

PROCLAIM
2016



On a Mission of Mercy: Evangelising Parishes



A PARISH RESOURCE - PART 1

**Keynotes & Reflection
Questions**



Office for
Evangelisation

CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF
BROKEN BAY

Acknowledgements

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PO Box 340, Pennant Hills NSW 1715

Tel: (02) 9847 0000

Fax: (02) 9847 0001

Website: www.dbb.org.au

Writing: His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl, Dr Susan Timoney, Most Reverend Nicholas Hudson, Daniel Ang, David Patterson, Richard McMahon, Rev John Pearce CP, Paige Bullen, Dr Bob Dixon, Dr Trudy Dantis, Very Rev Dr David Ranson VG

Design: Cyrilla Almeida

For enquiries regarding PROCLAIM 2016 contact:

Office for Evangelisation

Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay

Tel: (02) 9847 0508

Email: evangelisation@dbb.org.au

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CELEBRATING PROCLAIM 2016

Over three energising days in September 2016 over 520 delegates came together in Chatswood, NSW, to share insights and exchange best practices on parish evangelisation. The third turn of this national Conference, PROCLAIM 2016 was hosted and organised by the Office for Evangelisation, Diocese of Broken Bay, on behalf of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. The unique character of the PROCLAIM Conference is its focus on the local parish and its life and mission, serving as a gathering point for those working and serving in the midst of these 1,300 parish communities across the nation.



The conference was formally opened by Bishop Peter A Comensoli, who announced that the gathering had received the apostolic blessing of the Holy Father himself. In his correspondence to Bishop Comensoli, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State at the Holy See, shared:

The Holy Father asks you kindly to convey his cordial greetings to all assembled in the Diocese of Broken Bay for the third National Conference on Evangelisation, Proclaim 2016: Mercy. He trusts that in this Holy Year devoted to the preaching and practice of mercy, the Conference will contribute to a more effective proclamation of the Gospel message of forgiveness, redemption and interior renewal . . . With these sentiments, His Holiness commends the Conference to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord.

Following morning prayer His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, shared his learnings from Pope Francis with Conference delegates, confirming that the 'new evangeliser' in the parish requires four qualities to lead renewal: courage, confidence, a sense of urgency, and joy. The Cardinal encouraged our boldness as evangelisers, a boldness that emerges from our own dedication to personal prayer in the Spirit, our confidence in the glorious truth that we have received, and the desire or passion to be an evangelising disciple in the midst of an often challenging culture.

In her own keynote address Dr Susan Timoney, also of the Archdiocese of Washington, underlined that our parish boundaries do not determine where a person goes to church but rather who the parish is called to serve. Dr Timoney emphasised that the local parish serves everyone, Catholic and otherwise, who lives and works within its boundaries and that our parishes are called to be flexible and creative in engaging this local community with the Gospel. This is the meaning of an embedded and missionary parish.

I was privileged to address participants on the cultural tensions and challenges of change within the life of Australian parishes, the need for vision, bold proclamation, personal witness and a constant orientation outwards to the world, while the final keynote of the conference was delivered by Bishop Nicholas Hudson of Westminster, UK, who spoke beautifully of the potential of parishes to express Christ's mercy. In a moving reflection, Bishop Hudson recalled St John XXIII's description of the parish as "a village fountain to which all have recourse in their thirst", a metaphor extended by Pope Francis in his own image of the parish as an "oasis of mercy". The inclusive and transformative potential of our parishes, when they express the tenderness of God's love, was affirmed also by the concluding panel discussion of the Conference, facilitated by Vicar General of Diocese of Broken Bay, Very Rev Dr David Ranson.

Conference participants also enjoyed daily liturgies hosted by Fr Paul Finucane and Chatswood Parish, and facilitated by Fr Robert Borg, a 'Praisefest' event on the second night of the Conference led by Catholic Youth Broken Bay with over 350 participants both young and 'young at heart', and numerous workshops across the three days, canvassing a range of topics that sought to speak to the lived situation and evangelical mission of parishes today. The response from Conference delegates has been overwhelming and we trust that participants from across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific have returned home inspired to renew the face of their parishes and communities.



To support the ongoing mission of our parishes, the Office for Evangelisation has assembled the four Conference keynotes from PROCLAIM 2016 and supplemented these with reflection questions to support local discussion and implementation of the insights of the Conference. Select workshops have also been chosen to provide additional resources for your community's reflection, covering themes such as parish engagement, the best practices in parish evangelisation drawn from Australian research, and the formation of evangelisation teams. We hope this resource enriches your parish life in its mission.

With every blessing in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Ang', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel Ang
Director, Office for Evangelisation
Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay



HOW TO USE THIS PARISH RESOURCE

For those able to attend PROCLAIM 2016, the three days of the Conference offered fresh insights and practical strategies to the task of developing an increasingly missionary focus for our parishes. This parish resources aims to make these insights and strategies more widely available and to assist parishes in their discernment and implementation of those learnings.

Part 1 of this resource contains:

- Text of all four keynote addresses, with accompanying guided questions
- Material from the 'Praisefest' youth event, with a sample run sheet

Part 2 of this resource contains:

- Five workshop presentations with accompanying handouts

Whilst this resource can be used for personal reflection, it is best used within a parish setting by a parish group, for example, a Parish Pastoral Council. The guided questions are offered to facilitate the process of parish discernment, and it is hoped that by engagement with this resource, parishes will be able to consider fresh ways to develop a growing missionary outlook and to become ever more effective in the mission of evangelisation.

Note that PROCLAIM 2016 keynotes and many of the workshop presentations were recorded and can be accessed at www.xt3.com/proclaim2016 (video of keynotes) and www.xt3.com/proclaim (audio).

PROCLAIM
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Our Lady of Dolours Church, Chatswood, Sydney



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Praisefest at PROCLAIM 2016

Engaging Young People in the Life of the Church

Ministry to young people is often identified as an area in great need of development in many communities. Collectively we recognise the immediate need for more effective and engaging strategies to draw young people into the life of the Church. It is within this context that many diocesan, ecclesial and parish communities are boldly experimenting with their model of Church – bringing in contemporary styles of music and media to complement the rich traditions that are the foundation of our faith.

For more than a decade, the Australian response to this has been developing with the advent of *Anointed and Sent*, which provides a concrete vision for ministry with young people aged 12-30. Its implementation, the initial work of the Australian Catholic Youth Council, is supported by the ACBC Office for Youth. Many projects have formed to both promote the needs and gifts of young people as well as support them in their faith and life development. Through World Youth Day and the Australian Catholic Youth Festival a national Catholic youth identity has been established. To celebrate this growth and the tenth anniversary of Sydney WYD 2008, the Australian Bishops have identified the liturgical year of 2018, beginning on the first Sunday of Advent (3 December 2017), as a national Year of Youth.

The Year of Youth invites the Church into dialogue about the importance and life-giving presence of young people in the Church and society. It calls for dialogue and active engagement focused on the reconnection and renewal of a new generation of young people in the life of the Church. The Year of Youth is focused on local renewal and engagement and aims to:

- prayerfully discern the Australian Bishops' vision for ministry with young people, *Anointed and Sent*;
- authentic and personal engagement by Church leaders in the challenges and success in young people's lives;
- acknowledging the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of young people, and young people acting upon the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church; and
- upholding the dignity of young people, ensuring a safe environment from physical, emotional and spiritual harm.

Within the Diocese of Broken Bay, Catholic Youth Broken Bay is endeavouring to empower local communities to take up this challenge. The establishment of youth Hubs, which serve a number of parishes, will enable young people to gather for fellowship and formation in larger groups and with greater quality formation opportunities than might be available within a single parish. Catholic Youth Broken Bay also offers a number of regionally-based events, including Twilight Talks for young adults over 18 and Praisefest evenings for young people aged 16-35.

CYBB hosted its latest Praisefest as part of the PROCLAIM 2016 Conference with 350 young, and young at heart, in attendance. Although every Praisefest is different in theme and make-up due to the gifts of the host parish, it follows a generic structure as follows:



CYBB Praisefest - Sample Generic Runsheet

TIME	ACTIVITY
6 - 7 pm	BBQ
7 - 7:15 pm	Opening Praise & Worship
7:15 pm	MC Spot + Item (creative arts item, testimony, etc)
7:45 pm	Catechesis
8:15 pm	Sacramental Response (Normally Adoration) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Song (+ teaching of song) - Procession - Proclamation of the Word - Creative Response - Song-Silence-Song - Blessing
8:40 pm	MC Spot & Thank Yous
8:45 pm	Praise Party
9:00 pm	Finish