



PRAYERFUL AND EUCHARISTIC

Brian Storey, parishioner at St Mary's Murtoa comments on the discernment paper -

HOW IS GOD CALLING US TO BE A CHRIST-CENTRED CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA THAT IS prayerful and Eucharistic?

The 'Prioritised Questions and Proposed Changes' in this document are all valid and probably should be implemented. Undoubtedly, the other Thematic Papers will be equally well compiled and with a similar number of worthy recommendations.

My concern is that the sheer volume of suggested changes will bog down the Plenary Council, when it needs to focus on fundamental structural changes.

Only when Bishops give meaningful voice to the laity and empower them for leadership in parishes will the church move to "....meet the people where they are."

The implementation of parish and diocesan councils with lawful influence in the decision-making process, will bring about much needed transparency and the melding of ideas from these forums will bring about a church which is more relevant to local needs. Surely the Spirit moves in laity as well as in clerics?

The Plenary Council cannot possibly deal with all proposals, so it is essential that an on-going process of regular review is enacted so that the church can continually re-assess the "....signs of the times.." and thus remain relevant through time.

Once the basic changes from all theme papers are in place, the 'fine-tuning' of many issues will flow naturally over time; Holy Orders for Women, the empowerment of laity for weddings and funerals, the inclusion of language familiar to Australians and First Nation peoples etc. (These activities are already being performed and are accepted in the wider community!)

In Section 3 "Formation" this document "calls for....." many programs to be implemented. Whilst all are commendable, I believe they are a lesser priority which will serve the church better when greater numbers return once they see that serious re-structure is being implemented. I pray the Spirit moves the Bishops to act.