

*Proclaim 2018 was a national conference which engaged parishes and faith communities in a conversation focusing on five key areas: Leadership, Culture Change, Young People, Belonging and Evangelisation. The Ballarat Diocesan Foundation provided sponsorship for a number of people from the Diocese to attend this Conference. Diocesan e-News is featuring stories from participants.*

“Hello Church!” were the first words of **Karolina Gunsser**, community leader and pastor of the Citipointe Church in Brisbane. Karolina was one of the keynote speakers at the national *Proclaim* Conference, held 12-14 July 2018 in Brisbane with the theme *Make your home in me (as I make mine in you) - John 15:4*. Nine people from Ballarat diocese attended *Proclaim*. Thanks to the Ballarat Diocese Foundation who sponsored parishioners from around the diocese to go to *Proclaim*.



Karolina warmly acknowledged the Catholic Church and its work, and the commitment of the delegates gathering for *Proclaim*. Karolina has been a Youth Minister with Citipointe Church for 10 years. Citipointe is a Pentecostal church which started in 1974 as the Brisbane Christian Outreach Centre as a homegroup and is now global, including a school and a ministry college, and a substantial commitment to local and international social justice programs. Their mission is “To unmistakably influence our world for good and for God!” The majority of people in the Pentecostal church are youth and young adults.

“Christianity is always one generation away from extinction.” Karolina spoke of Citipointe gatherings that are “unapologetic about creating an atmosphere where young people could encounter the Holy Spirit” and “make a decision to follow Jesus”. The leaders “encourage an encounter with the living God enabled by the Holy Spirit.” And young people are “wanting to meet this Jesus.” She said, “Faith is not about religion it’s about relationships.” There was strong applause from the *Proclaim* audience a number of times during Karolina’s presentation. “A person with an experience can never be at the mercy of a person with an argument.”

Karolina noted four elements of their ministry: **Engage** - ‘engage’ is used rather than ‘evangelise’. Karolina referenced Paul’s ministry to all people. She said, “If the Gospel hasn’t got me to reach out and change people around me, I’ve got to ask if it’s changed me.” **Connect** - “A sense of belonging is one of the most defining factors in young people making a decision to follow Jesus.” **Serve** - serve the church and serve the world. “Give young people the ‘why’ and they’ll do the ‘what’.” **Discipleship** - “God is not filling us so we can be spiritually overweight”, we are filled so we can “pour out” and share with others.

Karolina’s declared and heartfelt commitment to following Jesus and to engaging others, especially young people was well received by many at the *Proclaim* conference. Another *Proclaim* keynote speaker who was well received was **Ron Huntley** (*Divine Renovation Ministry*, and previously with Fr James Malleeson’s team at St Benedict’s, Canada) who gave a similarly heartfelt talk on the work of ‘divine renovation.’ Ron’s *Proclaim* talk is **available on video** on the Faith Formation page of the Ballarat Diocese website [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au)



*From left (back): Thomas Thukkumury, Jess Salazar, Jamin Howman, Ann-Maree Convery, Sandra Dillon,  
(front) Sue Crowe, Amanda Smith, Marie Shaddock.*

*Jamin Howman is from Portland Parish*

*Ann-Maree Convery is from Cororooke Parish*

*Sandra Dillon is from Wendouree Parish and Catholic Earthcare Ballarat*

*Sue Crowe and John Meneely are from Catholic Education Ballarat*

*Marie Shaddock is from Ouyen Parish*

*Thomas Thekkumury and Jess Salazar are from Ballarat Cathedral Parish*

*Amanda Smith is from the Ballarat Diocese Bishop's Office*

*Marie, Thomas and Amanda are also members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.*