

# MQOF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

## Monthly Meeting Minutes

*Date | time* 23/02/2020 ! 7-9pm

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### In Attendance

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Father Reggie Lavilla, Father John-Paul Escarlan, Ruth Miranda, Eva Cheetley, Joseph Azzi, Ashley Azzi, Deacon John Cinya, &, Harlane Petersen, Phi Ngugen, Cecil Fernandes,

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### Absent

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Father Jack Green, Debojit Roy, Sidney Lazum, Nathan Fernandes, Jude Miranda

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### Approval of minutes

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Fr. Regie & seconded by Sidney

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### Agenda

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- Opening Prayer, Welcome & Apologies
- Reading of Evangelii Nuntiandi
- Aligning members with the different ministries
- Other Business
- Closing Prayer

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### Opening Prayer & Welcome

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- Opening Prayer by Fr. Regie
- Cecil welcomed the team. The apologies were noted Fr. Jack is on holiday. The 4 other apologies were sent before the meeting. The flow of the agenda was – Item 3 on the Agenda – Reading of Evangelii Nuntiandi – as part of the PPC formation. Item 4 on the Agenda – Feedback from the team on our formation day in Kellyville. Item 5 on the Agenda – follow up on the actions outstanding regarding the ministries. Item 6 on the Agenda – we will hear from our priests the issues they are facing within the parish and some negative feedback they have been receiving from Parishioners – exercising PPC's charism of listening. Minutes from last meeting approved by Cecil and seconded by Ruth.

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### Internal formation – Read Evangelii Nuntiandi

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Evangelii Nuntiandi- Chapter 16-30 was read by Ruth while the PPC listened and reflected. Here are some of the reflections in the order in which they were given :

**Fr. Reggie:** in Chpts 1-15 we read about the Kernel, the Dynamics & the Centre of evangelisation. Chapters 16-30 is on the Purpose of Evangelisation, the Content of evangelisation & the dimension of Evangelisation. The Purpose of Evangelisation explains what Evangelisation is for – to form the Culture of the Gospel, to form the Culture of the people, informing of the person of Jesus & the Gospel – from whom it cannot be really separated. The Content of Evangelisation concerns itself with - what do we say, what we preach, how do we witness with our lives and how should I live

my life to be an evangeliser to be able to bring people closer to God. The dimension of Evangelisation answers the question - is all of this for human flourishing of life here on earth or is it for something more than that - eschatological – pointing to the divine absolute– that would remind me of my identity as a Christian and of course then the “where or the environment” – I am not just preaching for the sake of preaching – it is always within the context of the church – like bringing the richness of the church to others, I enter the church transformed by its richness its sacraments, by being part of the whole mystery of the body of Christ.

**Cecil:** - Evangelisation is not just about preaching the Gospel – (an idea he thought it was when he was growing up), but it is about proclaiming the Gospel (as articulated in 22), - further it is about the Sacraments within the church (in 23), and then it is about giving what you have received (in 24), then summarised as a whole (in 26), slowly building up - to finally saying in 28 that it is for a life of eternity, beyond the things of this world, about the eternal picture – so you do not have to be worried or afraid or all the things that come with being human.

**Deacon John:** Narrated a story of a priest who visited a lady whose husband had died. The priest visited her but only kept quiet and spent time with the lady without saying anything to her. Just sitting with her for over an hour. After the funeral was over – the lady wrote him a thank you card – saying thank you very much for sharing my grief – and so for me that is evangelisation – it is very simple – not talking - but just being present. For us there is no church without Christ, and that being a church (through our charism of baptism) we have to be present and then we share and then we are in solidarity. From 16 we see that we cannot evangelise if we are not present. Culture can influence evangelisation – as the example in the Sudanese Culture - if somebody dies – people go and visit the family, write their name in a book, contribute some money (even if it is not needed), and spend time being present to the grieving family and even have a laugh together. On the other hand Culture can be a deterrent to evangelisation – as in the example of local boy – who even though we were friends with us did not invite us to his father’s funeral and was left to grieve on his own, without his friends (probably just a part of his culture).

**Ruth:** - Having being a part of charismatic movement group when growing – I did all the standard evangelisation practices that go with being part of a prayer group and it’s different ministries, however the real change happened when I had Jonathon my son – how would I pass on my faith to him in this generation, that is when the real transformation happened within me – I would have to be a role model - I would now have a deeper personal relationship with Jesus - that I then needed to be Christ in all situations – as my sister reminded me – where ever you are – you give Christ – that is evangelisation – you don’t have to be at a prayer meeting, or be in Church - to give Christ to others in all situations – whether it is at work, or at home etc. Modelling Christ behaviour everywhere is evangelisation for me. Today’s reading of Evangelii Nuntiandi is a confirmation for me – that I have to continue give Christ in all situations.

**Harlene:** - For evangelisation – transformation has to happen within us first – at a deeper level with the holy trinity – when we are transformed – people will see the change in us – then we will have the need to go and share with others – something that I have experienced – the way that I share is by being Christ to others – you don’t have to speak too much – you just have to be present – I don’t have to argue or to justify or to prove anything – the preaching of God’s love can be done by just being yourself – and hopefully people will see that – people ask me to pray for them – and I ask them to come with me and pray.

**Ashley:-** Evangelisation is for yourself first – but it is also about family life – with my son Luke whom I love very much – how do I pass on the faith to him – ofcourse I have to work on myself first – as I cannot give what I do not have – family life is so important as outlined in the document

– but families are under attack - that children have to feel the love of God in their homes first – parents will need to know how to share the gospel with their children in all aspects of their daily life – for that they need to be transformed themselves.

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### Review of PPC Formation day in Kellyville

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Ruth has started reading Activated Disciple – step by step guide on discipleship - easy reading – I enjoyed the day – gave us a lot of things to think about – that fact that we have Chabel & his team available to guide us – is a great source of comfort.

Harlene – the day for me was about coming together in prayer and also Matt’ testimony – also the book – I am learning how to meditate on the word – because we have to grow in the word – listening tonight – I feel we are all on the same page – what kind of disciple am I – so I had to think about that - what kind of disciples are we and how we are going to go forward together in unity with Christ as our banner.

Cecil – when we try to form the agenda for these meetings– what strikes me is that - we have to become here what we want our parish to become – the conversations that we have – the process we put ourselves through – our own formation as active disciples – will all help us become what we want our parish to ultimately become – that is why we have to be deliberate in what we do as a team together – Regarding the day - I liked Chabel’s talk at the end – there were many pointers for us – whether it is to slow the pace – getting a second set of people – who are like minded – and who reflect the same views being formed here – to volunteer in the ministries - as our history shows in both the churches we have had the same people that serve in all the ministries – with a possibility of being burnt out.

**Phi** – the day was more calling us to have an interior conversion as a Christian. Matt’s testimony – God is king – through all his ups & downs – God came out on top – we are fortunate in that sense – that we do not have to go through those extremes for God to be triumphant in our lives – so we should take that opportunity – there is also a link with what we have just read in EN– ofcourse we have the priests & the religious – they are the sign that there is a total dedication to God – but we as the laity also have a responsibility to evangelise – because we are part of the diverse body of Christ - and evangelisation also has to be diverse – so that is why the 2 are linked – each part of the body has a different function – the basis of evangelisation is conversion for different people on different scales – for catholics – it is a deepening of devotion & a more closeness with Christ – for non-Christians – evangelisation is about us the universal church trying to convert them in some way – either through social aspect – or their source of interest – if we are able to change one aspect of their thinking – we are successful in evangelising them – it comes down to how we live –if we live Christian lives – then people will come to know the salvation of God through how we live.

**Fr. Reggie** asked a few questions – is there any thought of moving on from there? – or does it encourage us to do more of this? – or should we have a follow up?

**Ruth** – responded by saying - one thing will lead to another – for me the whole day was about discipleship – where is that leading us – as we go into ministry and listen to people we are going to come across people who have questions for us and we will have to work out answers for them – so we will have things to address – so let us wait for that before we decide.

**Fr. John-Paul** – maybe we should have a day at the end of the year – to follow-up - to review what we have done – it is good that we are reading the church documents at this meeting – the PPCs in

other parishes (as discussed at a council of priests in the dioceses) – jump directly to the matters at hand. PPC plays a vital role in the parish life – as canon law says the role is to assist the priests in their pastoral care – of course you are going beyond the letter of the law – that as part of the evangelisation – you are part of the faith formation – you are not just telling the priests to be part of the faith formation but are actually doing it yourselves together with the priests.

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### Aligning members of the PPC with various ministries

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**Ruth:** Following up on an action item from last month's meeting where we allocated ministries to different members – just informing you that Fr. Reggie will be sending out a letter and there will be a permanent page in the bulletin listing all the ministries, where they meet, when they meet, what time they meet and who the contact person is – so that all the parishioners will know – the letter will be sent so that the PPC members can then use the information and visit the ministries that they have chosen.

Following up with Ashley who visited the play group – in St. Michaels.

**Ashley** – who went to visit the playgroup – had this to say – the lady who runs the group – is not part of the parish – the group is not part of the parish and are not connected to the parish – they are only using the premises – The mum organises some children and does some activities with them. The mums are lovely – but I don't think they are even practicing.

Some discussions were had on the playgroup and the final conclusion is that this group is not a ministry in this parish.

The Marian movement of priests meet on the Monday at 9.30 and so Joseph will not be able to go – but Ashley has volunteered to go in his place. Phi has volunteered to be part of the Acolytes. Basically once Fr. Regie sends the letter – the PPC member will go and visit the ministry – and inquire & seek - Whats happening? – what issues? – do they need any help? – form a link between them and the PPC - basic principle is to listen to know & to understand – it is probably best to go to their meetings – of course if you cannot make it to the meeting then it is okay to meet the contact and ask the questions listed above.

Deacon John belongs to the Social Justice group – and explained their activity – and some of their fund raising activities. At the moment they are preparing food for the homeless and go and visit them – they are lacking people in the ministry and most of the members are retired – they are looking for new members.

Remember Chabel's point – if a ministry is doing well – then we should not change anything. Fr. Reggie asked Harlene to think if she wanted to be part of the RCIA – and if she can - then to please find the appropriate training for you and then the Parish would be willing to sponsor you.

List of Ministries which Members opted for:

- Youth Ministry – Nathan
- Sacramental Program – Ruth
- Ministers of the Altar (is the new name for Acolytes & the senior servers) – Jude
- Social Justice Group – Deacon John
- RCIA – Roy
- Marian Movement for Priests – Joe
- Children's Liturgy — Ashley
- Legion of Mary – Cecil

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## Listening to the concerns of our Priests

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**Fr. Regie** – Here as some little challenges that we encounter – e.g. people are stepping down from the ministries – which can pose issues - especially if they are important ministries like the Baptism & RCIA – we cannot go on without people - people are stepping down for different reasons. One of the personal encounters – people are saying we are changing just for the sake of changing – so we are not happy so we are going – this reflects on how we lead the community – some people are not happy – we cannot please everybody – people may have not understood the reasons for some of the change – like we have changed the practices in the liturgy that were not correct – as what was being done was not right & we cannot going on doing this – e.g. we are changing the liturgy as a fruit of the liturgical ministry – we have taken out the acknowledgement of the Dharug people – they were not happy and they wrote to the Bishop – we have stood our ground on this - Fr. Regie explained the reason for removing the acknowledgement. What we are doing in the parish through evangelisation – leading people to Jesus – some people see this as going backward- one of the concrete example is the way we preach – they say “there is no more joy – you are preaching fire & brimstone” – so these are all our challenges – note that the formation of the mind is constantly conditioned by what we are hearing – that is why our Faith Formation programs are going to be important.

Fr. John-Paul – what we are doing in the Parish –is not changing but restoring – we are restoring our liturgy – we are restoring our Catholic identity as a Parish. To say that we are not acknowledging the owners of the land is not necessarily true – it is in the bulletin. In one of my encounters with the Aboriginal people – I remember them saying “ we are tired of hearing empty words & acknowledgements” - Maybe we will one day have an action ministry for the custodian’s of the land, who knows? If we go back to the history of this parish – for sure the tendency of the people - although we are followers of Christ – we follow the clergy – that is some people stay, but others will go – this is our challenge - continue to dialogue – to approach those who don’t agree – we have to reach out to them – you can see them clicking together – but we have to reachout to them. Another issue that I have is - For 1 year the Youth ministry has been going - the volunteers have the passion, but something is missing – but we have to invest – probably get a paid Youth minister - I am having a conversation with CYC, the HR person in the diocese and along with Sarah – to get a position description of the role – we will also need the volunteers and the parents in forming this new Youth group adventure. The final one – every parish has people that are committed – we will need more people that can commit. **Ruth** – confirmed that we need this 2<sup>nd</sup> group of people that can commit to the parish – a sort of succession planning – we will do this slowly so that the people who commit don’t get overwhelmed.

Deacon John – I am involved in liturgy works & charity and also with the Sudanese community. I have received a letter from the Bishop advising me that I am a deacon also to the Sudanese community. The Sudanese are part of this parish and need to be involved in the life of this parish and the programs of this parish, whether it is the liturgy, or young people, or legion of Mary, but there is no connection between those activities and this parish. – they are good by themselves – but they are now dying down – they have access to the house outside, but that is now being used by the Diocese and so they don’t have place to keep their statues, so that they find it difficult to practice their faith. There is a gap with the young Sudanese people. So these are my challenges.

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## Other Business

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Jude Besterwich has agreed to be part of the sub-committee for Faith Formation – other suggestions are to bring Tony and Renita – they are a good people who know so much and have great insights about Evangelisation – tap Richard & Marina too. Evangelisation is good – but once people are convinced that they have to be disciples of Jesus, then we will need groups to which people can go to. We need to encourage groups to come together – whether it as prayer groups, or bible study groups – so that people can come together. These groups will be published in the Parish Bulletin for this purpose.

Discussed Sidney's suggestion to be present during the faith formation program that Chabel is going to run in the parish and whether there were forms for people to sign-up for the program. This was discussed and an action was decided which will be communicated back to Sidney. Nathan is part of the Youth advisory group – Phi has also volunteered to be part of this advisory group. Ewa highlighted how her daughter and a group of some other girls from Nagle and some boys from St Pats have been meeting regularly at a social level – these present us with opportunities – in our thinking of a Youth group. The number one religion in Australia is sport – thinking about how we could get the Youth together. The number 1 enemy to youth group formation is the legislation around using premises and the rules & restrictions when the youth gather.

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## Closing Prayer

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Fr. Regie

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## Actions

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This meeting

- Follow-up with Harlene and ensure she is getting the communication - Cecil
- Continue to read the Evangelii Nuntiandi & reflect internally – Whole Team
- A letter will be sent to the various ministries informing them that a PPC member will be visiting them – with the purpose outlined - by Fr. Reggie
- Members should await the official communication from the Fr. Reggie to the ministries before they visit – Members of the PPC
- Ensure that Ministries will be constant item on the agenda – Ewa Cheetley
- Respond to Sidney's email – some of the outcomes decided at the PPC about his email - Ruth
- Send the letter that the Bishop sent regarding being the Deacon to the Sudanese Community – Deacon John
- Explore the possibilities to amalgamate the Legions of Mary of the Sudanese community and the normal Legion of Mary ministry in our Parish – PPC members

Previous Meeting

- Members who have not yet opted to choose a ministry – Whole Team
- ~~• Await the official communication from the Fathers to the ministries before they visit – All Members~~
- ~~• Formulate an official message to the ministries and communicate – Executive Team~~
- ~~• Attend whole day session on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb, Bring a plate of food for Lunch – Whole team~~

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## Important Dates to Remember

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- *Next meeting in 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April*