

COUNCIL MEMBERS HEAR WISDOM FROM THEOLOGICAL ADVISERS

At the beginning of the second full day of the second assembly of the Plenary Council, members received input from two of the Council’s theological advisers – or periti – on topics being considered on Tuesday.

Speaking to the theme “Called by Christ: Sent Forth as Missionary Disciples”, Fr Patrick McInerney SSC quoted from the Vatican II document *Ad Gentes*, which he described as “revolutionising our understanding of mission”.

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, Fr McInerney said citing *Ad Gentes*, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.

In contrast to other models of mission, he said, the Church understands that her own mission is actually a “participation in the Trinitarian mission of drawing all creation into the fullness of divine life”.

The Trinity is an “eternal, intimate communion of life” and this “mutual exchange of knowledge and love between the three Persons of the Trinity overflows in *missio Dei*, God’s mission”.

With this idea, “it is no longer ‘the Church has a mission’, but rather, ‘mission has a Church’”.

“In all our relationships, in all our activities, in our daily lives – at home or work or play – moved by the Spirit, each of us is called and sent to witness to the Father’s love made known in Christ,” Dr McInerney told the assembly.

The Plenary Members also heard from Sr Clare Condon, a Sister of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict. She spoke to the theme “Witnessing to the Equal Dignity of Women and Men”.

“All the baptised are called to participate in the priestly, prophetic and royal role of Jesus the Christ,” she said, “regardless of their sex.”

She spoke of the Gospels and how “Jesus’ relationship with women” was counter-cultural and “offered a different way of equal relationships”.

In this “change of epoch”, Sr Clare reminded Members that Pope Francis has asked the question: “Could the Spirit be prompting us to recognise, value and integrate the fresh thinking that some women are bringing to this moment?”

As an example of what people might look towards, Sr Clare pointed nominated what she called the “prophetic model” that existed in the Adelaide Archdiocese from 1986-2001, where Archbishop Leonard Faulkner governed with a diverse “diocesan pastoral team”.

Having heard reflections from the periti, the Plenary Members moved into the proceedings of the day, which includes discernment and voting on motions related to these two themes. The outcome of voting will be published tomorrow at 1pm AEST.

Tuesday night’s Plenary Council Mass will be offered for the Unity of Christians, and will be livestreamed from 6pm.

Follow the second assembly at: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/>