

Sharing our dreams

Once you have considered these questions, I would love for you to share your dreams and help to shape the future of our church, parish, and precinct.

Feeding these back to our community and building on them with further initiatives will begin to give shape to the possibilities being given us by the Spirit of God.

You can share your dreams by...



visiting www.churchinthecity.com.au/dreams and filling in the questions; or



emailing dreams@churchinthecity.com.au and sharing your dreams; or



filling out the **dreams booklet** found in the church foyer and pews

And so, let us begin our journey together!

As we now emerge from COVID we are set on a journey of renewal. Let us take a step at a time, but also with commitment and purpose.

Let us celebrate all that makes us a unique community of faith in all its diverse features.

Let us share our dreams and together discover what the Spirit is saying to the Churches – to our Church in Chatswood and now let us lay the foundations for the second 100 years of our life.

With you on this very exciting, grace-filled journey,

Fr. David Ranson PP VG

Our Lady of Dolours Chatswood Catholic Parish



BEING CHURCH IN THE CITY

OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER



OUR LADY OF DOLOURS
Chatswood Catholic Parish

Being Church in the city

Dear Friend,

From my first days with our parish, I have been excited by the richness of Our Lady of Dolours. We are the only truly urban, the most multicultural, and the largest parish in our Diocese.

Our unique Church in the city

This has prompted me to keep reflecting on what it might mean to be Church in the city. And not just any city, but in the very multicultural, growing context which is Chatswood.

This provides our church and parish with a unique character, quite different from other more suburban communities.

I have recognised that our church truly is a regional hub, a centre to which many people from wide and far come, and from which many people go.

This is helped by the presence of three schools in our precinct: Mercy College, St Pius X College, and our own Our Lady of Dolours Primary School.

Every school day, over 2,000 students come to our precinct. And our church is in the middle of it all, the point of intersection between all three schools – and for many students an experience of Church by which they will identify for their whole lives.

Consequently, we are a place of welcome for many people, near and far, and at all times of the day and night. It is extraordinary to see how many people come through the day, taking back to their homes something of the spirit they have experienced.

A new 'moment'

We have just celebrated the 100th anniversary of the opening of our church, our parish having been established in 1910. We are now into our second century as a parish community.

We have endured two years of disruption created by a global pandemic which has placed unexpected pressure on the vitality of parish life and has impacted participation in our parish communities.

On a global level, Pope Francis has called the Church to a new way of being, a 'synodal' way. Being synodal means we journey together in discernment of where the Spirit of God is leading us.

This is creating the opportunity for listening and dialogue, at every level of the Church, and involves a process of humbly learning together.

It is therefore a wonderful opportunity for us as a parish community to enter this invitation of the Holy Father and to apply in our own community what is being discussed in the worldwide Church and at the synod of bishops 2023, as well as through our own Fifth Plenary Council of the Church in Australia.

Being Church in the city, our journey together

We have embarked on a journey together, guided by the Spirit, to discover what it means to be Church in the city. Our journey together will have six steps, taking us through to Pentecost 2023...



Over the next year and a half, we will:

- Develop a clear mission and vision for the next 5, 10, 50 years
- Create a parish strategic plan and priorities
- Maximise our strengths
- Renew our church building and space
- Consider how we might redevelop our entire precinct in a staged way

What are our dreams?

The first step in our journey together is a call to share our hopes and dreams. Let us dream about what is possible in the next 5, 10, 50 years for our:

Church: the visible sign of our presence, and our point of gathering

Community: our parish community

Precinct: our significant spiritual and educational precinct including our church buildings, Our Lady of Dolours Primary School and Mercy College

Let us begin a great conversation and let us dream how we can become truly Church in, and for, the city.

The sharing of our dreams will give us the first hints of where the Spirit may be leading us.

To do this, I encourage you to consider carefully the following questions...

- Q.** What are my hopes and dreams for our Chatswood **church**?
- Q.** What are my hopes and dreams for our Chatswood parish **community**?
- Q.** What are my hopes and dreams for our church and school **precinct**?
- Q.** What **obstacles or challenges** do I think might come our way?
- Q.** What might be the **first things** we need to do?