

# THE WAY OF THE GOSPEL

On the re-organisation of parishes in the Archdiocese.

Report to Ss Peter & Paul's parishioners to be discussed at the parish AGM.

On Pentecost Sunday, 23 May 2021, Melbourne's Archbishop, The Most Reverend Peter A Comensoli issued a Pastoral Letter "**Take The Way Of The Gospel**" to the parishioners of the Archdiocese. Prior to this, meetings were held with the priests from the 209 parishes on 28 April, followed by a meeting of one lay person from each of these parishes. I was privileged to represent Ss Peter & Paul at that meeting on 12 May.

Over the past few decades the number of Priests in the Catholic Church in Australia and many other countries has been diminishing from the high point of the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the Melbourne Archdiocese this has seen the amalgamation of parishes and priests being responsible for more than one parish, e.g. Ss Peter & Paul and Our Lady Of The Pines.

The administration within the Archdiocese is becoming more difficult with significant imbalance in the size and structure of the various parishes.

In order to redress this imbalance, the Archbishop, after considerable research, is introducing a new set of boundaries, which supersedes the partly functioning deaneries, in the Archdiocese.

The Archdiocese will be organised into the following "regions":

Eastern Region	with 56 parishes to be organised into 16 "Missions".
Northern Region	with 58 parishes to be organised into 14 "Missions".
Western Region	with 42 parishes to be organised into 17 "Missions".
Southern Region	with 52 parishes to be organised into 15 "Missions".
Central Region	with 1 parish effectively being 1 "Mission".

Ss Peter & Paul, Doncaster East is in the Eastern region which will have an average of 3.5 parishes per Mission. The final number within "our Mission" will probably depend, amongst other things, on the population and number of parishioners covered.

Each Mission is expected to have 2 priests, but those Missions which include large hospitals, aged care facilities and/or secondary schools might have a 3<sup>rd</sup> priest. One of the priests is likely to be the "senior" priest for administrative purposes.

It was proposed that parishes choose with which of the adjacent parishes they would like to share the Mission, rather than have it dictated by the Archdiocese. This would probably be based on an historical basis as well as distance and of course agreement with those other parishes.

It is intended that there will not be any parish closures and that the structure within the parishes will remain substantially unchanged.

There might be some changes in administration to reduce the overall cost burden of each parish duplicating what other parishes within the Mission are also doing. This should be negotiated with mutual agreement once the structure of the Mission is finalised.

It would appear logical that SSPP and OLOP would be in the same Mission. Which other parishes would be members of the Mission needs to be discussed with other nearby parishes. This does introduce some complications because some of the nearby parishes do not, at this stage, have a parish priest appointed.

It is envisaged that the final arrangement of the Missions should be determined at a meeting of the Eastern Region meeting in late July or Early August.

This meeting will have the parish priest of each parish and 2 lay representatives of each parish.

The parish Pastoral Council, at its meeting on 16 June, 2021 agreed that the 2 representatives for SSPP be Frank Smit and Cheryl Tay, who will attend with Fr Jerald.

Prior to the Eastern Region meeting we will try to arrange which parishes might be willing to be in the Mission with us.

If any parishioners would like to have an input to this upcoming arrangement then please contact Fr Jerald or Cheryl at the parish office and join us at the **Parish AGM**.

Frank Smit

23 June, 2021