

**Youth sub-committee**

**OLSH Parish Assembly 21<sup>st</sup> September 2008**

***Preamble: The youth of today will become the adult Catholics and Parishioners of the future. It is important that we find ways to invite and welcome them into the life of the parish. Young people are naturally inquisitive and questioning, conscious of social justice issues, and want to be part of, and identify with, a larger community. They are also searching for spiritual guidance, direction, and reassurance, as they develop in their independence towards adulthood.***

***Proposal: To create an environment where the young are actively involved in the life of the parish.***

**Currently, the parish has some engagement with the youth, mainly through its connection with the local Catholic school. The First Friday Mass with the Bath Street campus is a very popular and effective way of contacting the younger children and their families. Most of the older children have the occasional meetings with the priests at the school, while some students participate in the Sunday liturgies, as readers.**

**Over the months leading to the 2008 World Youth Day in Sydney, the parish invested a lot of energy and encouragement in welcoming young people and organising their participation in this international gathering. After this remarkable experience, it may be possible to gather a small group that could focus on the next such event in Madrid, 2011. The World Youth Day brought young people together in a faith environment. It would be good to tap some of that positive energy for the parish; what can the parish learn from the organisers of WYD08?**

**Over the next year, the committee recommends that the Sunday evening Mass be dedicated to the Youth. Initially this would be each month. The liturgy committee could be asked to assist with the format of the Mass.**

**Following the Mass, the youth would be invited to a structured, but flexible, social gathering in the grounds of the presbytery, where participants would be invited to share something to eat, listen to music and enjoy each other's company, in the presence of some adults. It may be possible to invite guest speakers, watch a movie or do some small group work. Ideally this programme would be a feature of the parish over the next five years.**

**To sustain the interest over a long period and to constantly keep the youth in focus with the parish it is recommended that the parish employ a part-time Youth Coordinator. Ideally the Coordinator will be someone who has an interest in young people, has musical and organisational talents, is committed to the faith, and is creative and hardworking. Such a person could well have another positions, say a teaching appointing at the Catholic school. The Youth Coordinator would be assisted by a committee and a chaplain.**

**Besides the social and liturgical elements, it is recommended that the parish will also offer opportunities for the youth to experience social justice activities, such as working on a soup kitchen in conjunction with the St Vincent de Paul Society. This could be part of the community service promotions that are required of senior students at the school and for those students associated with the Marist REMAR movement. These students could be given a challenge and some goals to meet.**

**It is anticipated that the parish will be able to offer a place where the youth can gather and where they can feel comfortable and able to access the services of the Catholic community.**

***Goals for the next five years:***

- 1) Dedicate the Sunday evening Mass, at least once a month, to the Youth.**
- 2) Gather and maintain good resources for this Mass – music, power point presentations.**
- 3) Gather together adults who will be mentors to the young. This group would be the planning committee that could eventually work with a Youth Coordinator, as the parish youth committee.**
- 4) Provide a space within the grounds of the presbytery (and Bath Street campus) where the youth can gather after the Sunday Mass (or at other times) – with good lighting, catering distribution facilities, a sound system etc.**
- 5) Work with the Catholic school to fund a position for a Youth Coordinator who will be the key focus for youth in the parish (assisted by a committee and a chaplain).**
- 6) Provide opportunities to experience social justice by actually engaging with those less fortunate. A liaison with the St Vincent de Paul Society would be one means to commence such a programme. The Coordinator of such a programme would be part of the parish youth committee.**