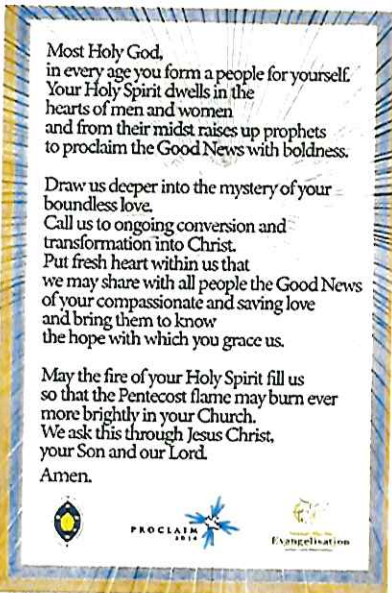




Awakening, Listening and Transforming



Most Holy God,
in every age you form a people for yourself.
Your Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of men and women
and from their midst raises up prophets
to proclaim the Good News with boldness.

Draw us deeper into the mystery of your boundless love.
Call us to ongoing conversion and transformation into Christ.
Put fresh heart within us that we may share with all people the Good News of your compassionate and saving love and bring them to know the hope with which you grace us.

May the fire of your Holy Spirit fill us so that the Pentecost flame may burn ever more brightly in your Church.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord.
Amen.



PROCLAIM

Evangelisation

Reflections on PROCLAIM 2014

Living the Joy of the Gospel in Parishes

Proclaim 2014 is a time for us to come to grips in a fresh way with what Pope Francis calls “Living the joy of the Gospel in our parishes” and the hope the Word of God gives us.



Along with over 550 people from all across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea – 46 of which were from the Ballarat Diocese – we listened to some very inspiring key note speakers, namely Fr Michael White, Tom Corcoran (co-authors of “*Rebuilt – Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost and Making Church Matter*”) and Dr Ruth Powell, who has written about many aspects of Australian life, including church health, denominational differences and individual attitudes.

Lin Bowers

I attended workshops that were “music” themed and found them extremely interesting and informative. A common theme through all presentations was the importance of music followed by ministry, then message in our liturgies.

Three very important elements Music – Ministry – Message!

The Conference focused on helping Catholics to renew parishes as faith communities and to inspire people to develop from consumers to contributors within their parish. We were challenged to reach those who for some reason or another, state themselves as catholic on their ABS Census form, but are not regular church goers. How can we reach out to those people in our parish who are not in the pews?

Lots of challenges ahead for our church, as we endeavour to spread the Gospel with the freshness that the post-modern world requires. We were challenged when we returned to our parishes to ponder the following questions:

- Are we a welcoming parish community
- Are we inviting people to join us at mass
- Are we making a measurable difference or simply serving
- Are we nurturing mission or is it business as usual
- Are we preserving broken systems or do we go where God is blessing
- Are we just meeting or are we moving

Certainly food for thought.

Sue Daly

I am not sure that this is what I signed up for! Evangelisation holds connotations of passionate people knocking on doors to spread their faith - and from my limited experience at being on the other side of the door, their courage and commitment to the task leaves me floundering!

In the weeks since Proclaim 2014 I have had time to receive some perspective on this – and knocking on doors is one thing – but the line that is persistently knocking in my brain goes ...



This little light of mine,
I'm going to let it shine ...
Let it shine,
Let it shine,
Let it shine!

What could our parish be like if each of us did a little more of this?

My prayer: May each one of us engage the Holy Spirit to shine more brightly in us!

Joan Bourke

Our key note speakers, Father Michael and Tom were excellent presenters sharing what they have learnt over 15 years to change the culture of their Parish through their talks on *Make Church Matter*, *Moving Members from Consumers to Contributors* and *Welcoming Communities*.

One challenge we have is to promote our “weekend experience”, so parishioners want to come to Mass, benefitting and enjoying being part of the wonderful community of the Parish of Gordon. It is really up to all of us to be the welcoming face, speaking to newcomers, people we don't usually talk to and introducing ourselves to anyone that we do not know.

Although we have a long way to go, I was very aware of how well our Parish is doing. This has happened through the wonderful work of Sue, Lin and John, and the support provided by so many of our parishioners.

I would like to thank the Diocese of Ballarat for sponsoring us, so the three of us were able to attend such a wonderful event with time to spend together building our very solid working relationship.

Fr Ed Moloney (our Supervising Priest)

PROCLAIM 2014 drew upon Pope Francis' encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium* with its theme being 'Living the Joy of the Gospel in Parishes' and uses the practical suggestions in *Rebuilt* to help those involved in parishes across Australia to Awaken to the Challenges facing the Church, Live their Missionary Call and Transform the Parish.

One of the major questions put forward to participants was **“Why” and “What” do we do as Church?**

We have a responsibility to articulate to all people in our faith communities that at the heart of our identity as Church is fulfilling of the mandate of Jesus to go and make disciples. We hear this at the end of Matthew's gospel:
“Meanwhile the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came and spoke to them. He said:

All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes to the end of time.” Matt 28: 16-20

“Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries”, but rather we are always “missionary disciples”. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* n120 –

Making disciples of Jesus is a call for every member of the Church - we are all in this together whether as laypeople, religious and priests. We do this by sharing our faith with others through prayer, witness to the gospel, and the work of the various bodies of the church who work to help those in need. The work in our parishes around the Diocese is at the heart of the missionary activity of the Church.

We give thanks to be part of this great movement founded by Jesus.

Snippets from a post conference Blog comment by Fr Michael White (co-author of *Rebuilt*)

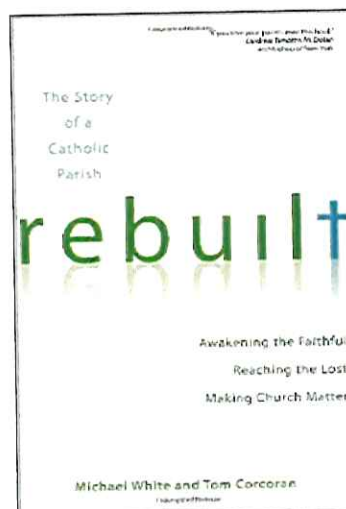
The appeal of this particular conference for us is that it's very premise expresses an incredibly important approach when it comes to evangelization; the conference's theme is *“Living the Joy of the Gospel in Parishes.”* *Proclaim* was intended as a conference for parish leaders, lay and clergy alike, who are interested in evangelization and discipleship *in their parish.*

We underscored some of our basic approaches when it comes to parish evangelization and discipleship: taking the focus off the people in the pews and creating environments for the unchurched, emphasizing the weekend experience, especially ministry, music, and message, and motivating church people to grow, move and serve.

Our (final) presentation focused on the Church as a movement that we are called to serve in our generation. It was received with an enthusiasm that we have only very rarely experienced.

Rebuilt: Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, and Making Church Matter

is a story of stopping everything and changing focus. When their parish reached a breaking point, White and Corcoran asked themselves how they could make the Church matter to Catholics, and they realised the answer was at the heart of the Gospel. Their faithful response not only tripled their weekend mass attendance, but also yielded increased giving, flourishing ministries, and a vibrant, solidly Catholic spiritual revival. White and Corcoran invite all Catholic leaders to share the vision, borrow their strategies, and rebuild their own parishes. They offer a wealth of guidance for anyone with the courage to hear them.



Following the conference we participated in two different services in two of Hillsongs many, many Sydney locations. Their energy and exuberance filled us with a fresh heart to renew our own weekend worship and infuse the whole life of our parish with the joy of the Spirit that we experienced at Hillsong. And just for the record, the music was fantastic.

Our Parish copy of 'Rebuilt' is available for loan – contact Narelle Conroy in the parish office via gordon@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Rebuilt is also available for loan from the Diocese library

Further information on the work of Fr Michael White and Tom Corcoran can be found at www.rebuiltparish.com