

NOTES FROM SUNDAY, 23 AUGUST - FORMATION AND PARTICIPATION ST. MARY'S - 12 PARTICIPANTS

Some shared what resonated with them from the document, others it was personal experience.

- Formation is lifelong. "For me it started with Antioch, Engaged Couples program, Children's Liturgy. But formation in all stages of life is vital".
- Intellectual formation. Courses at CTC on leadership. Other parishes offer formation which can be tapped in to. Courses need to be affordable.
- Belonging to the APMN (Australian Pastoral Musicians Network) and going to conferences around Australia that deal with Liturgy & Music that can then be shared with our parishes and put into action.
- We lived in the country, 25 miles from the Church. And my formation began with my parents and I learnt from them greatly. Then formation at Teacher's College going on to teaching. Our formation in faith changes as we get older.
- My father was a non-Catholic but so supportive of Mum and our Church life and Catholic education. We were formed also in simple interactions. I married a non-Catholic who was incredibly supportive and one day out of the blue he announced he would go through the RCIA program and I was his sponsor. This was a huge step in formation for me.
- Where is formation/participation in the lives of those who don't attend Church? How do we engage with ALL people.
- I have been a practising Catholic all my life from a very religious family. That encouraged me to work in Catholic Education and be involved in Parish life. For me mental health formation is needed. These people have a real disconnect no matter what religion. We need to be hopeful and our faith is a gift. St Mary's is part of a WHOLE community of church and non-church people with various needs. Do what we can to support our community at our particular life stage.
- I was a Remand Centre volunteer which has left me with a huge legacy.
- Everyone needs faith in what can be. In primary school the nuns needed someone to clean the classrooms so I spoke about it at dinner one night and my father went and voluntarily cleaned the school for years and we never knew this. Faith/community in action.

- There is a relational dimension to formation. Very happy that a Youth Group has restarted in the Parish.
- Being a very multi-cultural Parish one participant felt very disconnected when she came to the Parish, even with the people from her birth country. Learning a new way of doing things in the Australian Catholic Church was very hard.
- One participant would like to see us sitting closer together in Church.
- One participant felt she had let her children down because they don't attend Church. What will happen to the Church if the youth (our children) don't feel the need to 'belong'?
- Faith can be apologetic. Formation happens in different ways - internally and externally.
- Church language needs updating. There is also a contemplative way of seeing our faith. We have an innate desire to love and serve God. With our newly formed youth group one person when asked what they hoped to get out of the group said "how can I best serve God?"
- Is your faith life-giving? Your circumstances/actions determine how your life is 'giving'. Humbly live the Gospel, actioning your faith.