



BALLARAT DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

Vision

*We are a community of communities from the Murray to the sea.
Inspired by the Gospel and nourished by the Eucharist,
we follow the example of Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
reaching out in joyful and humble service,
caring for all of God's creation,
growing in love day by day
and looking forward to life with God forever.*

Along with the vision statement, the following principles are important as guides to good governance in all areas of our life in our diocesan community:

In living out this vision, all of Christ's faithful combine their gifts for the good of the whole community. "For the nurturing and constant growth of the People of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries, which work for the good of the whole body. For those ministers who are endowed with sacred power are servants of their brothers and sisters, so that all who are of the People of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, can work toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, and arrive at salvation." (Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, par 18)

To enable all of God's people to be co-responsible in fulfilling this vision, governance in parish and diocesan organisations must include the following elements:

1. **Participation** of all members of the Church
2. **Dialogue** and **discernment** in the process of decision-making
3. **Solidarity** and **Synodality** involving the breadth of the diocesan community
4. **Subsidiarity** in fostering local expressions of the Church's common mission
5. **Transparency** and **accountability** in stewardship of resources
6. Observance of properly established ecclesial, civic and corporate **standards** of behaviour
7. **Formation** appropriate to responsibilities
8. **Support** to enable effective administration and inclusive participation

1. Participation of all members of the Church

The Catholic social teaching principle of **Participation** is recognising that every member of the community has a part to play. All have a responsibility to be inclusive in the church, the workplaces, the neighbourhood and in decision-making processes. Promoting participation means recognising that each has something unique and important to contribute to society. All are called on to be active members of the local and global community. ¹

¹ <https://caritas.org.nz/catholic-social-teaching/participation>

'Each of us has a part to play, a gift to share, a service to offer, for building up the Body of Christ in love.² Effective participation will ensure that the talents, skills and gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon ... [all] ... are utilised in the service of God and the mission of the Church. The consequence of such participation is likely to be more faithful stewardship of the mission and resources of the Church³

2. Dialogue and discernment in the process of decision-making

Dialogue is a relational process serving to understand issues relating to the parties concerned in reaching a decision. It is vital to collaborative governance, stemming from a desire to listen to everyone.⁴ Discernment takes the process a step further and involves reflection and prayer leading to decisions in keeping with the teachings of the Church and productive of the common good.⁵

Effective discernment requires the disposition and time for decision-makers carefully to weigh up all elements of their decisions and enable the guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁶

Dialogue and Discernment enhanced by the concept of shared wisdom: a recognition that wisdom comes from God and an acknowledgement of the presence of the Spirit of Wisdom in each member of a group such that each has a valuable contribution to make to any process in which the group is involved. The input of each person furthers the quality of the process for the whole.

3. Solidarity and synodality involving the breadth of the diocesan community

Synodality involves the active participation of all members of the Church in its processes of discernment, consultation and co-operation at every level of decision-making and mission. Every member of the People of God is involved, though with varied roles and contributions.⁷

Solidarity, on the other hand, presupposes a commitment to a more just social order and urges each to consider the impact of how they live and interact with others from the point of view of justice. Being in solidarity means recognising others as equals and actively working for their good.⁸

4. Subsidiarity in fostering local expressions of the Church's common mission

All people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Thus, decisions should be made at the most appropriate level, by the people most affected by the decision and by those who exercise responsibility for carrying out the decision. It also means that those in positions of authority have the responsibility to listen to everyone's voice and make decisions according to the common good.⁹ Implementing the principle of subsidiarity supports the interdependence of all decision makers.

5. Transparency and accountability in stewardship of resources

Transparency demands timely and accurate disclosure/reporting concerning the performance, decision making and financial health of the Diocese to all stakeholders.

² Pope Francis 21/06/2013 <https://www.catholic.org/news/international/europe/story.php?id=51423>.

³ Implementation Advisory Group and the Governance Review Project Team, *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-responsible governance in the Catholic Church in Australia, A Report and Recommendations on the Governance and Management of Dioceses and Parishes in the Catholic Church in Australia*, 6.1 p.56, 2020, <https://www.catholicreligious.org.au/light-from-the-southern-cross>, Accessed 02/09/2020.

⁴ See *The Light from the Southern Cross*, op.cit., 5.2.4, p.44.

⁵ See <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/pope-francis-teaches-discernment-coping-spiritualbattles>.

⁶ See *The Light from the Southern Cross*, op.cit., 5.2.5, p.44

⁷ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html ¶ 7, 21. See also *The Light from the Southern Cross*, op.cit., 5.2.3., p.43

⁸ See <https://caritas.org.nz/catholic-social-teaching/solidarity>

⁹ See <https://caritas.org.nz/catholic-social-teaching/subsidiarity>. See also *The Light from the Southern Cross*, op.cit., 5.2.1. p.41.

Accountability refers to the obligation of the Diocese to accept responsibility for its activities and to disclose the results. It also includes responsibility for money or other entrusted property.

These two principles converge in the social responsibility to care for persons, resources and our planet as precious and vital to life. **Responsible stewardship** is integral to the mission of the Church and is a fundamental tenet of the Church's spirituality. It entails a responsibility for service that aims to nurture a gift from another. Frequently understood in relation to care for our common home, the ideas fundamental to stewardship apply more broadly, involving the just and proper use of human and material resources through prudent management, wise investment and usage.¹⁰

6. Formation appropriate to responsibilities

Professional development is mandatory in most professions and training in fiduciary concepts and the principles of governance is similarly a requirement for all who undertake the ministry of leadership in church organisations. Those involved in the mission of the Diocese, therefore, are required to build their capacity for and understanding of their role. This requires acquiring a blend of ecclesial, theological, corporate, and professional capabilities required for the effective operation of diocesan entities.¹¹

Further:

In addition to these principles which underpin all diocesan policies and procedures, the following are pertinent and are frequently referenced:

a. Authority

The quality by which persons or institutions call forth others to act. Its role is to ensure as far as possible the common good and involves formulating the ethos, policy and actions of the organisation.¹²

b. Common good

People are fundamentally social beings. Social, political and economic organisation has, therefore, implications for the entire community. Each social group, therefore, must take account of the rights and aspirations of other groups, and of the well-being of the whole human family. The common good is reached when all work together to improve the wellbeing of society and the wider world. The rights of the individual to personal possessions and community resources must be balanced with the needs of the disadvantaged and dispossessed.¹³

c. Co-responsibility

Participation in community brings with it both a range of rights and protections and a range of duties and obligations. The particular responsibility each person has within the Church stems from the responsibility that all Christians have by virtue of their Baptism. All share in the responsibility for the being and activity of the Church and all the People of God make a specific contribution to the Mission.

d. Human dignity

Our common humanity requires respect for and support of the sanctity and worth of every human life. All other rights and responsibilities flow from the concept of human dignity. This principle is deemed as the central aspect of the Church's social teaching. The belief that each life has value is shared with International Human Rights which are universal, inviolable and inalienable.¹⁴

¹⁰ See The Light from the Southern Cross, op.cit., 3.2.4 p.28.

¹¹ *ibid.*, 6.8.1, p.89

¹² <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/465/index.html#zoom=z>

¹³ <https://www.caritas.org.au/learn/cst/the-common-good>. See also The Light from the Southern Cross, op.cit., p.162.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

e. Mission

Jesus announced that he was sent by God 'to bring the good news'.¹⁵ Followers of Jesus share in that mission, proclaiming that in him – 'the Way the Truth and the Life'¹⁶ – the world will experience the saving power of God.¹⁷

Prior to any differentiations in the Church on the basis of particular roles and offices, the Church is the one Body of Christ, the one People of God formed by the one baptism, and serving the one mission and sharing in the one Eucharist. Stemming from this mission is a commitment to working together as Church to bring the Gospel to all, to renew and transform the world.

Diocesan Mission

The Diocese of Ballarat is one part of the people of God, Christ's faithful, entrusted to the care of the Bishop.

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat offers support and encouragement to the many thousands of people who live in the rural and provincial communities across the western part of Victoria from the Murray to the Southern Ocean.

The Diocese of Ballarat, through the work of all its people:

- gathers the people of God in worship through its parishes and within its boundaries;
- gives witness to the teachings of Jesus;
- proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
- reflects the sacramentality of all things, especially by the giving and receiving of the Sacraments of our faith;
- catechises the faithful and those new to faith;
- oversees the teaching of children in its schools through the work of the Catholic Education Ballarat;
- serves those in need especially through the diocesan agency CatholicCare;
- advocates for social justice;
- communicates openly and well with the faithful and the wider community and takes part in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue;
- enables the work of many groups, commissions and agencies connected to the diocese through a common faith in Jesus Christ and commitment to his mission;
- administers the temporal goods of the diocese with care and integrity;
- evangelises and reaches out towards those who are searching for meaning and faith.

¹⁵ Lk 4:18

¹⁶ Jn 14:6.

¹⁷ See Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Lay Faithful at the Close of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, ¶ 56. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paulii/en/apost_letters/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte.html. Accessed 23/08/2020. See also *The Light from the Southern Cross*, 3.3, p.29