

Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR)

RENEWAL PROPOSITIONS FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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The Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR) recognises that all Christ's faithful have *"the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful."* (Canon 212 §3)

The Church in Australia faces continuing decay unless its bishops recognise the essential role and responsibility that lay Catholic women and men share in in the wellbeing of their Church. Bishops must learn to trust and value the wisdom and advice of their people, whom they have too long ignored and treated as irrelevant.

ACCCR now calls for a systemic reform of the Catholic Church so that it:

1. ensures that all doctrines and practices reflect the teachings and spirit of Jesus;
2. seeks to heal not to hurt, to include not to exclude, to nurture not control;
3. reflects the Christian values of love, justice, compassion, peace, equality and freedom;
4. is trusted by the wider Australian and New Zealand community;
5. is free of the pervasive culture of clericalism;
6. recognises the innate dignity of every human person and rejects all discrimination;
7. welcomes women and men equally into all its roles of leadership, ministry and service, so that everyone shares co-responsibly in the mission of the Church;
8. calls on all its members to accept their responsibility to live their lives by Gospel values;
9. is guided by the sense of faith of the faithful (*sensus fidei fidelium*);
10. works for a world that is more just, compassionate, egalitarian, and committed to peace;
11. is truly safe for children and vulnerable adults, and prioritises their welfare;
12. adopts the very best models and practice of governance and leadership;
13. uses authority wisely and justly, ever open to new knowledge and experience;
14. is genuinely transparent and accountable to the faithful and to the community at large;
15. maintains an ongoing and open dialogue with all Christ's faithful.
16. selects and forms candidates for the priesthood in a spirit of service and rejection of clericalism.

ACCCR seeks a Church committed to:

1. **Synodality:** with regular plenary councils (at least every 15 years), diocesan synods or assemblies (at least every 5 years) - to identify key concerns of the time, and to discern and put in place the necessary plans to address them;
2. **Co-responsibility:** with participatory processes for the selection of bishops, and mandatory diocesan and parish pastoral councils which are truly representative of the diversity of people – including gender - within the diocese and parish. The members of these councils should be selected through a consultative process, and their vote must have real value;
3. **Inclusion:** with the recruitment and appointment of suitably qualified and experienced

women and men, attuned to the *sensus fidei fidelium*, to the most senior roles in dioceses, national bodies, and parishes;

4. **Accountability:** with every diocese and parish to provide an annual report to its people on its mission: its ministries, services, personnel, assets, finances, and pastoral plans;
5. **Subsidiarity:** with decisions being taken by competent authorities closest to those affected by the decisions, as directed by Pope Pius XI.

In preparing for the Plenary Council, ACCCR calls on each and every diocesan bishop to:

1. convene a diocesan synod or assembly in 2019 or early 2020, so that he can LISTEN to the sense of faith of the diocesan faithful, understand their priority concerns, and seek their advice on the selection of diocesan representatives to attend the Council;
2. establish immediately – if one does not already exist – a diocesan pastoral council, using a process that ensures a genuine voice for the diversity of the faithful within the diocese, including gender, ethnicity, age, social condition, work, apostolate, and the regions;
3. appoint, on merit, a balanced number of suitably qualified and experienced women and men to the most senior roles in his diocese;
4. prepare and publish - commencing in 2019 - an annual report to all the faithful of the diocese, which includes a full account of its ministries, services, personnel, assets, finances, and pastoral plans;
5. require every parish to prepare and publish a similar annual report commencing in 2019.

Since all the above matters also apply to the Universal Church, ACCCR calls on the 2020/21 Plenary Council to draw them to the attention of the Holy See.

Members of the Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform *

Australian Reforming Catholics
'Be The Change' New Zealand
Cardijn Community Catholics For Renewal
Catholics Speak Out
Communities Of The Way
Concerned Catholics Canberra-Goulburn
Concerned Catholics Tasmania
Concerned Catholics Wagga Wagga
Concerned Catholics Wollongong
Cyber Christian Community
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Inclusive Catholics
Rainbow Catholics Interagency For Ministry
Toowoomba Catholics For Reform
Vocal (Voices Of Australian Catholic Laity)
WATAC Inc. (Women And The Australian Church)
WWITCH (Women's Wisdom In The Church)

(Each ACCCR member group has its own focus and history; all are united in the call for renewal in the Church. The role of ACCCR, established in 2012, is to foster collaboration and support among its member groups and to disseminate messages of hope and opportunity. For further information, contact the Convener at: pjgovernance@gmail.com)