

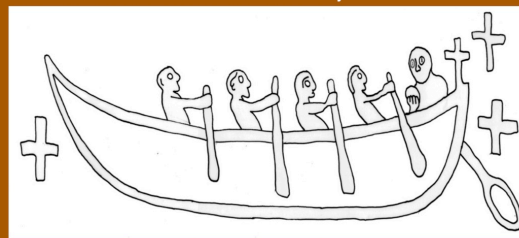
*Lay leadership  
in the parish*

*Our spirituality,  
faith and liturgy*

*The parish community  
and its sustainability*

*Our outreach ministries*

St Canice's Elizabeth Bay



## The Parish Gathering/ The feast day of St Ignatius

**W**e started our day by remembering Ignatius, and particularly his interior life. What could his life show us about our own? Where have each of us been called? What are our gifts, do we notice the movements in our heart, can we too let this be a guide to help us decide, discern what is the way we are best called to live for God?

What then are the gifts, the identity of our parish? How do we see it, what has drawn each of us to it, and what keeps us in it? How then can we use this information of the heart, to go out, to go forward? What is our vocation and what is our mission?

We started the afternoon with 'The Lord's Prayer' sung in Aramaic, and I wonder if most of us know this in already in our cells. We are called; we have been; since time began.

Four themes were discussed by different members of council and community' as a prelude to breaking into discussion groups. :

Lay leadership in the parish was led by Margaret Spencer. “We should not look on lay leadership as a replacement for a parish priest. We are called by baptism to lead, to proclaim the Word. We should not look on leadership as filling a hole left by lack of staff, but by the fire ignited in our souls by love. She said, “It is our job to become formed so that we can lead”.

Caroline spoke to our spirituality, faith and liturgy. “We are an open church. We provide a place for all. People come and find their heart here, they find a place to grow and flourish.”

Sue Wittenoom, in leading discussion focussed on the parish community and its sustainability, citing the different spaces, houses and buildings we have at St Canice’s said, “This offers us the opportunity of imagining how these may be used moving forward and possibly bringing more dignity to the people in the streets. Following Ignatius, we ask ourselves, how we can live more simply”.

Michael Parker was leading a group centred on our outreach ministries. Michael said, “How can the Kitchen evolve to improving our ‘outreach’ activities? We already have outreach from the Parish Office, a reinvigorated St Vincent’s de Paul Society, the Rooftop Garden, our sister parish in Railaco, and of course Canice Kitchen itself.

The groups worked with discerning how we could go forward. We were not involved in a business planning day, but a day to invite freedom and to listen closely to each other, where is the spirit moving us?

#### How do we imagine St Canice’s in 5/10 years?

How to go forward now, learning to listen, sharpening our capacity to discern to be spirit led in these changing times.

Groups will continue to keep their mission and each other in prayer, and there was a general agreement to meet again between the Masses on a Sunday at a date in the not too distant future. We agreed that we will be a praying community, and this be the where we start from.

Meanwhile we ask our whole community, those that were there and those who could not join us, to keep us in prayer, prayer for us all, to be given the grace to open our hearts and minds to God.

We are custodians of this precious, vibrant place. We will look after the work that has been done here for many years, and we will continue to serve and accompany all.

*The common theme for the day was that each of us was welcomed here. We were lost, we were outsiders and we found a place where we found a deep acceptance, a place where we could flourish. This is God’s hand.*

Not many places can make that claim.

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