



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Australian synthesis for global Synod of Bishops published

MEDIA RELEASE

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Catholics in Australia have expressed a strong need for a Church that is missionary and a Eucharistic community that is inclusive, the national synthesis for the global Synod on Synodality reveals.

The Australian synthesis, which emerged from a nine-month process that began in October 2021, draws from the diocesan consultation phase for the Synod of Bishops.

Earlier this year, Australian dioceses published a report on the findings of their local consultation – a process that every diocese around the world undertook. The National Centre for Pastoral Research prepared the national synthesis based on those diocesan reports.

Trudy Dantis, the Centre’s director, said there was much to draw upon from the diocesan reports, which themselves were the result of hundreds of submissions from groups and individuals.

“We also recognised that the Church in Australia captured very rich information through the Plenary Council, much of which was relevant to the experience of synodality,” she said.

“Through the Synod of Bishops and the Plenary Council, we have been able to capture and listen more deeply to the voices of people within and beyond the Catholic population.”

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference recently approved the national synthesis.

Bishops Conference president Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB commended Dr Dantis and her team on developing the synthesis.

“As we have learned through the Plenary Council process, Catholics have very different experiences, different hopes and different aspirations of and for the Church,” he said.

“It is a major undertaking to honour all those voices and help present a cohesive picture of the presence – or the absence – of synodality, that process of ‘walking together’, in our Church. The National Centre for Pastoral Research is to be congratulated for what it has produced.”

Adelaide Archbishop Patrick O’Regan, who along with Bishop Shane Mackinlay will represent the Bishops Conference at the October 2023 gathering in Rome, said the publication of the national synthesis is the next step in a long and important journey.

“This pilgrimage towards the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will take three-and-a-half years and will help the global Church to better understand how we can all walk together in seeking to fulfil our mission,” he said.

“While this is, in many ways, a new adventure, we in Australia have been blessed to walk this path for the past four years of the Plenary Council. We invite the People of God to keep walking, through the Synod’s three themes of communion, participation and mission.”

Access the national synthesis at: www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch

National syntheses have been prepared around the world. The Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops will use those documents to prepare an *instrumentum laboris*, or working document, for the Synod. Continental gatherings of bishops conferences will also be used to prepare for the Synod of Bishops.