

LOOKING FORWARD

The final **Looking Forward** gatherings for 2016 were held recently in the parishes of Charlton and St Arnaud. Since August this year, Fr Justin Driscoll and Amanda Smith have facilitated **Looking Forward** parish meetings in the parishes of Birchip, Donald, Quambatook, Robinvale, Sea Lake, Swan Hill and Wycheproof, as well as three meetings in the Ballarat East Parish (two at Ballarat East and one at Buninyong).

The format for the 2016 **Looking Forward** gatherings was consistent throughout each gathering, building on the parish self-appraisals completed several years ago and then parishioners were invited to identify their parish strengths as well as recognising the challenges and opportunities that are present. A parish profile for each place where gatherings have been held has also been developed, which was distributed to participants who were invited to discuss the data about sacramental statistics, Mass counts, national census figures for % of Catholics in the parish as well as financial and property information. The final part of the gatherings involved discussion about the way forward and the possibilities for parishes of sharing resources, especially in administration and the regulations requiring compliance on many matters including OLH&S and Child Safety.

In addition to the format of the other 2016 **Looking Forward** parish gatherings, those who attended the Ballarat East gatherings were invited to offer comments for consideration by Bishop Paul and the Consultors when making an appointment of a priest to Ballarat East to replace Fr Adrian McInerney who will retire in January 2017.

Fr Justin Driscoll



St Arnaud parishioners at their **Looking Forward** gathering held in their Parish Centre on Wednesday, November 23, 2016