IV

pastoral planning: strategies for multicultural pastoral care

“The spiritual care of all the faithful, and thus of the immigrant people, falls especially on the shoulders of the pastors of the parishes within which they live ... Let them bear this heavy burden in association and union with the chaplain or missionary if there is one present.” (Pastoralis Migratorum, n30, par 3)

It is important that migrants and ethnic communities be included in pastoral planning processes within the Archdiocese generally and in parishes.

Pastoral planning in a Church context means planning how the Church (be it an entire Archdiocese or particular parishes and communities) can carry out the mission of Jesus given the circumstances of today and where the Holy Spirit seems to be leading. Pastoral planning combines a focus on the mission of Jesus, a listening to the Spirit, an alertness to the signs of the times, and the development of practical actions. Pastoral planning is a systematic way of putting the church’s human and material resources at the service of its mission in the realities of today’s environment.

The term pastoral planning has been formally used in the Archdiocese since the mid-eighties. While planning had been a part of the life of many different diocesan organisations and communities, it was in the eighties that formal recognition was given to the need for more cohesive planning across this fast changing local Church.

A vision and broad goals were developed for the Archdiocese. Contributing to that process were the Priests’ Mini Assembly in 1987 and the Archdiocesan Assembly in 1989. In response to identified needs specific Archdiocesan projects were put into place.

The better known projects are those under the umbrella of Shaping Our Future. These include the development of the Archdiocesan Mission and Directions Statement (cf Ch 3) and the Shaping and Staffing Our Parishes (SSP) project.

SSP has been a comprehensive attempt to assist parishes to look at their mission in the light of the Archdiocesan Mission and Directions Statement and make pastoral plans for their future. For many parishes this has meant planning for change - working with the other parishes of the pastoral area, an expanding Catholic population within changing cultural norms, an increasingly multicultural Catholic population, fewer and ageing clergy or, in some cases, more clergy.

As the Archdiocese moves into the latter part of SSP attention is shifting to the Year of Great Jubilee in 2000 and beyond to the new millennium of Christianity. The major goal of pastoral planning as we move into the new millennium has been identified by Archbishop Bathersby as shaping the local Church into a vital missionary force in Australian society. Attention is to be more fully focussed on the Church’s role in the world - on evangelisation.

Parishes and the Archdiocese as a whole need to ensure that the pastoral care and inclusion of migrants, refugees and ethnic communities is given full consideration in these times of challenging change.
Pastoral Approaches to Migrants and Refugees in the Past

The Archdiocese of Brisbane has been described as a church where “a thousand flowers have bloomed”. This description refers to the many creative responses in pastoral ministry that have arisen in the last few decades. One of those “flowers” has been the response to migrants, refugees and ethnic communities.

The Catholic Immigration Office was established in 1947 to welcome and assist new immigrants from war-torn Europe. In the subsequent fifty years, migrants and refugees from most countries of the world have been welcomed to Australia through the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

This was possible only because of the great work done by the Catholic Immigration Office and its directors, and the contribution of many people and organisations working in conjunction with the office. There were many parishes which provided substantial assistance in resettling immigrant families. There were many clergy who took a particular interest in the pastoral care of migrants and refugees. Religious Orders played an enormous role in the resettlement and pastoral care process, particularly through the provision of Migrant Chaplains and through their work in Catholic schools. The St Vincent de Paul Society, both at parish and diocesan level, was a constant source of practical support for migrants and refugees.

In the time of the Catholic Immigration Office, the major pastoral responses to migrants and refugees could be summarised as:

➤ outreach and pastoral care by the local Church
➤ collaboration by religious orders, Church groups and individuals in providing ongoing support
➤ provision of Migrant Chaplains
➤ co-ordination of and support for local initiatives provided by the Catholic Immigration Office

Pastoral Strategies for Today’s Cultural Diversity

As the Archdiocese moves into new times, it is important to keep reviewing the major ways in which it responds to the pastoral care and inclusion of migrants and refugees. Today’s circumstances are different. In 1994 the Archdiocesan Catholic Immigration Office became the Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care (CMPC). The focus of CMPC’s work has shifted to take account of the needs of the present time. There is a much greater emphasis on education, awareness raising and work within Church structures and communities. Parishes are involved in resettling migrants and refugees in new ways. The number of priests and religious available for Cross-Cultural ministry is decreasing. There is a heightened awareness of the need for consistent pastoral and administrative approaches to ensure effective ministry. It is important that our multicultural reality is recognised and included in the ongoing life and mission of the local Church.
The following six strategies are the major ways in which the Archdiocese of Brisbane, working through parish communities, church agencies and individuals, responds to the pastoral care of migrants and refugees and the cultural diversity of the Archdiocese today.

1. **Commitment to Assisted Resettlement of Migrants and Refugees**

The Archdiocese will continue assisting with the resettlement of migrants and refugees within the parameters set by immigration laws. This has been a rich inheritance from our past under the management and guidance of the former Catholic Immigration Office. Now, the Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care continues the management of this strategy in conjunction with church, government and community bodies at the international, national and local levels.

A key feature of this strategy continues to be the collaborative working of parish communities with CMPC in establishing parish support groups. Parish support groups attend to the tasks involved in settling new migrant families and refugees within the parish.

2. **Commitment to Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers**

The appointment of Migrant Chaplains and other Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers to migrants and ethnic communities will continue to be a key pastoral strategy.

Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers play a vital bridging role between migrants/ethnic communities and the local church. Through Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers, new arrivals are welcomed and ministered to within their own cultural context. Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers work in cooperation, not in competition, with parish clergy, pastoral ministers and communities. Over time, Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers assist immigrants in the journey towards full, equal and active participation in the local Church.

(Refer to Chapter VI for further detail on the role of Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers.)

3. **Commitment to Networking, Partnership and Collaboration**

The Archdiocese continues to encourage the collaboration of different groups within the Church working with and for migrants and ethnic communities. Throughout our history, groups such as Religious Orders and the St Vincent de Paul Society have played a vital role in the welcoming and support of migrants and refugees. It is hoped that these collaborative networks of support will continue and expand. Parish support groups continue to be an effective response to the needs of newly arrived migrants and refugees. Good working relationships are fostered with relevant groups and authorities beyond the Church. The Archdiocese, through the work of CMPC, will do all it can to foster and support a collaborative approach in this area of ministry.

4. **Commitment to Cross-Cultural Education, Formation and Training**

Education, formation and training are an essential part of the journey towards a more inclusive, multicultural Church.

General cross-cultural education is important for all if we are to grow in sensitivity, understanding and appreciation of the rich cultural diversity that is within our Church. All of us as members of the Church will be empowered to build a stronger multicultural church if we have the basic knowledge, welcoming attitudes, skills and confidence to do so.

Formation and training are priority needs for Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers if they are to be effective in building a multicultural Church through their leadership roles. Chapter VI provides more detail on formation for cross-cultural ministry.

There is much that Church groups, faith communities, Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers can do for themselves to access basic education and more specialised training. In addition, CMPC provides resources, personnel and consultancy services to assist in this area. CMPC also has a responsibility to ensure that essential education and training opportunities are in place in the Archdiocese and are being utilised.
5. Commitment to Inclusion of Cultural Diversity in the Life and Mission of the Church.

Parishes and Archdiocesan bodies are encouraged to be aware of the cultural diversity within the faith community and to reflect such diversity in pastoral and administrative structures and in pastoral planning processes. Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers, mindful of their bridge-building role, collaborate with local parishes to work out tangible ways in which the migrant community can make meaningful links with the local parish.

As immigrants begin to relate to the local Church community, it is important that they be assisted to know its history and understand its priorities. It is equally important that the local Church community comes to know, understand and respect the stories of its new arrivals. Such mutual enrichment expresses the diversity and universality of the Church, especially when it finds expression in the liturgical and pastoral life of parish communities and the wider Archdiocese. Liturgy, being the most visible and frequent expression of ourselves as Church, has a special role in reflecting and relating to the diverse expressions of faith of those who gather.

6. Commitment to Archdiocesan Co-ordination and Resourcing of Multicultural Pastoral Care Strategies.

The Archbishop has entrusted to one of the Auxiliary Bishops the oversight of pastoral care for migrants, refugees and ethnic communities in the Archdiocese. The Archbishop has also appointed a Co-ordinator of Multicultural Pastoral Care within the Archdiocesan structures to carry much of the day to day workload involved in the co-ordination of multicultural care across the Archdiocese. Further, the Co-ordinator directs the work of the Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care (CMPC), the Archdiocesan agency which assists in the implementation of the Archdiocesan multicultural pastoral care strategies identified here. CMPC does this work in collaboration with other key bodies and personnel such as Migrant Chaplains and Cross-Cultural Pastoral Ministers to migrant and ethnic communities, Parish Priests and parish communities, ethnic and migrant communities within the Archdiocese and other Church agencies. The position of Co-ordinator, Multicultural Pastoral Care and the work of CMPC with its professional and committed staff is a key Archdiocesan pastoral strategy for building up a vibrant multicultural Church, and represents ongoing Archdiocesan financial commitment to achieving this goal.

A more detailed outline of the role of the Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care is provided in Chapter VII.

The six major pastoral strategies outlined above provide a framework for pastoral care in today’s culturally diverse Archdiocese. Within this broad framework there is much scope and a great need to develop specific approaches to particular issues which arise from time to time. Effective pastoral approaches are generated when people from such key groups as Priests and parishes, Migrant Chaplains, ethnic communities and CMPC staff collaborate with a sense of common mission. It is hoped and intended that this document will support such collaboration.