

Parishes of St Clare and St Francis Xavier

Minutes of Combined Annual General Meeting

Sunday 3 June 2007 @ 12.00 noon

PRESENT: Fr. Anthoni Selvaraj OFM, Vince Fazio, Daisy Tan, Josie Malcontenti, Joe Arcuri, Pat Shepherd, Margaret Green, Monique Waring, Dianna Hardy, Pat Hall, Margaret Charles, Georgie Rae, Carmel Purdey, Teresa Wilson (Guest speaker), Moya Sherison, Mary Grogan, Michael Grogan, Anthoni Samy, Julian Sakowski (Joint chairperson) Patricia Poropat (Joint chair person), Michael Robotham, Pat Miller, Bernie Miller, Joan Wells, Dom Dimattina, Sr Felicitas Lindeulys SPS, Amanda Sorenson, Mike Jeffares, Kathy Sakowski, Kevin McDonald, Michael O'Connor, Agnes O'Connor, Pat Fitzgerald, Frank Fitzgerald, Br Paul Booth OFM, Mary Blundy, Les Soulsbys, Margaret Soulsbys, Br. Matthew Hufer OFM, Monica Nitz, Clare Hangan, John Pierik, Rudolph Pierik, Trish Nicholson, Ann Leonard, Peter Leonard, Val Mooney, Gerry Mooney, Pat O'Brien, James Tan, Fr Bob, Josephine Guglielmi Jennifer Micheli (Minute Secretary).

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Julian Sakowski opened the meeting and asked parishioners to acknowledge and give respect to the Wurundjeri people, the original owners of the land of the two parishes.

2. OPENING PRAYER: Fr Anthoni led parishioners in a prayer based on Trinity Sunday.

3. APOLOGIES: Sr Dorothy Renton, Milan Poropat, Liz Clark, Carolyn Gakely, Myrna Hengeveld, Steven Hengeveld, Greg Kitch, Jill Kitch, Ben Reid, Judy Reid, Fr Ben OFM, Pat Crummy, Joan Crummy, Graeme Green, Pauline Green, Clare Van Den Berg, Anna

Massarotti, Mary Rossely, Libby Dawson, Phil McDonald, John Murphy, Barbara Murphy, Peter Sorenson, Cathy McCormick.

4. WELCOME: Julian welcomed parishioners to the meeting and introduced ex officio members (Fr Anthoni, Fr Ben, Fr Bob, Liz Clark, Monique Waring, Di Hardy and Carmel Purdey) and members of the combined St Francis Xavier (Vince Fazio, Cathy McCormick, Patricia Poropat, James Tan, John Nicholson, Monica Nitz and Karen Nolan) and St Clare's (Julian Sakowski, Jennifer Micheli and Trish Nicholson) Parish Council. Julian thanked the outgoing Councillors who left Council in mid-2006, Dan Sexton, Garry Frazer, Pat O'Brien and Kevin McDonald.

5. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Confirmed and passed, Monica Nitz and Cathy Sakowski.

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES: No business arising.

7. ANNUAL REPORT: Julian tabled the report and encouraged all parishioners to read it.

8. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT: This year has seen further maturity in the partnership between St Francis Xavier and St Clare's Parishes, with the joint Parish Pastoral Council continuing to meet as a single monthly meeting.

This is viewed as a positive step, and is a small acknowledgement of respect to the never ceasing demands on our priests. We are

truly fortunate across both parishes with three wonderful priests. However the reality is that our priests are ageing and the work-load is not diminishing. This remains our greatest challenge in the coming years, and it is important to continue to plan for the time when our position may not be so fortunate.

The Council will continue to seek to identify how the two Parishes can work together, share resources and support each other and support the members of each Parish.

You would be aware that the Council identified Reach Out as its theme for 2006. Each of the portfolios within Council was active over 2006, seeking to Reach Out to both our Parish congregations, and the wider community. Whilst there is no formal theme for 2007, we continue to seek to build on this work to Reach Out to our local communities.

The Parish web-site is now fully active. It is user friendly and provides maximum information about the various Parish activities. It is designed to help both parishioners and those from outside the Parish to be better informed regarding Parish groups and activities. If you have not already done so, I invite you to explore the Parish web-site.

In 2006, the Council was committed to re-establishing a Youth Group as an important part of Parish life. The importance of including our youth in Parish activities is recognised, with a goal to have both fun and to foster faith values in our youth. We need to sow the seeds for tomorrow's Christian adults.

To date, the Youth Group activities have been focused mainly on social activities. Since the Youth Group was re-formed about 14 months ago, we have had about 8 social functions, with the objective being for the youth of the parish to get to know one another, and to feel comfortable being involved in parish

activities. Functions are generally well patronized, with numbers varying between 20-50 parish youth attending functions. Functions are diverse, ranging from bowls to tennis to movie nights. We hope that the good news will continue to spread, and we are looking at World Youth Day and associated activities in 2008 for our youth to think more about the faith aspects of their relationship with the church. We are also currently examining developing some space at the old St Clare's school as a Youth Group meeting place. This should assist in further developing this important ministry.

Council considers education of parishioners regarding social justice issues to be very important. East Timor and the plight of people who victims of trafficking have been among the areas highlighted this year. Numbers however to these education sessions have been disappointing. Council invites you to consider a greater participation in these matters over the next 12 months. By better understanding social justice issues in our community, our Parish is better able to Reach Out to the wider community.

Social events continue to be well supported. Council thanks parishioners for their on-going support, as we consider the maintenance and development of a good social fabric to be important in ensuring a strong Faith community. There is an East Timor trivia night coming up on 16 June 2007. This is an opportunity to both support our Social Justice and Social objectives. We are counting on your continued support.

In August 2006, along with other Franciscan parishes in Australia, the Parish was represented at the bi-annual Franciscan Gathering. It was agreed that the concept of Franciscan spirituality was important, and needs to be fostered in our parishes. We made a commitment to continue to develop the concept of Franciscan spirituality in our parish, regardless of whether our parish is

able to be continued to be serviced by the Franciscan friars.

As I mentioned earlier, the individual Parish Pastoral Councils of both St Francis Xavier and St Clare's parishes continue to meet as a single, individual Council. The Constitutions of each council have served their respective Councils well over the years. However, the Constitutions are not appropriate for the combined Council in many respects. For the Council to operate efficiently, it must operate under a singular Constitution. For example, issues such as membership, numbers of councillors, voting and what constitutes a quorum are all areas that need review. Most importantly, it is also timely to re-establish our core objectives and functions.

The Council has been discussing this matter at some length over the last 12 months, and we are pleased to today table our proposed revised Constitution to you for discussion and (we hope) adoption. We believe that this revised Constitution will allow the Council to operate more efficiently and be better placed to achieve Parish objectives on your behalf going forward.

Finally, I ask each of you to think about serving the Parish by joining the combined Parish Pastoral Council. We have a number of members now retiring, and we really do need new nominations. When we last asked for nominations, it would be fair to say that we were not over-run by nominations. Please give this important role some serious thought.

9. GUEST SPEAKER: Ms Teresa Wilson, Project Officer (Melbourne Office) for World Youth Day 15 to 20 July 2008 played a DVD which outlined activities leading up to and including WYD program. Ms Wilson informed the meeting that the first WYD came from an informal audience with Pope John Paul II in 1984 and has grown to enormous proportions. Ms Wilson then called on

parishioners to show their hospitality to the pilgrims who will be in Melbourne from 10 to 14 July 2008 and also ask for volunteers for Days in the Diocese. The meeting was then informed about the journey of the Cross and Icon, which is travelling the world (similar to the Olympic Flame) and will travel through every diocese in Australia on its journey to Sydney. Ms Wilson answered parishioner's questions and the meeting was informed that pilgrims may stay with older families, families may choose pilgrims, and pilgrims under 18 will be billeted with their chaperons in church halls etc. Ms Wilson was presented with chocolates and a bottle of wine in appreciation.

10. PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT: Fr. Anthoni told the parishioners that we are an ageing parish but reminded them that the aged are being taken care of, they receive communion at least once a week in nursing homes. He also mentioned that the school has been given a grant to enable building works to commence, which will be named in honour of St Clare. Still struggling to lease St Clare's due to the fact that it is in a residential area. Both St Francis Xavier's and St Clare's church need extensive renovations, neither being disabled friendly, and the heating needs attending to in both churches.

Attendance at Christmas and Easter masses fell and while we must cater for older parishioners, we need to encourage young people. Many baptism and weddings during the year and adult education is strong. Fr. Anthoni stressed that the future is unsure, Fr. Bob is 75, Fr. Ben is 78 and both are being asked to do too much, both are too generous with their time.

Fr. Anthoni stressed that parishioners from both parishes should be think first that we are Catholics, not us and them and should feel a sense of tribalism.

When asked about steps for St Clare's parish house, Fr. Anthoni replied that it would need council approval and could cost \$15 to \$16 thousand dollars. He said that financial decisions are made by consultation with the Finance and Maintenance committees.

Fr. Anthoni stressed that churches everywhere need priests, and it is up to the community to produce local people for these positions. We have the skills and should use them to help the church. As long as the church is there, people will come. We only need committed people; we are the light and soul of the church he said. We are Christians first, and then members of St Clare's and St Francis Xavier's.

11. FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY: Fr. Anthoni and a small group attended the Franciscan gathering in Sydney last year. He explained that we must try to follow the example of St Francis, the values of peace, justice, care of the earth and a sense of welcoming. With smaller numbers, parishioners need to spread the message of St Francis. Spiritually is alive, it needs us.

12. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT:
None.

13. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ACCEPTANCE OF AMENDED CONSTITUTION: Julian explained that a sub committee had been formed which met during the year, presented drafts to Parish Council meetings and eventually came up with the proposed constitution.

Discussion followed and wording in 1. Introduction was changed from Franciscans Minor to Friars Minor. Fr. Anthoni answered a query in 4. Meetings, regarding representatives of the Finance Committee reporting to the Parish Council and said that reports to Parish priest will be encouraged. A query regarding 2. Membership asked if non

Catholics should be allowed on council was answered by Fr Anthoni. He said that he sees them as members of our community and will welcome them.

Julian moved that the Constitutions of the Parish Pastoral Councils of St Clare's and St Francis Xavier be rescinded, and the new constitution accepted. Motion carried.

14. GENERAL DISCUSSION: A query regarding Bond Payments was answered by Kevin McMahon from the Finance committee. He said this was due to the departure/decease of two residents in the units belonging to St Clare's in Woodhouse Grove. Payments were made to their estates.

15. CLOSING PRAYER: Fr. Anthoni led the meeting in the Lord's Prayer and the meeting concluded at 1.30 pm.