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Media Release
Launch of Concerned Catholics Tasmania Inc

2 October 2020 – For immediate release

Accountability and Transparency Sadly Lacking

In Tasmania, a group of committed Catholics has formed Concerned Catholics Tasmania Inc (CCT) to foster dialogue among lay Catholics, religious, priests and the Archbishop.

The official launch of CCT will be held in Launceston on Saturday 10 October 2020 with guest speakers including Francis Sullivan AO, former CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council and the Chair of Concerned Catholics Tasmania, Kim Chen.

In Australia, there is a growing lay Catholic movement seeking to change the Church's governance and management so it becomes more collaborative, accountable and transparent. There is also a call to include and embrace women as part of Church leadership at all levels. "CCT's hope is for a Church which is synodal, that is, centred on community engagement in Church decision making rather than the current hierarchical pyramid in which governance power is exercised from those at the top rather than power being disseminated among many," commented Kim Chen, Chair of CCT.

This growing lay movement now includes more than 20 Australian reform groups affiliated to the Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR).

CCT's concerns are many, and include the following:

Why can't Church authorities be transparent, inclusive and accountable in their decision-making?

How is it that the Bishops are so unaccountable to the people they are called to serve?

Why are women denied equal standing within the Church?

Why are there so few young people joining or staying with the Church?

Pope Francis is a breath of fresh air for many Catholics who hope for a renewed Church. Regrettably, however, many bishops cling to a Church structure that protects the pre-eminence and power of clerics and does not meet the needs of faithful Catholics. Those bishops have shut the windows to keep that breeze out. Many, rather than becoming inclusive and walking with faithful Catholics as they navigate our modern world, revert to their tired, dogmatic and exclusive ways of functioning.

It is perturbing that those vociferously demanding strict adherence to the authority of the Church are often those who undermine the leadership and wishes of our Pope.

Any enterprise which has a diminishing active "customer" base, such as the Catholic Church, should be assessing its structures, processes and personnel. It might even question its continued existence. Nationally, only 11.8% of Catholics practise regularly, down from 30% in 1978. In Tasmania, the current percentage is 6.7%.

Kim Chen commented that, "CCT wants to challenge the growing public perception of the institutional Church as a conservative, reactionary pressure group with little to contribute given the complexities and uncertainties of our times. It is little wonder to us that people are abandoning our Church." ###