

2009 AGM Report

by: Fr. JOSE S. ADRIANO

[30 August 2009]

1. I arrived in Inverell on the 28th of January. I was installed as PP of Inverell the following Sunday, the 1st of February. My first challenge to you all then was: we have work to do... and work we did!

I emphasized from the start that it is my sincere desire to establish an open communication with everyone: to talk to me personally; on the phone; or by email. I wanted to know your thoughts and your ideas... anything at all.

I likewise emphasized that every priest is different: leadership styles; pastoral emphasis; even the way we celebrate the mass and liturgies in the parish; the way we talk to people.

2. One of the major and abrupt changes that had to be done was the format of the Parish Bulletin; the version of our Readings [from the Jerusalem Bible to the New American Bible]; the discontinuance of our subscription with The WORD which is saving the parish \$ 1,086.60 annually; the publication of as much information as possible to ensure that every parishioner is informed about the goings on in the parish and with me.
3. The other change is the schedule of weekend masses: masses are now celebrated in Ashford and Tingha every Sunday [7:00 am in Tingha; 11:30 am in Ashford]. The mass in Yetman remains once a month.

On weekdays, the masses are now at 12:15 [Monday; Tuesday; Thursday] and at 7:00 am [Wednesdays]. There is no mass in the main church on Fridays because the mass is celebrated at McLean. Except on 1st Fridays when mass is celebrated in the "main church" with Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 12:00 Noon.

4. Various ministries have been organized and set-up:

- a. involvement in the mass was a priority: as Readers/Commentators; as Eucharistic Ministers; as Offerors of Altar Gifts; as Collectors; as Greeters; as Choir/Music Members; as Altar Servers.

- b. acknowledgement and strengthening of existing ministries in the parish and activities:

- i. Holy Trinity School Ministry
- ii. The Altar Society
- iii. Catechetical Programme
- iv. Garden Care
- v. Children's Liturgy
- vi. Family Group Movement
- vii. Parish FINANCE Committee
- viii. Distribution of Holy Communion to the Home-Bound
- ix. Hospital Ministry
- x. Home Visitation Ministry
- xi. McLean Ministry
[Mass every 2nd; 3rd; 4th; and 5th Fridays; with Anointing on the 2nd Friday]
[Visits on Thursdays with Anointing if requested]
- xii. Home Rosary Ministry
- xiii. Parish WELCOME Team
[Team Members visit parishioners who register as "new"; there will be a Parish WELCOME Gathering in Spring]
- xiv. Music Ministry
- xv. Sacramental Programme:
 - Confirmation: -39 Candidates
 - 1st Reconciliation: -55 Candidates
 - 1st Eucharist: -to be held on the 8th of November
- xvi. EASTER Liturgies
[Parishioners grouped themselves and organized each day: Palm Sunday; Mass of the Lord's Supper; Good Friday Service; and Easter Vigil].
- xvii. Baptisms are now held every Sunday [and any other day] except on the 2nd Sunday of the month – when I go to YETMAN].

- xviii. Parish Collections; the Annual Budget and Quarterly Financial Statements are now published.
- xix. Monthly DEATH Anniversaries are now published.
- xx. A more comprehensive [4 weeks] General PARISH Roster is published.

c. new ministries and parish initiatives:

- i. Parish LITURGY Group
- ii. Registry Books Recorders
- iii. BAPTISM Preparation Programme
- iv. Rite One [1] Reconciliation at McLean
- v. Youth Programme
[gathering every Friday at 6:00 pm]
- vi. Catholic CHARISMATIC Prayer Group
- vii. Bible Study
[facilitated by Jim Griffiths; Tuesdays/10:00 am at the Parish Meeting Room]
- viii. Home Visits
[the home-bound; the sick; those who stopped coming to church]
- ix. Tingha and Ashford now have a weekly Sunday Mass
- x. Mass at the Cemetery on the 31st of October at 9:00 am.

d. on the Wish List:

- i. Prayer Warriors for Parish Intentions
[This is mainly for the home-bound: from those who will sign-up, a chain is created. Prayer Intention is requested – Warriors are given 2 to 5 fellow Prayer Warriors to call if a Prayer Intention is requested – mainly from JOE] so that all Prayer Warriors would pray for a particular intention.]

- ii. Parish MARRIAGE Preparation Team
[It is envisioned that this Team will be trained to conduct the Parish Marriage Preparation Programme for the parish.]

- iii. Senior Altar Serving/Acolytes
[for complicated liturgies & Funerals; and for weekend masses]

- iv. After-Mass Cuppa
[every Sunday; after the 9:00 am Mass]

- v. Parish FUNERAL Team
[To prepare cold water; and jugs & cups one hour before a funeral; as GREETERS: to hand out booklets; to usher people into their seats; to make sure the toilets are clean and ready for use; to prepare the charcoal for the incenser; to bring out the portable seats from the shed if there is an overflow of funeral attendees; and to clean-up after the funeral].

- vi. Parish GRIEF Team
[To assist parishioners/families in a “GRIEF SITUATION” caused by death; illness; separation/divorce; etc.]

- vii. RCIA
[Initially: to form an RCIA Team who will conduct the program by 2010.]

- viii. Parish HISTORY Team
[To compile historical information; things; any historical material including DVD/CD/photos of funerals; etc.] parish events and celebrations, including weddings; baptisms;

- ix. “School-Age” Baptism
- xi. Adult Confirmation
- xii. Parish INFORMATION Brochure
- xiii. Parish FORMATION Team
- xiv. Parish HISTORY Team

e. needing some encouragement and perking-up:

- i. Bi-Monthly Communal Reconciliation [1st Tuesdays/6:00 pm]

- ii. Mass Attendance
 - iii. Membership in the Planned-Giving Programme
 - iv. "Flowers from the Garden" by Parishioners
[parishioners gathering flowers from their own gardens and present them as an OFFERING at mass]
- f. Pastoral Actions implemented/initiated:
- i. Rite One Reconciliation [30 minutes before every mass]
 - ii. Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament [every 1st Friday/12:00 Noon]
 - iii. Parish Retreat
 - iv. Mass at the Saint Vincent de Paul Centre [5th Fridays]
 - v. Mass for the Brazilian Abattoir workers [by Fr. Paul Mahoney; every 1st Sunday/6:00pm]
- g. VARIOUS activities:
- i. While Saint Vincent de Paul is an independent pastoral body: the parish fully cooperates with its programmes as it fulfills the charity work component of the church.
 - ii. In response to the Victoria Bush Appeal, we were able to raise: \$ 1,154.00 which was coursed through the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.
 - iii. Communal Reconciliation in Inverell and the other Mass Centres in Lent and in Advent.
 - iv. Procession of the Blessed Sacrament inside the church [Feast of CORPUS CHRISTI; and CHRIST the KING]
 - v. CATHOLIC Life in the Spirit Seminar [28-30 August]
 - vi. Spirituality in the Pub [Fr. Paul McCabe; 16th of June]
 - vii. Holy Items have been acquired through "Memorial Donations" [Communion Ciboria; pyxes; Altar Servers' vestments; Altar Cloths; the Book of Gospels; small chalices with paten; funeral Pall; Holy Water Bucket; Rose vestment for the priest].
- h. Parish Celebrations:
- i. Catechists' Sunday [22nd of February]
 - ii. International Women's Day [8th of March]
 - iii. ANZAC DAY Mass
 - iv. Sunday of Divine Mercy [18/19 April]
 - v. Re-dedication of the Church [25/26 April]
 - vi. Vocation Sunday [2/3 May]
 - vii. Catholic Debutante's Ball [15th of May]
 - viii. ADIG on the Pulpit [16/17 May]
 - ix. Family Group Movement Sunday and Fruit Cake Sunday [24th of May]
 - x. Philippine Independence Day [7th of June]
 - xi. Launching of the "Year of the Priest" and Awarding of: Papal Medal Bene Merenti to Roma Fenwick [19th of June]
 - xii. Installation of Brian Baldwin as Regional Vinnies President
 - xiii. CONFIRMATION [21st of June]
 - xiv. Blessed Mary MacKillop Sunday [9th of August]
 - xv. World Day of Migrants & Refugees and AGM [30th of August]
- i. OTHER NOTES
- i. The "Fr. MUCH MULLANE" Tree was cut down.
 - ii. The Presbytery is fitted with a reverse aircon system
 - iii. A new Sound System is installed in the church
 - iv. A new Photocopier is acquired
 - v. Due to vandalism: the church doors facing the road is now closed. However: the door facing Otho Lane remains open.
 - vi. PGP Renewal
 - vii. The monthly parish contribution [\$ 500.00] to Mission Mexico is terminated effective June 2009 [it started in October 2005].
 - viii. Rev. John McHugh was assigned in Inverell for his Diaconate Pastoral Placement in July 2009.

5. My leadership style is consultative and collaborative. The few times that I don't, they are necessitated by practical and sensible need. Generally, I don't live strictly by the book; I am guided by common sense. Many times, we must learn to trust one another. And to respect one another.

The power that comes with that piece of paper signed by the Bishop called: Appointment Letter is important but not as important as the power to serve. That is why, as long as I am here, everyone is encouraged to get involved in the many tasks and ministries in our parish.

I consider it sacred to uphold your identity as laity; and will cultivate a culture of participation in our church. If you are not involved in one way or the other, aside from coming to mass and financially supporting our operation, you are missing out on the joy of belonging and the grace of participating.

I would be remiss in my duty and responsibility as your Pastor if I will not give you the avenue to experience that joy and that grace.

Here is an honest fore-word to the Parish PASTORAL Council with whom I will be working with: I squirm when parishioners talk and talk and talk but refuse to get involved in the tasks to be done. I am unhappy when I am with a parishioner who is full of ideas and is quite brave to articulate them but is too busy to find time to actually serve.

These people propose... and expect other parishioners to implement their proposal/s.

Be warned that it is my pastoral practice to involve the very person/s who propose suggestions and ideas on how to "make our parish better". Those who are good at proposing must be ready to lead and to get involved in what they propose.

There is joy in doing things together. It does not only build the church; it strengthens friendships. I am very willing to try new ideas or strengthen current practices and activities as long as they are organised by committed parishioners.

If you want to do things and directly get involved with them, let's go for them. If we succeed, GOD bless us; if we fail... at least we tried. We succeed together; or we fail together. That is at the core of our pastoral ideal: together.

What I am saying is: I treasure the involvement of lay people in the life of the parish. I take very seriously your role as "church". My respect for your role and identity are borne from my personal philosophy that I do not have the monopoly of "Divine Inspiration". GOD speaks to us all and inspires us all to be his servants... but in different and varied roles. You have gifts to share... come and share it!

6. In the same vein: I cannot lead alone. I need those whom we call: Parish Leaders who are entrusted with organising and coordinating the various tasks and ministries. They are: the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Committee; the Coordinators and organisers of the many Pastoral Teams and Programs; Presidents and Chairpersons of different service groups and organizations; Animators of ministries who are in the background by the very nature of their tasks and identity like Garden Carers; Altar Society; Babysitters; etc.

These are the parishioners and parish bodies with whom I must collaborate constantly. They are primarily the ones who will make sure that our programs are implemented; our vision realised; and who will enable the other members of the parish to be involved in what we do.

I respect decisions made by them as long as they are not contrary to the teachings of the church; the policies of the Diocese and the Bishop; and against the commonly accepted traditions and practices of the parish. We will consult with one another... and guide one another for the good of the parish.

I say again: this springs from the belief that I, alone, do not have the monopoly of "Divine Inspiration"; nor do I possess your insight as "locals" and your creativity.

Priests come and go. But you: you live here and, therefore, you know more than what the priest knows about the parish. Many times, because of this, your observations and insights; your conclusions and judgments are naturally more reasonable than mine.

Hence, I listen intently to what you say and observe closely what you do. Sometimes, I try to hear what you do not say... and discern what you are not doing... and why.

Our Parish is saturated by talents like seeds eager to break from the ground; by creative hands and minds eager to be part in designing our future; by pilgrims eager to be part of the journey. It is our task [myself and the Parish Leaders], to harness these GOD-given graces for the good of all. It cannot remain idle and untapped. It must be released into the open so that we can build our parish together.

7. Finally: I would like to THANK most sincerely those who served as members of the Parish PASTORAL Council this year:
 - a. Barry Gaukroger who resigned since the 5th of February 2009
 - b. Bernie Graham who resigned since the 2nd of April 2009
 - c. Ruth McCausland who resigned since 7th of May 2009
 - d. Sally Williams who resigned since 22nd of June 2009
 - e. Colleen Graham who resigned since 22nd of June 2009.
 - f. Neville Cook; June Saint; Patsy Armstrong and Tony King whose terms ended this year.
 - g. And most especially to: ANTHONY MICHAEL who served as Chairman of the PPC for four years covering his two terms as a member of the Council.

The past Parish PASTORAL Council, as we all know, efficiently served the parish with Fr. BERNIE at the helm. They religiously met as a council and made decisions that served the best interest of this parish.

While they are no longer members of the PPC, except Ann Casey-Ransom and Margaret Morrissey who continue to serve the remaining one year of their term, it is my fervent hope that they will serve the parish in whatever capacity they feel the Lord is calling them to do.

8. In the meantime: we have work to do... guided by the Lord, our True and Faithful SHEPHERD, we will face the challenges of the future and serve our parishioners the best way we can.

GOD bless us all... and THANK YOU!