

# Take THE Way OF THE Gospel

## BEGINNING THE JOURNEY



Thank you for sharing this resource with your community. The step-by-step process outlined below should take approximately 90 minutes. The 'Take the Way of the Gospel' pastoral letter is recommended prior reading and it is suggested that hard copies are provided for each person at in-person sessions (or that electronic copies are sent via email for online sessions). If using Zoom, an extra technical person is helpful, to oversee the Zoom environment (create the meeting link, create/monitor break-out rooms etc.).

The 'Take the Way of the Gospel' pastoral letter and 'Beginning the Journey' PowerPoint resource are available to download at:

[www.melbournecatholic.org.au/mission](http://www.melbournecatholic.org.au/mission)

### SUGGESTED IN-PERSON TIMELINE

Adapt for your own circumstances, e.g. time of day, number of participants or if using an online platform.

8 MINS

## Opening prayer

**Leader:** We begin our gathering today in prayer.  
We bring ourselves exactly as we are right now (pause).  
We call on the Holy Spirit as together we pray – in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Music:** **Taizé chant 'Holy Spirit, Come to Us'**  
([YouTube](#) or [Spotify](#))

Holy Spirit, come to us,  
Kindle in us the fire of your love  
Holy Spirit, come to us (x2)

Jesus said it is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciple

Jesus said no one has greater love than this to lay down one's life for those one loves

**Reader:** **Scripture reading**  
(followed by time of quiet personal reflection)

I thank my God every time I remember you, and in every prayer of mine for you all. I pray with joy at your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, confident that the One who began a good work in you will bring it to completion by the Day of Christ Jesus.

And this I pray, that your love for one another may overflow more and more with knowledge and complete understanding that will enable you to discern what is best.

—Philippians 1:3–6, 9–10a

Reflect silently for a few minutes about God's presence in your parish and in our Archdiocese at this time.

What do you need at this time?

What do we need as an Archdiocese?

**Leader:** Lord, we thank you for your presence as we start the 'Take the Way of the Gospel' journey together in prayer. May we open ourselves to you with a new depth of trust and conviction in your guiding hand, so that we may discern our journey with compassionate and humble hearts and come to know the Spirit moving within and amongst us, and so be transformed. Amen.

## Prepare

Prepare the environment (15 minutes prior to the starting time) and offer hospitality as guests arrive, introducing participants to one another.

5 MINS

## Welcome

**Leader:** We warmly welcome each of you to this workshop.

Thank you for joining us for 'Take the Way of the Gospel': Beginning the Journey, where we will prayerfully begin a journey of listening, learning and walking together, seeking to engage with generous hearts and open minds.

Gathering as the body of Christ, the purpose of this session is to provide the opportunity to dialogue, listen intentionally and share with each other in the Spirit, with respect and awareness.

As we gather today, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout the Archdiocese. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respect to them and their cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

**PART 1: 30 MINS TOTAL**

## Engagement with 'Take the Way of the Gospel' (Part 1)

**8 MINS**

**Leader:** For the next hour, we will prayerfully reflect on each paragraph of Archbishop Comensoli's pastoral letter 'Take the Way of the Gospel', breaking it into two sections. Each section will begin with a slow paragraph by paragraph reading of the letter. As we read, listen for words and phrases that draw your attention or strike you in some way. We will pause for 30 seconds after each paragraph for you to reflect and to note the words and phrases that speak to you. Then we will move into small groups, where you will each have an opportunity to share what you have heard in the letter with others. We will then move back into the large group where you will be invited to share a single word or phrase that you heard in your small group. After which, we will repeat the process with the second half of the letter.

Read through the letter. You may like to use a different person to read each paragraph. Finish this section with the paragraph that ends with the sentence 'This will be a journey that will take time and effort, and we will need to take it together'.

Thank you everyone for that time of quiet listening. We are now going to move into small groups, where you will have time to listen deeply to each other.

The question you will be asked to reflect on is: As you listened deeply to the pastoral letter, what has resonated with you, and how has this left you feeling?

We will have 15 minutes in our small groups.

Divide the group up into smaller groups of 6-8 people. For an online setting, create break out rooms of 6-8 participants.

**15 MINS**

### IN SMALL GROUP (OR BREAK OUT ROOM)

**Small group facilitator:**

Welcome everyone

- We have 15 minutes to share in this group.
- This is a space where we will respectfully listen to one another.
- Please, respect each other by:
  - being brief,
  - allowing each other to speak, in turn, only for a minute or two, without interruption so everyone has a chance to speak.

- The question you are being asked to respond to is:  
As you listened **deeply to the letter**
  - what has resonated with you?
  - how has this left you feeling?
- If there is time after everyone has spoken, a second round using this question:  
As you listened **deeply to each other**
  - what resonated with you?
  - how has this left you feeling?

**7 MINS**

### IN LARGE GROUP

Participants return from their small groups (or break out rooms), to the large group. You may wish to record comments from participants in this short section below, on a whiteboard or butcher paper.

**Leader:** Welcome back everyone.

We will take a minute to reflect quietly on what we heard in our group.

Would anyone like to share, in one or two words, what you heard in your small group that particularly resonated with or challenged you?

Thank you everyone, we have come to the end of our reflection on the first half of 'Take the Way of Gospel'.

**NB:** You may like to introduce a short 2-3 minute break or activity here to allow participants to stretch and refocus on the next part of the workshop.

**PART 2: 30 MINS TOTAL**

## Engagement with the letter 'Take the Way of the Gospel' Part 2

**8 MINS**

**Leader:** We will now spend time listening carefully to the second half of the letter.

After each paragraph we will pause for 30 seconds to give you time to reflect, to note the words and phrases that speak to you, and what feelings arise in you.

Begin reading at: 'Our local Church, in all its vast spread, is wonderfully rich and varied...'

Thank you everyone for that time of quiet listening. We are now going to move back into our small group, where you will have time to listen deeply to each other.

The question we are asking you to reflect on is the same as last time.

"As you listened deeply to the pastoral letter, what has resonated with you, and how has this left you feeling?"

15 MINS

## IN SMALL GROUP

Small group facilitator to repeat process as above.

7 MINS

## IN LARGE GROUP

People return from their small groups (or break out rooms), to the large group. You may wish to record people's comments in this short section below, on a whiteboard or butcher paper.

**Leader:** Welcome back everyone.

We will take a minute to reflect quietly on what we heard in our group.

Would anyone like to share, in one or two words, what you heard in your small group that particularly resonated with or challenged you?

15 MINS

## Closing prayer

**Leader:** We conclude our gathering today in prayer (pause).

**Music:** Short excerpt of Taizé chant 'Holy Spirit come to us'

Holy Spirit, come to us,  
Kindle in us the fire of your love.  
Holy Spirit, come to us,  
Holy Spirit, come to us,  
Holy Spirit, come to us.

**Leader:** Lord, we humbly seek your wisdom, courage and guidance for our Archdiocese as we recommit ourselves to 'Take the Way of the Gospel'.

**Small group facilitators:**

### Prayers of Intercession

1. Loving God, your Holy Spirit gave the disciples new eyes, new ears and a fresh heart to form the family of the Church and to proclaim the Kingdom of God. We ask the same for your family in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, as we begin a new conversation about our common mission for the years ahead.  
Through Jesus we pray.  
**All: Come, Holy Spirit.**
2. Loving God, the mission of the Gospel is at the heart of our life, worship and outreach. We desire that our local faith communities be arranged to flourish and be effectively resourced –spiritually, ministerially and materially. Help us to re-imagine our parishes, united with each other, humbly discerning the best way forward.  
Through Jesus we pray.  
**All: Come, Holy Spirit.**

3. Loving God, this is a journey that will take time and effort, listening and learning, and we will need to take this journey together. We ask for the courage and guidance of your Spirit, to help us adapt to current and ever-changing realities. Now is our time, here is our place. Be with us as we 'Take the Way of the Gospel' towards missionary renewal in our Archdiocese.  
Through Jesus we pray.

**All: Come, Holy Spirit.**

4. Loving God as we enter this time of ongoing discernment, we turn to you with confidence. Open our hearts to where you are calling us, help us to reach out to our neighbours in fruitful dialogue, to reframe our thinking and inspire decisions that bring renewed life.  
Through Jesus we pray.

**All: Come, Holy Spirit.**

5. Loving God, we turn to you with a new depth of trust and conviction in your guiding hand. May we make this journey with compassionate and humble hearts, come to know your Spirit moving within and among us, and so be transformed.  
Through Jesus we pray.

**All: Come, Holy Spirit.**

6. Reflect on your own intentions for a few moments.... Through Jesus we pray...

**All: Come, Holy Spirit.**

**Leader:** We now pray together...

**All: Come Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful  
and enkindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created,  
and you shall renew the face of the earth.**  
Holy Mary, Mother of the Church. **Pray for us.**  
St Joseph. **Pray for us.**  
St Patrick. **Pray for us.**  
St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. **Pray for us.**

## Close

**Leader:** Thank you for joining us today. This is the first part of our response to Archbishop Comensoli's invitation to 'Take the Way of the Gospel'.

For further engagement opportunities, up-to-date information and further parish resources for the 'Take the Way of the Gospel' process, please visit:

[www.melbournecatholic.org/mission](http://www.melbournecatholic.org/mission)

