

Towards a Listening Church

The fact that a group of committed lay Catholics has formed Concerned Catholics Tasmania (CCT Inc), for which the level of support grows daily, including from religious and clergy, is a sign that the Church here in Tasmania must begin to listen authentically to the hopes and concerns of Church members. Despite claims to the contrary, decisions are being made without adequate consultation with communities affected. Visits, whilst pastoral, do not constitute consultation unless there is a structured opportunity for discussion and input by people. The national Plenary, now postponed until 2021, was meant to give everyone in the Australian Church a chance to discern within their own communities and dioceses so that their ideas could go forward. In Tasmania, the process was late, short and shallow across much of the Archdiocese.

We are proud of the many wonderful works of the Church throughout Australia; we cherish the richness of our faith. We are frustrated, however, that there is a lack of transparency and accountability to the faithful. We remain embarrassed about a patriarchal structure throughout the Church that devalues the laity and, in particular, the gifts of leadership and governance held by women. The launch of CCT on Saturday will further help the return to a Church with the humility that Jesus intended when he placed its future in the hands of imperfect mortals.

Chris Smith,

Deputy Chair Concerned Catholics Tasmania