
Around the Well

The Newsletter of Concerned Catholics
Tasmania

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From the Chair of CCT

Paul Simon explains that in writing his lyrics *"I live in fear my love for you is so overpowering I'm afraid that I will disappear"* he was capturing the sense that his love for his wife was so intense that he was in danger of losing his sense of self. Perhaps that is what we are called to do in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Matthew 22:37 alludes to that *"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."*, the greatest commandment.

Unlike Paul Simon, we embrace that kind of transformation and are willing to immerse ourselves in the love of God. The loss of our sense of self is not our paramount concern.

Right now, we find ourselves enmeshed in Plenary, looking to respond to Pope Francis's invitation to the whole Church to question itself on synodality and address his call in *Laudato Si* to do more to care for our mother Earth.

Individually, such a challenge would be daunting. Collectively, we can do much by supporting and encouraging each other. Communion, Word and Eucharist will sustain us. And all of that with joy in our hearts.

Kim Chen

A few readings...

Did Jesus really intend this? An argument for women priests: <https://johnmenadue.com/hope-springs-eternal-the-case-for-catholic-women-priests/>

Homily on the opening of the consultation for the 2023 Synod, Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv <https://parracatholic.org/homily-for-the-29th-sunday-in-ordinary-time-year-b-2021/>



From Pope Francis...

"(God's word) guides the Synod, preventing it from becoming a Church convention, a study group or a political gathering, a parliament, but rather a grace-filled event, a process of healing guided by the Spirit. In these days, Jesus calls us, as he did the rich man in the Gospel, to empty ourselves, to free ourselves from all that is worldly, including our inward-looking and outworn pastoral models; and to ask ourselves what it is that God wants to say to us in this time. And the direction in which he wants to lead."

"Dear brothers and sisters, let us have a good journey together! May we be pilgrims in love with the Gospel and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit. Let us not miss out on the grace-filled opportunities born of encounter, listening and discernment."

Homily at opening Mass of the Synod, Vatican, 10th October.

Save the Date – Convocation 3 – November 18th

The Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform presents

The Future of Catholicism in Australia

With the first session of the Australian Plenary Council now concluded, it is time to take stock of what has happened.

What did it achieve? Did it meet our hopes and expectations?
What does it mean for the next assembly in July 2022?

What can we, as Australian Catholics, do to build on the process to date, in the lead up to and in the next assembly?

Ellen Fanning (ABC, *The Drum*) will lead an online discussion. Experts, including Plenary Council members, will review the proceedings and outcomes, offering some pointers on possible activities in the inter-assembly period.

The convocation commences at 7.30pm AEDT. Register by clicking on this link: [REGISTER FOR CONVOCATION THREE](#)

Synod on Synods!

Pope Francis has announced that the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (October 2023) will focus on Synodality. For one short and clear explanation of this papal initiative see [The Synod of Synodality](#). Clear and comprehensive but easily accessible information is available on the ACBC website link: www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch.

Whilst the synod of bishops commences in May 2023, Pope Francis has taken the step of putting in place processes for consultation with all the faithful: laity, religious and clergy, between now and then. He wants the bishops' discussions to be informed by those consultations.

CCT will offer to assist the Archdiocese in organising the necessary consultation so that we can send in a response that authentically reflects the feelings and ideas of Catholics in Tasmania. We are awaiting news on an Archdiocesan launch of this synodal process.

Laudato Si'

The Archdiocesan response to the Laudato Si' goals was launched with the opening of a Laudato Si' garden at St Francis Xavier parish.

Courage to take the step.....

May we have the courage to take the step into the unknown that beckons us,

trust that a richer life awaits us there,

that we will lose nothing, but what has already died.

Feel the deeper knowing in us, sure of all that is about to be born beyond the pale frames where we stay confined.

John O'Donoghue

Membership of CCT?

Please consider supporting the mission of CCT by becoming a member. Membership and mailing lists are confidential.

Committee Membership?

We are also keen to hear from anyone who would like to be involved as a **committee member**. Please contact Kim Chen if you would like to discuss this, or email the secretary.

Ideas for us?

Our next meeting is on November 22nd. Please contact us prior to this if you wish to bring matters to our attention.

Recent developments in CCT

The Committee of CCT met by Zoom on Monday 18th October:

Meeting Guest – Paul Collins. In its continuing commitment to connect with and learn from others engaged in Church reform matters, the Committee was joined from Canberra by Paul Collins, historian, broadcaster and writer. A Catholic priest for thirty-three years, he resigned from the active priestly ministry in 2001 due to a dispute with the Vatican over his book [Papal Power](#) (1997). Paul has authored fifteen books and is known as a commentator on Catholicism and the papacy. Paul engaged with the committee in discussions on possible paths ahead in CCT mission.

Vaccination Matters. The Committee noted that the media is still interested in this issue and has approached CCT regarding some homilies and written communications against vaccination.

Plenary Council. The Committee received a very good commentary on the Plenary from Trish Hindmarsh, albeit as an outsider looking in. This will be put on our website in. Her observations included: “a leap into a more ‘synodal way of being Church’”; “visible exhaustion after the intensity of the week”; “processes and organization were declared by some to be outstanding”. Trish feels that, despite a wide divergence of views in some areas, “the ‘spiritual conversations’, guided by openness to the Spirit and to one another, seemed to have enabled the members to engage in genuinely respectful dialogue” and that “congratulations are in order”. For a detailed extract, including some concerns and “Where to now?” see Page 4 of the newsletter. It is hoped that CCT and all in the Archdiocese will be able to hear from the Tasmanian members of the Plenary in the near future.

LGBTQI+. CCT has been approached regarding pastoral concerns for LGBTQI+ students, staff, and family in our schools and certain guidelines allegedly in place. CCT is seeking advice. We noted with regret that the LGBTQI+ issue was largely sidelined in the Plenary.

Synod on Synodality. It was noted that there has been little diocesan information about this key event of the universal Church. Our archdiocese is expected to consult with diocese members and send a report. See information and discussion on Page 2.

Convocation 3. The Committee highly recommends Convocation 3 on November 18th. See Page 2 for information.



ACCCR and reform further afield

The recent ACCCR agenda has been dominated by Plenary, Convocation 3 and the 2023 Synod. All have been reported on elsewhere.

It was noted that **Bristol UK** recently held the *Root and Branch Lay-Led Inclusive Synod*. The outcomes paper *The Bristol Text to Reform* makes definitive statements in four key areas:

1. Moral theology (“...speak afresh in different cultures and contexts...”)
2. Church authority (“...leadership that is based on accountability and consent...”)
3. Redefining and reclaiming liturgical ministry (“...all belong to a royal priesthood...”)
4. Embracing diversity (“...the Church effectively has no coherent teaching on gender...”)

www.rootandbranchsynod.org

ACCCR is considering an Australian equivalent to ensure the lay voice is heard.

Post Plenary Gleanings (extract) – Trish Hindmarsh (the full version is on our website)

It was evident to me as an outsider looking in that:

-Archbishop Tim Costelloe seemed nervous and ill at ease at the beginning while delivering his opening remarks. At the end in summing up he seemed relaxed and confident, in fact happy with what had been achieved.

-Members expressed that they felt free to speak their minds and obviously did so fearlessly in the daily reports. There was an evident atmosphere of mutual respect and great willingness to do one's best for the future of the Church

-Women's voices were well represented even though they were in the minority numerically.

-There were many young and highly articulate members, who were really impressive.

-The issues and hopes expressed in the reports reflected those expressed through the 17,500 submissions. No issues were left unsaid or unacknowledged.

-Great emphasis was given to strengthening parishes as places of missionary outreach and formation for the laity. The richness of small groups in parishes ('communities of communities') was cited often.

-Opportunities for formation of laity and clergy, bishops too, was a constant theme.

-The need for inclusion of all was universally recognised (almost taken for granted as the norm) in the reports.

-The gift of the First Peoples of Australia to the Church and the recognition of that gift was always front of mind during the Council

-The exclusion of women from full participation in Church was daily raised as a universally agreed challenge that absolutely must be addressed.

-The need for 'ecological conversion' was considered normative by all. No question.

-Inclusion of LGBTIA+ people was mentioned a number of times in reports but not addressed directly. This remains a fraught area in need of urgent attention. (In the 'too hard basket'?)

-Reform of Church Governance received much attention and there were divided ways of thinking about this. *The Light from the Southern Cross* was named as a key resource, as was the Royal Commission recommendation to 'learn from' the Church's education, health and welfare agencies who have contemporary governance structures that meet compliance.

-There was a request from the Governance group for clarification of the term 'Mission' being constantly mentioned in Council and not universally understood. Richard Lennan was invited to speak to this as one of the twenty 'periti' (expert advisors) to the Council.

-Thursday was a closed day, one to remember. Members spoke of the extreme emotion and sorrow they felt in hearing direct testimony from victims of abuse and exclusion. No one could fail to be moved. There seemed to be a balance struck in needing to maintain confidence for the sake of those who had shared, and the need for as much transparency as possible about the Day of Lament.

-There were multiple 'Interventions' from the floor of the Plenary (that is, 300 word submissions from individual members, some of whom were invited to speak to their submission). They addressed all manner of topics and members spoke about the relevance, passion and variety of these, but none came to public light. As was to be expected, some members 'cherry-picked' for attention interventions that closely aligned with their model of an ideal Church.

Where to now? The Drafting Committee will take the Proposals put forward this week from each of the groups and form them into motions to be voted on in July. It is assumed there will be some crossover with the Synod on Synodality with preparation for that starting in October and the Synod happening in 2023. Council Plenary Groups will continue to meet and refine their work. Just how this will all happen and what relevance or connection it might have for the wider People of God in Australia needs still to be clarified.