



Building Communities of Belonging

Diocesan Formation Gathering Day

Saturday 11 October 2025

Participant Booklet



Outline of the Day

- 9:00 am Arrival, Registration: Participants collect nametags and program; enjoy morning tea
- 9:30 am Acknowledgement of Country
Welcome and About this Day
- 9:45 am` Prayer
- 10.00 am **Keynote: Part I** The place of community and belonging in a Catholic parish. What is its place? Why is it important in the context of the mission of the parish/Church in today's culture.
- 10:40 am Discussion on Keynote Part I
- 11.00 am **Keynote: Part II** What can a parish do to grow the sense of belonging amongst its parishioners?
- 11:40 am Discussion on Keynote Part II
- 11:55 am Participants move to their selected workshop (indicated on name tag)
- 12.00 pm **Workshops:** Located in the science block across from Mercy Centre
- 12:50 pm **LUNCH** (in Mercy Centre)
- 1:30 pm **Round Robin Dialogue** between Parishes; three rounds
- 2:40 pm **Plenary** Discussion and Sharing
Listening to one another in a general sharing of what has been heard, what is insightful, what is challenging, what is hopeful.
- 3:15 pm **Following up** in Parish Group
1-3 things we will follow up in our parish community/s: Participants discuss with their own parish group where possible.
- 3:40 pm Wrap Up and Prayer



WORKSHOPS

	Focus	Content	Leader/s
A	Building Communities of Belonging – learning from what others have discovered.	What are the insights from other parishes who are intentionally well into this journey?	Geoff Gowdie
B	A community of belonging for Young People	What sort of parish culture is invitational, welcoming and inclusive of young people?	Claire Spinelli and team
C	A community of belonging for Children & Families	What sort of parish culture is invitational, welcoming and inclusive for children and families?	Christine Sebire
D	Parish–School Partner-ship in building communities of belonging	The critical role of parish and school working together to build connection, welcome, trust and belonging with families'/children/ young people.	Dr Paul Sharkey and Kim Butler
E	Building communities of belonging - local strategies in practice	Examples of practices that are in use in our diocese.	Fr Junray Rayna
F	Welcome, hospitality and belonging in Scripture	The essential and foundational role of welcome, hospitality and belonging in the biblical narrative.	Dr Chris Cotter and team

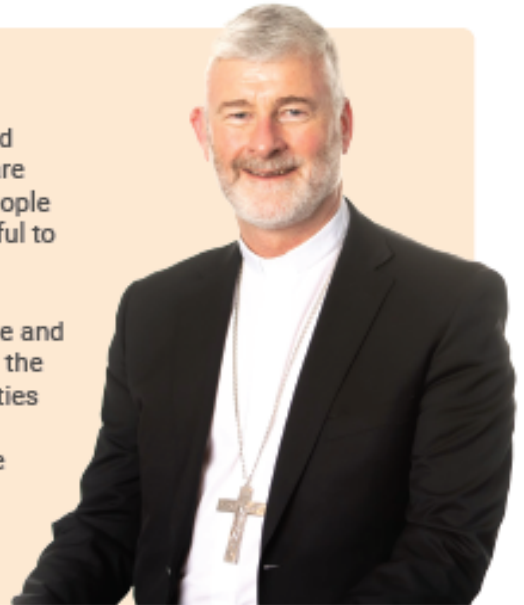


Message from the Bishop of Sandhurst

It is my great pleasure to promulgate the Strategic Mission and Pastoral Goals (2024-2028) for the Sandhurst Diocese. They are the fruit of deep listening, dialogue and discernment by the people of God in our Diocese over the past few years. I am very grateful to all who have contributed to their development.

The Strategic Mission and Pastoral Goals will guide, encourage and inform our missionary and pastoral initiatives and activities at the Chancery, in parishes, schools and other movements and entities throughout the Diocese for the next five years. The Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council will monitor, review and evaluate progress towards the goals.

Most Rev Shane Mackinlay DD PhD



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

Gospel mission and pastoral outreach.

- 1.1 Informed and inspired people committed to missionary discipleship.
- 1.2 Renewed forms of participation in the life of the Church, with particular attention to those who are marginalised, or who feel disconnected or excluded.
- 1.3 Thriving Christian communities that embody synodality and witness to the Gospel.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

Belonging and sense of community.

- 2.1 Parishes that build welcoming, flourishing, and inclusive communities where the love of Jesus can be experienced and celebrated.
- 2.2 The gifts and wisdom of women are valued and included as fundamental to our Church.
- 2.3 Renewal of how our parishes and other ministries collaborate to build sustainable and life-giving communities.
- 2.4 Creation and implementation of an effective Diocesan Communication Strategy.

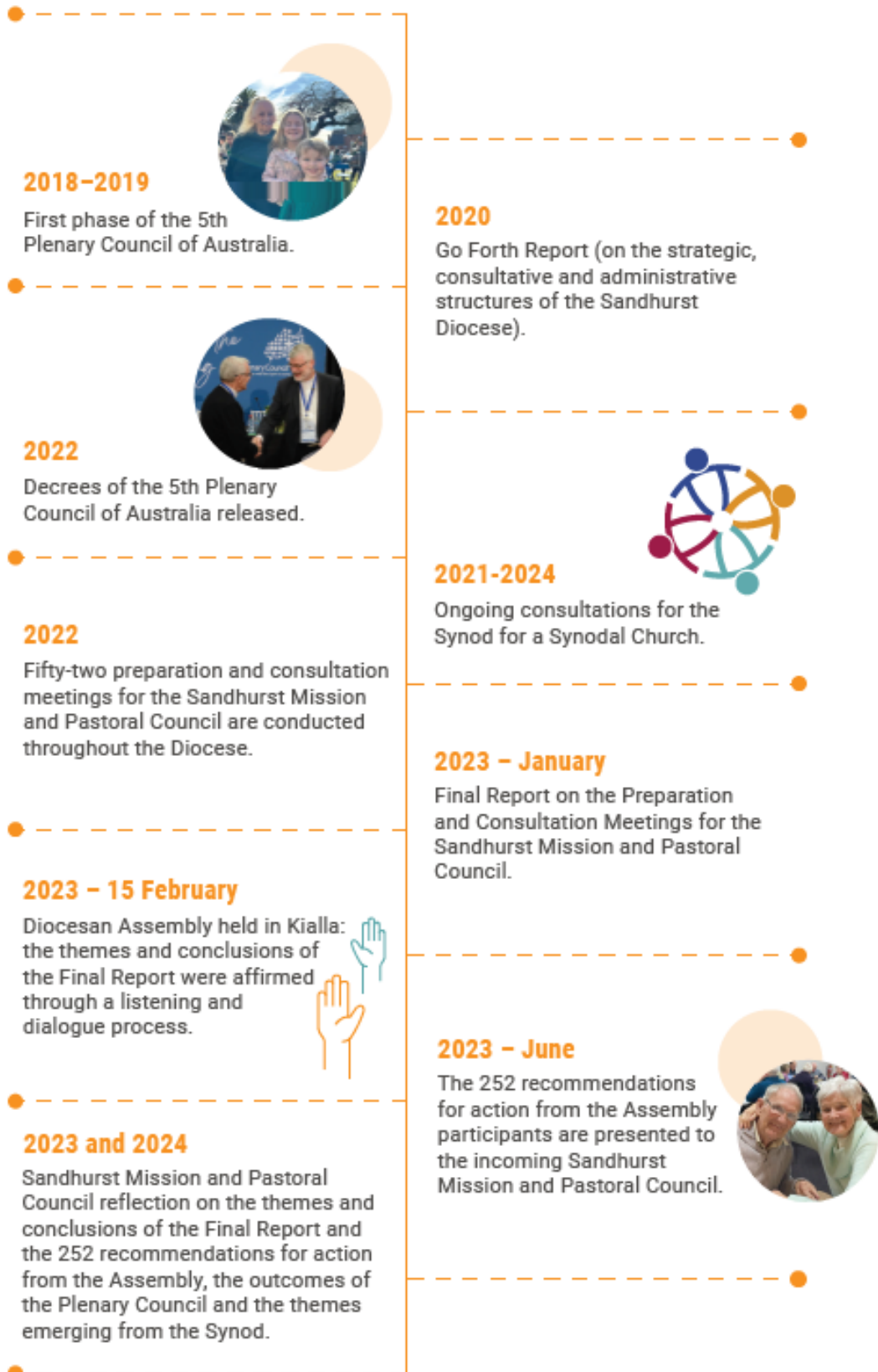
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

Life-giving and empowering formation.

- 3.1 Formation of the People of God to be informed, confident and Spirit-filled missionary disciples.
- 3.2 Coordinated faith formation that is readily available and responds to the lived realities of people throughout the Diocese.
- 3.3 Ongoing formation and encouragement for people to take responsibilities in liturgy and leadership.



THE JOURNEY TOWARD THESE GOALS...





Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

FORMATION SUPPORT PLAN 2025 - 2026



In light of the Strategic Mission and Pastoral Goals, Bishop Shane has endorsed the following Formation Initiatives for 2025 – 2026.

2025

1 SMP GOALS FAMILIARISATION WORKSHOP

- between June and September for all parishes: priests, parish councils (pastoral & finance), ministry teams and interested parishioners
- led by Workshop Facilitators
- book a time slot with Chancery [email: leslie.cooper@sandhurst.catholic.org.au]

2 PARISH-BASED PLANNING PROCESS to implement Strategic Mission and Pastoral Goals

- available from September 2025
- supported by Facilitation Leaders as needed
- and including:

3 Processes and Workshops for Synodal Decision Making and Conversations in the Spirit

4 DIOCESAN FORMATION GATHERING – enriching capacity for growing a Sense of Community and Belonging

- Saturday 11 October, Shepparton

5 EVANGELISATION AND FORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- lead-up and follow-up formation strategies around and in light of the **Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF)**, Melbourne, **30 November - 2 December**

2026

6 ANNUAL DIOCESAN GATHERING Sandhurst Formation Institute

- School holidays July 2026

7 DEANERY FORUMS Bendigo, Shepparton, Wangaratta

- to facilitate inter-parish sharing forums in/from March thru to May/June

8 SCHEDULE OF MINISTRY SPECIFIC FORMATION 2026

- supporting and collating an annual schedule of formation for specific ministries, including priests, pastoral associates, RCIA teams, sacramental teams, liturgical ministries, youth ministries, parish-school partnership leaders
- available from February 2026

9 NETWORK OF PEOPLE/RESOURCES to provide spiritual formation

- to support Strategic Mission and Pastoral Goals
- from February 2026

10 ONLINE FORMATION RESOURCE LIBRARY

- developed through 2026, 2027
- added to as local resources are completed and as external resources are collected, curated and collated.

Note: All Formation Projects above, except No 1, will be ongoing beyond 2026. Even No 1, once completed will result in a reusable resource that can go into the Online Resources Library (No 10).



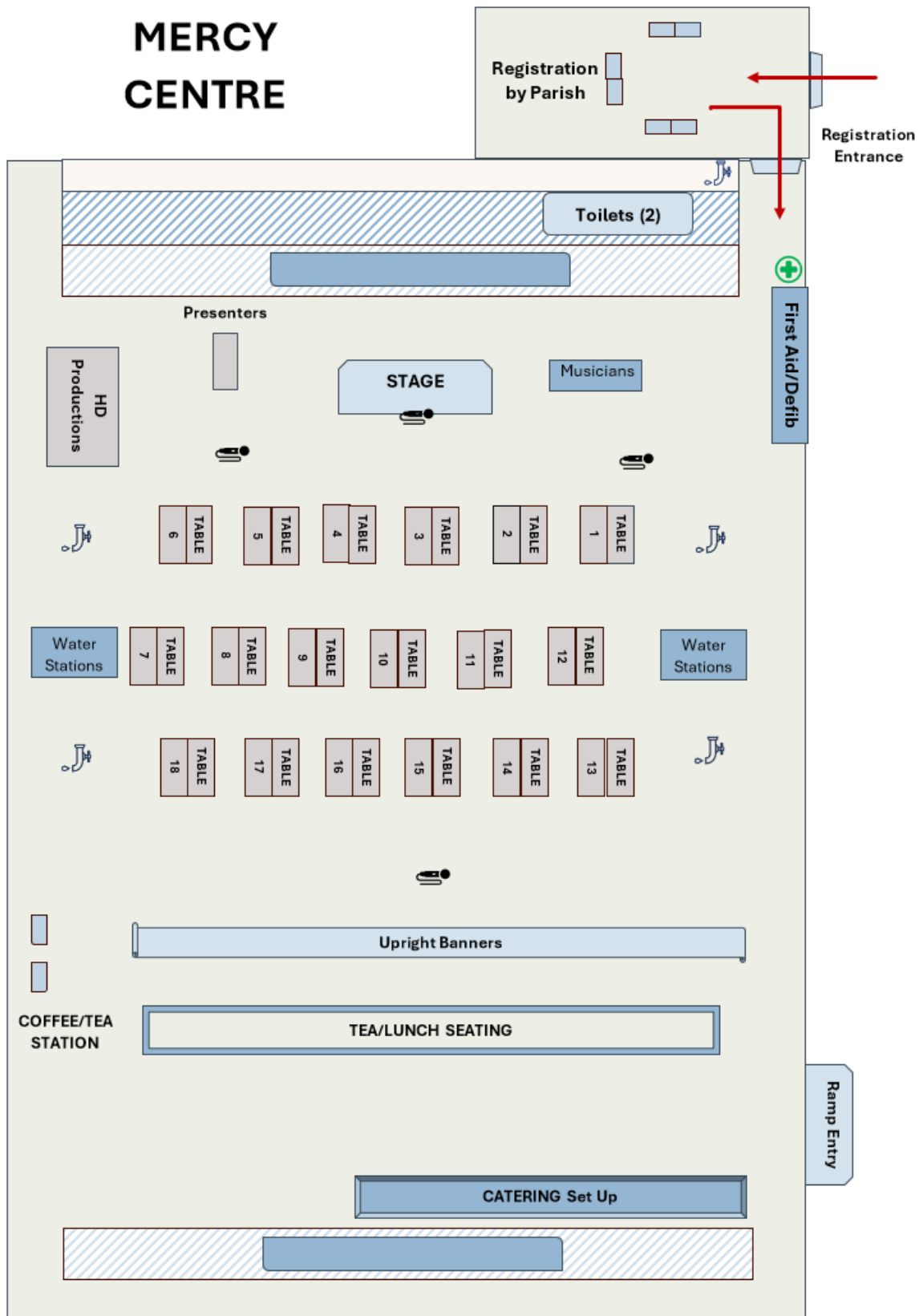


Keynote Part II

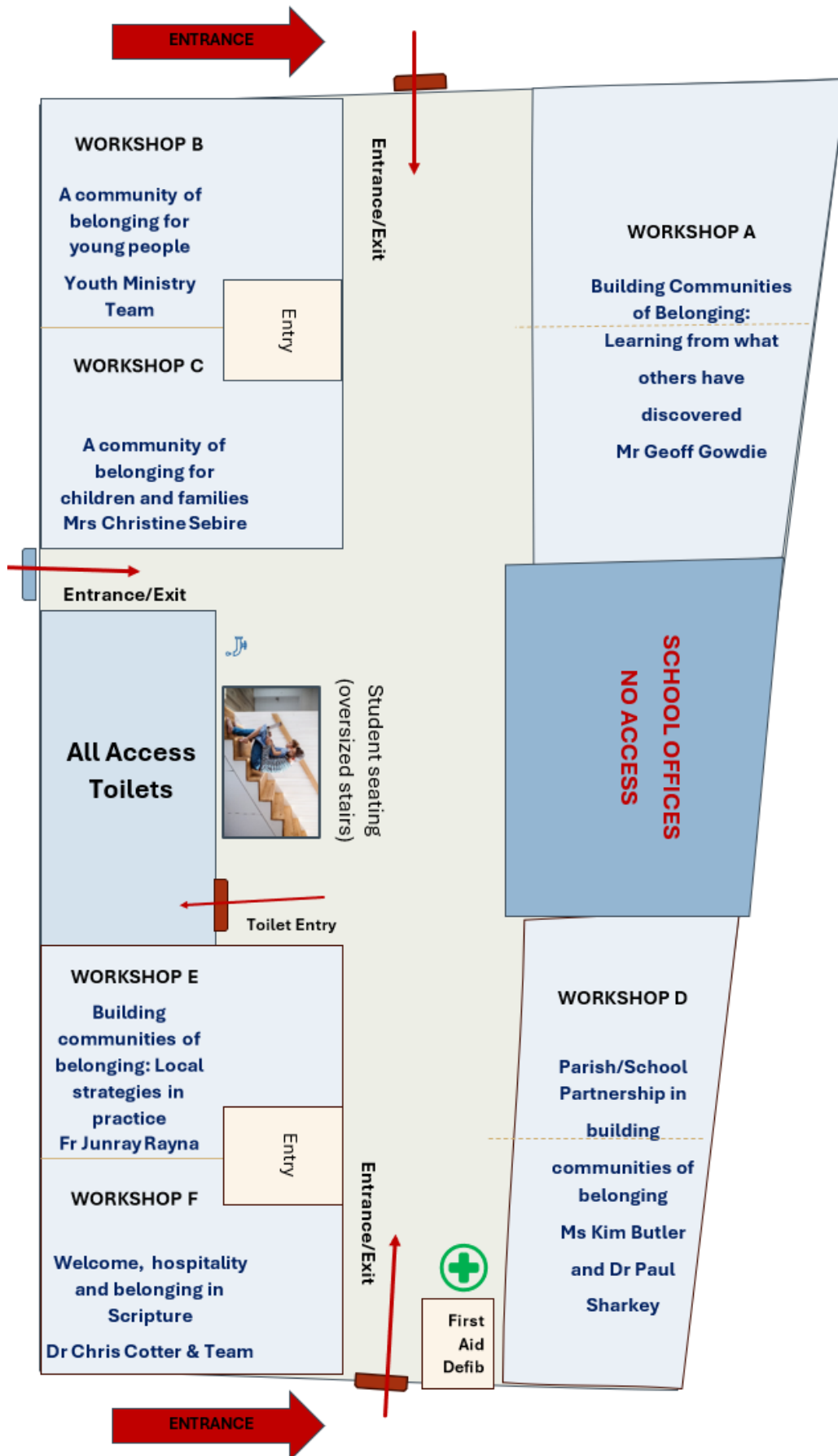
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MERCY CENTRE: All aspects of the day take place here EXCEPT the workshops



SCIENCE BUILDING CLASSROOMS: Location of workshops

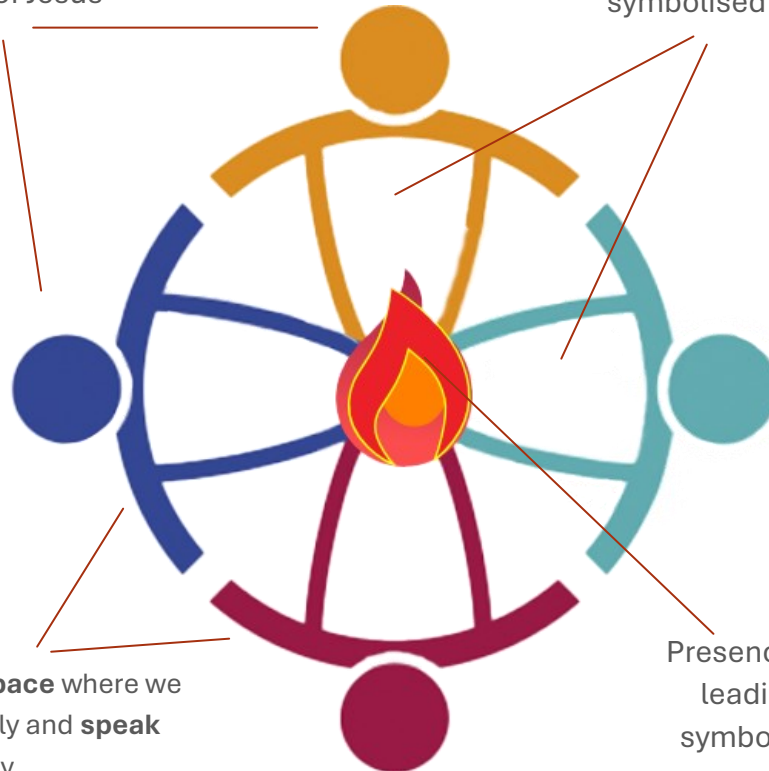


Diocesan Formation Logo

We have utilised a logo from the recent Synod of Bishops (***For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission***) and added the flame in the centre, symbolising the intimate presence of the Holy Spirit when we commit to formation together.

This is about **people** – together in relationship we are formed into the likeness of Jesus

Presence of **Jesus** drawing us together into the mission of self-giving – symbolised by the **Cross**



We make a safe **space** where we can **listen** humbly and **speak** boldly

Presence of the **Holy Spirit** leading and inspiring – symbolised by the **Flame**

