

## **Report on *Stirring the Waters*, Colloquium for Australian Catholic Women**

*Adelaide, 22-24 February 2019*

from Audrey Brown, Director Catholic Education Ballarat.

I was fortunate to be able to attend and facilitate a workshop at this Colloquium. Two colleagues from the Catholic Education Office Ballarat attended, and six other women from around the Diocese had also travelled to participate in the Colloquium.

In all, the Council for Australian Catholic Women hosted around 130 women from across Australia at the event.

***Stirring the Waters: Catholic Women responding to the Spirit*** created the opportunity for theological reflection on what the Spirit is saying to the Australian Church at this time and explored how to create a Church that is (in anticipation of Plenary Council 2020) inclusive and synodal, missionary and merciful, prayerful and discerning.

The session on Friday evening marked the opening of the colloquium and invited reflection of the twentieth anniversary of the major research report *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus*. It was actually quite confronting and somewhat dispiriting to realise how few of the recommendations that arose from that report have actually been implemented by our Church in the twenty years since.

Saturday opened with a keynote on the broader theme of an *inclusive and synodal church*, which was followed by a choice of four workshop from which delegates chose one to attend. Each workshop included input and ample opportunity to ask questions and participate in discussion, with a focus on different aspects of women and leadership in the Church.

Saturday afternoon focused on a *missionary and merciful church* with presenters sharing their personal stories of having lived in the margins, and their experience of Church.

Sunday provided an opportunity for experiencing and learning about prayer and discernment in the Plenary process, with three members of the Plenary 2020 Executive Committee leading the panel discussion on a *prayerful and discerning church*, followed an opportunity for conference delegates to actively contribute to Plenary Council 2020.

### ***Diocesan Delegates Meeting***

Prior to the commencement of the Colloquium, I attended a diocesan delegates meeting and heard about the work being undertaken by women's councils and women's reference groups in other dioceses.

***Audrey Brown***