
Around the Well

The Newsletter of Concerned Catholics
Tasmania

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From the Chair of CCT

Sitting here on Valentines Day/Ash Wednesday, what a contrast these events are. Yet there is commonality. [Thomas Griffin](#) writes that while one is about romantic love and the other about repentance and preparation for the holiest of days in our church year, both are about commitment and sacrifice. Love means that we die to ourselves and rise to love for those around us. It costs time, energy, effort and sacrifice. As we reflect on what our Lenten practice might be, rather than giving up something, we could focus on conscious love for others.

I heartily recommend attending and participating in our AGM on Saturday 23 March in Launceston. Sandie Cornish, an Australian participant at the Synod in Rome last October and the Plenary in July 2023, will share her perspective on what has been achieved so far and how we might make a difference.

CCT recently wrote to ask about the plan for archdiocesan consultations as requested by Synod organisers. We were pleased to receive a reply from the Archbishop inviting us to comment on the [Synthesis Report](#) from the first Synod session, focusing particularly on Chapters 8 to 12, 16 and 18. While the timeline is short and precludes broad consultation, the Committee will prepare thoughts based on our mission, material from previous gatherings and input such as the upcoming AGM discussions. We will email the relevant chapters out to members and welcome any input on some or all.

Given that there could be momentous change in our church in Tasmania in the year ahead with the installation of a new Archbishop and decisions from the Synod in October 2024, we, hopefully, will have an opportunity to actively participate in a church "moving not occasionally but structurally towards a synodal church, an open square where all can feel at home and participate." (Pope Francis)

Please keep in your prayers committee member, Carey McIver, who is seriously ill.

Sue Chen

www.concernedcatholicstasmania.org



What happened at the first session of the Synod? Hear from someone who was in the Synod Hall. What are our hopes the second and final session in October?



CCT welcomes **Dr Sandie Cornish**, practitioner and academic in the field of Catholic Social Teaching, as our guest speaker on

Saturday 23rd March
9.30 for 10am to 12.30pm

Tailrace Centre, 1 Waterside Drive,
Riverside, Launceston

Sandie's address will be preceded by a (very) short AGM. Questions and discussion will follow her address.

Sandie was one of the *periti* (advisors) for the Plenary Council and was appointed to the Synod on Synodality as an Australian representative.

PS: We had the date booked before the Premier! Flexible early voting options are easy to access!

Page 1

Recent developments in CCT

The Committee of CCT met by Zoom on Monday 5th February:

Annual General Meeting March 23rd with Dr Sandie Cornish Organisation for this event is well underway. It will be refreshing to hear from someone who was present in the Synod Hall and can tell us of her personal experience of the Synod as delegates journeyed together.

Regional Spirituality Opportunities As part of its mission, CCT will provide opportunities for reflection and discernment at the regional level. Details will be finalised shortly.

Membership Fees As CCT currently has a cash balance sufficient to meet its immediate needs, the committee voted to waive the annual subscription fee for 2024. New members will receive a free first year.

Committee Reflection Day Each year the committee manages to get away from the business of its meetings and have time for personal and group reflection. Dr Drasko Dizdar led the group on Saturday 17th February.

Tasmanian Conversion Practices Bill CCT's submission can be found on our [website](#). It argues that "the Bill does not effectively address the damage caused by sexual orientation and gender identity conversion practices".

Opportunities for Pre-Synod Involvement From the Synod Office in Rome comes an Invitation to ALL Catholics to participate in consultations (Feb to May, 2024), with the message: "All bishops have been notified, and dioceses have been requested plan these consultations to focus on the Synod Summary, with 'widest participation possible'". Details and a Discussion Guide for small groups is to be found at: <https://catholic.org.au/synodalchurch>.

From Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI): Information about and opportunities to participate in the Synod are being offered online from this independent lay global organisation (In case any dioceses are unresponsive to the Synod!) ACCCR is affiliated with CCRI. All are welcome to check out offerings at catholicchurchreformintl.org.

And/or, attend the CCT AGM with Sandie Cornish or see accr.com.au.

Around the Well Members will soon have access to a small badge using our well image. The significance of the image is explained on Page 4!

ACCCR and Refugee Updates See Pages 3 and 4.

Next Meeting Tuesday March 5th Ideas, feedback, queries to hello@concernedcatholicstasmania.org.

A paradigm shift in theology.....

Pope Francis has called for a "paradigm shift" in Catholic theology that engages with contemporary science, culture and people's lived experience as an essential starting point.

"Theology can only develop in a culture of dialogue and encounter between different traditions and different knowledge, between different Christian confessions and different religions, openly engaging with everyone, believers and nonbelievers," the Pope wrote in the apostolic letter.

Pope Francis wrote that Catholic theology must experience a "courageous cultural revolution" to become a "fundamentally contextual theology". Guided by Christ's incarnation into time and space, this approach to theology must be capable of reading and interpreting "the Gospel in the conditions in which men and women live daily, in different geographical, social, and cultural environments," the Pope wrote.

He contrasted this approach with a theology that is limited to "abstractly re-proposing formulas and schemes from the past". He emphasised that theological studies must be open to the world, not as a "'tactical' attitude" but as a profound "turning point" in their method, which he said must be "inductive."

From CathNews November 2. Full text [here](#).

Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform

Synod on Synodality At the first Reps Meeting in January, members expressed hope and joy about the universal Synod so far, with a stated commitment to keep its spirit and progress alive in between the two sessions as we head into 2024. There is realism too about its shortcomings, including lack of clear commitment to LGBTIQA+ Catholics and the full inclusion of women. The consultation and decisions expressed in *Getting Back on Mission: Reforming our church together* (2019, Garratt Publishing, Catholics for Renewal) are still seen as hallmarks for Catholic Church reform and renewal.

Webinar: We are reminded that there will be webinar on 22nd February- *Evolving Catholicism and The Synod*, featuring Francis Sullivan and Kevin Liston as speakers (Ormond Rush was unavailable) and Trish Hindmarsh as responder.

Papers prepared by Kevin Liston in response to the Synod Summary Document and the motu proprio, *Promoting Theology*, were welcomed by Members. It was decided to adopt both as ACCCR responses, to be posted on our website or at www.acccr.com.au/posts/.

The Elyssa Roper seminar in January facilitated by CCRI, and featuring ACCCR Members, Christina Reymer and Kevin Liston, was very successful, despite technical glitches. It is available [here](#) for anyone who was unable to join on the day.

The Tomas Halik lectures, *Help my unbelief! Finding God in a Secular Age*, organised by the Parramatta Diocese on February 12th, offered a marvellous opportunity. Video recording [here](#).

Gay Conversion Therapy Ban Draft Legislation NSW ACCCR is considering how to respond to calls for its support for this draft legislation. Some felt our mandate as the Coalition does not extend to involvement with specific issues such as this. Others felt it is important to do so.

Possible Incorporation of ACCCR It has been decided to commission a briefing paper, prepared by the specialist lawyer who worked with WATAC in this area, to guide our Members in discerning the most helpful legal structure for ACCCR to adopt into the future. We agreed that if ACCCR is to continue to evolve, we need to have legal standing as we raise funds and engage in the public square. (We have thousands logging in to the online events we organise, from across Australia and globally). There is the potential for ACCCR to become a catalyst for the development of a wide ranging lay representative body committed to a synodal way of being Church into the future.



***Fiducia Supplicans* - on the blessing of people in same sex relationships..... "opening the door to grace"**

Fiducia Supplicans puts an end to the era of doctrinal policing, a policy which Francis has been promoting since the beginning of his papacy. Francis' policy was not only for LGBTQ+ people but for anyone who was wounded by draconian applications of "pastoral care."

This new document quotes from the pontiff's first official document, the apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, in which he instructed avoiding "a narcissistic and authoritarian elitism, whereby instead of evangelizing, one analyzes and classifies others, and instead of opening the door to grace, one exhausts his or her energies in inspecting and verifying."

From National Catholic Reporter – full text [here](#).

Update on Refugees & Asylum Seekers

CCT members Kim Chen and Cathy Sullivan, met with Senator Nick McKim on 23 January 2024 to discuss pressing and ongoing issues with refugees, especially those in PNG & Nauru. PNG is not a party to the UN Convention on refugees, which makes the 81 or so refugees there reluctant to apply for refugee status. Their fear is that they may not be given a 'durable solution', meaning resettlement to a third country or safe local integration.

Some are mentally & physically ill and have a strong case to be evacuated & resettled in Australia. Senator McKim argues that while PNG has the ongoing responsibility, Australia, having created the situation in the first place, is morally bound to resolve it.

The PNG bishops are agitating for Australia to advocate on their behalf, and Secretary of the Bishop's Conference Fr Giorgio Lucini has liaised with CCT for support. Members will also be interested in reading St Vincent De Paul National President Mark Gaetani's forthright article ["Pope Francis would find PNG refugee conditions an eye-opener"](#) in *Pearls & Irritations*.

The situation in Nauru has its own configurations. Being party to the UNHCR Convention, Nauru is bound by its obligations. From information on the Refugee Council website, two groups of 10 & 11 boat arrivals are now detained on Nauru as of late 2023 (Update: more just sent there). It is difficult to clarify their situation, but it is public knowledge that the Australian government has pledged \$422 million dollars to maintain the Centre over the next three years. Most of this will go to the US private Prison Company MTC. CCT will continue to monitor these issues.

Re-visiting the Well

Some have asked why we use the well symbol with our newsletter. It is based on a reflection used at one of the first CCT Committee meetings:

It is reported that Carl Jung's favourite story went like this:



"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.

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."