

The Parishes of St Teresa, St Hugh and St Thomas More

Our Parish workshop

Here, Now, Us

On 27 November 2021, 17 of our parishioners met together at St Thomas More Social Centre to share in a workshop to learn about, discuss and to plan how to create a more missionary outlook for our parishes.



Hard at work absorbing the treasure trove of our Catholic Social Teaching

Here are some of our experiences, thoughts and ideas for the road ahead.

We hope you will be inspired to come and join us in the weeks and months ahead into putting into practice what we learnt.



Our Context

Who are we?

Where are we?

What do we want?

We are three parishes Catholic Communities

We are present to one another in our communities

Working alongside and beyond in mutual support.

Desiring to share the Gospel with people around us.

Our parishes are:

- **Diverse with many unique gifts**
- **Different languages**
- **Different cultures**

We want to achieve closer integration and togetherness in order to bring about

- **More events celebrating what we can achieve together**
- **Using patience and perseverance**
- **With a one-to-one approach**
- **to turn ideas into action**

Common Good Thinking and Practice

- The idea of the politics of Hope as a principle of Common Good Thinking. (See YouTube video of Rabbi J Sacks)
- To overcome the divisions in society with is the politics of anger
- How to create a better future
- To use our social capital as assets to overcome the destructive concept of the zero sum game where one gains whilst another loses
- Social capital is love, friendship and influence which grow as they are shared. They are non zero sum games.
- They are not about competition but cooperation
- They are not found in the market of competition but in the environment of family and community
- To understand the difference, we need to look at the difference between contract and covenant
- A contract is an agreement where two people or more people pursuing their own interests, come together for mutual benefit.
- A Covenant is where people come to together in respect of each other in a loyal bond to do together what neither can achieve alone.
- The Social contract creates a state but a social covenant creates a society
- A covenantal society binds us together without overpowering or domineering because we are part of the collective.
- Societies are strong when they care for the weak
- Rich when they are for the poor
- Invulnerable when they care for the vulnerable
- In building the social covenant we defeat the politics of anger and division, and re-create the politic of hope.

Building the Common Good locally

How locally do we share our social capital to create a more covenantal shape to our society?

- **Identify gifts and strengths in each**
- **Build connections with wider region**
- **Clarify structures available already**
- **Address fears of future viability**
- **Caritas as a vehicle for ‘parish purpose’**
- **Feed conclusions into Synod outcomes**
- **Solidarity and Subsidiarity – get on a do things**
- **Broaden engagement and volunteering**
- **Integrate across ethnic groups**
- **Befriending and listening to what people want**
- **Persevering and committing.**
- **Awareness of those who are struggling financially and socially**
- **Dissipation of “mutual aid”**
- **Catholicism and its perception in society**

Looking Forwards

Identifying and overcoming our 'blind spots'

- **Divorced and separated**
- **People who 'go missing'**
- **Young people**
- **Are we a 'forgiving place'?**

To make available the resources to

- **Change our outlook**
- **Involve and engage all sections and groups in our communities in our liturgy.**
- **Mindset that is geared towards the development of Catholic Social Teaching in all aspects of parish life**
- **Direct our outreach for mission**
- **Be bold and progressive**
- **Plan for three-parish working together on finance, pastoral care, and mission.**

Conclusions and Feedback

The need to reach-out to the people who shy away and try to understand why. Offer more help and support. Be less judgmental, more positive, and more welcoming.

I want to serve Holy Mother Church all my abilities and want to concentrate on it through my parish community.

Getting to know those belonging to communities currently separated from main parish community. Involving individuals in outreach in the city (prison, winter shelter, detention shelter)

Deeper understanding of the needs of the lonely, follow this up with visiting someone I know.

Reach out to people I know who are in need of help/support. Try to be more proactive in doing and not wait to be asked to help. Possibly become one of those who asks others to join in!

Help and support Parish Priest & Deacon throughout parish life.

Think of joining new organisations – non-denominational – Post Pandemic. Re-start International shared Table. Lobby for Parish caretaker

Music – Elderly for transport to mass.

Be a powerful community of prayer. Part of a discerning group re Needs of today and how best to meet them.

My Skills are mostly in training and catechesis for young people, children, and families in the respect for life and reconciliation to help build Christian families.

THINK ‘COVENANT’ AS THE KEY WORD