
Around the Well

The Newsletter of Concerned Catholics
Tasmania

No 33 13 March 2024

From the Chair of CCT

This edition of *Around the Well* follows closely on the tail of the last. There are two reasons for this edition. One is momentous: the loss of our friend and foundation CCT member, Carey McIver. The other is significant: to update you on the role CCT has been invited by our Archbishop to play in contributing to the archdiocesan submission to the next phase of the Synod on Synodality.

A tribute to Carey is below.

Further in this edition, you will find a summary of some experiences of members who attended the first session of the Synod. They provide a taste of what Sandie Cornish will have to say on 23 March in Launceston.

CCT has been asked by our Archbishop to provide a response to Chapters 8-12 and 16-18 of the Synthesis Report (see [here](#)) published late last year as a summary of the outcomes from the first session of the Synod held in October last year. The CCT response must be provided by 30 March 2024. Your input to CCT's response will be both welcomed and valued so that CCT can craft our response following our AGM.

We encourage you to attend our AGM, the premier event on Saturday 23 March. Details are in the right-hand column. You can do an absentee election vote in the State election so please don't be a CCT absentee if at all possible!

Sue Chen

Vale Carey Christopher McIver 29 Jan 1953 – 24 Feb 2024

What a difference a Carey makes.....

We have bid final farewell to Carey McIver, a stalwart founding father of Concerned Catholics Tasmania (CCT), part of our spirit and a cornerstone upon whom many have depended for more years than the years our group has existed.

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 for the second and final session in October?



CCT welcomes **Dr Sandie Cornish** 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.

RSVP (including apologies)
donna_mcwilliam@yahoo.com.au

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

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While it is a simple task to catalogue Carey's endearing attributes and qualities, the sum of those parts does not express the full essence of Carey. That he was a child of God there is no doubt. God's love, warmth, joy and grace emanated through Carey. With his positive perspective and good humour, he embraced us and lightened the tone of our interchanges. Carey was fun to be with.

The sorrows suffered due to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune could have dulled Carey's zest for life. The death of son, Robbie, and the 'terminal illness' that infects the hierarchy of our church could have been crushing blows were it not for Carey's indomitable spirit and the embrace of his closest companions on the journey, bride Judy, and offspring Matthew, Paul, Kate, Damian, David and Patrick.

Carey understood that life was a gift that called him to look to the welfare of other. People not ideas were his primary concern. If something needs to be done, then, following reflection, Carey was willing to swing into action for a worthy cause. Opting out was not a path Carey often took, although with the Catholic Church he came close. The causes were many but what distinguished Carey was how he went about it. Deep listening was his mantra. Accompaniment his style. Growth his objective.

Our souls are pierced by separation from our fine companion and our compassion for Judy and her family. Nevertheless, God's gift of Carey remains with us. Our clear recollections are of a fine man whose tender honesty and integrity demonstrated the impact of divine grace has in this world and will stay with us. Our consolation is, 'If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him'. (Romans 6:8)

For those who were unable to attend Carey's farewell, rest assured that it was much more than a fitting send off. It rang true and Judy and the McIver family honoured Carey with intimate stories shared with great composure, clarity, comfort and courage. Mark Freeman shared with us his knowledge and understanding of a dear friend and fellow pilgrim. We were privileged to be there.

Sue and Kim Chen

A Synod update - What is our role here and now?

1. Faithfully conveying to the faithful in Tasmania the story of the Synod so far.

1.1 The purpose of the Synod as both Fr James Martin SJ and Cardinal Michael Czerny SJ have said "the Synod on Synodality was less about issues, even important ones, and more about how we discussed those issues." (see Fr James Martins article [here](#))

Quotes from Pope Francis, closing Mass of the first Synod session

"Dear friends, the general assembly of the synod has now concluded,.....today we do not see the full fruit of this process, but with farsightedness we look to the horizon opening up before us."

"The Lord will guide us and help us to be a more synodal and missionary church, a church that adores God and serves the women and men of our time, going forth to bring to everyone the consoling joy of the Gospel he said."

"This is the church we are called to 'dream': a church that is the servant of all, the servant of the least of our brothers and sisters; a church that never demands an attestation of 'good behaviour,' but welcomes, serves, loves, forgives; a church with open doors that is a haven of mercy."

"We may have plenty of good ideas on how to reform the church, but let's remember: to adore God and to love our brothers and sisters with his love, that is the great and perennial reform."

From the Synod Prayer....as we await the second session...

"We stand before you, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in your name. With you alone to guide us, make yourself at home in our hearts. Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.....let us find in you our unity as we journey together..."

1.2 Father Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., the former master general of the Dominicans, led a retreat for members of the Synod of Bishops outside of Rome, a few days before their deliberations began. Importantly, Fr Radcliffe pointed out to members that without friendship we shall achieve nothing. Then he quoted a beautiful line from Pope St. John Paul II: “**Affective collegiality precedes effective collegiality.**” Affective describes something that has been influenced by emotions, is a result of emotions, or expresses emotion. Effective describes something that produces a desired result. (Late news: see [here](#) for details of a free live stream of **Where to next with the Synod** with Fr Radcliffe this Thursday 14th March at 5.30pm.)

“We preach the gospel of friendships that reach across boundaries,” said Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., during the retreat he led for members of the Synod of Bishops outside of Rome, a few days before our deliberations began. This image informed and illuminated my experience of the XVIth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which concluded this weekend:

So, from the start the foundational focus of the Synod would be the friendships created as it is by friendship that we will make the transition from “I” to “We” Fr Martin included in his opening remarks. To his mind, that was the most important thing that occurred at the Synod: Friendships were built across boundaries, within the boundary of our love for Christ, whose love knows no boundaries.

Fr Martin went on to answer the questions that many Catholics have about the Synod: What really happened? What did you do? And, crucially, what was the point?

1.3 Conversations in the Spirit – the synod’s gift to our Church The retreat at the Fraterna Domus retreat centre, was led by Fr Radcliffe and Mother Maria Ignazia Angelina, an Italian Benedictine sister. It included not only prayer and presentations, but also an introduction to the main way of participating in the Synod, called “Conversations in the Spirit.” **These conversations, more than anything else, were the main contribution of the Synod to the church.**

The first step for conversations in the Spirit was prayer. Everything members did was grounded in that, and they frequently paused to reflect. Each module (or section of the Synod) also began with a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica.

It was helpful to ask everyone what name they wanted to be called at the tables. Next, each member around the table was free to speak for three minutes (strictly timed) sharing their response to the question at hand. The questions came from the working document, or *Instrumentum Laboris*—for example, “How can a synodal church make credible the promise that ‘love and truth will meet?’”

No one was allowed to interrupt and everyone had to listen. No interruptions, responses or talkbacks at this stage. Following that, after more prayer, each member shared what they had heard, what moved them and what resonances they felt in the discussion. Where was the Spirit moving? Again, no interruptions.

Finally, the third session was a freer discussion, where members could answer questions, share experiences and challenge one another.

The genius of this method lies in its ability to convey the complex reality of our discussions honestly. **A secretary would write up the convergences, divergences, tensions and questions.** Then a reporter would present the table’s discussion to the plenary session. In this way, there was no need to force a false consensus when there wasn’t one; rather, any differences and tensions were honestly communicated.

This method meant that everyone was listened to, everyone got a chance, and an honest summary was offered for further reflection.

Members also had the chance for “interventions” (speeches) at the plenary level. In other words, beyond the contributions by the tables as a group, individuals could address the entire Synod, including the pope, who was often present. For the most part, these were fascinating, as you heard about issues affecting churches from around the world. What did Fr Martin know about Catholics living as a persecuted minority in some countries? At the beginning of the Synod not much, now much more.

Every member could speak, and priority was given to those who had not yet spoken.

Fr Martin realized that the message of the Synod is this method, which could help the church immeasurably in a time of great polarization.

Fr Martin wishes that the synthesis was more reflective of the rich conversation around the topic and admitted divergences, as was done in other controversial areas.

1.4 Friendships were the key to the Synod. Of course, it's easy to be friendly with people on the same wavelength. But the most synodal moments for Fr Martin were when he spoke with people with whom he disagreed, sometimes dramatically. After what he would call some severe interventions on LGBTQ issues, he spoke with several delegates one-on-one, during coffee breaks. By the end of his discussions, there wasn't much common ground, but there was friendship and respect, and we greeted each other from then on.

2. Will this change the church? Perhaps not, but it's a start....perhaps a thing good in a polarized world.

3. Now what? This was only the first session of the Synod. Moreover, our synthesis is what one member of the synod office called a “martyr document,” which means it will only last for 11 months and then die, to be replaced by a new one and then, perhaps, an exhortation from the pope.

4. What will happen next October? Will we use the synthesis as a jumping-off point, or will other issues have emerged in the next 11 months? What will the people of God tell us in the intervening months? Will there be greater openness now that Synod members know one another? Or will positions harden?

5. “What will be given?” said Father Radcliffe at the end of our retreat. ***“We wait to see what the Lord in his wisdom will give us, which will certainly not be what we expect.”*** As for me, I look forward to next year with great hope.

Points to emphasise:

- 1 Lay women and men are delegates at the Synod.
- 2 Few delegate theologians attended. No experts at tables. Session 2 will probably be different.
- 3 The round tables point to deep listening to each other without deferral to rank.
- 4 Co-responsibility and accompaniment on mission enhanced with the sauce of friendship.
- 5 There are vastly different needs of local church: be attentive to that.
- 6 Get involved!
- 7 Hopefully and God willing, Pope Francis will decide.

Kim Chen