

St John the Apostle Parish ● Kippax Open Forum ● 29 August 2024



To be on earth the heart of God

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come to You tonight with humble hearts seeking Your guidance and wisdom as we begin our gathering. We ask that You will bless each person in our community and that You will be present with us in a special way tonight.

Help us to listen to one another with open hearts and open minds and to support one another as we strive to serve You in all that we do. Let us be still and know that You are guiding us as we place our trust in You.

As we step into a new chapter in the life of our community help us to embrace it with grace and faith. Let this transition be an opportunity to experience Your faithfulness anew.

Amen

Attendees

Jan Biggs
Pamela Blackwell
Joan Breen
Rob Breen
Di Bruce
Murray Bruce
Maureen Burgess
Joan Chapman
Pam Connor
Marian Crowley
Juan de la Torre
Kay Dwyer
Marian England
Maryanne Ferguson
Terry Fewtrell
Marie Flint
Matthew Garton
Patricia Gilchrist
Sharon Greaves
Irene Higgins
John Hogan
Anthony Jayawardena
Libby Kain
Peter Kain
Helen Kennedy
Judy Kenny
Ted Kildea
Sigrid Kropp

Christine Lancaster
Margaret Luck
Carl Madsen
Jenny Maher
John Maher
Elizabeth McDonald
Jenny McGee
John McInerney
Joy McInerney
Carol Moore
Mercia Needham
Judy Netting
Tru Nguyen msc
James Nield
Eleonor Niemiec
Anthony Noakes
John O'Heir
Della O'Heir
Joseph Ots
Peter Polkinghorne
Jo Reed
Maria Scarr
Carmel Screen
Margaret Sheehan
Chung Tran msc
Sabina Van Rooy
Kirsty Vera
Kerry Yard

Comments from Small Groups

Group 2

- Sadness that some people are upset – we need to be generous in spirit.
- St Thomas parishioners know what they are about, they are caring and there is a positive spirit in the St Thomas Aquinas parish.
- We have to accept change and adapt – be good to get to the nitty gritty when the time comes.
- Shortage of priests. It is inevitable things need to change.
- Update in COMPACT monthly about what is happening in the archdiocese in relation to the amalgamation so all parishioner are aware of what is happening.
- Keep the MSC Charism alive.
- There is some of the bedrock already here – many St John's parishioners have had connections with St Thomas Aquinas over many years.

Group 3

- Is it just older people who have been in the parish a long time who are really concerned?
- Accept the change because it is inevitable.
- Don't know people in Charnwood.
- Mass will still be celebrated here.
- Part of the concern is around dollars – this is not going to happen straight away.
- Can't see how the amalgamation will work.
- Fear of losing the MSC's
- Will we become a diocesan parish – happy to share that with Charnwood.
- The Church is the people – not the priests.
- Australia has an Australian spirituality.
- Priests from foreign lands have different ideas and often impose their ideas.
- It's our parish and we need to work hard to maintain our spirituality and ensure that an incoming priest doesn't try to change that.
- We like our parish the way it is and we do not want its essence changed.

Group 4

- Demographics of people in Charnwood area – can we get them to “commit” to parish life?
- One member stated pastoral care of both parishes.
- 3 priests – 5-year appointments.
- Moving forward, sharing, prayer and communication of archdiocese to all parishioners – to engage, share more in our parishes.
- We are blessed in this parish with the MSC's.
- Listen to voices from education perspective of change. Recognise change makes you feel uncomfortable and we need to support all people in change.
- 5 parishes in Adelaide remain as individual entities whilst being administered as one parish.
- Embrace change – may bring us to accept change.
- It is important to bring everyone along on the journey.

Group 5

- Important to keep the MSC spirit; worried about losing this spirit.
- Concerned by the lack of limited information and communication process.
- We want a majority MSC influence rather than an Archdiocese influence.
- What will happen with the schools, St Johns, St Thomas, SFX?, engagement/relationships between the schools and the two parishes.
- What/how will the finances be managed now and in the future?
- We recognise the reality of our times i.e. limited priest numbers, and shrinking congregations.

Group 6

- Sad at the lack of communication, and representation.
- Out of the blue, top-down messaging.
- Non MSC in style, in the past it was conversational.
- No qualms in merging but the process is flawed.
- No communication since November 2023 announcement by the Vicar General Fr. Richard Thompson.
- Bungled but going to happen so we need to look forward.
- Small communities within the parish.
- MSC's are shrinking and this is the future.
- It might not have a great impact.
- Pleased with the opportunity.
- Great to share Charism of MSC's.
- Great tradition of discernment not seen here.
- Interested in logistics and practicalities like how finances are going to work.
- Financial arrangements are crucial.
- How to share priests between parishes and experience in running parishes if Fr. Gerard at Charnwood retires in the next few years.
- Importance of being a Vatican 2 community with love, communication and cultural diversity.

Suggestion: Hold a liturgy to acknowledge the change in the parish and the way forward together.

Group 7

- Inevitable that we will be combined as time goes on.
- Each parish has its own ethos.
- Look at how we can make it happen – to embrace it.
- More communication.
- How we will manage change is important.
- Charnwood has had to stand on its “own feet” for a long time now – part of their ethos
- Quite happy with the idea.
- The amalgamated parishes have all worked in Australia
- People seem to be worried about the finances.
- We don't want to lose our priests.
- Not too worried about it.
- Really grateful for the 3 MSC's priests we have.

Group 8

- Creates a load on the parish team.
- Will Fr. Gerard be committed for 5 years?
- Resources in the future?
- We have to be realistic about the shortage of priests.
- Presence of priests from overseas looks promising.
- More community input into decisions, not handed down by the hierarchy.
- We should embrace the change
- Agreed that we should embrace the change – we have no choice really.
- We are equipped for strong input from the people of God (Lay).
- We come here because we feel nurtured.
- We are well-placed to make this work.
- Concern for Charnwood.
- Don't steamroll Charnwood.
- Our choir was asked to sing at Charnwood 50-year celebrations.
- Younger members of both parishes need to be a part of this.

Group 9

- Heart Spirituality
- Each parish holds its own individuality due to different experiences.
- Charnwood's different experience has led to a different style.
- Diversity here in our community.
- Communities are diminishing so combining will help know people better.
- Heart Spirituality special here and we don't want to lose it.
- Big fear of losing MSC's in 5 years.
- Young families and single parents don't seem to be represented in our church – this is perhaps a change in thinking in society that there isn't a need to go to church – however, their faith is still strong.
- Diminishing communities may lead to amalgamation in the future.
- People are fearful of amalgamation and have mixed feelings on it.

Group 10

- When does the 5 years start and end?
 - There has been a lack of communication.
 - Misinformation
 - Rumours
 - Timely communication
 - More information
 - Intent of agreement with the MSC's and Archdiocese.
 - What is the end goal?
 - People are totally disillusioned by the Archdiocese, and the MSC's.
 - Discernment – is it what we want? or what God wants? or what the Archbishop wants?
 - Archdiocese does not have enough priests –
 - Priest in formation from overseas.
 - Will there be a change over from the MSC's after the 5 years,?
 - Other parishes under religious orders.
 - What is the feeling of Charnwood parishioners?
 - Can we make them feel more welcomed.
 - Extra work load for priests and office staff.
 - Sharon goes to Charnwood one day a week – who is paying Sharon's salary at Charnwood?
 - Concern MSC's might pull out of both parishes due to excess work load or lack of priests.
 - How does this proposal affect our current priests?
-