

**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE MEETING HELD AT MARY MACKILLOP PLACE,
MOUNT STREET, NORTH SYDNEY, NSW
26 – 30 November 2012.**

The Mass of the Holy Spirit was concelebrated on Tuesday in the chapel of Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney at 7 am. The President of Conference, Archbishop Denis Hart, was the principal celebrant and preached the homily.

*The President welcomed the **observers** from the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (Catholic Religious Australia)*

- Sr Annette Cunliffe rsc
- Sr Marion Gambin rsj
- Rev. Fr Anthony Banks osa

EPISCOPAL APPOINTMENTS SINCE THE LAST PLENARY

+ Archbishop Mark Coleridge 11 May 2012 Installed as Archbishop of Brisbane
+ Robert McGuckin, 14 May 2012 Appointed and 11 Jul 2012 Ordained Bishop of Toowoomba
+ Paul Bird, CSsR, 1 Aug 2012 Appointed 16 Oct 2012 Ordained Bishop of Ballarat
Very Rev Harry Entwistle, 15 Jun 2012 Appointed Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross
Mgr John Woods, Diocesan Administrator of Canberra and Goulburn

Retired Bishops

+Patrick Power 7 Jun 2012 Former Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn
+ Peter Connors 16 October 2012 Emeritus Bishop of Ballarat

ELECTIONS

Bishop Robert McGuckin was seconded to the Bishops Commission for Canon Law
Bishop Paul Bird CSsR was seconded to the Bishops Commission for Liturgy.

PROPOSED SYRO-MALABAR EPARCHY

Cardinal George Alencherry attended the Plenary meeting on Wednesday afternoon and participated in a discussion of a proposed Syro-Malabar Eparchy. He joined the bishops for Mass which was followed by dinner with Permanent Committee.

YEAR OF GRACE

Fr Peter Brock attended on Thursday afternoon and led the bishops in a reflection on the Year of Grace.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The Bishops discussed the Royal Commission and released the following statement on Friday, 30 November. Two members have been appointed to the Council for the Royal Commission: Archbishop Mark Coleridge and Bishop William Wright. The rest of the membership will be announced in the coming weeks.

CHURCH TO ESTABLISH COUNCIL FOR ROYAL COMMISSION

With leaders of Religious Orders, we welcome the establishment of the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse.

It is an opportunity for those who have suffered to obtain a compassionate hearing, justice and further healing.

It is also an opportunity for the Church's processes to be scrutinised with greater objectivity. This will allow further refinements that seek justice and pastoral care.

However imperfectly, this work has been going on in the Catholic Church for the last two decades. It will continue.

Once again, we renew our heartfelt apology to those whose lives have been so grievously harmed by the evil perpetrated upon them by some priests, religious and church personnel.

In order to work as effectively as possible with the Royal Commission, we have established a supervisory group of representatives from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia.

This supervisory group will establish and oversee a new Council for the Royal Commission consisting of 10 people (including bishops, religious and lay people) served by an Executive Officer.

Our hope is that, in its search for truth, the Royal Commission will present recommendations ensuring the best possible standards of child protection in our country.

Painful and difficult as this might be for the Church, it is nothing compared to the hurt of those who have suffered sexual abuse, particularly by clergy and religious.

Through the days of our meeting, the bishops and religious leaders have appreciated the support of the prayers of many in the Australian Catholic community.

Bishops Commission for Canon Law

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC COUNCIL FOR CANON LAW

The Conference approved the establishment of the Australian Catholic Council for Canon Law in May 2011. As the President of the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand is an ex-officio member of the Council, Sr Maria Casey rsj, having been elected President of the Society for a three year term, will replace Fr Anthony Kerin, whose term as President came to an end in September.

Bishops Commission for Catholic Education

The Bishops Commission for Catholic Education undertook a review of the National Catholic Education Commission in 2012. New statutes were approved.

REPORT ON THE GONSKI RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms Therese Temby, Chair of the National Catholic Education Commission, provided a summary and outline of the current state of negotiations with the Commonwealth Government concerning proposed reforms to school funding.

Bishops Commission for Church Ministry

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC COUNCIL FOR CLERGY LIFE AND MINISTRY (ACCLM)

Fr Frank Devoy finishes his term of office at the end of this year and his replacement will be announced in the coming weeks.

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC COUNCIL FOR LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY (ACCLPM)

The three new members of the Council were welcomed on Tuesday 28th August 2012. They are Mr Greg Byrne (Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle), Ms Sarah Moffatt (Archdiocese of Adelaide) and Mrs Christine O'Halloran (Archdiocese of Hobart).

The Council members recommended the appointment of a Chair (Sr. Kari Hatherell osu) and a Deputy Chair (Mr Richard McMahon). These recommendations were approved by the Bishops Commission for Church Ministry and the Chair and Deputy took up their positions on 23 October 2012.

Bishop Peter Comensoli is Bishop Delegate to the ACCLPM.

Donella Johnston (Director, Office for the Participation of Women) serves this Council as Executive Secretary to the Bishops Commission for Church Ministry (BCCM).

OFFICE FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN (OPW)

The Young Catholic Women's Interfaith Fellowship has received a very positive response with over twenty applications from dioceses all over Australia. The flexible program of a two-year graduate certificate in Theology with a blend of face-to-face input and self-directed online study has also made the Fellowship more accessible and thus more attractive for women. The Fellowship will begin in February 2013 and run through until November 2014.

COUNCIL FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC WOMEN (CACW)

CACW National Conference is planned for 15-17 August 2013 to be held at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney. Bishops will be asked to invite delegates from each diocese to attend this Conference. The theme of the Conference is *Wisdom at the Gate: Radiant and Unfading (Wisdom 6:12-16)*. The goal of the Conference is to discern ways in which the wisdom of women might be better integrated into the life and leadership of the Catholic Church in Australia. The Conference will celebrate the ways that Catholic women share, seek and live wisdom by providing opportunities for those gathered to connect, pray, learn and discern together. The hope is that the Conference Delegates will return to their dioceses renewed, re-energised and re-equipped to encourage other women to re-engage in the life of the Church.

LAY GROUPS

This year's National Gathering of Lay Movements was held in 13th July and attended by representatives from The Australian Grail, Australian Catholic Cursillo Movement, Palms Australia, Catholic Women's League Australia, Focolare Movement, Equipes Notre Dame – (Teams of our Lady), Antioch, Neo-Catechumenal Way, Community for a Better World, Secular Franciscan Order (SFO), Disciples of Jesus, and the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life. Next year's annual gathering will be held on Tuesday 9 July, 2013 at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney. The theme will include a focus on the Year of Faith.

CATHOLIC VOCATIONS MINISTRY AUSTRALIA (CVMA)

During this year, under the leadership of Fr Brian Mascord, the CVMA Executive undertook a review process, facilitated by St Megan Brock rsj. This enabled CVMA to review the function of the Executive and to revisit the CVMA Statutes. The review was a beneficial process and brought new life and new direction for CVMA.

As a result, CVMA have appointed Fr Tony Cox ssc as Executive Officer, effective 1st January 2013. Due to Fr Tony's other commitments, it will be necessary to relocate the CVMA office to Melbourne where the Columban Mission Society has office space available.

This Commission formally acknowledged and thanked Sr Melita Bagnall rsm for the work that she has done for CVMA over the past five years, the last two years of which she served as Executive Officer.

Bishops Commission for Doctrine and Morals

PRENATAL TESTING PAMPHLET

The Prenatal Testing Pamphlet was distributed to dioceses in the first week of November. Those dioceses that have not placed orders may still do so.

DVD DEEPENING OUR FAITH

The Bishops Commission for Doctrine and Morals has approved the DVD, *Deepening Our Faith* on the Compendium of the Catholic Church, developed by the Bishops Commission for Mission and Faith Formation

Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations
APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER OF LUTHERAN - CATHOLIC DIALOGUE

Following the transfer of Fr. Laurence McNamara CM and his resignation from the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue the Commission appointed a new member of the dialogue, Sr Michele Connolly rsj.

PLANS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
UNITATIS REDINTEGRATIO AND NOSTRA AETATE

The Commission with the assistance of the Council proposed the following plan for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of *Unitatis Redintegratio* (2014) and *Nostra Aetate* (2015).

Early 2014: The Conference issue a Pastoral letter on 50th Anniversary of *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Decree on Ecumenism, to be sent out to all parishes with some resource material (ideas/ resources for celebration) for Diocesan celebrations around 21 November 2014

Early 2015: The Conference will issue a Pastoral letter on 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* to be sent out to all parishes with some resource material (ideas/ resources for celebration) for Diocesan celebrations around 28 October 2015

May 2015: Visit by Cardinal Koch (PCPCU) to speak at Conference Plenary and do a tour of capital cities. All Archbishops will be offered the opportunity to host Cardinal Koch in their dioceses.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA (NCCA)

The Triennial Assembly of the NCCA will be held in Melbourne, 5 – 9 July 2013.

INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS

Prayer for Muslims

The annual celebration of the month of Ramadan provides an opportunity for members of the Catholic Church to pray for Muslims. An appropriate intercession to be included in the Prayers of the Faithful is suggested:

For our Muslim brothers and sisters, that by the bodily discipline of fasting and the spiritual devotion of their hearts, they find grace and favour in God's eyes.

Bishops Commission for Health and Community Services
CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES AUSTRALIA

Fr Joe Caddy was re-appointed as Chairperson of the Board(s) of Catholic Social Services Australia for a further twelve month term. Conference appointed Ms Barbara Hingston to the Board(s) of Catholic Social Services Australia for a three-year term.

CATHOLIC HEALTH AUSTRALIA

The CHA Annual General Meeting was held in Perth on August 19, 2012. Rowena McNally was elected Stewardship Board Chair following the retirement from the Board of the previous Chair Tony Wheeler. Mick Roche, a Board member of Little Company of Mary Health Care, Stephen Cornelissen, CEO of Mercy Health, and Jennifer Stratton, Group Director of Mission of St John of God Healthcare joined the Board following the retirements of Madonna McGahan, Michael Stanford, and Pat Bugden.

CHA PERINATAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEBSITE

The newly established CHA perinatal palliative care website, www.pnpc.org.au launched on 21 August, offers advice to both parents and health professionals on how best to care for mothers and unborn children where an unborn is diagnosed with a condition likely to prevent a live birth. The Commission wishes to draw the website to the attention of those within the Church who might benefit from this resource.

Bishops Commission for Justice, Ecology and Development

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL REPORT (ACSJ)

On 21 September, the ACSJ convened the launch of the 2012 – 2013 Social Justice Statement – *The Gift of Family in Difficult Times: The social and economic challenges facing families today*. Dr John Falzon, CEO of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Australia, launched the Statement. Dr Lisa Bridle, community services practitioner and disability advocate, was respondent. To date, over 34,000 of the 35,000 printed copies have been distributed. A free electronic version of the Statement is also available on the ACSJ and Conference websites. The Statement received favourable coverage in Catholic and secular print media. The national launch has been followed by various diocesan launches around Australia. The Statement has been promoted among Catholic Education Offices and a range of supplementary resources have been produced to assist in the promotion of its message.

Membership

For the coming triennium, there are four vacancies to fill on the ACSJ. At this plenary meeting, the Commission endorsed the following nominations to the ACSJ:

Professor Lynette Henderson-Yates of the Diocese of Broome
Mrs Susan Grout of the Diocese of Sale
Sr Louise McKeogh fms of the Diocese of Parramatta

CATHOLIC EARTHCARE AUSTRALIA

Major Initiative – ASSISI

Catholic Earthcare has completed its pilot phase of the Sustainability Initiative for the Catholic Church in Australia (ASSISI) and the ASSISI Initiative and associated resources are being evaluated through research with our partners in the following sectors of the Catholic Church: Education, Health, Congregations, Agencies and Diocesan offices. The ASSISI resources now available for enabling organizations on the journey include: ASSISI pathway document, ASSISI briefing papers, ASSISI mapping the phases (poster), Sustainability Steering Group formation processes and pathway document, Phases on the Journey to Ecological Leadership (poster) and various PowerPoint slide shows including those on Catholic Social Teaching and Social Process Theory and Praxis.

New Resource – PURE GIFT

Catholic Earthcare's 2012 resource is an online package featuring a 5-minute animation film and a series of 'Formation and Prayer Exercises' which focus on four themes from the narrative of the Pure Gift animation: *The Art of Surrender; The Art of Conversation and Co-Inquiry; Grace as Pure Gift; The call to Participation*.

The Pure Gift package also includes a liturgical strand including *Liturgy of the Word and Prayer of the Church*. *Pure Gift* is freely available at Catholic Earthcare's website: www.catholicearthcare.org.au and is a way for Catholic organisations to acknowledge the signs of the times that is calling for ecological conversion and inspire a response that moves Australians towards being ecologically sustainable.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA REPORT

Caritas Australia Annual Report

Caritas Australia's financial result for 2011-12 reflects its greatest ever financial contribution to changing the lives of those impacted by poverty and injustice, with \$28.6 million of funding for international and \$1.4 million to First Australian programs. This represents a \$3.8 million or 14% increase on the 2010-11 year which was also its previous most significant response.

Project Compassion

The total amount raised for Project Compassion 2012 was \$10,707,842, which exceeded the expectation of \$9.9 million. This was possible because of the generosity of Catholic parishes and

communities across Australia. Caritas is deeply grateful for the leadership and encouragement of Bishops throughout the country in promoting the 2012 campaign.

Bishops Commission for Liturgy

ROMAN MISSAL (2010) IMPLEMENTATION

Bishops and priests continue to work with the preparation and praying of the revised Roman Missal texts after almost one year of liturgical use in parishes. It is hoped that some research instruments might be prepared in the coming years in order to gauge how the texts have been received (by priests and people) and also to suggest any resources or formation strategies that might be helpful to provide in the future to assist priests in their ministry (e.g. for the benefit of presiding celebrants for whom English is a second language).

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYERS FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN

At the National Liturgical Council Meeting in Melbourne on 5 Sept 2012, Bishop Peter Elliott and his Religious Education consultants in Melbourne were given the task of preparing a draft translation of the *Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children* from the Latin text provided in *Missale Romanum*, 3rd ed. (2002) which was the text used for the ICEL Grey Book prepared in 2008.

Bishops Commission for Mission and Faith Formation

REFLECTIONS ON THE SYNOD

The Conference heard from Archbishop Costelloe sdb and Bishop Prowse who participated in the Synod on the New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith.

THE PROCLAIM 2012 CONFERENCE ON THE NEW EVANGELISATION

The PROCLAIM 2012 Conference on the new evangelisation was held from 9-11 August 2012. Archbishop Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council Promoting the New Evangelization, gave important input and encouragement for the Church to respond to the call to the new evangelisation. Archbishop Fisichella's involvement in PROCLAIM 2012 was significant because it showed that the Holy See took a great interest in how the New Evangelisation was being embraced and implemented by Catholics in Australia. Archbishop Fisichella sent a note after PROCLAIM 2012 to say "it was both a joy and an honour to be a part of that great event". It is anticipated that PROCLAIM will be held again in 2014.

CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE REPORT

After a very effective start to the year with enquiries, outreach continues to draw in more and more people who want to find out more about the Catholic faith 2012 - 828 (to 24 October) 2011 - 543 2010 - 761.

AUSTRALIAN OFFICE FOR FILM AND BROADCASTING

Mass For You at Home (MYAH)

The contract for "Mass for you at Home" on *Aurora: The Community Channel* was renewed for \$10,000 + GST, which was included in the budget. It goes out a minimum number of times on Sunday, Monday and Saturday at 10am. MYAH on Channel 10 is still attracting 90,000+ viewers at 6am on Sunday morning.

Mass Online

St Mary's North Sydney and Church Resources are very close to launching the live-to-tape daily Mass to be broadcast on the internet. It will be the 7am Mass from St Mary's, North Sydney and will be stored for 24 hours.

CATHOLIC MISSION

Reappointment of Martin Teulan as Director of Catholic Mission

The Pontifical Mission Societies has accepted the recommendation of the Commission and Martin Teulan has been reappointed as National Director of Catholic Mission for another five years, from September 2012.

Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC PRISON MINISTRY COUNCIL

The Commission has recognised that this part of its mandate is a significant component of the Church's mission to the poor and disadvantaged. It has been in need of attention at the national level for some time. The Conference agreed to establishing this Council

WALKING WITH LOVE NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP

Following the success of the National Walking with Love Symposium Series examining pastoral support and alternatives to abortion held in each capital city, a national training workshop is being planned for April 2013 to extend the symposium series and approach to abortion to non-capital city and rural dioceses. The workshop is for diocese and Catholic Education Office representatives to be trained in delivering mini-symposiums in their areas to encourage support for women facing difficult or unwanted pregnancies.

WORLD YOUTH DAY 13 IN RIO DE JANEIRO

The Commission drew the attention of the Conference to the importance of encouraging the youth of their dioceses to participate in the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference WYD Pilgrimage to Rio de Janeiro in 2013.

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL IN MELBOURNE 5-7 DECEMBER 2012

The Commission urged bishops to support the Australian Catholic Youth Festival, Melbourne, 5-7 December 2013 by encouraging and assisting their youth to attend the Festival.

Bishops Commission for Relations with Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CATHOLIC COUNCIL (NATSICC)

NATSICC Members 2012-2015

The members of NATSICC from 2012-2015

Jaimi Lee Armstrong (Tas)

Mitchell Firth (Youth)

Margaret Gilson (Vic)

John Lochowiak (SA)

Dolly McGaughey (TSI)

Thelma Parker (Qld)

Shirley Quaresimin (WA)

Anne Wheldon (NSW)

Cathie Wilson (NT)

ACT VACANT

The executive will be elected when NATSICC meet in November.