

Melbourne Synod Listening and Discernment on Missionary Leadership

Our Lady of the Valley Parish Greensborough VIC. Sunday 16th August 11:30am after Mass at St Thomas

How do people in my community demonstrate missionary leadership?

We already see community members exercising missionary leadership by doing the best they can with the gifts they have to make people feel welcome in our parishes. Examples are speaking to new people at church and being a warm face. Missionary leadership is evident in the existence of liturgy groups, music and AV teams, baptismal support teams, bereavement support teams, family groups, children's liturgy sessions and the impending youth meeting. The amalgamation of the 3 churches was another example where members of the community used leadership skills and successfully led, informed, supported the 3 church communities throughout the process to a seamless uniting. At times there are social events organised in one of the churches but could do more.

Our community members set examples of missionary leadership behaviour in the day to day of their ordinary lives when they are kind, involved and generous in their own family, work and recreational pursuits day to day. We see ourselves as respectful of being where people are at, and we give at the level of our ability and at the level of our gifts. We understand people are at different stages of the faith journey, and we are seeing older children being baptised as parents involve them more in the decision making.

What prevents people from becoming engaged in missionary leadership?

Even though we do what we do, when visiting other churches in the country regions we get the impression that they are more vibrant church, a lot more happening in the community. Perhaps this is because people in the country are an enclosed community and rely on each other.

Our mission is the great commission, how to create a real encounter with Jesus because this is what creates discipleship and is missionary leadership. For people to say "I believe in God" - that is the ultimate aim. Co-responsibility is grass roots of faith, we are in a new way of living out Catholicity! Not building schools etc but on building the mission of Christ, a personal relationship is necessary to witness to him. Perhaps it's not so much that the church has a mission, but instead, the mission has a Church.

One challenge is that there seems to be a prioritisation of recreation and sport over faith formation in the wider community. It also makes families busier. It's a normal part of our social fabric at the moment and we need to accept this. If we are to continue to respect where people are at we will need to make changes so that they can fit in faith development as well as maintain these important priorities; because those priorities of sport also show the glory of God

Whilst it's challenging, we must recognise younger families don't do faith formation as we did growing up. It is the next generation, they are different. We need to adapt to make it relevant: use the right language, be at the right places for them, do the right activities to foster relationships. This is missionary leadership. We could invite local sport teams for a Mass to start or end a season, put on a BBQ or community social event for winning side. Have a pop up sausage sizzle for them at their ground. Have church activities in afternoon...

What three priorities to support missionary leadership could the Archdiocese pursue over the next five years?

1. After the conclusion of the Synod to implement the findings quickly
2. Review and acknowledge the Plenary submissions from Plenary Council of Aust by the 2027 implementation.
3. Help us promote fundraising efforts, give us incentives - Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) through to Parish top down collaborations.
4. Accessible Diocesan programmes in all aspects of life, training in RCIA and for those working with Children