

A PATHWAY INTO THE FUTURE

# Let us Dream

HENDRA HAMILTON NORTHGATE CLAYFIELD







## *The situation*

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### **IN THE ARCHDIOCESE**

- The Catholic Church in Australia is in decline
- The Archdiocese of Brisbane lost over 12,000 practicing Catholics in the years between 2011 – 2016
- Since 2019 the Archdiocese has declined a further 34% (19,000 people)
- It is common for children to be baptised and confirmed for school entry and family identity rather than because they have had a personal encounter with Christ and his Church. As a result, after initiation, often we don't see them again
- The average age of parishioners in Australia is 59
- We have a declining number of priests with no change to existing Mass schedules

### **IN HENDRA HAMILTON NORTHGATE AND CLAYFIELD**

- Our local situation reflects the larger context
- At the beginning of 2022 we had 8 Masses per weekend across the two parishes with an average of 65 people at each Mass
- We have one full time priest and one volunteer deacon appointed to the two parishes
- Mother of Mercy Parish has witnessed a decline from 416 to 215 weekly participants since 2016
- St Agatha's Parish has witnessed a decline from 457 to 308 weekly participants since 2016
- We have limited school engagement, limited youth and children's ministries and an insufficient budget to recruit a high quality ministry team
- We have 4 properties, two of which only host one Mass per weekend with around 50 people
- All Masses increase in attendance significantly at Easter, Christmas and special occasions
- Against this difficult back drop we have immense opportunity if we have the courage to make change

# *What is possible?*

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Given our resources, location and situation, if we're open to making some significant changes and re-focussing our resources, we can become a Church that welcomes and engages children in such a way that they love to attend and ask their parents to take them; a Church where teenagers find purpose and meaning as they encounter truth, beauty, and goodness; a Church where young adults not only continue to practise their faith, but develop it and are empowered to lead and minister; a Church where adults do not merely attend, but continue to deepen their faith and become missionary disciples; a Church where families find such welcome, love, and support that Church becomes an extension of their family; a Church that reaches beyond its own walls in working towards justice and peace in our world, and building relationships with other Christian traditions, other religious traditions, and with government; we can become a Church where every person is loved, welcomed, and transformed as they encounter Jesus, and encounter those who walk in his footsteps.

Such a vision can only come to fruition with a high quality ministry team combined with inspiring and intentional leadership. But with the re-purposing of our existing resources, such a team and vision is within our grasp.

## *The goal*

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The end goal is a parish led by a ministry team of trained and passionate leaders in the areas of youth ministry, children's ministry, adult formation, music and liturgical ministry and other staffing as required. The parish would focus its resources on the Mass and the ministries that surround it. This means some Masses would focus on ministry to families, others to youth and young adults, and others to a broader range. The intent would be to grow the community from what is currently 525 to a community of around 1000 weekly participants over a period of 5 – 10 years.





He is  
Risen

Happy  
Easter

Welcome

ALLELUIA  
He is risen

# *What we'd have to be willing to give up?*

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Such a vision would require sacrifice. The giving up of some existing practices and properties for the sake of a renewed vision and missionary engagement. Areas that would require change for this vision include (but are not limited to), the following:

## **PROPERTY**

- A review of all assets with the view to re-purposing the property at Hamilton (valued at around 14m but net value of around 9m), which could be purchased by another agency in the Archdiocese with the church being leased back to the parish.
- The possible re-purposing of the property at Northgate (valued at around 7m), which could either be sold to a Catholic agency or leased for 99 years (again with the possibility of leasing the church back at a small cost).
- Investing the profits into an endowment fund which could provide the parishes with a perpetual income which can fund the recruitment of a ministry team as well as its initiatives.

## **MASS TIMES AND COMMUNITIES**

- Consideration of Mass schedules in light of the mission, with the recognition that the situation which informed the existing Mass schedule no longer exists.
- The acknowledgment that it's not possible, with one priest, to sustain 7 Masses per weekend. This means moving toward fewer Masses with more people, but greater attention given to the ministries associated with each Mass.
- The long-term move toward an amalgamation of the two parishes.



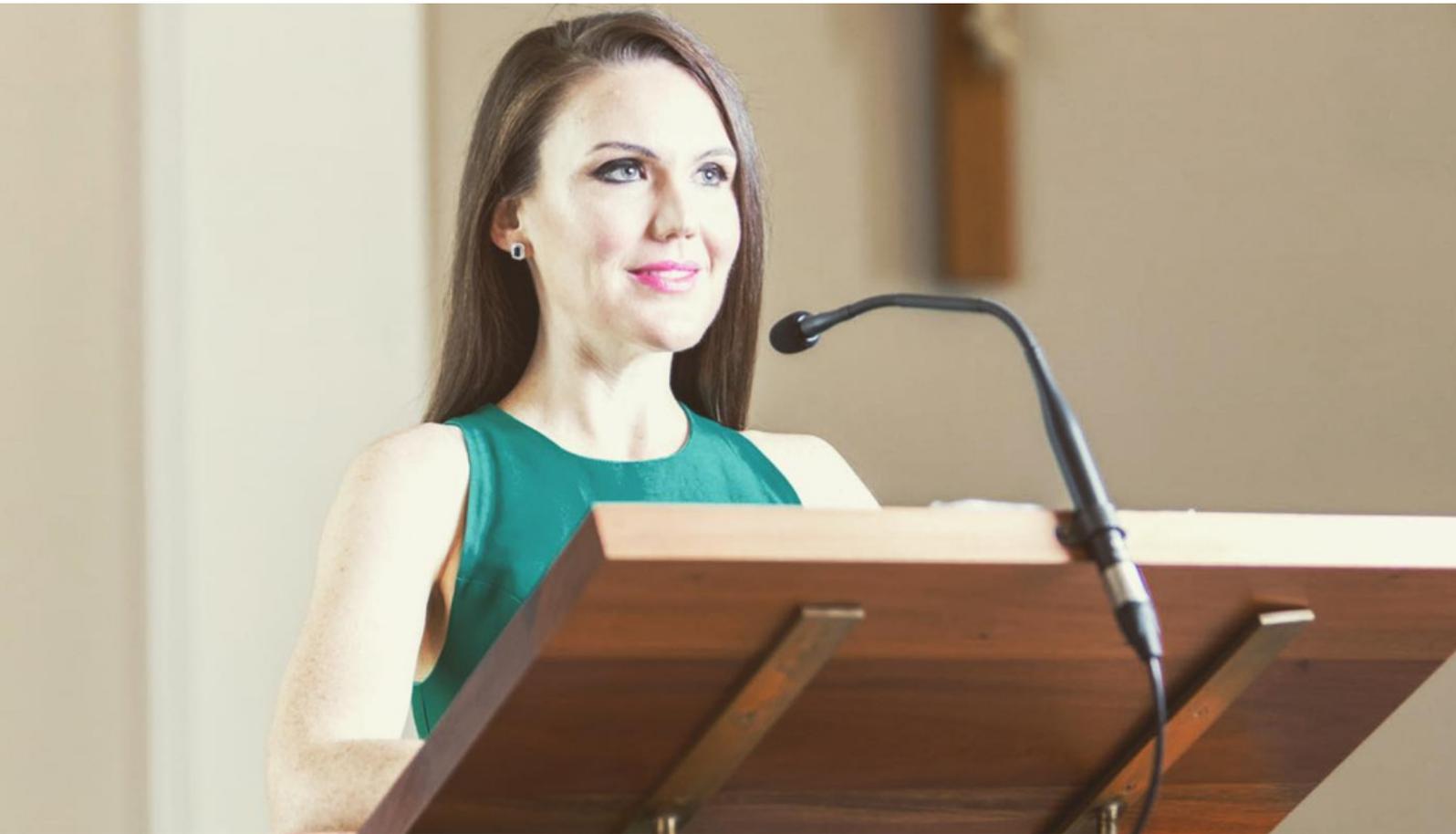


## **CULTURE**

Creating a Catholic community that attracts a new generation of families and youth will inevitably require culture change. We will need to be willing to:

- Develop an outward focus: how to make new people feel welcome, engaged and invited back.
- Be willing to revise liturgical style: at Masses for families, how does our liturgy facilitate young families encountering God? At youth Masses, how does our liturgy help youth feel nourished and connected?
- Be willing to encourage a culture of ongoing formation and succession planning. This means every person in a role (whether it be youth coordinator, children's minister, lector, musician etc.) is thinking about who they might be able to train up to join them in that ministry.
- A culture of striving for excellence: a God who is great should be reflected by a community that strives for great ministry, great music, great community, great hospitality, real espresso coffee, clean and well maintained property etc. Doing things well honours God and honours people.
- At times this will mean moving some long-term volunteers into roles that are more suited to their charisms. At times it will mean encouraging volunteers to be flexible in order that others can also be involved.





## *What are the benefits?*

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Benefits which include:

- Engaging both parishes in a vision for the future (this alone creates energy, expectation and hope)
- The stopping of slow decline
- The ability to be able to fund high quality lay ministry for longer periods of time
- A particular focus on ministry to children, to youth, and to the schools in the parish and on intentional adult formation and education
- A long-term future for the parish which is one of hope, of growth, of mission and of seeing people of all generations discover the faith, hope and love the Church has to offer

## *What's the alternative?*

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If we keep doing what we've always done, we'll keep getting what we've always got. This means that the alternative is simply a slow decline. Closing of the churches not in order to fund mission, but instead because there is no one left to engage in the mission. Whilst this paper is a proposal, and there may be other possibilities that deserve consideration, the one thing we cannot afford to do is to simply keep things as they are.



## *Key steps for implementation*

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Should this proposal be accepted, these would be some of the key steps toward implementation:

### **1. PARISHIONERS ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION:**

This document and the meeting from which this document was presented is the first step in this process. From this point there follows an important process of feedback, which includes:

- Feedback survey for parishioners (online and hard copy)
- Opportunity to meet individually to discuss other possible solutions
- Possible follow-up meeting with the whole community in light of feedback

### **2. ARCHDIOCESAN PROPERTY TEAM**

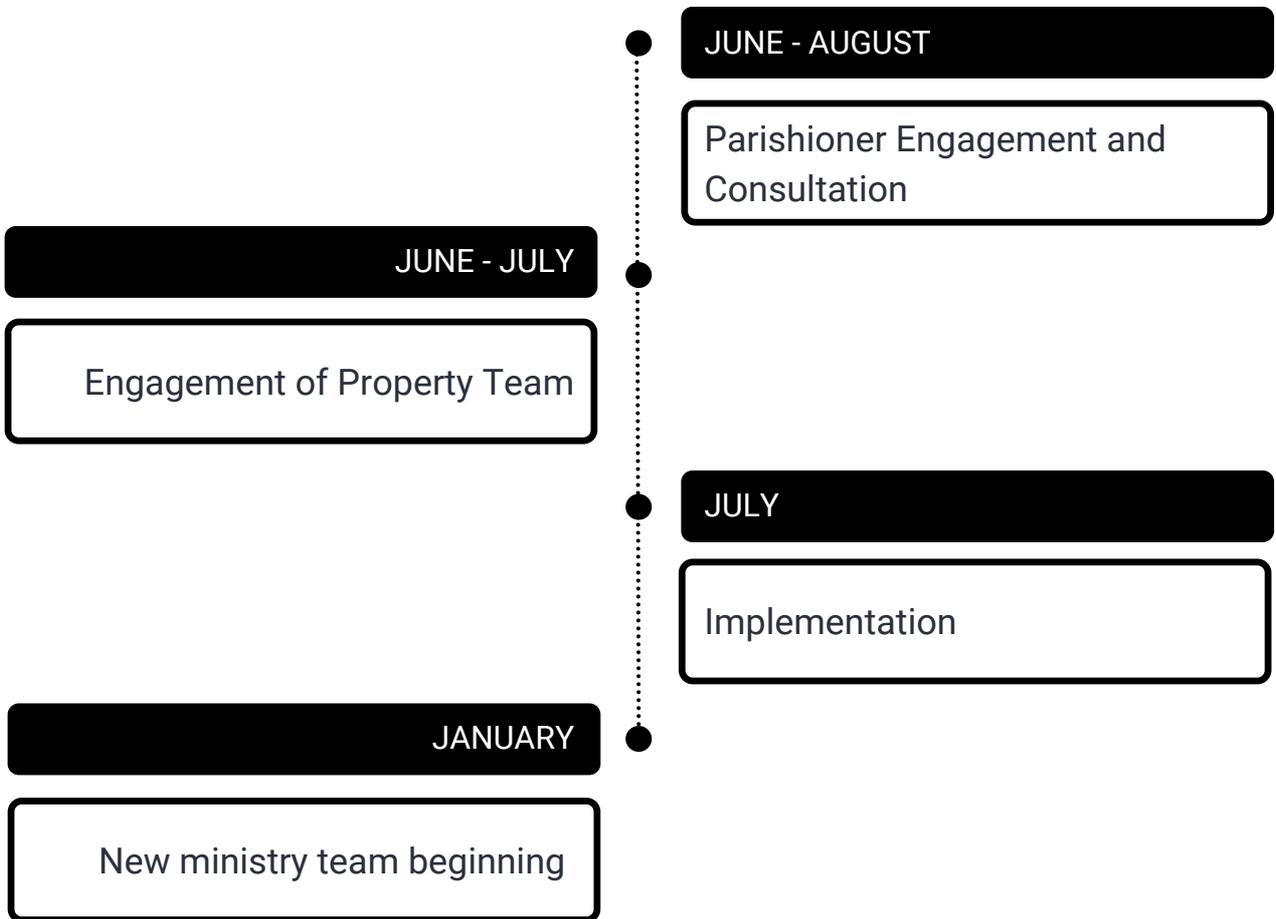
From here, the Property Subcommittee of the Finance Council of Mother of Mercy Parish along with representatives from the parishes would work with the Archdiocesan Properties team on a proposed Masterplan for all properties in the two parishes to consider how best to re-purpose these properties. This team will also support us with canonical processes.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

If the general consensus is to move forward, we then move to re-purpose properties, revise Mass times if necessary, and set up an endowment fund. Once this is established, we could look to recruit a ministry team starting 1 January 2023 (or before if possible). Evangelisation Brisbane would provide support with recruitment, parish structure and school engagement.

# Timeline

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# *Appendix One:* PARISH LEADERSHIP PARADIGM

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Such a vision would require sacrifice. The giving up of some existing practices and properties for the sake of a renewed vision and missionary engagement. Areas that would require change for this vision include (but are not limited to), the following:

## **1. PARISH LEADERSHIP IN TEAM**

- A. Leadership needs to be in teams, rather than by priests in isolation
- B. Leadership appointments need to be on charism rather than ordination
- C. Leadership team should encompass:
  - 1. Leader: provides overall vision and leadership (senior leader/s)
  - 2. Sacramental Provision (Priest/s)
  - 3. Youth Pastoral Associate – perhaps combined with Sacramental Coordinator
  - 4. Children’s and Families Pastoral Associate – General Pastoral Worker
  - 5. Liturgy and Music Pastoral Director
  - 6. Business Manager (if necessary)
  - 7. Secretary

## **2. ESSENTIAL MINISTRIES**

### **A. Youth Ministry (Yr 7 – 12):** every Friday night of the school year

- Volunteers meet fortnightly mid-week for prayer and prep
- Friday nights:
  - 1. Music
  - 2. Talk
  - 3. Small group discussion
  - 4. Final word
  - 5. Supper
  - 6. Youth ministry serves as a doorway to the Sunday Mass community... It does not stand in isolation, but is oriented toward engaging youth into the life of the parish, and therefore Sunday Mass

### **B. Children's Ministry**

- ‘Kids Church’ - for the full length of one family Mass on a Sunday with the option for children to return for Liturgy of the Eucharist if parents prefer
- Focused on engaging children with the life of Jesus and facilitating opportunities for children to encounter Jesus
- Play Group/Parent’s Group: One weekday morning a week, includes morning tea and some pastoral care
- Volunteers meet fortnightly for prayer and prep

### **C. Young Adults Ministry**

- Youth group leader also looks to engage young adults in the life of the parish
- Provide social get together after Sunday evening Mass/or event
- Small group studies in scripture in catholic teaching
- Teach young adults how to engage in their own scripture reading and praying with scripture

# *Appendix One:* PARISH LEADERSHIP PARADIGM

(CONTINUED)

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## **D. Senior's Ministry**

- At least once a month
- Scripture Reflection/Discussion Tea/Coffee Community

## **E. Adult Formation and Education: Discipleship Evenings**

- Senior Leaders to run monthly discipleship evening – focused on building faith and culture within the region
  1. Praise/Prayer
  2. 30min talk
  3. 30min discussion
  4. Supper
  5. Focused on the mission and vision of the Church in that region. Promoting activities across the church. Creating opportunity for encounter with God through prayer, praise and preaching.

## **F. Mass Community Coordinators/Leaders**

- Each Mass needs a key leader/coordinator: the same face at the same mass who would:
  1. Ensure welcome and rosters at Mass
  2. Engage new comers
  3. Run pre-Mass prayer meeting for those involved in the liturgy
  4. Ensure the culture, welcome, excellence and consistency of experience for new comers

## **G. Liturgy and Music Pastoral Associate**

- Liturgy and Music Pastoral Associate needs to be capable, competent, and versatile musician with a deep understanding of Catholic Liturgy. They require high interpersonal skills, and understand that they are employed to serve the vision of the Senior Leader of the Parish
- They oversee liturgy with a focus on music at masses
- Provide training and rehearsals for musicians

## **3. WHO?**

A. The key for such a ministry is quality of leadership

B. The structure allows for a broader selection of leaders that looks beyond the ordained, but selection of staff is crucial

C. Leaders need to have

- Deep sense of vocation to the Church
- Deep personal relationship with God
- Proven character: humility, stability, honesty, love, integrity
- The charism to lead in their respective area
- Suitable qualifications

# Appendix Two: PARISH SNAP SHOT IN NUMBERS

## Hendra Hamilton

Mother of Mercy

Brisbane North East



## PARISH PRIEST

Fr Neville Yun (14/04/2020 - 14/04/2026)

## PARISH COMMUNITY

### Mass Centres

1. Our Lady Help of Christians
2. St Cecilia's Church
3. St John's Church

### Parish Schools

1. Our Lady Help of Christians

## SUNDAY MASSES

- 6:00pm (V) (Hendra)
- 4:30pm (V) (Hamilton)
- 7:30am (Northgate)
- 8:30am (Hamilton)
- 9:00am (Hendra)
- 6:00pm (Hendra)

## MASS COUNT

2021 Mass Count	2019-2021 Variation	2019 Mass Count	2019-2016 Variation	2016 Mass Count
215	-49%	422	1%	416

## Clayfield

St Agatha's

Brisbane North East



## ADMINISTRATOR

Fr Neville Yun (01/01/2022 - 31/12/2022)

## PARISH COMMUNITY

### Mass Centres

1. St Agatha's

### Parish Schools

1. St Agatha's

### Other Schools Within Boundaries

1. St Rita's

## SUNDAY MASSES

- 5:00pm (V)
- 7:00am
- 9:00am
- 5:30pm

## MASS COUNT

2021 Mass Count	2019-2021 Variation	2019 Mass Count	2019-2016 Variation	2016 Mass Count
308	-17%	370	9%	457

# Appendix Three: RENEWAL

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HENDRA HAMILTON NORTHGATE CLAYFIELD