



Susan Chen's testimony at the launch of Concerned Catholics Tasmania Inc

In about June 2018, I was asked to speak at Mass to invite parishioners to participate in Plenary preparation, aimed at informing the Bishops about what we think God is asking of us in Australia at this time.

I spoke from the heart about what troubles me: the bishops' stance on gay marriage, sexual abuse coverups, lack of leadership for women, church governance structures etc. As I walked out of church I thought, if I get a bad reaction, then that's it for me! I don't want to continue to belong to this organisation. Instead, what I heard were comments, including: "thank you"; "at last"; "it's a relief"; and "I want to be part of this". It was a transforming moment in which I realised that the majority, based on that small sample size, are actually pretty upset with the institutional church, and that it is time to make our voice heard. Consequently, a number of workshops were held with large parish representation, and many months later we sent off six submissions to the Plenary Council Committee.

Fasttrack to today and we hear voices that say Plenary Council won't achieve much, as the decisionmakers are Bishops and the majority of delegates are church employees. I could be disheartened, but I'm not because I've had another epiphany!

I have come to the realisation that the process is important, not just the outcomes. In other words, I'm going to invest my energy in the process of taking responsibility as an adult for being authentically church, with Jesus as my model, because that is lifegiving and positive. Furthermore, I gain strength, hope and community from those around me, as we continue to actively work for an inclusive, transparent and accountable church.