

**Synod of the Family**  
**Response to Bishop Paul Bird's invitation for people to express their views.**  
**Parish of St. Augustine's Maryborough.**  
**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015.**

**Important issues facing families in the world today.**

1. Financial pressures.
2. Responsibilities
3. Roles of parents in the family (Father/Mother)
4. Single Parent Families
5. Teaching children to be good citizens.
6. Setting an example as Christians.
7. Families and faith (or the lack there of).
8. Family break ups and remarriage (Blending Families)
9. Preparation for marriage.
10. External influences e.g. Social Media
11. Divorcees and their return to the church.
12. Acknowledgement of Gods help.
13. Understanding and Forgiveness
14. Freedom and opportunities.
15. Same sex / alternative relationships.

**Role of parents their relationship as Father and Mother**

The roles of father and mother and parent are not taught to create harmony in the family unit anymore. The basic traditional roles were there to help families function in a balanced way, equality has become a negative in this regard. Yes male and female are created equal but they still have specific roles to keep that equality balanced. Traditionally father was protector and provide and mother was the nurturer. One of the positives we see is they support each other in these roles and share their responsibility of raising children in this way. In these times, both parents share responsibility in providing and nurturing.

**Responsibility to be good role models**

The older generations are here to set good examples and be good role models to the youth of our time as well as those who may not share our beliefs. When we set a good example in a positive lifestyle as Christians it shows our younger generations and others not of our faith that we have something good that works to promote positive living and caring for others. Home and school/teachers have a responsibility to set a good example and be good role models.

**Supporting Families**

The roles of parents have changed a lot in our church and society generally. Parents supported and backed each other up in the care of children and in previous times they had extended family support to raise children to be good people. These days, single parents especially, struggle to raise children. Continuing the good support of families in the parish/school community, through our many programs in existence and helping them with anything they need in raising their family, needs to be greatly encouraged.

### **Support and Welcoming of all in the Parish Family**

The Church needs to be more supportive of families affected by divorce, re-marriage, separation, illness and domestic violence. Which families are we looking to help, is it only families within the parish community or anyone who comes to us in their time of need? By helping all we are setting a good example and proving to those who have a negative view of Catholics, that we live the example of Christ – he loved and welcomed all including and especially those in less tolerated groups of our society.

### **Negative Pressure on the Family especially time and finance**

We live in a time poor society. With the expectation of a high standard of living, we never seem to have enough time for our families, there are so many negative outside influences. Social pressures can place a high expectation on our standard of living, which can contribute to family pressures. It is affecting the way families and communities function. The church needs to be willing to accept and support all affected by this including those who are not mainstream Christians.

### **The Church and those less mainstream Christians who want to be part of the faith in every way.**

Is the church willing to be more welcoming and supportive to those through circumstance have separated, re-married or divorced, and those who live an alternative lifestyle who still share the faith otherwise. The Lord welcomed all, is the church willing to do the same.

### **Support of young people and others in their Faith**

With the ever changing world, it is a challenge to encourage the participation of youth in the faith. There needs to be more encouragement for youth and others in the importance of attending Mass and being part of the parish community. Being a Christian, Catholic or indeed a spiritual person means sharing that faith with others in the local parish and wider community. We need to encourage our youth and others to practice their faith in a real way with being part of the church community and attending Mass. Encouraging our youth in this also then sets an example to those around them to seek the Lord and practice good Christian values. There are so many outside influences especially television and social media, that encouraging their faith will help them traverse the world they live in today.

### **Misunderstanding of Church Teaching.**

The next generation are not familiar with the nuances of Church Teaching which includes the properties of marriage, support for those in broken relationships, unconditional forgiveness and continuing welcoming among the Church community.