

A disappointing response to our letter expressing concerns....

In our March newsletter, the Chair of CCT reported that we had written to the Archbishop seeking answers on matters of concern to CCT and many of the faithful in Tasmania. Many of our questions were relating to our understanding from official Church documents.

Below is a summary of the response received from Michael McKenna, Director of Chancery Services, writing on behalf of the Archbishop. The letter written and questions asked by us, and of the complete response received, can be accessed [here](#).

- 1. Diocesan Pastoral Councils.** Direct questions seeking the pastoral reasons for not having a Diocesan Pastoral Council and about any progress in this direction were not answered. It seems that the Archbishop is not prepared to move ahead until he sees what everyone else is doing after the Synod (and the discernment time that will happen after that). We can expect no progress for a number of years.
- 2. Implementation of recommendations from ACBC commissioned report on Church governance, *The Light from the Southern Cross*.** Direct questions asking what processes are in place to address the recommendations of the report for our archdiocese, or any progress on moving towards a synodal Church, were not answered. Despite many recommendations being within his episcopal responsibility, the Archbishop is not committing to progress until he sees what others are doing.
- 3. Financial reporting to the faithful of the Archdiocese** No reason was given as to why there is not a practice of regular financial reporting providing transparency and accountability to the faithful of the archdiocese. The letter suggested this is under “active consideration” but highlights the need to be careful to ensure a balance between transparency and “commercial in confidence”. This is a distraction. CCT is not suggesting that the faithful should have information on confidential contracts etc.
- 4. Media and Communication** Questions regarding access to the *Catholic Standard* for other contributors, including to promote faith related events and suggesting a broader based advisory body, were not answered directly but there was a restatement of the position that the *Catholic Standard* is the official Church publication for the Archdiocese and should, by implication, only contain the official voice. The letter introduced the irrelevant matter of a ‘glossy’ being impractical. This is not what CCT requested. It seems that our Pope’s call for open discussion and diverse opinions is not being heeded by our Archbishop.
- 5. Preparation for Synod** In answer to a question seeking information on the way in which the Archdiocese is consulting to assist in preparation of the diocesan response to the synod, we were informed that no consultation is planned. Our question about how we will be informed of the contents of the diocesan submission was not answered.

CCT notes that the faithful were not given any information about the outcomes from the Plenary consultations held last year, nor about any submission sent to the Plenary from the Archdiocese which purported to represent our views. It seems that this will also be the case for the Synod.