
Around the Well

The Newsletter of Concerned Catholics
Tasmania

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From the Chair of CCT

Here we are in the season of Lent. My reading of our Archbishop's pastoral letter concerning abstinence and sin left me with a sense of needing something more.

These days it is not hard to find what you are looking for on the net. It provides us with ready access to a lot of material. One free subscription I receive is *Thinking Faith* published by the Jesuits in Britain.

Recently, I read a republished article entitled *Keeping Lent with St Luke* by Jack Mahoney SJ, Emeritus Professor of Moral and Social Theology in the University of London. The article was first published on 11 February 2010. It includes the second preface for Lent which reads:

This great season of grace is your gift to your family to renew us in spirit.

You give us strength to purify our hearts, to control our desires, and so to serve you in freedom.

You teach us how to live in this passing world, with our hearts set on the world which will never end.

What appealed to me about both the article and the preface was the notion that my controlling my desires, such as by fasting and abstinence, would free me up to listen and to hear more clearly what God was asking of me day by day. For me, becoming enmeshed in my everyday rituals and habits can distract me from truly significant tasks. Busyness keeps me from dealing with the too hard basket. The strictures of Lent, by curbing those desires which bind us, can actually result in liberating us to focus on worthier endeavours. By rejecting the desirable opportunities offered to Jesus in the desert, he was able to get on about his Father's business.

Rather than "giving up" for Lent we are being asked to temper or harness our desires so they do not loom so large in our everyday life in order to free us up to do "the Father's business".



A time for refreshment....

CCT uses the image of the well to inspire our journey. Throughout history, the well has been a place of meeting and of refreshment. There people drew water, cool and life giving. They drank deeply.

We use this image as we share, support each other and gain refreshment in our faith, looking beyond the challenges presented by our institutional Church, towards a church that is humble, inclusive, transparent and life giving for all.

At this time of Plenary and Synod preparation, we reprint an early reflection, based on a favourite story of Carl Jung:

The water of life, wishing to make itself known on the face of the earth, bubbled up in an artesian well and flowed without effort or limit. People came to drink of the magic water and were nourished by it, since it was so clean and pure and invigorating.

(continued overpage)

From the Chair (cont.)

In terms of worthy endeavours, on behalf of CCT, I have recently written to Archbishop Julian raising five issues: a Diocesan Pastoral Council, the implementation of the recommendations from *The Light from the Southern Cross* report on Church governance, financial reporting by the Archdiocese to the faithful, media and the role of the Standard, and the preparation for the Synod of Bishops on Synodality. In our dealings with our Archbishop, he has been invariably polite and courteous.

In our letter we have asked that CCT representatives meet with the Archbishop to hear his views on the matters raised. We are waiting to hear back from our Archbishop about that.

Kim Chen

Report on Diocesan Pastoral Councils released

Historian and researcher Damian Gleeson's report *Diocesan Pastoral Councils: An Australian Historical Study* considers the post Vatican II experience of Councils in Australia. Commissioned by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference as part of its response to *The Light from the Southern Cross* report on Church governance, the report paints a more positive view of the Australian experience than that suggested in the governance report and in the Bishops' response to that report, the latter of which, Gleeson says, held the dominant view "that pastoral councils 'withered', lacked 'energy', were 'dysfunctional' and/or lacked purpose. He notes that the Bishops' report "appears to place responsibility almost exclusively on lay council members yet avoids a broader analysis of other possible contextual factors and questions of authentic leadership".

Reinforcing the importance of leadership, his first conclusion is that "the attitude, energy and enthusiasm of the bishop are the largest factors influencing the existence, meaningfulness, and longevity of a DPC".

The publicly available report is available for download at this [link](#) via CathNews. Of particular interest is section 6.4, which looks at the Tasmanian experience where Gleeson comments that "The DPC flourished for many years because the Archbishop (Guilford Young) recognized it as a 'very important body'; he gave it 'teeth and energy'".

A Time for Refreshment (cont.)

But humankind was not content to leave things in this Edenic state.

Gradually they began to fence the well, charge admission, claim ownership of the property around it, make elaborate laws as to who could come to the well, put locks on the gates.

Soon the well was the property of the powerful and the elite.

The water was angry and offended; it stopped flowing and began to bubble up in another place. The people who owned the property around the first well were so engrossed in their power systems and ownership that they did not notice that the water had vanished.

They continued selling the non-existent water, and few people noticed that the true power was gone.

But some dissatisfied people searched with great courage and found the new artesian well. Soon that well was under the control of the property owners, and the same fate overtook it.

The spring took itself to yet another place – and this has been going on throughout recorded history.

Recent developments in CCT

The Committee of CCT met by Zoom on Monday 28th February:

Matters of Concern The Committee has, for a while, been concerned at the lack of progress in discussions with our Archbishop on matters of concern to CCT members and others who have contacted us. It was agreed that a letter be written to the Archbishop seeking answers in five areas of concern (listed in the Chair's report above). CCT will inform you of the response.

ACCCR related matters. See page 4 of this newsletter.

Synod on Synodality The Committee has still not had clarity from the Archbishop on how the Archdiocesan response will be prepared, how input will be sought and whether it will be made available to all. Very few parishes have held consultations to prepare a submission and the lack of mention of the synod in many parishes is disappointing.

CCT Submission to the Synod This can be accessed on our [website](#). The 250 word limit was very restrictive for writer Sue Chen!

Annual General Meeting May 7th with Frank Brennan SJ The Annual General Meeting of CCT with Frank Brennan as guest speaker will be held in Launceston on May 7th. Details will be circulated when finalised.

Laudato Si' It is pleasing to note the initiatives being taken by a number of parishes. Trish Hindmarsh, CCT member and presenter at our Laudato Si' seminars has recently published her book, *Ecological Spirituality*, available now through Garratt Publishing in Melbourne and the Daughters of St Paul.

Next Meeting – your input? The next meeting of the committee is on Monday 4th April. Should you wish any issue considered, please alert us: hello@concernedcatholicstasmania.org.au.

International survey of Catholic Women

Participants sought for an international survey of Catholic women

Professor Tina Beattie, founder of the international Catholic Women Speak (CWS) network and executive member of the global Catholic Women's Council (CWC), has announced the launch of an international survey of Catholic women. The online survey,

www.concernedcatholicstasmania.org



Membership of CCT?

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

A simple prayer for peace in Ukraine

For those who are fleeing: sanctuary

For those who are staying: safety

For those who are fighting: peace

For those whose hearts are breaking: comfort

For those who see no future: hope

Poor Clares Galway

Lenten Reflections Lent and Synodality

The ACCCR Lenten program, *Exploring Synodality in Lent*, by theologian Elissa Roper and others can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/mr44vfhh>

International survey (cont.)

released on Tuesday 8 March 2022 (International Women's Day), will gather feedback from Catholic women around the world. It will provide data for a submission for the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission."

The survey is being conducted by Dr Kathleen McPhillips and Dr Tracy McEwan from the University of Newcastle, Australia, in collaboration with Dr Clare Watkins and Emeritus Professor Tina Beattie from the University of Roehampton, London. It invites responses from women aged 18 or over who have at any time identified as Catholic.

To find out more and to access the link to the survey, please read the research flyer at <https://catholicwomenspeak.com/> or <https://www.catholicwomenscouncil.org/>.

Tina Beattie notes, "This is a unique opportunity for Catholic women to contribute to the Synod and to ensure that their voices are heard in ways which represent the diversity of women's lives, practices and beliefs in the worldwide Church".

Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR)

Synodality Webinar 16 Feb 2022: Our Voices

Substantial positive feedback has been received with appreciation for the valuable contributions from presenter Dr Elissa Roper, theologian at YTU specialising in Synodality, and respondents Kevin Liston (SACEC) and Andrea Dean (WATAC). The video and Chat record will be circulated to the over 2,000 registrants in the near future. Bishop Vincent Long gave a powerful *Introduction*.

Synod Submissions

ACCCR is recommending that individuals and groups continue to make Synod submissions directly to Rome, since the deadline for the ACBC to receive submissions was Sunday 13th March.

Plenary Council Commentary

There is considerable questioning amongst many Catholics about the adequacy and integrity of the document released in December last year after the first Assembly of the Plenary Council titled, *First Assembly Proposals from Small Groups and Individual Members*. (click [here](#) to access) This document of over 100 pages is the source for drafting proposals to be voted on in July.

Robust commentary and critique of this 'fruits' documents, as it is being labelled, has been circulated through ACCCR, including an article in *Pearls and Irritations, False fruits: What hope now for the Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church?* (click [here](#)), by ACCCR Convenor, Peter Johnstone Feb 17, 2022. He states that, during the assembly, "the manipulative approach adopted shows scant respect for either the Pope or the people." The article has been sent to all PC members, including bishops.

There is also a [response](#) by Dr Brendan Reed, senior priest of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Parish Priest of Deepdene, and lecturer at Catholic Theological College in Systematic and Pastoral Theology, seriously questioning the document. We now know that the draft 'Proposals' document created by the Plenary Council Drafting Committee since Christmas, which is intended as the agenda for the Plenary Council in July, is complete. It is not available to the Catholic faithful.

Plenary Blog: John Warhurst will offer a discussion online with a number of Plenary delegates and a few invited guests in this lead up period before the July second Assembly of the Plenary Council. Documents that have been prepared by the Drafting Committee and the periti in the months since the October 2021 First Assembly have not been shared with the Faithful. John Warhurst will share any information as it comes to hand through his blog and Trish Hindmarsh will pass that on to CCT members as it comes to hand.