



CATHOLIC
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of
BALLARAT

Diocesan e-News

SYNODALITY IN PRACTICE: LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT AND LEADING CHANGE

The 14th National eConference focused on engaging communities around Australia in a landmark discussion around the future vision and direction for the Catholic Church in the country. This discussion was timed to coincide with the 2020 Plenary Council - the first such synod for the Australian Church in eighty years.



The e-Conference held on August 8 was attended by sixteen parishioners in St Michael and John's Parish, Horsham. Some thoughts on this e-Conference by Fr Peter Hudson, Parish Priest, can be read below:

Archbishop Mark Coleridge talked about 'what is a synodal church?' It is the church on a journey, a teaching and learning church, listening to all the voices of people, and to listen to the Holy Spirit in the messiness of our journey together. Synodality is a word not much heard till Pope Francis started using it, and some people struggle to understand it. How new is it and how does it relate to Vatican II and Scripture? In a truly synodal Church who listens to whom? What have been your own experiences of faith, and of the Church which has shaped you? Who can you and your community encourage to join in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter to ensure their story is contributed to shaping the future of the Church in Australia? What needs to be done to make our church truly synodal? Are bishops, clergy, laity, religious orders, youth acting on Pope Francis' synodal call, in different ways? Do you feel you are listened to?

"Tradition" reminds us that we live our faith in history, which we receive from those who have passed on their faith to us. Have you experienced "tradition" as a positive force in the life of the Church? What might it contribute to the life and mission of the Church? The Holy Spirit at the centre of the Church calls the Church to move to the future, to the fullness of life in Christ, without abandoning the faith we have received through history. What challenges do you face in being open to change and the "eternal newness" of God, while remaining connected to the past, to the history of faith?

The Holy Spirit "blows where it wills" (Jn 3:8). Where might the Spirit be blowing today? What might the Spirit be asking of us as a Church? What skills/attitudes/practices enable us to listen for the Spirit in different points of view while also remaining united in our faith?

May these points and questions guide us in our reflections and personal responses.