

I am pleased to report that a most successful Parish Council meeting was held last Sunday, at which the major focus was the next steps in our Mission Action Plan process. Ably facilitated by Meredith, the Council reviewed some of our past efforts at capturing the *mission, vision* and *values* of the parish.

It is worth just pointing out the difference in these words, as we might consider them to be similar. The definitions we used were as follows: **Vision** is “The future story of a parish or agency that enables the people to see a better time ahead for themselves and those for whom they care”. **Mission** is “The unique contribution the parish or agency makes within their own context”. **Values** were defined as “the things that are most important to the parish or agency which influence the way people behave and the choices they make.”

We then reviewed our previous efforts at mission planning, and categorised the statements we had made in the past into one of the three categories. The fourth category became the *enablers*, that allowed us to move towards the bigger picture of vision and mission. What became apparent in this process was that we had identified lots of enablers (good facilities, financially strong, Christian principles, range of activities), and our values were fairly clear (welcoming, inclusive, caring), but we have yet to translate those into an articulated vision.

This is the challenge that exists for us, now – to identify goals and aspects of our mission, and importantly then to gather information and data around each of these goals, so that we might better understand how we can meet these mission goals. Our over-arching vision is the one that we share with the Diocese – “to make the Word of God fully known.” How we do that in our local context is the work to be done.

Please continue to pray for God’s Spirit to guide and lead our process.

I am grateful to Fr. Matthew Dowsey for his gift to the parish of the beautiful candle holders that we are using currently on the Nave altar. If you have not yet seen them, I encourage you to have a look. The holders were turned from the wood of a river red gum tree on the property at Diggers’ Rest where the Society of the Sacred Mission had their priory. The tree is listed on the register of significant trees in Victoria, because of its age (estimated to pre-date white settlement in this country), and its peculiar shape. When a large branch fell off it some years ago now, the holders were made, and they were used on the altar in the Chapel there, until the sale of the property some years ago now.

May St. Joseph, Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, Thomas Cranmer, Thomas Ken, and all the Saints walk with you this Lent... *Sam*