
Around the Well

The Newsletter of Concerned Catholics
Tasmania

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From the Chair of CCT

As children at home and in the schoolyard, we played chasings. The participants were usually of different ages, stages of development and athletic ability. Consequently, some point was "base". It could be a tree. "Touching base" took you out of the game and enabled you to catch your breath and have a rest. Leaving base meant re-joining the game.

For me, being with Christ is like touching base. Gathering with others to listen to the Word being proclaimed or celebrating Eucharist together or being together at our AGM, all create an environment in which you can catch your breath and have a rest. The sense is of stepping over a threshold, out of the busy street and into a calm space. Those touching base experiences do enliven and reinvigorate us.

The CCT committee, invigorated and enlivened by our AGM, has just touched base in our monthly meeting. There are a number of issues we are addressing. First and foremost was formulating a response to the promotion by both the Christopher Dawson Centre and the Catholic Standard of the climate change views of Professor Ian Plimer. While he is free to express his risible views on climate change, it is his disparaging remarks about Pope Francis and *Laudato Si* that are infuriating, even more so when our Catholic newspaper and an institute which holds itself out as supportive of Catholic Intellectual Tradition promote and facilitate that attack on our Pope.

Another concern we are hearing about is the *Good News for Living Years 11 and 12 Religious Education Syllabus*. We are monitoring that.

Keep an eye on our website to get the latest.

May the joy and peace of Christ be with you

Kim Chen

www.concernedcatholicstasmania.org



Pope Francis on climate change

After my election as Pope, I asked experts on climate and environmental science to assemble the best available data on the state of our planet. Then I asked some theologians to reflect on that data, in dialogue with experts in the field from across the world. Theologians and scientists put their heads together until they reached a synthesis.

While this was being worked on, in 2014, I went to Strasbourg in France to address the Council of Europe. President Francois Hollande sent his Environment Minister to receive me ...she said she had learned I was preparing a encyclical letter on care for the environment. I told her about it and she said to please publish it before the meeting of heads of states to take place in Paris in December 2015. She wanted it to turn out well ...it is important that the Church makes its voice heard in this vital, necessary process: our faith demands it.

Let Us Dream: the Path to a Better Future
2020, p32

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Recent developments in CCT

The Committee of CCT met by Zoom on Monday 23rd May.

Annual General Meeting The AGM was well attended with over 80 present from around the state. The [President's](#) and [Treasurer's](#) Reports are on the website. The Committee is grateful to those who took time to provide some written feedback and ideas for the future; some is shown on Page 3. Fr Frank Brennan's presentation *The Plenary, the Church and the Public Square* was wide ranging, challenging and well received. Frank quoted Pope Francis (see column, right) on the 'vocation' we all have to 'light up the world' wherever we are. We belong to a Church that is to be a 'celebration of difference', making 'God's dream for creation' come true, by walking together in synodality. We do not need to wait for Bishops to tell us how to respond.

Frank went on to explore two issues that are challenging us all in the Australian public square: The Uluru Statement of the Heart and its implications, and, Temporary Protection Visas and the injustice and suffering they cause for asylum seekers.

See right column for more of the address. A recording is on the [website](#).

Diocesan Pre-Synod Gatherings The Committee noted the reference to these gatherings in the most recent *Catholic Standard*. Sadly, there were very few people in attendance, single figures in the northwest and north, around 20 in the South. The small numbers could be explained by the lack of a genuine consultation process, and therefore a lack of connection, leading up to the gatherings, as well as very limited advertising. Whilst some of the concerns about Synodality in our Archdiocese expressed in submissions seem to have made it into the feedback given at the gatherings, there was no chance for discussion.

Regional Spirituality and Discussion Sessions The committee is planning some opportunities for CCT members to gather. Details shortly.

Professor Plimer Lecture CCT has received communications expressing concerns about this lecture where the visiting professor contradicted the research and reputations of scientists around the world, denigrated *Laudato Si'* and questioned the wisdom of Pope Francis in writing it. We have [written](#) to the *Catholic Standard* expressing concern about the prominence given to this lecture in the official Catholic publication and suggesting that there should be a statement that the views expressed

Fr Frank Brennan quoting Pope Francis (from AGM notes, left) and more on his address.

"As Christians, we do not only receive a vocation individually; we are also called together. We are like the tiles of a mosaic. Each is lovely in itself, but only when they are put together do they form a picture. Each of us shines like a star in the heart of God and in the firmament of the universe. At the same time, though, we are called to form constellations that can guide and light up the path of humanity, beginning with the places in which we live. This is the mystery of the Church: a celebration of differences, a sign and instrument of all that humanity is called to be. For this reason, the Church must become increasingly synodal: capable of walking together, united in harmonious diversity, where everyone can actively participate and where everyone has something to contribute."

(From: **Message Of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 2022 World Day Of Prayer For Vocations**)

Frank also reflected on the Gospel (John 21) we read at the beginning of the meeting, with Jesus calling the disciples to (a) know there was fish and bread there already as nourishment, (b) that they were invited to contribute their own 'catch', and (c) their nets would not break no matter how much pressure was placed on them.

by the speaker are not those of the Archdiocese. A letter has also been sent to the Christopher Dawson Centre, sponsors of the lecture.

ACCCR Report Trish and Vin Hindmarsh presented a report from recent meetings of ACCCR. The **ACCCR submission to the Synod on Synodality** is being finalised and will be available to us shortly. A **Statement on the Plenary Council Process**, expressing concerns about the Plenary process as well as making proposals considered essential for the evolution of our Church, has just been released – read it [here](#). Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn will continue the very successful **Plenary Tracker** for the second assembly.

Sr Joan Chittister's visit to Australia has been very successful.

Next Meeting – your input? The next meeting of the committee is on 18th July. Ideas to hello@concernedcatholicstasmania.org.au.

The Plenary Journey – on the right track?

The second General Assembly of the Plenary Council will be held in Sydney from the 4th - 9th of July. This follows on from the first General Assembly held in October 2021.

The fruits of the first general assembly of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia were gathered in a December 2021 [report](#) that contains dozens of proposals to shape the ongoing Council journey. *Towards the Second Assembly: A Working Document for Members* was produced in February to guide members of the Plenary in their preparation for the second assembly, but is not available in the public sphere, so we as members of the wider Church have no way of helping delegates hear other opinions and ideas. A commentary on the document written by John Warhurst can be accessed [here](#).

Archbishop Julian Porteous recently wrote a [piece](#) for the Catholic Weekly (Sydney) which questioned the path being taken by the document, and therefore the Plenary, arguing that it could “allow the process of further decline to occur” if the focus is not on the Church's role of evangelization but on organization.

Members may be interested to read a response to the article (see [here](#)) written by Dr Michael Leahy, former priest, and member of Catholics for Renewal, who says that the Archbishop's piece “does the Church the great favour of clearly and distinctly stating the conservative position on the reforms proposed.”



Membership of CCT?

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

Feedback

Some feedback at our AGM:

Ongoing gratitude for your commitment, work and prayers to continue this journey...Keep critiquing our Church...keep up the good work, it is important...thank you for the website, resources, gatherings and being a voice to Church...great speaker, good time frame, keep it pithy!... Lower CCT's demographic (agreed – also committee! – Ed.)...we need not only young people but also some multicultural representation, how do we encourage these?... the Church hierarchy is here to take Jesus and his teachings into our heart. This is their main role, not making rules... Thank you for holding the 'net' out to offer hope, promise and a future to embrace.

Thank you to these and others who contributed!

Caring for the Earth by living out the Laudato Si' Goals

We are grateful to Tony Smith, *Laudato Si'* Tasmania Northern Deanery Facilitator, for providing us with some valuable links that attest to the reality of climate change. Tony is a member of the group established by the Archdiocese to implement the goals of *Laudato Si'*. Until the establishment of this group, our Archdiocese has, except for individual small group initiatives, been slow to respond to the inspiring *Laudato Si'* call of Pope Francis, despite it being written seven years ago.

Hence the disappointment when *Laudato Si'* and any initiatives are being ridiculed.

Professor Ian Plimer did just that recently in Hobart at an event publicised by the *Catholic Standard*. A climate change denialist, his 2019 opinion piece with a similar thrust in *The Australian* was called out by the Press Council as breaching its standards, see: [Complainant - Australian Press Council](#).

Here are some factual links provided by Tony.

<http://ecite.utas.edu.au/77774/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/scienceshow/monitoring-ice-north-and-south/13587924>

https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2021/09/24/social-justice-statement-2021-22/>

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Social-Justice-Statement-2021-22.pdf>

<https://www.dow.org.au/the-season-of-creation-cry-of-the-earth-cry-of-the-poor/>

https://www.arrcc.org.au/ecological_practise_for_local_faith_communities

<https://catholicearthcare.org.au/laudato-si-families/>

<https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/3ECnCxMQNt1B229ACvJ7uu?domain=youtube.com>

<https://www.documentarymania.com/player.php?title=Climate%20Change%20The%20Fact%20s>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p076w7q5>

<https://www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au/en/changing-climate/state-climate-statements/tasmania/>