

ACBC MEDIA CONGRESS

The Australian Catholic Communications Congress, organised every three years by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) was held recently at the Rydges Hotel in Sydney. The theme of the Congress this year was, "What is our voice? *'Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks'*" (Mt 12:34). The Congress was opened by Bishop Peter Ingham, Chair of the ACBC Australian Catholic Media Council.

The Congress began with a keynote address by Sr Jane Keogh csb, a Human Rights Campaigner, "What is our Voice. Speaking the Truth." Sr Jane told us of her experiences as an educator and advocate for asylum seekers. Those present were challenged to look at what we can do ourselves to help those in need.

The program was full with many presentations, expert panel Q&A, participant workshops, hot button issue discussion and a lively and entertaining music presentation by Steph Unger. The ABC Religion and Ethics Unit were well represented and encouraged participants to develop relationships with their local media outlets and to make what we have to say interesting and positive.

Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications delivered a keynote address, "The Church in a digital world: communicating the Good News, sharing the gift of faith". Archbishop Claudio was captivating in delivering his messages and some of his key points were to engage the audience otherwise we are talking to ourselves, keep the language simple, listen to others and he reminded us that, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ is at the heart of our message."

Following Archbishop Claudio's address was a book launch by Beth Doherty, "Tweet others as you wish to be tweeted, a scripture based guide to social media for the Church". This book will be available for loan from the Diocesan Resource Centre soon.



Above: L-R: Beth Doherty and Archbishop Celli

Left below: Delegate asking a question with Bishop Paul in the audience



The Congress Mass was held at St Mary's Parish Church, North Sydney, celebrated by Archbishop Claudio and con-celebrants included our own Bishop, Paul Bird. Following Mass was the Congress dinner, held at St Mary's Parish Centre and we were thoroughly entertained by Robyn Moore, who is best known as the voice of cartoon character Blinky Bill.

The final day of the congress included presentations on media crisis management, the Royal Commission and our voices for the future. Bishop Peter closed the Congress with a prayer and was thanked for his role as Chair of the Media Council over the past 9 years as his term has now finished.

The Congress always provides a great opportunity to renew acquaintances and make new connections with others in the communications area of their dioceses, being reminded again of Archbishop Claudio's words that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is at the heart of our message.

Full texts of all presentations from the Congress are available from <https://www.catholic.org.au/congress2015/presentations>