



MEDIA STATEMENT

MARCH 4, 2025

## International Women's Day 2025

International Women's Day on March 8 is a time to take action to ensure women's safety, inclusion and leadership.

Bishop Michael Morrissey, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's delegate for women, welcomed this year's International Women's Day theme, "Accelerate Action".

"The voice and leadership of women is critical to the Church's future and integral to our journey together, as the final document of the Synod on Synodality reminds us," Bishop Morrissey said.

"The Australian Plenary Council and the Synod highlighted the need to improve our efforts to invite and make space for women's baptismal call of co-responsibility.

"While nurturing this leadership to strive forward, we must also ensure the safety of women and the most vulnerable.

"We must speak out and act against domestic violence and inequality and offer safe spaces - mentally and physically - for women, men and families."

The theme was discussed at the recent opening gathering of the Young Catholic Women's Fellowship, supported by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Joined by Kelly Paget, Australian member of the Synod on Synodality, Fellowship participants asked questions about Kelly's leadership journey and shared their insights into how the Church could accelerate action.

"It is important to recognise and affirm when progress is made, locally and nationally, and identify the factors contributing to these successes," participant Ashley Carvalho said.

"Such insights can inform and improve areas where further support for women in leadership is needed.

"Opportunities should be made available for women to speak in forums where they were traditionally excluded, nurture their leadership potential and invite them into leadership roles."

Another participant, Fina Jose, said: "There is merit in facilitating activities, seminars and projects that promote and address women's health, education, safety, wellbeing and leadership, ensuring that such activities are safe, open and involve women's leadership."

“Experiences of inequality – which can occur behind closed doors, be casual or unnoticed by leaders – should be shared, with training provided to clergy and lay leaders to identify, understand and address the issue,” she said.

Catholics around Australia are encouraged to reflect on women’s safety, inclusion and leadership, and consider what actions can be taken.

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