
Around the Well

The Newsletter of Concerned Catholics
Tasmania

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*The Plenary - past history? Or the promising early stages
of an engaging journey?*

in Hobart with John Warhurst and Nimmi Candappa

September 10th – details overpage

From the Chair of CCT

Pope Francis reminds us:

"We can wonder if God is demanding too much of us, asking for a decision which we are not yet prepared to make.... (God our Father) always invites us to take a step forward, but does not demand a full response if we are not yet ready. He simply asks that we sincerely look at our life and present ourselves honestly before him, and that we be willing to continue to grow, asking from him what we ourselves cannot as yet achieve." (Evangelii Gaudium 153).

What we are called to is relatively simple. Love God and neighbour. **How** we do that can be really complicated. As Church (people not buildings or hierarchy) gathering, or, as Pope Francis says, we are vulnerable to the workings of the Holy Spirit.

On a Plenary July Wednesday in Sydney, Christ's followers were gathered in a room together when a poor decision was communicated to them causing many women followers and a few others to remain standing at the rear of the room rather than resuming their seats after a break.

Vulnerable to the Spirit working, a review and way forward was found and later revealed. Those followers paused and then were asked to take a step forward in trust, which they did. In that moment it became apparent that many were asking from God "what we ourselves cannot as yet achieve".

In our archdiocese we too are asking from God what we ourselves cannot as yet achieve.

Kim Chen

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ACCCR Submission to Synod of Bishops

The Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform, with which CCT is affiliated, identified seven key priorities in its submission:

inclusion of women with equality in governance and ministry;

all governance and leadership to be synodal in practice with strong accountability, transparency and inclusion;

eradication of clericalism;

response to the suffering and healing of victims and survivors of religious sexual abuse;

inclusion of all, especially LGBTIQ+ people;

pastoral outreach to those who feel cut off from the Church owing to its official social teaching, e.g., the divorced and remarried, contraception, annulments, LGBTIQ+;

the need for improved presentation of Jesus' teaching through better educated preaching and scriptural interpretation.

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CCT Statewide Gathering

The Plenary - past history? Or the promising early stages of an engaging journey?

September 10th 9.40 for 10am to 12.30pm

Guilford Young College Bosco Centre, Glenorchy Campus

You are invited to a morning of input and discussion about the recent Plenary. CCT is keen to harness the momentum generated as we look ahead to the next steps.

Our input will include that from two members at the Plenary:

Dr. Nimmi Candappa is a Melbourne writer and academic. Some clear advice she provided for Plenary Council members was: *"Members of the Plenary Council would do well to remember their foremost calling is to discern where the Holy Spirit is calling the Australian Church. That doesn't mean limiting or restricting that discernment to what members consider possible for the Church to address."* (Eureka Street September 30, 2021)

John Warhurst AO, is a noted Australian academic and a prominent leader within the Australian Republican Movement. He currently holds the positions of Emeritus Professor at the Australian National University and Deputy Chair of the Republican Movement. John is Chair of Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn and was a representative for that archdiocese at the Plenary. He is a regular columnist for the Canberra Times and has been respectfully tireless in his advocacy for change in our Church. John's 2019 visit to Tasmania to meet with Catholics in our archdiocese provided the catalyst for CCT being established.

As well as hearing those insights, we will look ahead to where we go next, calling upon their wisdom and seeking your thoughts for our archdiocese. How do we build on these early steps? What can be done in our parishes?

Registration is at donna_mcwilliam@yahoo.com.au, preferably **before September 4th**. Note: Entry to GYC is via Mill Lane (level entry). Parking in public nearby carpark.

One parish continues the Plenary hopes through dreaming, sharing and making plans....

A Burnie/Wynyard Parish Post-Plenary gathering was successful. The twenty-six in attendance considered a number of ways in which the parish could take action on issues raised during the Plenary Council.

These included:

the establishment of a Parish Pastoral Council and inviting a person experienced in this to speak at a later gathering; providing more formation and reflection opportunities, including by inviting guest speakers;

a Parish Social event;

a Laudato Si group to establish definite goals and actions;

a group to look into Plenary Council decrees regarding Indigenous people, as well as the Uluru Statement from the Heart;

considering ways of outreach, welcome and of strengthening community.

There are so many ways in which the Plenary can be a catalyst and re-energiser of parish and diocese!

Recent developments in CCT

The Committee of CCT met by Zoom on Monday 22nd August. Matters discussed included:

Post-Plenary Event – September 10th. Planning for this is well underway. With two such experienced speakers and Plenary members, we aim to ensure maximum participation by allowing plenty of discussion and question time. The Tasmanian Plenary delegates have been invited.

Regional Spirituality Sessions In light of the post – Plenary events, it was agreed that these be postponed to 2023.

Campaign for Refugees Early hopes for movement by our new government have not yet eventuated. Committee members, and all CCT, are encouraged to approach Federal members, including to advocate for the promised abolition of Temporary Protection Visas (there are 19000 currently)

Correspondence with Archbishop Recent correspondence with our Archbishop regarding the Plenary was disappointing. [Our letter](#) had sought some indication of steps the Archdiocese will be taking to continue progress in the direction of the Plenary. We noted that some other prelates, including Bishop Long of Parramatta and the Archbishop Comensoli of Melbourne had written to their flocks to report on the Plenary and to encourage ongoing discussion at diocesan and parish level. [Our Archbishop's response](#), via the Director of Chancery Services, Michael McKenna, was that there are no plans to do anything until after the Plenary decrees have been considered by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in November then submitted to the Apostolic See for approval. He wrote that "it would be precipitous and imprudent to advance further discussion on matters which may yet be subject of further changes, amendment or for that matter rejection in part, or complete."

CCT rejects this position. Members will note that many, if not most, [decrees](#) are non-contentious, pastoral and spiritually enriching. They are supported by a broad Church membership and are Christ centred. Few, if any, should be seen as appropriate for 'rejection'. Let's not place hurdles in the way of further discernment and engagement with some of them.....



ACBC Social Justice Statement Respect: confronting violence and abuse

We recommend this excellent statement. It can be viewed [here](#).

...processes that must penetrate hearts....

"I trust and pray that Christians and civil society in this land may grow in the ability to accept and respect the identity and the experience of the indigenous peoples. It is my hope that concrete ways can be found to make those peoples better known and esteemed, so that all may learn to walk together. For my part, I will continue to encourage the efforts of all Catholics to support the indigenous peoples. I have done so on other occasions and in various places, through meetings, appeals and also through the writing of an Apostolic Exhortation. I realize that all this will require time and patience. We are speaking of processes that must penetrate hearts."

Pope Francis - Speech during Apostolic Journey to Canada 2022

ACCCR Update August 2022

The Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR) is a network of 19 organisations in Australia and one in New Zealand. Members are committed to their Catholic faith and foster collaboration and mutual support in seeking reform and renewal in our Church. The Coalition is guided by Vatican II and the leadership of Pope Francis, with a strong commitment to co-responsibility for the Church's mission.

ACCCR Plenary and Synod Related Activities (Convenors' Update, August 2022):

ACCCR collaborated with member groups at many levels in covering the Plenary Council through Plenary Tracker (CCCG), the Synodality Seminar Series 2021/22 (YTU, Garratt), publication of our book 'Building the Church We Need', the Synod Submission 'Creating a Just and Synodal Church', and the Australian visits online and in person, of Sr Joan Chittister. (WWITCH).

General Reps Meeting 18th August: This was the opportunity for debriefing about the Plenary Council outcomes, and discussion about how ACCCR can keep momentum going. There was overall disappointment with the Plenary process which was so limited in scope to initiate urgent change at many levels due to the inevitable shortcomings of Canon Laws surrounding Plenary Councils. However, all agreed that the silent 'protest' and subsequent redrafting and voting on the associated motions had 'rocked' the Council Members and was a prophetic moment in Australian Catholic Church life. It is acknowledged that the Council is a global 'first' as an attempt at lay, religious and clerical structured discernment that sets a precedent for the Church universal. CCT has circulated several notable 'responses' to the Council from participants in or observers of the Council: eg. John Warhurst, Clair Victory, Vincent

Long, Frank Brennan, Peter Johnstone, Rene Pols.

ACCCR Members agreed that we need to remain a powerful lay voice to pressure the ACBC and each of our dioceses to implement whatever can be implemented now and ultimately, after Vatican approval, the 10 Decrees in full (in about 12 months).

Synod on Synodality Submission: The ACCCR *Synodal Processes Project Group*, established in 2021 under the leadership of four of our member groups, prepared an extensive submission to the Synod, submitted in August after Coalition endorsement. This can be accessed on our website.

Review of ACCCR Governance Model: The Coalition was founded in 2011 and member groups have agreed that a review of its governance structures is timely now. A suitable process for carrying out this review is being negotiated and a Representatives Group meeting for this purpose is planned for Sept 8th. A number of groups favour the status quo (which relies on consensus and ACCCR's identity as a 'network' of groups in 'Coalition', not an 'organisation' as such). Others see the evolving need for more formal structures similar to those of CCT or other incorporated bodies. We need a Coalition that continues to be strongly united in purpose and spirit, fully effective in giving the laity a voice in shaping the 'Synodal Way' for our Church post-Plenary and post-Synod.

New Co-Convenor:

ACCCR needs to appoint a new Co-Convenor to replace Peter Johnstone who is retiring from the position after outstanding service. A process for electing a replacement is being developed and nominations will be called for shortly.