



Ad Clerum – November 2007

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

The Rev'd. Jeff Coop:

Last Saturday week, Jeff was ordained priest. It was a wonderful act of worship at All Saints' Gordonvale. I thank the Archdeacon for leading the retreat and for his challenging sermon. We pray not only for Jeff, but for Christine and their two lovely daughters Breanna and Lysandra.

Also Jeff celebrates his fortieth birthday in the next week or so. Congratulations.

The Rev'd Maggie Kirby:

Maggie will be ordained priest on Friday evening 30 November, 2007. The Propers will be for St. Andrew.

The liturgical colour is red.

We pray for:

Fr. Tony Martin as he celebrated his seventieth birthday last Thursday (8th November).

Fr. Arthur Chauntler and his daughters as they care for Fr. Arthur. Fr. Arthur has been in hospital this week but hopes to be discharged tomorrow and the family will care for him at home in a palliative care situation.

Fr. David Philp, former priest of this Diocese, underwent surgery for the removal of a tumour on the brain. It is my understanding that David is being moved to a Nursing Home. We pray for Fr. David, Daphne and the family at this time

Bishop John Noble:

I have been speaking with Bishop Noble and I am delighted to report that his health has improved. Bishop John will remain on medication, but he is very well and sounds very happy. All his heart function test results are excellent. Life is treating Bishop John and Lorene kindly. Please keep praying for them.

General Synod:

Our Diocese was represented well by The Archdeacon, Fr. Christian Ford, Fr. Ian McAlister, Mrs Deane Bray, Mr Michael Fellows and Mr Al Spinaze.

It is great that General Synod has indigenous representation. Bishop Jim Leftwich, Bishop Saibo Mabo and Fr Charles Loban had seats on the floor of Synod.

Our Primate, Archbishop Phillip Aspinall's leadership was outstanding. I attach an email from the Primate's office in regard to some of the outcomes.

The National Home Mission Fund Meeting (NHMF):

On Thursday 18th October the NHMF met in Sydney. There were requests for ministry assistance totalling \$195,000. The available funds were only \$128,000.

I had submitted requests totalling \$47,500.

I need to point out that the Dioceses of Rockhampton and Gippsland did not apply this year as they realised that available funds were limited.

We were successful in securing funds of \$20,000 to maintain the ministry of our Ministry Development Officer.

Our funding source for Weipa was reduced by \$2,000 to \$7,000.

We were not successful for funds for the monthly Western run or the Gulf run. The Diocesan Executive will be addressing how we can fund these and other ministries for the 2008 year.

The Chairman of NHMF, Bishop Ron Stone and the members of the Fund are being proactive in seeking to raise monies during 2008 so that their pool of funds for 2009 is larger. Please pray for us.

Financial Situation:

I take this opportunity to thank the Diocesan Executive for grappling with a number of issues. Not only have our NHMF grants been reduced, the Diocese did not receive the level of funding we applied for from ABM. However, I must say we did very well compared to other dioceses, but as a Diocese we need to address how we fund and support various ministries.

There are some matters of financial management in regard to St. James Village that the Diocese needs to address. To rectify these matters the Diocesan Executive has approved funds to correct various matters.

Since I have arrived in the Diocese, there have been several requests for financial help for a variety of causes. Due to our current financial situation, I have to inform you that there are no funds available except via certain trusts which are for specific purposes.

A Future With Hope:

Early this month the first of the Regional Consultations were held for the latter part of 2008. I thank Fr. Ian McAlister for the planning and work he undertakes in regard to these conferences and for ministry development in general.

The theme for 2008 is "2008 – faith and hope and love".

I have placed the outline of my paper on the web.

Communication/Stewardship:

Since becoming Bishop, I have said several times that communication is a key issue within the life of the Diocese. I learnt in parish ministry just because you have said something once, it certainly does not mean that everyone has heard it!

The same is true within the Diocese. There is a need to keep retelling the message.

Also we need to address the matter of Stewardship. Stewardship is not just about money. Stewardship is about how we use what we have to honour and give glory to God. It includes how we use our skills, our time, our talents as well as the finances and their resources we have been blessed with in this life.

We give in thanksgiving to God for the blessings of life.

Diocesan Council Meeting:

Please pray for the Diocesan Council meeting on Wednesday 21 November. Many important decisions will be made that will impact future ministry.

Cathedral Restoration:

Both the Cathedral Chapter and the Diocesan Executive have agreed that the work on the bell tower commence as soon as possible.

On today's figures the cost is \$1,127,435.62. As building costs are rising at 1.2% per month, in Townsville, the final cost will be greater than this amount.

The Restoration Appeal will be launched at 12 noon on Saturday 16th February, 2008. This is the weekend of the Diocesan Council. I have invited Bishop Adrian Charles, a former Dean, to be the celebrant and preacher at the Service. I have invited my Episcopal brother, Bishop Michael Putney to be present as well.

Good Shepherd Lodge:

The Board of Good Shepherd Lodge is exploring the possibility of a 60 bed facility at Greenfield, north of Mackay. Please pray for the Board as they explore this possibility.

Books:

Professor Noel Loos has published a book titled, "**White Christ, Black Cross**". I have read it with interest and found it very helpful. For me the book put together many pieces of the indigenous ministry jig-saw. It is easy reading. It provides well researched background to ministry in this Diocese and the role of ABM. For anyone in ministry within this Diocese, this book is a must. You will be blessed.

The Mission Task Force of General Synod has produced a very helpful booklet. "**Time to grow: doing church differently**". I am forwarding a copy to each parish. The booklet not only offers challenges it provides insights as to possible ways forward. A must for all in diocesan and parish leadership.

I have mentioned before that I have read Bishop Hall-Matthews book, "**A Remarkable Venture of Faith**" and Bishop John Lewis' thesis for his Master of Theology degree on self supporting ministry within the former Diocese of North Queensland. All four books have been most helpful in my understanding of the history and where the current Diocese of North Queensland is at present. The challenge is how we move forward with love and care. This challenge is very much a part of my prayer life at this point in time.

Advent Studies:

Fr. Ian McAlister has written four excellent Advent studies. I know it may not be convenient for some parishes to undertake them as studies this Advent, but I urge every parish to use them.

With Annual Meetings coming up, these studies would be a wonderful way for a new Parish Council to focus on their ministry.

I look forward to hearing how the studies have gone for you and your parish.

Website:

This past Sunday I gave the address at the Remembrance Day Service in Townsville. There have been several requests for it to be placed on the web. By the time you read this, it should be there.

As mentioned before I have written one of the Lenten books available for next Lent. Not only is there the book but there is a C.D. that provides a range of resources. After Christmas I will place the sermons on the web and people can use them as they see fit.

I have often asked the preacher for a copy of a sermon. There have been times, after reading it, I was not as excited. I believe there is something in the delivery of a sermon that you can not pick up in "just the reading". Having said that, they offer some ideas that some may like to take up.

Registry – Holiday period:

It has not been easy at times during this year and I have granted the staff time off between Christmas and the New Year. I will be on call.

You can contact me at home on: (07) 4728 9413 or
Mobile: 0418 713 506 or 0418 779 239

Thank you very much for your ministry.

God bless

+ Bill, N.Q.
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The Right Reverend William (Bill) Ray
Bishop of North Queensland