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# Around the Well

The Newsletter of Concerned Catholics  
Tasmania

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No 4 28 October 2020

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Welcome to the fourth edition of our newsletter, *Around the Well*.

We find ourselves at an interesting stage of our establishment. Our launch on October 10<sup>th</sup> was a great success and led to a significant increase in membership and additions to our mailing list, not only from those present but also from those who heard about it. There is a yearning from faith filled people for change in our Church and for their voice to be heard. \*\*

Many people expressed their gratitude for providing an opportunity to gather and discuss in a way that they said has been lacking in recent years. They felt encouraged and affirmed by the presence of so many like minded people from all over Tasmania; they were gratified by the interest and support of clergy and religious.

The Committee is now in the process of communicating outcomes from the Launch gathering to Archbishop Julian and is seeking a meeting with him to discern with him how we can move ahead in framing an agenda to enhance the voice of the faithful within this Archdiocese.

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124 people joined to hear Francis Sullivan launch Concerned Catholics Tasmania in Launceston and then discuss their hopes for the Church

\*\* **Keep an eye out for details of coming regional events this year looking at *The Light from the Southern Cross* report on Church Governance. Dates and venues to be confirmed.**

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[www.concernedcatholicstasmania.org](http://www.concernedcatholicstasmania.org)

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## Who we are

Our vision is for an inclusive Church which welcomes all in the spirit of the Gospels, and in which the talents, gifts and wisdom of all Catholics, female and male, whether lay, religious or ordained, contribute at every level of participation and decision making in the Catholic Church in Australia.

We are committed to ensuring Catholic lay people in the Archdiocese of Hobart have an effective role and voice in its administration and direction, and an effective means of providing support to one another as we work collaboratively to carry out the mission of our Church.

## We have a website!

Find the latest about us at [www.concernedcatholicstasmania.org](http://www.concernedcatholicstasmania.org).

(until we have more 'hits' it will be necessary to ensure you add the 'org')

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## CCT Officially Launched by Francis Sullivan AO

"Thank you for doing this - for providing this opportunity"

"It's so good to be with other Catholics who feel the same as I do"

"We couldn't form a group like this in our parish, thank you for providing us with an avenue for expressing our concerns"

"After listening to Francis, I feel reassured there will be better times ahead for Catholics who have felt isolated, disillusioned and helpless for years"

"I am leaving with a spring in my step and a song in my heart..."

These are just a few of the many comments we received after the Launch. With 124 attendees and 37 formal apologies (not counting the many others who expressed a desire to be there but who did not register a formal apology) there was a sense of solidarity, hope and, for many, relief.

The presentation by Francis Sullivan was outstanding. Whilst being frank and challenging, he also filled us with a sense of optimism as he set our path within the context of our calling as baptized members of God's church.

A more detailed description of the launch can be found on page 4 of this Newsletter.

### Latest Developments in CCT

The Committee of CCT met by Zoom on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October. Items discussed included:

**Review of Statewide Launch.** The Launch was reviewed at length. All agreed they had been part of something very special and powerful. Francis Sullivan had provided an inspirational keynote address and the program ran efficiently. In reflecting on the range of responses we received we saw clear evidence that the Spirit is moving through CCT to address the deep and heartfelt needs of many Tasmanians.

Near the end of the program, everyone present was asked to respond in writing to the question: What is my best hope for CCT? The responses revealed general sentiments of gratitude, solidarity, relief at being heard and provided direction, a sense of purpose

### *From Pope Francis on the role of laity, especially women*

*"We pray that by the virtue of baptism, the laity, especially women, may participate more in areas of responsibility in the Church.*

*No one has been baptized a priest or a bishop. We have all been baptized as lay people.*

*Lay people are protagonists of the Church.*

*Today, it is especially necessary to create broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church. And we must emphasize the feminine lay presence because women tend to be left aside. We must promote the integration of women, especially where important decisions are made.*

*We pray that by the virtue of baptism, the laity, especially women, may participate more in areas of responsibility in the Church, without falling into forms of clericalism that diminish the lay charism."*

*Journey with the Pope*

*October 14 2020*

and community. They also provided insight into views on our way of being CCT in church and suggested future directions for CCT. These thoughts will serve as a blueprint for further planning and actions.

**Where to from here?** The committee reflected on ways to maintain momentum as we aimed at being a model of a synodal, inclusive and transparent church, a voice for change and a model of being on a faith journey together. It was agreed that a meeting will be held in each region before the end of this year to continue the conversations begun at our launch. Details will be available shortly.

**Membership.** Formal membership is now over 100 members and our mailing list over 250. We recognise the need to assure people of privacy; these lists are certainly confidential to the Committee.

**Website.** Thanks to advice received and the commitment of our new webmistress, Kathy Cuthbertson, we now have an attractive and informative website!

**Contact with Archbishop Porteous and the Archdiocesan Plenary Council delegates.** There was discussion about the importance of maintaining communication with the Archbishop, the Vicar General and our two lay delegates to the Plenary Council so that they are aware of developments within CCT. The Chair, Kim Chen, will keep in contact with them.

**Within Parishes** There was also discussion about a number of individual parish issues that were raised by various attendees who were very grateful to have found broader support for their concerns. The challenge of spreading CCT's vision to other parishes who have not yet heard about us was also addressed.

## Membership of CCT

You are encouraged to consider supporting the formation of Concerned Catholics Tasmania by becoming a member. This also benefits us by your payment of a nominal membership fee.

There is a hard working committee in place so nothing extra is asked of you as a member unless you offer assistance!

**Membership and mailing lists of Concerned Catholics Tasmania are completely confidential.**



## Graphic design - are you able to assist?

We would be grateful to hear from anyone able to assist with the occasional graphic design task. The first is to help us design a logo based on our 'well' image.

If you can help with either of these please contact us by email at [hello@concernedcatholics.tasmania.org](mailto:hello@concernedcatholics.tasmania.org)

## Keeping in touch

We continue to look for ways to improve our contact with you, our members and supporters, and the wider Catholic community and beyond. Should you have any ideas, questions or other feedback, please contact us at [hello@concernedcatholics.tasmania.org](mailto:hello@concernedcatholics.tasmania.org).

## Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform

Report by Trish and Vin Hindmarsh. ACCCR has 19 church reform and renewal bodies affiliated with it. For details see

[www.acccr.com.au](http://www.acccr.com.au).

### ACCCR Communication with Archbishop Costelloe's office.

Ongoing representations to Archbishop Timothy Costelloe from ACCCR have been made, following the letter of 4<sup>th</sup> August from ACCCR to Archbishop Costelloe, with three requests: (a) To have a woman as co-chair or deputy chair of the Plenary Council, (b) Gender balance and transparency in the preparation of the Instrumentum Laboris, (c) diocesan pastoral councils, and diocesan synods or assemblies in preparation for the Plenary Council.

A letter came for the Archbishop's Office with advice that Plenary Council matters are to be referred to the Plenary Facilitating Team.

### Independence within Affiliation

CCT has also agreed that it is only to be expected that CCT will not always be of the same mind as ACCCR or its member organisations regarding the modus operandi in dealing with issues related to reform and renewal. We each have our own culture and context, even though we share much in common in terms of wanting to help in the renewal of our church.

CCT will be open to seek further advice about positive ways for us to seek opportunities for dialogue with Bishops.

## Leaving in droves....

"I am ignored completely by the Church's hierarchy. Utterly, absolutely ignored. But that's ok because they're only a tiny proportion of the Church. They're desperately powerful, yes, and they make the rules, yes, but the Church is 1.2 billion people which is why I stay."

So speaks Mary McAleese, former President of Ireland, canon lawyer and civil lawyer. In her recent book *Here's the Story: a Memoir* she says "I am a person of faith, but I am also a person with a thinking brain". In her interview with The Tablet she warns that people are "leaving the Catholic Church in droves". Extracts from the interview can be found by posting this into your browser: [People leaving Church in 'droves' warns McAleese](#)

## Singing a New Song

The following is a short extract from the conclusion to a homily given by Peter Johnstone, Convenor, Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform

"The Church must sing a new song, and it seems clear to most seeking renewal of the Church that the new song will require a Church with much more respect for the faithful; and with appropriate structures requiring accountability, transparency and inclusion, particularly ensuring the equality of women. Let's be very clear: the Church's exclusion of women from governance of the Church (and from ordination) is simply discrimination and a denial of the equality of women."

## More detail on our Launch

Donna McWilliam was host for our launch held at the Tailrace Centre in Launceston.

After the Acknowledgement of Country by Carey McIver, Kathy Cuthbertson read Luke's Gospel passage of the Road to Emmaus. CCT Chair, Kim Chen then reflected on this powerful story and related it to the vision of Concerned Catholics Tasmania. His full text is on the website. Kim's comments finished with:

"So, Concerned Catholics Tasmania Inc are companions supporting each other, accepting responsibility and seeking to be God's story tellers in whatever way we are called, large or small. We are looking to find ways of being authentic Church for ourselves and others and embracing and including all those who want to share their journeying with us and we with them and reaching out with words of challenge, truth and hope. Part of accepting responsibility is taking on board the need to build relationships and structures which are consistent with Church teaching especially its social teachings of human dignity, common good, subsidiarity and solidarity.

Seeking the common good means questioning and challenging what seems out of order, unproductive or plain wrong. We are in the business of building up, not pulling down. We are baptised responsible adults, not children, and seek to be treated that way. We are co-dependent and realise that we need to support each other and share and contribute as much or as little as we can: a few loaves and fishes can go a long way!"

Francis Sullivan was introduced and thanked by Vin Hindmarsh, who highlighted two take away points from his talk: to stay proactively engaged with this Church of ours and to maintain focus on our CCT aims. A recording of the inspiring, challenging and hope-filled address given by Francis, and the Q&A which followed, can be found on the website under Events.

Chris Smith then outlined the journey of CCT to this point. He noted the initial steps leading to the formation of a committee which then identified six key steps to get CCT to the point of this Launch:

1. The development of Vision and Mission Statements.
2. Completing the necessary governance requirements such as a Constitution, organising incorporation and electing office bearers.
3. Building membership through personal approach and communications.
4. Informing the Archbishop of our progress and plans, committing us to being open and transparent with him and hoping to establish regular communication.
5. Building connection with other groups through ACCCR.
6. Developing a communication strategy through email, newsletters, website and media.

During his session, Chris invited Sue Chen and Judy McIver to share their own journey towards becoming members of CCT. Their texts are on the website.

Chris concluded by expressing the committee's disappointment that they been unable to reach agreement with the Archbishop on a way to organise opportunities for open

discussion as part of the preparation for the Plenary. The committee will now be looking at ways to provide those opportunities.

The final session was led by Carey McIver who invited people to reflect and then discuss with those nearby what their best hopes for CCT were. People wrote these on note pads for collection and consideration by the Committee when determining future directions.

After thanks to organisers and participants, Kim Chen asked Sue Hyslop to lead a final prayer. This was followed by a clip showing a flash mob rendition of "Ode to Joy". This can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbJcQYVtZMo>.

We danced out of the hall!!!

## Reflection



'Mary and Cleopas of Emmaus' by Dina Cormick 1986

**On the journey of this day, accompany us; in the stories we share, inspire us  
In our breaking of bread, sustain us.  
In our desire for you, may our hearts burn and overflow with joy and love,  
Gracious Companion.**

**Come journey with us; walk with us; listen to our story.**

**Our hopes our dreams, our struggles our joys**

**Our story of life, we share with you**

**As we journey, Jesus our God. Amen**