibilities are carried out in ways that protect children, young people and vulnerable people while also enabling parish mission.

Considerations for Implementation

- Developing multimedia communication to help parishes know what resources are available.
- Communicating in ways attentive to the different levels of technological skill and technology use within parishes.
- Providing resources for information technology and social media to advertise mission initiatives in parishes and across the Archdiocese.
- Supporting ethical use of AI and technology to assist administration and mission, with attention to privacy, safeguarding, accuracy, transparency, inclusion and human oversight.
- Developing an Archdiocesan pastoral formation and parish support service, or help desk, that priests, parishioners, PPCs and parish staff can contact for formation, training, information-sharing, administrative guidance, pastoral outreach support, connections, references and common templates.

118. Volunteers, Leadership Succession and Participation

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen volunteer support, leadership succession and broader participation in parish and diocesan life. This recommendation crosses over with Key Theme 4.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. The role and value of volunteers in the Church by quantifying, recognising and celebrating volunteers across the Archdiocese.
- b. Volunteers with formation, encouragement, role clarity, safeguarding support and practical resources.
- c. The development of parish and diocesan leadership succession plans.
- d. Building parish structures that help people connect ordinary life, family life, service and leadership with participation in the mission of the Church.

119. Clergy Transition, Induction and Synodal Leadership

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen transition, induction, mentoring and accountability for clergy, especially parish priests and newly arrived priests.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. A formal transition and induction plan for incoming clergy (including when Parish priests are newly appointed or moved) inclusive of canonical, legal, human relations and pastoral requirements. This plan must also include strategies for how the parish welcomes a new priest.
- b. Processes that recognise clergy transition that is relational and communal, not only administrative.
- c. All priests in ongoing conversion of heart toward synodality, listening, co-responsibility and shared mission.
- d. Formation for priests in the Synod's direction and synodal practice.
- e. Reviewing the current international clergy program to assess viability, support of clergy and support of communities.

Considerations for Implementation

- Strengthening formation for newly arrived priests in Australian cultural norms, relationships with women, administration, finance, safeguarding, parish expectations and local pastoral realities. Providing team mentoring and experience with an existing parish priest before taking on full responsibility where appropriate.
- The Archbishop will make regular visits to parishes as a visible sign of communion, listening and shared accountability.

120. Appraisal, Review and Pastoral Supervision

The Archdiocese will develop and implement formal appraisal and review processes for diocesan and parish leaders, lay and ordained, to ensure accountability, support and growth.

This can be supported through:

- a. Defining 'pastoral supervision' clearly as reflective practice, wellbeing support, ministry accountability, professional supervision and pastoral growth.
- b. Ensuring review processes are pastoral, constructive and mission-focused, not merely bureaucratic.
- c. Including parish priests, clergy, parish staff, pastoral associates, PPC chairs, Finance Council members, chaplains, youth ministers, diocesan leaders and other ecclesial leaders.
- d. Connecting review and supervision processes with the People and Culture Plan in Key Theme 4.
- e. Providing support for leaders before, during and after transitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

121. Formation for Structures, Stewardship and Governance for Mission

The Archdiocese will provide ongoing formation for all involved in parish, school, diocesan and community structures, in close connection with the formation strategy in Key Theme 4.

This formation will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Baptism and the People of God.
- b. Missionary discipleship and co-responsibility.
- c. Synodality and communal discernment.
- d. Subsidiarity and participation.
- e. Ecclesiology, stewardship and service.
- f. Accountability, transparency and governance for mission.
- g. Practical skills for PPCs, Finance Councils, parish administration, safeguarding, risk, communication, IT, social media and ethical technology use.

122. Post-Synod Implementation, Resourcing and Accountability

Following the 2026 Archdiocesan Synod, a Synod Implementation Working Group will be established and meet in August 2026, made up of members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and Bishop's Council of Priests, to turn the Synod outcomes into practical, resourced and accountable actions.

The group will:

- a. Review the Synod outcomes and identify the actions required for each Key Theme.
- b. Assign each action to the appropriate person, parish, school, office, agency, council, commission or diocesan body.
- c. Identify which recommendations require Archdiocesan action, parish action, school action, agency action, regional action or shared responsibility.
- d. Determine what resources, formation, templates, funding, communication and training are needed.
- e. Develop a staged implementation plan with clear priorities, responsibilities and timelines.
- f. Ensure that parish, school and community action plans can be adapted to local circumstances while remaining aligned with the Archdiocesan mission.
- g. Provide practical tools to help parishes, schools and communities discern local goals and actions.
- h. Develop an evaluation and accountability process (to be put into place by July 2027), including regular reporting to the Archbishop, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Bishop's Council of Priests, parishes, schools and communities.
- i. Ensure that implementation is communicated in plain language and through accessible multimedia formats.
- j. Review progress regularly so that the Synod becomes an ongoing process of conversion, participation and mission, not only an event.

123. Mission Implementation and Accountability: The Archdiocese will provide a practical implementation framework to assist parishes, schools, communities, and agencies to develop local missionary action plans, identify responsible leaders, allocate resources, support formation, and review progress regularly in light of the Synod outcomes.

The following points apply to the implementation and resourcing of all recommendation in this section of the document.

- Identify the needs in your local community, including who is marginalised?
- Who is involved in bringing about / actioning their recommendations
- How will this be resources withing our communities
- What will the implementation process look like (e.g. action plans)

124. Parishes, Schools and Communities

The work of our community continues as we journey towards the Synod and beyond. As part of our baptismal call, each of us is encouraged to discern the priorities of the Diocesan Synod and develop appropriate mechanisms at a Parish, School and community level to implement the outcomes. Resources and training will be provided as mentioned above to assist this process.



APPENDIX A: SYNOD RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

35. Formation and accompaniment for missionary discipleship.

Missionary discipleship is the vocation of all the baptised. It begins in personal encounter with Christ. Each person is called to ongoing conversion and holiness. What begins as personal conversion is then lived through ordinary actions for the transformation of the world. Formation for missionary discipleship equips people to live their baptismal call with confidence, joy and practical skill. This recommendation is developed further in Key Theme 4, *Formation for Mission and Leadership*.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. A clear, plain-language explanation of 'mission' and 'missionary discipleship' so that all people can understand what it means in daily life.
- b. Lifelong formation including:
 - i. Reflection, guidance and accompaniment on the baptismal call to mission throughout life;
 - ii. Learning about Catholic Social Teaching
 - iii. formation in Scripture, prayer, the teachings and tradition of the Church, discernment of God's call and practical witness.
- c. Programs that build confidence in sharing faith, including programs that can connect with or complement RCIA / OCIA, sacrament preparation for children, and other pathways of initiation.
- d. Culturally appropriate formation and training (e.g. migrant communities, language groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, etc.).
- e. Parish priests and Parish leaders to further develop their capacity in leadership in service of a synodal church.¹⁵

36. Deep Listening, Accompaniment and Missing Voices

Deep listening is essential to becoming a missionary Church. In the Archdiocese we will strengthen ongoing listening, accompaniment and dialogue, especially with those whose voices are often missing, unheard or marginalised.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Structured ongoing conversations with those who are on the peripheries of Church and society¹⁶ and creating safe spaces for honest conversation, respectful speaking, faithful listening and discernment including key pastoral and sacramental moments in parish life.

¹⁵ See paragraphs 4-8 and the *Leadership in Service of a Synodal Church* document.

¹⁶ For example: First Nations communities, young people, elderly people, rural communities, people not regularly engaged in parish life, adult professional and formation groups, cultural communities, people living with disability, neurodiverse people, LGBTQ+ people, those served through chaplaincies, Centacare, Catholic Education and other Catholic or community services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considerations for Implementation

- Mapping and documenting the depth and breadth of the Church's missionary works.
- Incorporate, celebrate, share and document stories of ordinary people who live as missionary disciples in daily life as a resource to support growth and development in mission.
- Expanding the May Mass count or developing complementary measures to better recognise missionary activity beyond Mass attendance alone.
- Acknowledging past failures of individuals and the institutional Church for harm or abuses through means such as liturgies of lament or an open letter of apology.

37. Partnership, Inclusion and Advocacy for Mission

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen partnership, inclusion and advocacy so that the Church becomes more clearly invitational, welcoming and mission-oriented.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Formal endorsement and use of the Archdiocesan Welcome to Country Guidelines.
- b. Adopting NATSICC's cultural competency training throughout the Archdiocese which includes the "Cultural Competency in a Catholic Context" online course and face-to-face / on-Country training where available.
- c. Commendation of NATSICC's position paper "Embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Life of the Catholic Church" (received and accepted by the Plenary Council's First Decree, Reconciliation: Healing Wounds, Receiving Gifts) as the parish reconciliation roadmap.
- d. Developing mechanisms for listening to ecological wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and incorporating it into Laudato Si' Action Plans.
- e. Parishes, schools and communities to develop local Laudato Si' Action Plans and to commit to the goals of the Archdiocesan Laudato Si' Action Plan.
- f. Developing and implementing an Archdiocesan Disability Inclusion Plan.
- g. Examining the Church's own barriers to inclusion, including language, culture, assumptions, structures, accessibility, leadership patterns and participation practices.

Considerations for Implementation

- Parishes, schools, communities and agencies to identify specific missionary goals appropriate to its local context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

38. Ecumenical and Interfaith Partnerships

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen partnership, inclusion and advocacy so that the Church becomes more clearly invitational, welcoming and mission-oriented.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Praying with and for each other.
- b. Collaborating on issues of common concern, including social justice, peace, care for creation, support for families, service to the poor and community wellbeing.
- c. Collaborating in pastoral planning where appropriate, especially in rural and regional areas.

Considerations for Implementation

- Creating opportunities for dialogue, shared prayer, service and community-building with other Christian communities and interfaith partners.

39. Bearers of Good News in the World.

In the Archdiocese we will support parishes, schools, families, communities and agencies to become visible bearers of Good News in a culture where many people are no longer engaged with parish life but may still be searching for meaning, community and God.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Recognising and supporting family life, the Domestic Church, as the first place where missionary disciples are formed.
- b. Parishes to be visible centres of missionary activity.
- c. Families and households in all their forms to be places of prayer, hospitality, faith-sharing and service.
- d. Young people to be part of the missionary action of the Church as leaders, witnesses, ministers and co-responsible participants.
- e. Finding new ways to communicate the Good News through digital and other communication methods, in connection with the communication and technology supports in Key Theme 5.

Considerations for Implementation

- Encouraging new missionary initiatives such as pop-up outreach, small groups, local mission experiments, public witness, community gatherings and other 'new nets' for mission.
- Identifying, supporting, promoting and celebrating faith communities whose charism is the formation of families in the faith, with a particular focus on young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

57. Liturgical celebrations are moments of encounter with Christ, opening us to God and neighbour. Nourished by God's Word and the Body and Blood of Christ, people of all ages and backgrounds are empowered to share their gifts for the good of the community and are sent on mission to proclaim the Good News with their lives, bringing Christ's healing, justice and liberation to the world.

58. Welcoming and Inclusive Parishes and Communities

Parishes and communities will become more visibly welcoming, inclusive and accessible, so that all people can encounter Christ and find belonging in the Body of Christ.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support :

- a. Parishes and communities to be inviting environments that cultivate belonging.
- b. Publicly affirming that families, children and people of all ages and life circumstances are welcome.
- c. Using inclusive, accessible and life-giving language in liturgies, Parish and Diocesan communications and publications.
- d. Making liturgies more accessible for people with disability, neurodiverse people, children, elderly people, cultural communities and those less familiar with Church language or practice.
- e. Assisting in the discernment of gifts (charisms) of people in the community and opportunities to participate in the life and mission of the Church.
- f. Promoting prayer in all contexts including communal, family and personal prayer.
- g. Fostering a culture of vocations understood as the call of every person to follow Jesus as a way of life.

Considerations for Implementation

- Sharing liturgical leadership with various groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, migrant and cultural communities, LGBTQ+, neurodiverse and those with differing abilities, to develop appropriate responses or solutions to meet their needs.
- Proactively invite and form new and diverse people into liturgical rosters, ministries, planning teams and visible parish roles, especially children and young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

59. Rich Liturgies and Eucharistic Celebrations

In the Archdiocese we will promote rich liturgical and prayer life, including Eucharistic celebrations and other forms of prayer that flow from and lead back to the Eucharist.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. A diversity of liturgical expression, prayer and spirituality across parishes and the Archdiocese (e.g. Liturgy of the Word, children's liturgy, prayer services, reconciliation services, devotional prayer, cultural prayer forms, music events and prayer beyond Mass).
- b. Ongoing formation for liturgy committees, clergy, liturgical ministers, musicians, readers, acolytes, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and those involved in children's liturgy.
- c. High-quality preaching, including homilies by ordained ministers, and appropriate reflections or testimonies from lay women, lay men and young people.
- d. Theological, scriptural and pastoral formation for those who preach, lead prayer or offer reflections.
- e. Feedback processes for liturgical celebrations, preaching and parish prayer.

Considerations for Implementation

- Providing special consideration for Masses and liturgies with children, using language, music, participation and structure appropriate to their developmental age as outlined in the *Directory of Masses with Children*, and similarly for secondary school-aged young people.

60. Co-responsible Liturgical and Sacramental Leadership

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen co-responsible leadership between ordained and lay people in liturgical and sacramental life.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Clarification of what co-responsibility between ordained and lay people looks like in liturgical planning, sacramental preparation, parish welcome and parish ministries.
- b. Priests to lead a culture of welcome, collaboration and delegation.
- c. The formation of lay women and men, young people and culturally diverse members of the community for liturgical leadership roles and ministries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

61. Liturgical Celebrations as Encounter and Mission

Liturgical celebrations are moments of encounter with Christ, opening us to God and neighbour. Nourished by God's Word and the Body and Blood of Christ, people of all ages and backgrounds are empowered to share their gifts and to go forth as missionary disciples.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Liturgies that are prayerful, beautiful, accessible, inclusive and connected to people's lived realities.
- b. The proclamation and breaking open of Scripture so that the Word of God becomes meaningful for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- c. Liturgical celebrations to include a clear mission-oriented dimension that sends people out to live the Gospel.

Considerations for Implementation

- Encouraging active involvement in planning and preparing liturgical celebrations, with appropriate collaboration between clergy, liturgy teams, families, schools and parish communities.
- Learning from community gatherings, civic rituals and cultural events that successfully gather people, build memory and form community, while remaining faithful to Catholic liturgical tradition

62. Sacramental and Faith Formation Pathways Across Home, School and Parish

In the Archdiocese and in partnership with Catholic Education South Australia we will develop more consistent and unified pathways of sacramental and faith formation across home, school and parish. This recommendation also aligns closely with Key Theme 3.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Sacramental preparation that is embedded in the life of the Parish, School and home.
- b. Families to journey through sacramental preparation as a genuine part of Catholic Education and parish life.
- c. Consistent approaches to sacramental preparation across the Archdiocese while allowing appropriate local adaptation.

Considerations for Implementation

- Inviting families to explore faith with their children, recognising that Catholic schools are often an entry point into the life of the Church.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Supporting children-led liturgies and prayer, including opportunities for children to pray in their own language where appropriate.
- Providing support for school-age baptism, especially for children whose sacramental formation may have been disrupted by COVID or other circumstances.
- Developing post-Confirmation programs that link school, parish, family and youth ministry.
- Reviewing the pastoral and formational configuration of Confirmation and First Eucharist, including the question of age, in consultation with parishes, schools, families and appropriate diocesan bodies.

63. Baptism, Participation and Mission

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen the celebration of and preparation for sacraments as moments of encounter with Christ, participation in the Church and mission to the world.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. An understanding that the sacraments of initiation for children and adults is the responsibility of the whole community.
- b. The development of Archdiocesan resources to assist everyone to understand baptism, baptismal dignity, charisms and the responsibility of all the baptised for participation and mission (See recommendations for Key Theme 1 and 4).
- c. Baptismal preparation in the home and in the parish community.
- d. Naming and strengthening the missionary and communal dimension of all sacraments.
- e. An understanding that baptisms, weddings, funerals, reconciliation, anointing of the sick and sacramental preparation as privileged moments of listening, welcome, accompaniment and evangelisation (See related recommendations in Key Theme 2).
- f. Sacramental celebrations reflect the local context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

79. Our Church, as “a community of believers, a community of memory, narrative, and celebration, has an enduring mission to serve the faith, by transforming the world for the betterment of humanity”⁴⁷. This mission is enacted necessarily in distinct yet complementary ways by Catholic Schools and Parishes, in partnership with families, across South Australia.

80. Catholic Education as Mission Beyond the School Fence

Catholic Education is part of God’s mission and is broader than Catholic schools alone. It includes Catholic schools, early learning, preschools, families, parishes, public school students, homeschooling families, students in other denominational schools, tertiary students, alumni, sacramental formation and lifelong learning.

The recommendations for the future of this mission are underpinned by these principles:

- a. Catholic Education is part of God’s mission and participates in the evangelising mission of the Church.
- b. That Catholic Schools “embody and find expression for the love of God” that can speak clearly to young people, assisting them to learn to live faithfully in today’s world⁴⁸.
- c. Catholic Education cultivates communities of hospitality by welcoming all families with love and by providing intentional moments for young people to encounter Jesus.
- d. Catholic Education celebrates stories of faith, hope, service and transformation in our communities.
- e. Schools, parishes and families share responsibility for developing and sustaining the faith life of young people.
- f. Catholic Education reaches beyond Catholic schools to include families and young people in public schools, homeschooling, early childhood settings, tertiary education and other educational contexts.
- g. Families in all their forms are essential partners in Catholic Education and Being Church Together.

81. Strengthening Parish-School-Family Partnerships

In the Archdiocese and in partnership with Catholic Education South Australia we will strengthen meaningful, ongoing and fruitful dialogue between parishes, schools and families, with a focus on relationship-building, connection and shared mission.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

⁴⁷ Tomas Halik, *The Afternoon of Christianity: The Courage to Change*, trans. Gerald Turner (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2024), 184.

⁴⁸ *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, 5.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Collective exploration of the publication Being Church Together.
- b. Regular Being Church Together dialogue groups for parish and school leadership to develop and share mission plans.
- c. Shared school-parish faith formation events for families, including families connected with Catholic schools, Catholics in the public school system and families not currently connected to parish life.
- d. The inclusion of the perspectives of families, parishioners, clergy, students, school staff and school communities in governance and consultation structures.
- e. Communication between parishes and schools about parish life, school life, shared mission and opportunities for participation.
- f. Cooperative resource sharing across parish and school.

Considerations for Implementation

- Focusing one Catholic Education SA Leaders Forum per year, with the support of key Archdiocesan staff, on the theology and practical implications of Being Church Together, tailored to principals, parish priests, and APRIMs.
- Catholic Education should be accessible, including through better communication of financial assistance for Catholic families who may believe Catholic education is unaffordable.
- Developing practical models of support and shared mission between parishes and schools.

82. Supporting Educators, Leaders and Staff in Catholic Identity and Mission

The Archdiocese and Catholic Education South Australia will prioritise collaborative, intentional and well-resourced formation for all those who contribute to the mission of Catholic Education.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Mentoring and practical support for principals and school leadership to lead mission dialogically in communities of growing diversity.
- b. Prioritising and resourcing formation for APRIMs, Religious Education teachers and leaders, supported by both the Archdiocese and Catholic Education South Australia.
- c. Developing teacher capacity to integrate the Catholic identity of the school and parish into their work, to better support students' exploration of faith and spirituality.
- d. Every teacher, Catholic or not, to understand how they contribute to Catholic identity, mission, formation and the religious life of the school.
- e. Evaluating and strategically addressing the professional, spiritual and faith formational needs of Religious Education teachers and leaders.
- f. Further supporting and resourcing the education and formation of students with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considerations for Implementation

- Providing formation in liturgy, Christian spirituality, charism, Catholic Education, Catholic identity, mission and Religious Education.

83. A Continuous Lifelong Formation

Catholic Education is a lifelong process, from birth to death, and should form young people and adults as missionary disciples.

Considerations for Implementation

- Developing R-12 formation pathways, with stronger attention to secondary students.
- Involving young people in the faith formation of their peers through witness, youth ministry, leadership and service.
- Supporting student voice, student leadership, service, social justice and peer witness as expressions of mission.
- Providing chaplaincy and formation support for tertiary students.
- Celebrating and remaining connected to alumni of Catholic Education, including through old scholars networks, mentoring, mission partnerships and witness.
- Exposing seminarians to Catholic schools as part of their formation.
- Strengthening partnerships between parish and school in the ongoing faith formation of families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2023 diocesan statement on formation, *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, commits the Archdiocese to “foster the faith formation of the people of God in this place that is, to provide opportunities that draw Catholics into a closer encounter with Jesus Christ, and thus ensure that we are ‘permanently in a state of mission’”.

95. Archdiocesan Formation Strategy

In the Archdiocese we will develop and implement a comprehensive formation strategy that equips parishes, schools, communities, agencies and ministries for lifelong formation in missionary discipleship, leadership and service.

This formation strategy will ensure the following:

- a. Clear explanation of what formation will be offered, how it will be delivered, who will implement it at Archdiocesan and local levels, and how it will be resourced.
- b. Diverse models of formation that includes spiritual, theological, scriptural, pastoral, liturgical, missionary, synodal, operational, administrative, technological and leadership formation.
- c. Formation that is Archdiocesan-aligned and supported, but locally governed, co-designed and implemented according to local community needs.
- d. Formation that connects parishes and communities around shared goals and common mission.

Considerations for Implementation

- A review and audit of current and recent formation programs, including what is active, what has ceased, what has worked well and what can be learned from earlier credible formation programs.
- A needs and gaps analysis across the Archdiocese, including parishes, schools, communities, migrant communities, agencies, ministries and leadership groups.
- Clear identification of who formation is for, including clergy, parishioners, lay ecclesial ministers, teachers, school leaders, APRIMs, RE teachers, parish staff, PPC members, Finance Council members, volunteers, youth leaders, chaplains, pastoral associates and diocesan leaders.
- Multi-level and multi-modal formation, including face-to-face, online, small group, parish-based, regional, school-based and Archdiocesan opportunities.
- Formation opportunities for cultural and migrant communities, mindful of Catholic traditions specific to their spiritual practices.
- Explicit support and formation for English as a Second Language lay people, clergy and leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

96. Formation for All the People of God

In the Archdiocese formation will support all to grow in faith, communion, mission and participation.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Formation in Scripture, prayer, sacraments, Catholic teaching, Catholic Social Teaching, discernment, charisms, mission and service.
- b. Formation in practical witness, evangelisation, accompaniment, listening, inclusion and engagement with contemporary culture.

Considerations for Implementation

- Formation that helps communities ask: What is working well? What is challenging? What support is needed to grow?
- Formation that prepares people to engage seekers, young people, families, those on the margins and those who are not regular Mass attenders.

97. Parish and Community Formation Strategies

Every Parish Pastoral Council, with support from the Archdiocese, will develop a local formation strategy based on Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel and aligned with the Archdiocesan formation strategy.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Every Parish Pastoral Council developing a formation strategy and evaluation process for their parish or community based on the Archdiocesan statement Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel: Formation in the Archdiocese of Adelaide.
- b. Communities with limited resources or limited leadership capacity.
- c. Local formation that includes the voices and needs of people on the margins.
- d. Family ministry and associations that promote the Domestic Church, recognising that faith begins and is nurtured in families.

Considerations for Implementation

- Co-designing local formation plans with the people who will participate in them.
- Conducting local needs analysis in parishes, schools, communities and ministries.
- Identifying local formation priorities for missionary discipleship, leadership, liturgy, service, outreach and participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

98. People and Culture Plan for Ecclesial Ministry and Leadership

In the Archdiocese we will develop a comprehensive People and Culture Plan to support lay ecclesial ministry, clergy, parish staff, volunteers and all ecclesial leaders.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Recognition of lay and ordained ministers and leaders as co-responsible partners.
- b. Adequate remuneration for paid lay ecclesial ministers.
- c. Formation and professional learning for lay and ordained ecclesial ministers which includes pastoral, spiritual, theological, human, academic, administrative and leadership learning.
- d. Regular performance development, review, evaluation, and professional learning processes for all ecclesial leadership, including clergy, parish secretaries, Parish Pastoral Council members, Finance Council members, pastoral associates, chaplains, youth ministers, parish staff and diocesan leaders.
- e. Pastoral supervision, reflective practice, accountability, wellbeing support and ministry review for ordained and lay ecclesial ministers.
- f. Conciliation processes with visible authority and clear pathways for addressing conflict.
- g. Clergy needs, especially clergy from overseas, in collaboration with Key Theme 5.

Considerations for Implementation

- Employed youth ministers or chaplains in schools and parishes where feasible and appropriately resourced, to support youth formation and reduce pressure on teachers, parish priests and staff
- Formation in operations and administration where these are necessary for mission, including governance, finance, communication, compliance, WHS, safeguarding and parish systems.
- Formation in ethical and effective use of AI and associated technologies for mission, communication, administration and learning.
- Explore the Ministry of Catechist, as instituted by Pope Francis in *Antiquum Ministerium* (2021), to strengthen evangelisation, faith formation and missionary discipleship across the Archdiocese.

99. Leadership in Service of a Synodal Church

In the Archdiocese we will continue developing the *Leadership in Service of a Synodal Church* framework as the foundation for parish, school, community and diocesan leadership development.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Formation for leadership as service, grounded in baptism, discipleship and mission.
- b. Ministry and leadership of women in the church through access to women's leadership programs, mentoring, professional networking etc.
- c. Pathways that identify and invite new and diverse leaders, especially people not already involved in existing structures.
- d. Leadership development opportunities for young people, culturally diverse Catholics, people with disabilities, people from rural communities and other under-represented groups.
- e. Formation for parish priests and lay leaders in shared decision-making, co-responsibility and synodal leadership.

100. Formation Team, Funding and Collaboration

The Archdiocese will fund and support a Formation Team to enact the Archdiocesan formation strategy and People and Culture Plan.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Funding within the Archdiocesan budget for formation leadership (staffing), resources, delivery and evaluation.
- b. Scholarships or financial support for people who need assistance to access formation, including women in leadership formation and emerging leaders from communities with fewer resources.

Considerations for Implementation

- Collaboration between the Formation Team, Clergy Life and Ministry Team, Catholic Education South Australia, Centacare, parishes, schools, communities, other dioceses and relevant Catholic agencies.
- Ongoing support when new methods of teaching, learning, technology or pastoral practice are encountered.
- Formation programs guided by and administered with the support of people with appropriate formation expertise and high-level formation backgrounds.
- Meaningful mentors for people moving into ministry and leadership roles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

101. Synodal Methodology in Formation

Formation programs throughout the Archdiocese will adopt a clearly defined synodal methodology.

Synodal methodology includes:

- a. Prayer, Scripture and openness to the Holy Spirit.
- b. Deep listening and respectful speaking.
- c. Inclusion of voices from the margins.
- d. Dialogue, discernment and shared responsibility.
- e. Attention to baptismal dignity and the gifts of all the People of God.
- f. Feedback loops, accountability and transparent communication.
- g. Communal discernment that informs decision-making for mission.
- h. A willingness to be converted by what is heard and discerned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

115. Diocesan and Parish Structures for Communion, Participation and Mission

Appointment of a Diocesan and Parish Structures Group to review current structures and explore new or other ways to increase communion, participation and mission through:

- a. Explanation current governance, consultation and participation structures at diocesan, regional, parish and school levels, and identify how these might be strengthened.
- b. Review of structures in light of baptism, the People of God, synodality, co-responsibility, subsidiarity, stewardship, accountability and governance for mission.
- c. Committing to parish, regional and diocesan assemblies as regular practices of synodal listening, discernment and planning.
- d. Mandating the Diocesan Pastoral Council and Parish Pastoral Councils as best synodal practice.
- e. Supporting current initiatives including:
 - i. Providing Church support to form, renew and sustain PPCs where parishes need assistance.
 - ii. Promoting and updating the Parish Pastoral Council Handbook.
 - iii. Conducting combined, quarterly DPC, Parish Councils Chairs and Parish Priest Gatherings and using these structures to explore ways of strengthening communion, participation and mission, at all levels.
 - iv. Conducting joint gatherings of all Archdiocesan Councils and Commissions with the Archbishop. Currently gathering at the beginning of year with the purpose of exploring our shared mission.
- f. The Terms of Reference for this group to be approved by the Archbishop, through consultation with the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Bishop's Council of Priests.

Considerations for Implementation

- Archdiocese to create a health and aged care Archdiocesan commission to develop stronger synodal connections with Catholic health and aged care providers who employ 8,000 people in SA.
- Ensure adequate representation across communities within parishes, including cultural communities, young people, families, elderly parishioners, schools, people on the peripheries, and those with pastoral, professional, administrative or governance gifts.
- Identify barriers to participation, including lack of invitation, childcare, transport, meeting times, digital exclusion, lack of confidence, upskilling needs, volunteer fatigue and shortage of people.
- Clarify how subsidiarity will be embraced: what decisions should be made locally, what belongs regionally, and what requires diocesan coordination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

116. Parish, Regional and Resource Planning for Mission

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen parish, regional and diocesan planning so that structures serve mission.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. Regional or cluster-based models that reduce administrative burdens and enable collaboration across parish boundaries.
- b. Assessment of regional models according to parish vitality, financial sustainability, organisational capability, volunteer capacity, pastoral mission, administrative burden and inclusion of peripheral groups.
- c. Exploration of appropriate financial joint ventures or shared resource models between parishes, regions or Catholic entities.
- d. Collaboration with all entities within the Catholic Church Endowment Society and at parish level.
- e. Stronger parish-school integration, including the possibility that schools can support parishes more in mission, communication, family engagement, leadership and resources.

Considerations for Implementation

- Continuing the Parish and Deanery Boundaries Project⁵⁵, ensuring it is adequately resourced and reflects mission priorities for growth.
- Ensuring parish and regional planning recognises the shortage of active volunteers and works realistically with the people available.
- Supporting structures that enable more lay people to participate in one-to-one sharing, accompaniment, pastoral outreach and local mission.

117. Parish Administrative, Compliance and Digital Support for Mission

In the Archdiocese we will ensure that administrative, compliance and digital systems support mission and ministry.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. The recognition that administration is a charism and that people with gifts in HR, WHS, finance, governance, risk, compliance, IT and communication contribute to the mission of the Church.
- b. Diocesan support so that all parishes have the right resources to undertake required administration.
- c. Funding, templates, risk assessment tools, compliance guidance, safeguarding support and shared services where appropriate.

⁵⁵ The Parish Boundaries Project is supported by the Archbishop's Office to map and confirm existing parish boundaries for pastoral planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- d. Compliance, safeguarding and legal responsibilities are carried out in ways that protect children, young people and vulnerable people while also enabling parish mission.

Considerations for Implementation

- Developing multimedia communication to help parishes know what resources are available.
- Communicating in ways attentive to the different levels of technological skill and technology use within parishes.
- Providing resources for information technology and social media to advertise mission initiatives in parishes and across the Archdiocese.
- Supporting ethical use of AI and technology to assist administration and mission, with attention to privacy, safeguarding, accuracy, transparency, inclusion and human oversight.
- Developing an Archdiocesan pastoral formation and parish support service, or help desk, that priests, parishioners, PPCs and parish staff can contact for formation, training, information-sharing, administrative guidance, pastoral outreach support, connections, references and common templates.

118. Volunteers, Leadership Succession and Participation

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen volunteer support, leadership succession and broader participation in parish and diocesan life. This recommendation crosses over with Key Theme 4.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

- a. The role and value of volunteers in the Church by quantifying, recognising and celebrating volunteers across the Archdiocese.
- b. Volunteers with formation, encouragement, role clarity, safeguarding support and practical resources.
- c. The development of parish and diocesan leadership succession plans.
- d. Building parish structures that help people connect ordinary life, family life, service and leadership with participation in the mission of the Church.

119. Clergy Transition, Induction and Synodal Leadership

In the Archdiocese we will strengthen transition, induction, mentoring and accountability for clergy, especially parish priests and newly arrived priests.

The 2026 Archdiocesan Synod commits to initiatives and actions that support:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. A formal transition and induction plan for incoming clergy (including when Parish priests are newly appointed or moved) inclusive of canonical, legal, human relations and pastoral requirements. This plan must also include strategies for how the parish welcomes a new priest.
- b. Processes that recognise clergy transition that is relational and communal, not only administrative.
- c. All priests in ongoing conversion of heart toward synodality, listening, co-responsibility and shared mission.
- d. Formation for priests in the Synod's direction and synodal practice.
- e. Reviewing the current international clergy program to assess viability, support of clergy and support of communities.

Considerations for Implementation

- Strengthening formation for newly arrived priests in Australian cultural norms, relationships with women, administration, finance, safeguarding, parish expectations and local pastoral realities. Providing team mentoring and experience with an existing parish priest before taking on full responsibility where appropriate.
- The Archbishop will make regular visits to parishes as a visible sign of communion, listening and shared accountability.

120. Appraisal, Review and Pastoral Supervision

The Archdiocese will develop and implement formal appraisal and review processes for diocesan and parish leaders, lay and ordained, to ensure accountability, support and growth.

This can be supported through:

- a. Defining 'pastoral supervision' clearly as reflective practice, wellbeing support, ministry accountability, professional supervision and pastoral growth.
- b. Ensuring review processes are pastoral, constructive and mission-focused, not merely bureaucratic.
- c. Including parish priests, clergy, parish staff, pastoral associates, PPC chairs, Finance Council members, chaplains, youth ministers, diocesan leaders and other ecclesial leaders.
- d. Connecting review and supervision processes with the People and Culture Plan in Key Theme 4.
- e. Providing support for leaders before, during and after transitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

121. Formation for Structures, Stewardship and Governance for Mission

The Archdiocese will provide ongoing formation for all involved in parish, school, diocesan and community structures, in close connection with the formation strategy in Key Theme 4.

This formation will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Baptism and the People of God.
- b. Missionary discipleship and co-responsibility.
- c. Synodality and communal discernment.
- d. Subsidiarity and participation.
- e. Ecclesiology, stewardship and service.
- f. Accountability, transparency and governance for mission.
- g. Practical skills for PPCs, Finance Councils, parish administration, safeguarding, risk, communication, IT, social media and ethical technology use.

122. Post-Synod Implementation, Resourcing and Accountability

Following the 2026 Archdiocesan Synod, a Synod Implementation Working Group will be established and meet in August 2026, made up of members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and Bishop's Council of Priests, to turn the Synod outcomes into practical, resourced and accountable actions.

The group will:

- a. Review the Synod outcomes and identify the actions required for each Key Theme.
- b. Assign each action to the appropriate person, parish, school, office, agency, council, commission or diocesan body.
- c. Identify which recommendations require Archdiocesan action, parish action, school action, agency action, regional action or shared responsibility.
- d. Determine what resources, formation, templates, funding, communication and training are needed.
- e. Develop a staged implementation plan with clear priorities, responsibilities and timelines.
- f. Ensure that parish, school and community action plans can be adapted to local circumstances while remaining aligned with the Archdiocesan mission.
- g. Provide practical tools to help parishes, schools and communities discern local goals and actions.
- h. Develop an evaluation and accountability process (to be put into place by July 2027), including regular reporting to the Archbishop, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Bishop's Council of Priests, parishes, schools and communities.
- i. Ensure that implementation is communicated in plain language and through accessible multimedia formats.
- j. Review progress regularly so that the Synod becomes an ongoing process of conversion, participation and mission, not only an event.

123. Mission Implementation and Accountability: The Archdiocese will provide a practical implementation framework to assist parishes, schools, communities, and agencies to develop local missionary action plans, identify responsible leaders, allocate resources, support formation, and review progress regularly in light of the Synod outcomes.

The following points apply to the implementation and resourcing of all recommendation in this section of the document.

- Identify the needs in your local community, including who is marginalised?
- Who is involved in bringing about / actioning their recommendations
- How will this be resources withing our communities
- What will the implementation process look like (e.g. action plans)

124. Parishes, Schools and Communities

The work of our community continues as we journey towards the Synod and beyond. As part of our baptismal call, each of us is encouraged to discern the priorities of the Diocesan Synod and develop appropriate mechanisms at a Parish, School and community level to implement the outcomes. Resources and training will be provided as mentioned above to assist this process.

APPENDIX B:

SYNODALITY: JOURNEYING TOGETHER

WHAT IS SYNODALITY?

Synodality is an ancient practice of the Church and a way of being Church that, Pope Francis said, will be key for the Church in the future.

“Synodality is a style, it is a walk together, and it is what the Lord expects from the Church of the third millennium.” -Pope Francis

Synodality is both a path of spiritual renewal and a path of structural reform. Synodality enables the Church to be more participatory, missionary, and merciful. It involves gathering all levels of the Church for mutual listening, dialogue, and community discernment. Because of our common Baptism the synodal journey also includes other Christians.

A synodal style means journeying together as God’s people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is a way of being Church that involves prayer and a mindset of deep, faithful listening, as well as honest and respectful speaking.

Synodality transforms how we gather, how we listen, how we include, how we plan, how we discern, and how we move forward together as a people of God.

Synodality means that all baptised people, sharing their God-given gifts, are invited to be co-responsible for the life and mission of the Church, thereby enriching it and those to whom it ministers.

Synodality is learning by doing, the more we do it, the more we become *Pilgrims of Hope*.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Pope Leo XIV said at his first appearance as the Successor of Peter:

“We want to be a synodal Church, a Church that moves forward, a Church that always seeks peace, that always seeks charity, that always seeks to be close above all to those who are suffering.” -Pope Leo XIV

A Church that acts in a synodal way is one in which the common baptismal dignity, individual giftedness and call to co-responsibility for mission, are recognised and celebrated. All are called to share their gifts generously, while practising deep listening, humility, patience, and a willingness to forgive and be forgiven. Those who are called to leadership and the exercise of authority in a synodal Church, do so in a spirit of service, following the model of Jesus, who knelt to wash the feet of his disciples.

A Church that acts in a synodal way uses consultative and collaborative discernment processes to inform decision-making and calls on every baptised person to actively participate in its mission.

Our call towards a synodal Church means that not only do we flourish, but so does our world. This is the synodal path. This is the synodal way, and we are all invited on this journey.

“So, let us move forward, without fear, hand in hand with God and with one another, as we walk the synodal path.” -Pope Leo XIV

APPENDIX C: RESOURCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

BECOMING MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

- Background Study Document:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/10ZsSEOaMP57gQP8LaaVd2TgIFwI_VRKN/view
- Further Reading/Resources:
The Song, Robinson G (2022) Towards the end of my days: theological and spiritual reflections. Chapter 3: The Singer and his song; pp 31-33.

COMMUNION IN GRACE - SACRAMENT TO THE WORLD

- Background Study Document:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Hw2eKamR4_2Gvd86jZkFWXMJ9ro4yDLg/view

THE MISSION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND BEING CHURCH TOGETHER

- *Being Church Together: A Theology, Vision and Guiding Principles for the Parish-School Relationship*
[https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/_files/f/150059/Being%20Church%20Together%20\(Print\).pdf](https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/_files/f/150059/Being%20Church%20Together%20(Print).pdf)
- Background Study Document:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sPxMiiAzTuPaHZBJ4IFXZPNbyqu2pTw-/view>

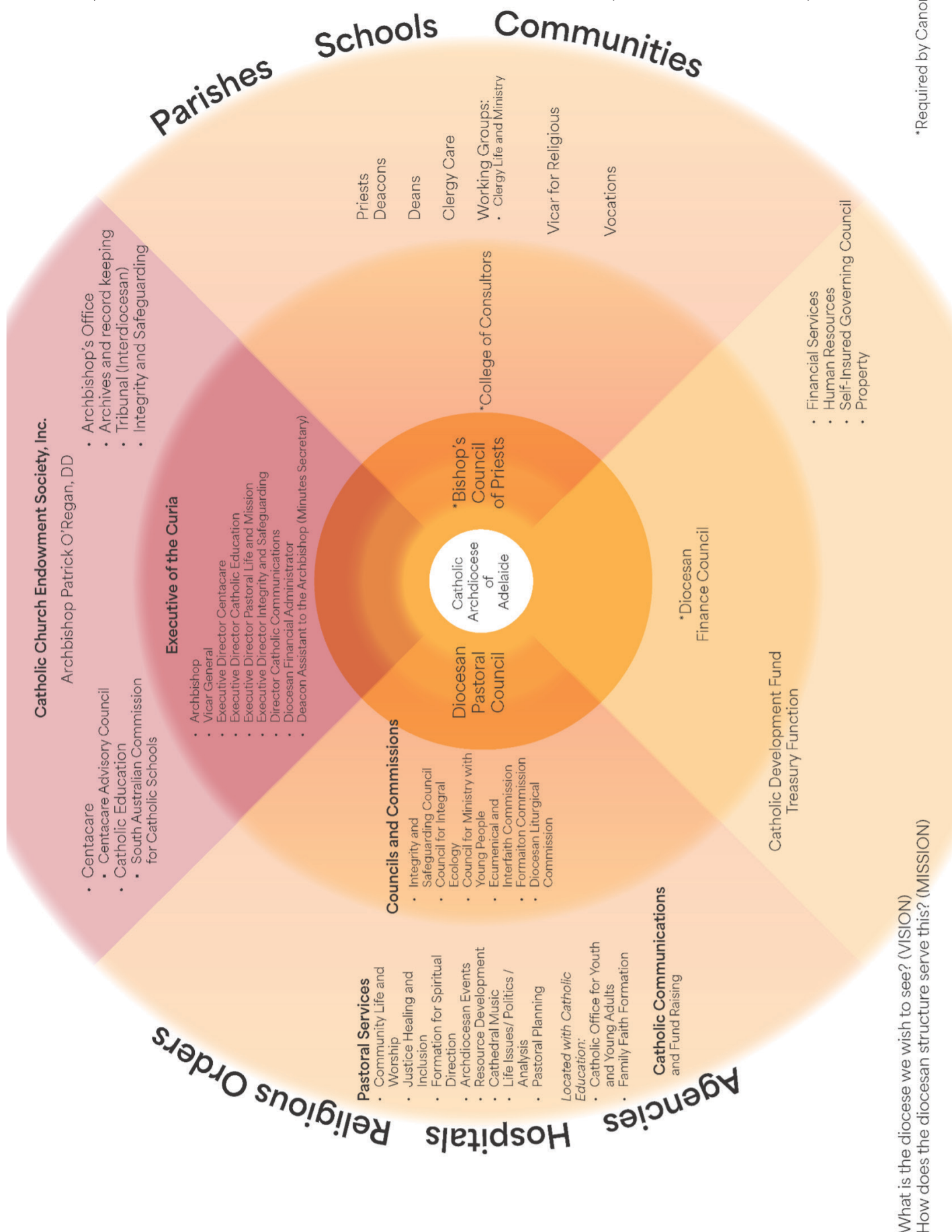
FORMATION FOR MISSION AND LEADERSHIP

- *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel: Formation in the Archdiocese of Adelaide*
[https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/_files/f/150055/Drawn%20Into%20The%20Joy%20Of%20The%20Gospel%20\(Digital\).pdf](https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/_files/f/150055/Drawn%20Into%20The%20Joy%20Of%20The%20Gospel%20(Digital).pdf)
- Background Study Document:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Sbwqaynzkc1H8cfH0yd7bH0hSLgtXV5/view>

STRUCTURES AND PLANNING FOR COMMUNION, MISSION AND PARTICIPATION

- Background Study Document:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/103nJTWLOKCOdYfSP7HW783w7cWG_ITQ3/view

APPENDIX D: ARCHDIOCESAN STRUCTURES



*Required by Canon Law

What is the diocese we wish to see? (VISION)
How does the diocesan structure serve this? (MISSION)

APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY

A-C

Acolyte – A lay person formally instituted by the Church to assist the priest and deacon at the altar, especially during Mass.

Adult Christian Initiation / RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) – The process by which adults prepare for and receive the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Apostolic Exhortation – A formal papal teaching document that encourages a particular way of living out the faith (less authoritative than an encyclical).

APRIM – Assistant Principal - Religious Identity and Mission, role in Catholic Schools responsible for faith leadership and Religious Education.

Archdiocese – A major ecclesiastical district of the Church, led by an Archbishop and comprising several Parishes.

Archdiocesan Synod – A large consultative gathering that brings together clergy, religious, and laity to discern pastoral priorities and directions for the local Church.

Baptismal call / Baptismal dignity – The vocation and identity received in Baptism as a child of God, called to holiness and mission.

Being Church Together (BCT) – A 2023 Catholic Education SA publication about strengthening collaboration between Schools, Parishes, and families.

Canon law – The body of laws and regulations governing the Church's internal structure, leadership, and practices.

Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) – The body overseeing Catholic Schools in South Australia.

Caritas Australia – The Catholic Church's international aid and development agency.

Catechesis – Religious instruction and formation in the faith, usually to prepare for the sacraments or to deepen understanding of Christian life.

Centacare – The Catholic social services agency of the Archdiocese of Adelaide, supporting people in need.

Charism – A particular spiritual gift or grace given by the Holy Spirit for the service of the Church and the world.

Clergy – Ordained ministers in the Church (bishops, priests, and deacons).

Co-responsibility / Co-responsible leadership – A model of Church leadership where clergy and laity share responsibility for mission, decision-making, and ministry.

Communion – Spiritual unity among believers, rooted in Baptism and the life of the Trinity; also describes unity in the Church's sacramental and communal life.

Council of Priests – A representative body of priests who advise the Archbishop on matters concerning pastoral governance.

D-H

Deanery – A grouping of nearby Parishes within a diocese for collaboration and mutual support.

Deacon – An ordained minister who assists the bishop and priests in liturgy, preaching, and service, especially to the poor.

Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) – A consultative group representing the diocesan community to assist the bishop in planning and evaluating pastoral priorities.

Discernment – A prayerful process of listening to the Holy Spirit and reflecting to recognise God’s will for individuals or communities.

Diversity / Interculturality – The recognition and inclusion of different cultures and languages within the life of the Church; interculturality emphasises mutual enrichment between cultures.

Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel (DJG) – The 2023 Archdiocesan statement on faith formation inspired by *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Ecclesial – Relating to the Church (ecclesia = “assembly” or “Church”).

Ecumenism / Ecumenical – Efforts to promote unity and cooperation among Christian denominations.

Eucharist – The central sacrament of the Church in which bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ; also called the Mass.

Evangelii Gaudium (EG) – “The Joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis’ 2013 document on evangelisation and missionary discipleship.

Evangelisation – The act of proclaiming and living the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

Formation – The process of spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral development that helps individuals grow in faith and ministry.

For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission; Final Document (FD) – The 2024 Final Document from the Global Synod on Synodality, outlining the Church’s vision for a synodal future.

Governance – The structures and processes through which the Church organises decision-making, accountability, and stewardship.

Homily – A reflection or sermon given during Mass to interpret the Scriptures and relate them to Christian living.

Hutt St Centre – A Catholic-founded service for people experiencing homelessness in Adelaide.

I-M

Inclusion – Ensuring all people, especially those on the margins (e.g., people with disabilities, diverse cultural backgrounds, LGBTQ+ persons), feel welcome and valued in Church life.

Integral Ecology – A concept from *Laudato Si’* recognising that care for the environment, society, and human life are interconnected.

Interfaith – Dialogue and collaboration between people of different religious traditions.

JOCist Movements – Catholic youth movements inspired by the See-Judge-Act method (e.g., Young Christian Workers, Young Christian Students) promoted by Joseph Cardijn in the 20th Century.

Laity / Lay people – Baptised members of the Church who are not ordained clergy; they participate in the Church’s mission in daily life.

Laudato Si’ – Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical on care for our common home (the environment and human ecology).

Lector – A lay person formally instituted by the Church to assist reading Scripture (except the Gospel) during the liturgy.

Liturgical / Liturgy – The public worship of the Church, especially the celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments.

Mission / Missionary discipleship – The Church’s call for all baptised people to share the Gospel through service, witness, and justice.

Modern Slavery Statement – A public report describing how the Archdiocese identifies and reduces risks of modern slavery in its operations and supply chains.

Multiculturality – The coexistence and celebration of diverse cultural groups within one faith community.

N-S

NATSICC – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council, representing First Nations Catholics across Australia.

Neurodivergent – Refers to individuals whose brain processes differ from what is considered typical (e.g., autism, ADHD).

Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) – A local Parish body that works with the Parish priest to promote pastoral action and mission.

Pastoral – Relating to the spiritual care and guidance of people.

People of God – A term used by Vatican II to describe all members of the Church as God's people, equal in dignity and sharing a common mission.

Sacrament – A visible sign instituted by Christ to give grace (e.g., Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, etc.).

Safeguarding – Policies and practices ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults in the Church.

Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC) – The Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963).

Shalom – Hebrew word meaning peace, wholeness, and wellbeing; often used to describe the peace of God.

Subsidiarity – A Catholic social principle that decisions should be made at the most local and competent level possible.

Synod / Synodality – From syn-hodos (“journeying together”); describes a way of being Church that involves listening, dialogue, participation, and shared discernment.

Synodal conversion – The transformation of Church culture and structures to embody the spirit of listening, dialogue, and co-responsibility.

T-Z

Theology / Theological reflection – The study or reflection on God, faith, and human experience in light of Scripture and tradition.

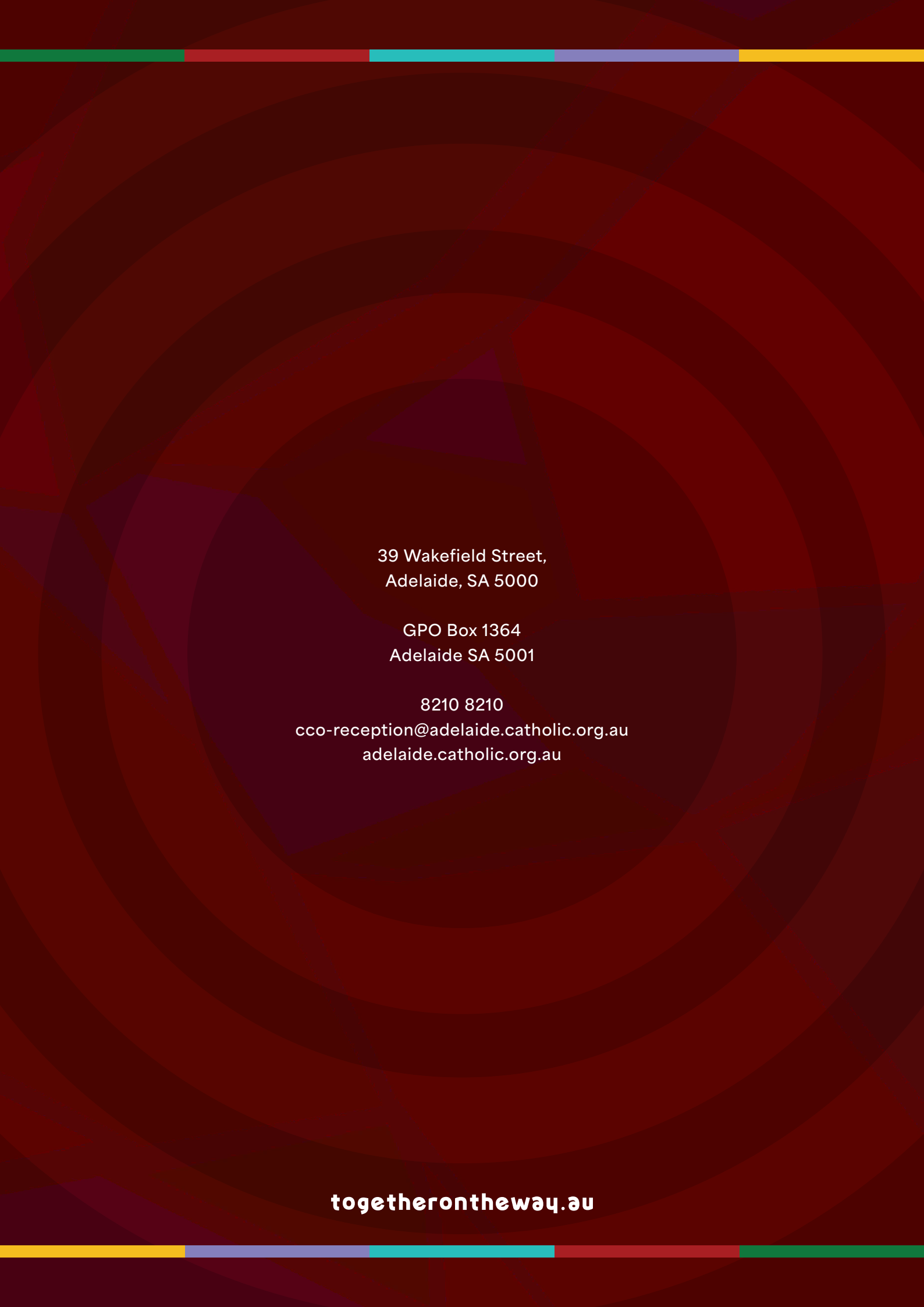
Trinitarian life – The shared love and communion among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which forms the model for Christian community.

Universal Prayer – Also called the Prayers of the Faithful; intercessory prayers offered during Mass for the Church and the world.

Vocation – One's personal calling from God, lived out in a specific way such as marriage, ordained ministry, religious life, or lay service.

VUCA world – *Acronym for Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous*—a term describing the challenges of modern life that influence how young people experience faith.





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