



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Church in Australia carrying forward its pursuit of synodality

MEDIA RELEASE

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One “particular grace” of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia has been its encouragement of many initiatives in the Church across the country, according to a letter to the People of God prepared for the Solemnity of Christ the King.

As the Church marks the end of the liturgical year this weekend, the letter provides an update on work carrying forward the Plenary Council’s outcomes while awaiting the Holy See’s formal recognitio of the Council’s decrees.

More than a dozen people – clergy, religious and laity – gathered in Sydney recently to provide a report on work undertaken since the Council’s conclusion in July 2022. Such a report had been called for in the Council’s decrees.

The group’s members had been nominated by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and the Association of Ministerial PJPs. They decided to offer the report in the format of a letter to the People of God.

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, who served as the Plenary Council’s president, said while there is a keen desire to receive the Holy See’s recognitio, the Church in Australia has not been sitting idle.

“This letter to the People of God outlines just a selection of the initiatives that are being pursued, including diocesan synods and assemblies, national conferences and events hosted by various Church entities,” he said.

“As the letter says, ‘there are many participants in a shared journey which continues to unfold.’”

The letter, which considers the complementary nature of the ongoing Synod of Bishops for a Synodal Church, includes reminders of some of the key milestones since the Plenary Council’s celebration phase ended last year:

- The approval of the Council’s acts and decrees;
- The submission of the acts and decrees to the Dicastery for Bishops;
- The publication of [*Carrying Forward the Plenary Council: As we continue the journey together*](#) at Pentecost, inviting local Catholic communities to reflect on their own engagement with the Council’s decrees.

“In providing this report, the Bishops of Australia share their commitment to honour and implement the remarkable work of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia,” the letter says.

“It remains fresh and alive in our planning for the future. We look back in gratitude for the breadth of engagement on every level of the life of the Church and for the experience of encounter, listening and discernment (which lies at the very centre of a synodal framework) afforded by the experience of the general assemblies of the Plenary Council.

“We look forward with anticipation and hope that, with the promulgation of the Decrees of the Plenary Council, the Church in Australia will be graced with both a deepened experience of communion and participation, and at the same time a revitalised impetus to mission.”

[Click here to read the letter to the People of God.](#)