



The Ballarat Diocese Social Justice Commission met in Ararat on Saturday May 19.

We express thanks to the Parish Council who met with the Commission to share the Social Justice activities happening in the Ararat community.

The Commission members listened to the stories of

- the work with the Muslim Community and the support being given to ensure welcome and help with building a mosque,
- the mission to the prison,
- support for refugees,
- supporting women's issues and
- this Lent raising the community conscience about slavery chocolate and ethical chocolate.

They felt that the key to their success is that social justice is embedded in the Parish Council and supported by a strong finance and administration committee. They also recognise that they are part of the larger community, where sometimes it is the Catholic Parish that is the leader and sometimes they are the led, but the outcome of social change is always the goal.

When asked why they are involved in Social Justice the consensus was:

It seems an innate need.

Injustice is a form of imbalance and we have an instinct to put things back in balance.

The Commission is preparing for three forums on Family called FAMILY MATTERS to be held around the Diocese. Forums will be held in Warrnambool and Mildura, with Ballarat having held their forum on June 24. Fr Frank Brennan accepted the invitation to speak at all Forums.

For the Warrnambool and Mildura Forums everyone will view the recorded presentation given in Ballarat, followed by questions and interactive time with Fr Frank via Skype. Workshops are being planned on strengthening respectful relationships, involving personnel from Centacare and other agencies. Look up the website 2017familymatters.weebly.com/ to stay tuned for opportunities to register and participate.

The Commission is keen to promote resource kits that have been developed in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Family Violence. Details of these are available for download through the diocesan website and the kit has been sent to all parishes. ([Family Violence Kit](#))

Anti-poverty week and Catholic Mission are both about conscious raising the issues of poverty and doing something about it. For us, Catholic Mission is the way we can respond to Anti-Poverty week (15-21 October).

Members of the Social Justice Commission are available to talk about the Commission and social justice issues to groups in your parish and school. Please invite them. social.justice@ballarat.catholic.org.au