
Around the Well

The Newsletter of Concerned Catholics
Tasmania

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From the Chair of CCT

The other day, I was meandering through saved articles and re-read an article by John Alonso Dick, an historical theologian and professor at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and the University of Ghent, entitled *The Tenacity of Hope*.

He referred to Jane Goodall, the English anthropologist and her book, *Reason for Hope*. A friend who attends Mass here in Burnie was one of Jane's first assistants!

Jane wrote "*Each one of us matters, has a role to play, and makes a difference*". She continued:

It is these undeniable qualities of human love and compassion and self-sacrifice that give me hope for the future. We are, indeed, often cruel and evil. Nobody can deny this. We gang up on each one another, we torture each other, with words as well as deeds, we fight, we kill. But we are also capable of the most noble, generous, and heroic behaviour.

Likewise, Pope Francis encourages us:

"We need to let the Lord's words echo constantly in our hearts: "*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, who am meek and humble of heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls*" (Mt 11:28-30). Jesus' yoke is a yoke of love and thus a pledge of refreshment."

On behalf of all our CCT committee, I wish you a joyful, peaceful and hope-filled Christmas"

Kim Chen

Convocation 3

A recording of the Convocation (see Page 3) can be found at:

[The Future of Catholicism in Australia, Convocation Three – November 18, 2021: Session Recording - YouTube](#)



Can we learn from the corporate world?

When someone is moved atop a pyramid, that person no longer has colleagues, only subordinates. Even the frankest and bravest subordinates do not talk with their boss in the same way that they talk with colleagues who are equals, and normal communications patterns become warped. ... The pyramidal structure weakens informal links, dries up channels of honest reaction and feedback, and creates limiting chief-subordinate relationships that, at the top, can seriously penalise the whole organisation. A self-protective image of omniscience often evolves from these warped and filtered communications. This in time defeats any leader by causing a distortion of judgement, for judgement is often best sharpened through interaction with others who are free to challenge and criticise.

GREENLEAF, R. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*

“a primacy of listening that works from the bottom up...”

Pope Francis is reorienting the power structures of the Catholic Church from a vertical, top-down style of governance to a circular, more relational approach through the global synod process, according to Xaviere Missionary Sister [Nathalie Becquart](#), the undersecretary of the Vatican's office of the Synod of Bishops.

"The focus is no longer first on the primacy at the top of the pyramidal view. The focus is first on all of the people of God".

"Papal primacy can no longer be conceived on its own or in itself, and it is clear that for him [Francis], primacy can only be exercised in relationship to and with all the members of the people of the body of Christ,"

"Pope Francis' style of primacy is a primacy of listening that works from the bottom up and envisions a position of the primacy within a circularity of relationships with bishops, that is collegiality, and with all the people of God,"

"The vision of synodality and the synodal church is truly rooted in the mystery of the Trinity.....mutual discerning in which everyone has something to learn."

"The aim of this synodal conversion is to retrieve the style of the early church that was a synodal church in which no one decided alone,"

"This change is significant and constitutes nothing less than the reconfiguration of the Catholic imagination regarding the way we look at the church.....in this sense, the pope has pushed the reset button of our reception and interpretation of Vatican II."

"We are called to get rid of a pattern of competition to enter into a pattern of cooperation and circularity. We will be a church more faithful to God."

Christopher White, National Catholic Reporter

And from Pope Francis himself....

[Pope Francis' homily from the opening of the Synodal Path – Catholic Outlook](#)

Balancing beliefs and rights.....

“(In debate on the Religious Discrimination Bill) there should be agreement on three key principles:

First, there should be no discrimination against kids.

Second, religious schools should be able to choose staff with an eye to maintaining the school's religious ethos.

And third, should a highly conservative or evangelical school want to be restrictive in staff selection, that selection should not be on the basis of sexual orientation, and it should be based on published, coherent employment policy rigorously and equally applied to all staff regardless of their sexual orientation.

Frank Brennan, SJ, *Three keys to balancing belief and rights*, The Australian Dec 1, 2021.

Membership of CCT?

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

Ideas for us?

Our next meeting is on January 31st. Please contact us prior to this if you wish to bring matters to our attention.

Recent developments in CCT

Matters considered since the last newsletter:

Diocesan Preparation for the Synod on Synods At the time of writing, CCT had not received a response from the Archbishop regarding his intentions to ensure opportunities for diocesan consultation, as requested by Pope Francis, so that our thoughts can be part of the input to Bishops as they consider how to bring to reality the Pope's hopes for a more synodal Church. CCT is concerned that, as time moves on, we will be left without sufficient time to give proper consideration to the questions raised. The Plenary preparation sessions held in May had allowed one opportunity in the north and the south with limited time for discussion, a frustration expressed by many attendees, and outcomes from these consultations were not made available to the faithful.

It was reported that some parishes have organized assemblies to discuss their hopes for a synodal church. There is more detail on the synod, and preparation for it, on Page 4 of this newsletter. CCT notes that there is no reference to the synod on the Archdiocese of Hobart website.

Vaccination Matters. The media has again approached CCT for comment on this matter and have been referred to our previous statements. It was disappointing to note in the Mercury of 30th November that the Archdiocese had not decided whether to make vaccination mandatory for priests and employees but "supported the use of vaccines for personal protection against the Covid virus". This seems somewhat out of step with the Pope's call for vaccination as an "act of love".

Laudato Si'. Those who attended the CCT gatherings on Laudato Si' may be interested to know that Fr Michael Tate and Tony Smith have developed a website and Facebook page:

www.laudatositasmania.com (website),

www.facebook.com/laudatositasmania (Facebook)

LGBTQI+. This continues to be a time of uncertainty for LGBTQI+ students and their families due to talk of 'guidelines' from Catholic Education for their support and the current debate on the Religious Discrimination Bill currently before Federal Parliament.



ACCCR - Convocation and reform further afield

The very successful **Convocation 3**, moderated by Ellen Fanning, was attended by over 1,200 participants online. The speakers shared their experiences of, and hopes for, the Council first session and the lead up to the second in Sydney in July 2022. Speakers included Claire Victory, Francis Sullivan, Nummi Candappa, Virginia Burke, John Warhurst, Eleanor Flynn, Robert Fitzgerald, Susan Pascoe and Kevin Liston.

Planning continues for a **lay-led Synod** in early 2022, prior to the Plenary second session, with the aim of ensuring that ALL laity have the chance to participate at some level.

The *Bristol Text* from the '**Roots and Branch Conference**' has now been endorsed by the great majority of ACCCR member groups, including CCT. The text can be found at: www.rootandbranchsynod.org

What is the Synod on Synodality 2023? (a brief summary)

Pope Francis has called for the Synod on Bishops in October 2023 to be a Synod on Synodality. In keeping with the spirit of such an event, he is calling on all Catholics to participate in discernment processes leading up the Synod of Bishops so that the Bishops will hold their discussions fully informed by the thoughts of Catholics world wide.

Documents Clear, colourful and comprehensive information is available now on the ACBC website: www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch.

Two videos are available and worth watching: (Archdiocese of Sydney, 4 mins, downplays 'consultation' phase and accents Bishops' role), and a Fr Gilbert from Kalkota, (14 mins, outlines the ten 'Themes' to inform the Plenary Journey, the Mission of Jesus and the Process)

The Fundamental Question

The fundamental question for the discernment process is:

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together".

How is this "journeying together" happening today in your particular Church?

What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"?

There are three major themes to guide the discernment:

Communion, Participation, Mission

Timeline

Launch of Synod – October 2021

Michael McKenna has been appointed as process facilitator for Tasmania.

Local gatherings can be held at parish and other levels November 2021 to February 2022.

Dioceses are to organise diocesan wide consultations April/May 2022.

A ten page diocesan summary will be prepared.

Australian Bishops will combine diocesan reports to draft the Australian response to be sent to the Dicastery for Synods in Rome.

Australian Bishops will participate in pre-synod meetings with other Oceania countries, December 2022 to March 2023.

The Synod of Bishops will be held October 2023.

At some time following the Synod, Pope Francis will produce a *motu proprio* for the whole Church to promote Synod teachings.

The Australian National Committee overseeing the Synod processes in Australia includes Trudi Dantis, Danial Ang, Stephen Hackett, Gabrielle McMullen, Sophy Morley and Lana Turvey-Collins.

The two Australians appointed to Rome to help prepare the Synod are Fr Ormund Rush and Susan Pascoe.

Late News - Bishops' Delegates to Synod

Archbishop Patrick O'Regan (Adelaide) and Bishop Shane Mackinlay (Sandhurst) have been elected Australia's two delegates to the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023.

How does the Synod relate to The Plenary Council?

Submissions to the Plenary will 'inform' the Australian responses to the pre-Synod consultations.