

During May 13 to 15, approximately four hundred participants attended the Mission One Heart Many Voices Bi-annual Conference in Sydney. Amazing key note speakers, master classes and a variety of workshops provided an enriching, enlivening experience. The days resounded with the sharing of wisdom, with affirmation and with challenges for our leadership.

Participants were welcomed to Country by representatives of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council. Students from the Catholic Schools Performing Arts group provided a mesmerising performance of song and dance focusing on inclusion and multiculturalism. Each conference participant was then presented with a small glass heart as a symbol of love distributed by the NATSICC representatives.

Keynote speaker, Dr Carol Zinn, a Sister of St Joseph from Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia and Executive Director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, spoke of becoming a Church beyond 2020 in the context of the cosmos: holan (arts and wholes), scripture, the outer and inner worlds, and beauty (music/arts). She stressed that the church is the people of God - all of them, all the time; that our Baptism makes us members, always; and that the church engages the world in the same way that Jesus engaged the world. She imagined a church where dialogue, inclusivity and encounter are the norm; a church where the joy of the Gospel is “looking at others with the very eyes of God (love)”.

Dr Zinn stated that leadership for mission is about trust, that without having that relationship of trust with God, it is almost impossible to lead mission. The focus of her address was on living the joy of the Gospel and Pope Francis’ exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* which was a key theme of the conference. Critical to doing so, she said, is choosing love over fear, inclusivity over exclusivity and mercy over judgement

Bishop Paul Tighe, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture, spoke about how the digital age

is changing our culture, language and communication and can be used in the church to call people into relationships. The church is here to communicate the message of Christ which has been entrusted to us. He commented that Pope Benedict commenced a twitter account to reach out with messages of hope. Pope Francis took over this twitter account and has 40 million followers.

The Conference Breakfast speaker was Dr Robyn Miller, CEO of Mackillop Family Services. She spoke about their work in empowering families, working with children with disabilities and assisting with specialised foster care. She stated, “We must hold our nerve and be faithful to the gospel”.



Over the three days, we were addressed by over forty-seven presenters. There were talks on justice as an authentic way of living mission in today's world, on the environment, trafficking, refugees, disability and on many other topics. The MOHVM Conference was a most rewarding, enriching and affirming experience. It was inclusive, relevant and engaging with many excellent speakers.

The next MOHVM Conference will be in September 2021. If you have not attended one of these conferences, it is an experience worth having, as attending helps us to strengthen our capacity to share and live out our faith in our own lives, in our homes, parishes, schools and communities.

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