

## Parish Advisory Council Report 2023

In true Carmelite spirit, *Service - being present to the needs of others*, was the focus for the parish for 2023.

The Parish Advisory Council (PAC) carefully considered feedback from our 2022 Ministry Sunday gathering to discern this direction for the new year. As a parish we are truly blessed with the active involvement of hundreds of our parishioners in designated ministries with all of us keen to participate in a community of people who seek to be the face of Christ for others. The incorporation of “washing of feet” in our Holy Thursday celebration was a tangible reminder of who we are – people of service. Our feast day celebration in July had a particular focus on ministry. Participation and connection fostered through the sharing of story was highlighted in liturgies at various times throughout the year. The Liturgy Committee undertook a widespread consultation in relation to the reading ministry. The community reiterated the importance of building community through involvement in ministry and the thirst for regular formation open and accessible to all. As a result of feedback, which included significant story-sharing, the formation program for ministers of the word will take on a new format in 2024.

The PAC began the year with a gathering to thank Jane Connolly for her chairing of the Parish Advisory Council, to welcome new member, Anne-Marie Maw, and new Chair, Christine Clarke. The 2023 members were:

*Christine Clarke, Jane Connolly, Anne-Marie Maw, Michael Kearney, Cara Fox, Paul Jensen, Warren Fields, Fr Martinho da Costa, Fr Matthew Tonini & Fr Albino Dos Santos.*

The monthly meetings of the PAC incorporate prayer, listening, reflection and discernment for ways that best represent a shared leadership approach that supports our Carmelites and allows the community to flourish.

The Archdiocesan Summit was a key event in the year. A number of parishioners attended with the support of the parish. The gathering was structured around the themes of the Archdiocese of Brisbane Apostolic Priorities – *With Lamps Ablaze*:

- i. Teaching Prayer
- ii. Reshaping Parish Communities
- iii. Bringing Cultural Communities to the Centre
- iv. Responding to Abuse and the Abused
- v. Engaging Anew with First Nations people
- vi. Implementing Integral Ecology
- vii. Embedding Synodal Governance

The parish also sponsored a group of parishioners to attend *Mystery and Mission: The Art of Liturgical Celebration* conference in Brisbane in September. We support the continued formation of our community to be one of vibrant worship for a journey in faith that is true to our Carmelite spirit.

Our Carmelites have continued to provide support to the community of Regina Caeli in 2023. The OLMC Parish Advisory Council with the Parish Leadership Team of Regina Caeli have talked together about ways we might support the work of our Carmelites across the two parishes. We have met to share story and so create a shared understanding of our contexts. We hope to further open up communication between our two communities with a focus on welcoming cross-parish participation.

The community of Our Lady of Mt Carmel Incorporates our school, an incredibly vibrant and engaged place. The principal of Mt Carmel Primary School, Warren Fields, is a member of the Parish Advisory Council. In 2023 the parents of Mt Carmel School took the initiative to organise a Mt Carmel community night in support of ongoing maintenance necessities and of course to strengthen connections and relationships. It was a fabulous night and a wonderful example of change coming from the ground up in our church.

The Synod on Synodality continued in 2023. It is Pope Francis' initiative for the Catholic Church to collaboratively chart its path in the contemporary era, emphasizing listening, discernment, communion, participation and mission. The OLMC Parish Advisory Council seeks to understand more deeply the implications of synodality for our local community and for it to guide reflections on our role and purpose as we begin the new year.

The following reflection by Margaret Wheatley has been used recently in Carmelite gatherings and amongst various ministry groups in Coorparoo. We take it into 2024 as a prompt to growing more fully into our Carmelite way – *Prayer Community Service*.

### **Turning to One Another**

*There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.*

*Ask "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" Keep asking.*

*Notice what you care about.*

*Assume that many others share your dreams.*

*Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.*

*Talk to people you know.*

*Talk to people you don't know.*

*Talk to people you never talk to.*

*Be intrigued by the differences you hear.*

*Expect to be surprised.*

*Treasure curiosity more than certainty.*

*Invite in everybody who cares to work on what's possible.*

*Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something.*

*Know that creative solutions come from new connections.*

*Remember, you don't fear people whose story you know.*

*Real listening always brings people closer together.*

*Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.*

*Rely on human goodness. Stay together.*

*Margaret Wheatley, "Turning to One Another," 2002*