



NATIONAL BIENNIAL LITURGY CONFERENCE 2020

The National Biennial Liturgy Conference is an Australian gathering of liturgy representatives, pastoral ministers, catechists, musicians, educators and all who are interested in liturgy. The 2020 conference was held in Parramatta NSW from March 12-14. The keynote speaker was Fr Paul Turner, Kansas City, Missouri, USA and the conference focussed on fostering and forming the people of God at prayer.



Attendees from the Ballarat Diocese were Bishop Paul Bird CSsR, member of the [Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Bishops Commission for Liturgy](#) and Dr Susan Crowe, member of the Ballarat Diocesan Liturgical Commission.

A report of the conference from Dr Susan Crowe can be read below:

The National Biennial Liturgy Conference held in March 2020 in Parramatta had “Liturgy: Forming a Prayerful and Eucharistic Church” as its focus. Being one of the topics for the Plenary Council, this proved to be of great interest with a larger number of attendees than usual for this conference.

The keynote speaker was Fr Paul Turner, who was a great attraction for many who attended. This conference was one of the last that was able to be held with the shutdown of conference centres, churches, borders and Australia itself. Some of the attendees from New Zealand were going home to a two week isolation.

Fr Paul’s keynote addresses ‘top and tailed’ the conference. In his opening address “Looking Back”, Fr Paul spoke about ‘the fruits of the Second Vatican Council as they continue to blossom under Pope Francis’. The changes made to our liturgical celebrations – particularly the Mass – were explored and explained. The paper was broken down into five different ways of seeing these changes:

- Creating better focus;
- Mining the Tradition;
- Setting new directions;
- Expanding the Lectionary;
- Re-centring Eucharistic theology.



The second keynote addressed our looking forward with hope and confidence knowing the Holy Spirit is there to continue to guide us in the years to come. In this talk Fr Paul addressed three areas:

- The diminished attendance at Sunday Mass;
- The challenges of secular society;
- Ideas for the way forward.



Fr Paul emphasised the fact that Jesus continues to echo in our hearts and we must share this good news with others. His suggestions for the way forward for the Church in Australia as we prepare for the Plenary Council, especially “Forming a Prayerful and Eucharistic Church”, were simple:

- Tell people about Christ (1 Peter 3:15);
- Develop our own personal prayer;
- Learn about the Liturgy;
- Participate fully, consciously and actively in the Liturgy.

There is so much more in Fr Paul’s keynotes, however, these papers have been published on Fr Paul’s website [here](#) and permission is granted to download them.

Other workshops I attended were interesting. Professor Clare Johnson’s presentation “Liturgy at the Heart of Catholic Schools” although offering good information, also left me with so many questions on the ‘how’ we can achieve liturgies that are “a vibrant, life-giving force animating the life of the Catholic school”.

Fr Tom Elich’s presented the workshop “Is your Parish church fit for Sacred use?” I attended this workshop in the hope of some suggestions on how to make our Cathedral – beautiful as it is – a little more congregational friendly.

The third workshop I attended “Proclaiming the Scriptures: The Word of God – Living and Active” was presented by Dr Carmel Pilcher rsj with participants offering suggestions on how to proclaim the Word.



The Conference was sponsored by the Australian Catholic Bishop’s Conference Bishops Commission for Liturgy and its advisory bodies, in the hope the gathering provided an opportunity to network with those involved in liturgy across Australia and find out more about the liturgical life of the Church. See the conference website [here](#).

Susan Crowe



*Members of the Australian Pastoral Musicians Network Inc. Executive with Fr Paul Turner at the Conference:
L-R: Fiona Dyball, Sophy Morley, Paul Mason, Fr Paul Turner, Michael Mangan, Susan Crowe and Angela Gorman
Photo courtesy of Josie Ryan, APMN Executive Member*

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