



Ad Clerum – September 2007

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Greetings.

It is my prayer that both life and ministry are a blessing to you. When I was young I thought the “green time”, the Sunday After Trinity as it was then, or the Sundays After Pentecost as they are now known, went on forever! However, I can not get over how quickly time has flown. I was reflecting on St. Bartholomew’s Day that it is five months since I was consecrated.

Reflections from the Hill:

This week Fr. Ian quoted from William H. Willimon, who was one of my lecturers when I was overseas. Willimon is right, it is very easy to develop an inward ministry focus. In my last parish appointment I realized I had to make contact with the community if the Parish was to grow. So I strived to contact six parishioners each day, either by telephone or visit, and six people who were not involved with the life of the Church.

This was a great learning for me. Those who were parishioners thought differently to those who were not members of the parish. In general, Church members were concerned about the ministry they received along with the matters of the institutional Church. Those who did not belong to the Church wanted to know about God and how the Christian faith could enrich their lives.

Several years ago, I undertook the Lab1 course. The focus of the course was to help people back to the Church. One of the statistics I recall the leader made was that you need twenty one meaningful contacts before people will become involved again. At the time I thought, “What!” I have to say for me it has proved to be true time and time again. In reaching out we have to be intentional. I had to examine my ministry style and approach. It was not easy. In fact I often thought it was easier in the “good old days!” The days are gone when we can say, “I made contact and it’s up to them”. In coming to grips with the ministry reality, I found my prayer life was enhanced and enriched as well.

So I thank Fr. Ian for his weekly contributions and for this current reflection.

Audited Financial Statements:

By now every Synod member should have received the audited financial statements. I remind people that you have until Wednesday 5th September, to make comment or ask questions.

Web Site:

I thank Mr. Matthew Hodge and Mrs Julie Cliff for all their work in re-vamping our web site. During the last couple of days I have spoken with people from other dioceses and they have commented positively on it.

The Reverend Canon Dr. Barbara Oudt:

Canon Barbara will conclude her ministry at St. Mark's College at the end of the year. I ask for your prayers for Canon Barbara as she prepares to retire and for the Council of the College as they seek a new Principal.

The Position of General Manager:

Applications for this important position within the life of the Diocese close today. We have some very good applicants. A small committee has been appointed by the Executive to interview and appoint. I will keep you informed of progress.

Fr. Patrick Doulin:

I am pleased to report that the Parish of North Mackay has invited me to extend Fr. Patrick's ministry for another twelve months, that is, to the end of December 2008. I was delighted to honour this request.

NATISAC:

On Thursday, 23 August, 2007, I had the pleasure of being with the members of NATISAC, as they continue to address ministry issues. As part of the agenda we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Torres Strait Islanders joining NATISAC. Bishop Jim Leftwich has been the Chair for a number of years and at this meeting stepped down from being Chair, but will remain a member of NATISAC. Fr. Charles Loban was elected the new Chair.

We give thanks for Bishop Jim's leadership in past years and assure Fr. Charles of our prayers as he takes up his new responsibilities.

A Future with Hope:

I have drafted a 2007 version of the documents and it is being proof read. As soon as it is ready it will be forwarded to parishes.

A recent meeting of the Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee resolved to trial the priest/enabler model of ministry. I am approaching possible parishes to ask if they are prepared to trial such a venture.

What do you Seek?

Grassroots publications have invited me to write their Lenten book for 2008. The title is "What do you Seek? In terms of the Lectionary, next Year is A with the traditional Lenten readings. These are the readings that were used when adults were seeking baptism in the life of the early church.

Also the studies will focus on the renewal of baptismal vows at Easter. One of the concerns I had as a Parish Priest was that parishioners did not really prepare to renew their baptismal vows at Easter. The study will address this issue.

Cursillo:

At present I have invited people to discern whether God is calling them to be Lay Directors for 2008.

Synod 2008:

Due to the Lambeth Conference at the end of July and start of August, the date of Synod has been moved forward. It is 4th, 5th and 6th July 2008. Please note these dates in your diary and let your Parish know.

Two Dates:

21st September has been designated as the International Day of Prayer for Peace. Liturgical resources are available at: <http://overcomingviolence.org/en/iepc/resources.html>

30th September – Social Justice Sunday. The registry will forward a resource booklet to parishes early next week. Information and supplementary resources are available from www.ncca.org.au

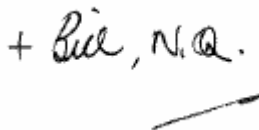
Prayer Points:

- Fr. Kevin Perrett – as he mourns the loss of his dear mother.
- The Reverend Keith Dodds as his health continues to improve.
- Canon Barbara Oudt as she continues her ministry at St. Mark's and prepares to retire.
- Fr. Paul Bland as he concludes his ministry as Principal of Trinity Anglican School.
- Fr. John Simons and Mildred as they prepare to move to St. John's Cairns.
- Vacant Parishes and for those invited to consider various parishes – especially Ingham, Mossman/Port Douglas and Proserpine.
- The Yorke Island community as they mourn the death of Fr. Rocky Nai and then a week later the death of the Council Chair, Mr Don Mosby.
- For General Synod and our diocesan representatives: Bishop James Leftwich; Bishop Saibo Mabo; The Reverend Canon Chris Wright; The Reverend Ian McAlister; The Reverend Christian Ford; Mr Michael Fellows; Mr Allan Spinaze; Mrs Deane Bray and myself.
- Bishop Saibo as he commences in-service training.
- For our Military Chaplains, those who are being deployed and their loved ones.
- For the Roberts family at this difficult time and for all who are caring for Mr Roberts.
- For our Schools.
- For the Committee to appoint a new General Manager/Registrar.
- For the Diocese of Riverina as the drought continues to have a crippling impact economically and socially. Bishop Doug has asked for prayers in three areas:
 1. Our farmers and their families (also I ask you to pray for our farmers and loved ones).
 2. Our rural communities who struggle to maintain their energy (also for our communities as well).
 3. Our faith communities as they share the message of hope to their communities (Please for our faith community to do the same).
- For the people of the Sunshine Coast as they clean up following last weekend's floods.

Please be assured of my prayers for you and your ministry. There are many exciting ministry activities taking place in our Diocese. It is my prayer that we can continue to build on them so that the Kingdom of God will be extended in your part of the vineyard.

Yours in Christ,

+ Bill, N.Q.



Bishop William (Bill) Ray
Bishop of North Queensland