

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PLENARY COUNCIL FOR ACTION

How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church that is humble, healing and merciful?

For our Australian Church

- *The Church needs to take back its moral authority on social justice matters through reflection, investigation, consultation and action that is in keeping with the teachings of Christ.*
- Re-introduce the Third Rite of Reconciliation. We believe that this rite provides a community sense of healing and forgiveness. We recommend that information and education be provided in parishes and schools about the nature of this rite and its potential benefits.
- Rationalise Church assets that are not most economically utilised in order to generate income. This income should be used to finance the employment of properly trained staff to develop outreach programs in order to build a greater sense of community in our parishes and schools and the wider community. We believe this action reflects the true mission of the Church.
- Part of the income generated by rationalising assets should also be used to employ appropriately trained and remunerated pastoral associates and workers in all parishes.
- *The Church must openly take ownership of the wrongs committed in the past. As part of the healing and restoration process, the Church should fund counselling and pastoral support for those who have been abused and/or hurt by the Church, and openly publicise these services.*
- The Church should direct more resources into general support services for people who have experienced a variety of hardships in life.
- *We believe there should be an increased focus on people who have become marginalised and/or left behind by the Church – for example, young people, those who have divorced, ‘lapsed’ Catholics, LGBTIQ people, First Nations people, asylum seekers, the elderly – and strategies should be developed to re-engage individuals and groups in order to become a more inclusive, humble, healing and merciful Church.*

- Publicise websites and other sources of information, *including international sources*, which provide material about the positive work of the Church.
- *The Church has to learn how to use the media effectively, including social media, so that its good work is well publicised to Catholics and to the community in general, and to harness interest in and commitment to participation in social justice action.*

Local actions for the parish of St Thomas the Apostle

- Employ a pastoral associate. Part of the role would be to review the current outreach ministries in the parish and assess the need for additional programs.
- Hold a healing Mass for all parishioners, *particularly those experiencing a variety of difficulties in life, and* acknowledging that many Catholics have been hurt and saddened by the behaviour of individuals and the institution of the Church.
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- Publicise websites and other sources of information, *including international sources*, which provide material about the positive work of the Church.
- Consider the language used in our blessings in order that all people feel included. For example, blessings on Mothers’ and Fathers’ Day could also include a blessing for those without children of their own but who have had a caring and/or guardian role with young people.