



INCLUSIVE, PARTICIPATORY AND SYNODAL

Felicity Knobel, one of the Diocese of Ballarat's delegates to the Plenary Council comments on the discernment paper - HOW IS GOD CALLING US TO BE A CHRIST-CENTRED CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA THAT IS Inclusive, Participatory & Synodal?

After reading this paper, what gives you hope?

This paper gives me immense hope for the Catholic Church as we are reminded of the touchstone of our faith and our actions, Jesus Christ. He welcomed everyone, he sought people out, he rose above taboos of society, he offered redemption, he was an advocate and he didn't exclude. He truly was the exemplar of inclusion. Jesus in his ministry set out in no uncertain terms that his church was a forum of welcome and this must be what we are today. We, as the people of this church, are given this responsibility, just as Jesus gave to his apostles and we must meet this challenge. This paper shows that we are more than capable of being that church. There is hope in that we are able to identify the people that need our assistance and that we are already looking at very real ways to assist. We are able to see that our ways can change, we can develop further and that it is necessary. What gives me hope is that we have spoken, that we have listened to one and other and we have a plan.

What do you find challenging?

I love that this paper challenges us. This paper shows how we have fallen short in including and welcoming, however, in our honesty we have set a challenge for our church to meet. The Catholic people have discerned with such honesty and they have looked beyond themselves and truly looked at who is their neighbour? We need to be challenged and we have to work on these challenging topics as a community. We cannot make excuses or say that it is too hard or that it won't work. We know that these challenges are important and that we as a community know that is working towards including and walking with each other as a faith community.

What are your thoughts on this paper in relation to your parish or the diocese as a whole?

St Patrick's Cathedral Parish is an immensely capable, honest and loving community. They showed in the discernment process that they are willing to have tough conversations, to reflect on themselves as part of the Church and to look at ways they are able to move forward. Our parish will meet these challenges with enthusiasm and passion in order to be a welcoming and inclusive community.