



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

News from the Bishops' Plenary Meeting – November 2005

Bishops elected to World Youth Day Committee.

Bishop Kevin Manning and Bishop Christopher Prowse have been elected to the Organising Committee for the World Youth Day celebration to be held in Sydney in 2008.

During their Plenary Meeting, the Bishops received a detailed briefing on plans for the event to be held during July 2008 and spoke of the need to begin catechesis as soon as possible. The evangelisation and catechetical focus will be on the development of preparatory programs for inclusion in Catholic school curricula. There will also be clear links established with those involved in youth ministry across Australia.

The Bishops authorised the establishment of a National World Youth Day Committee with a representative from each diocese. The Committee will operate under the auspices of the Bishops' Committee for Laity.

The Bishops' Committee for Laity also flagged that it would set aside the \$10,000 usually provided to send two Conference delegates to overseas World Youth Day events to provide assistance to needy youth in Australia to travel to World Youth Day in Sydney.

A website has been set up at www.wyd2008.org.

Pastoral Document on the Church and the Media

A Pastoral Document on the Church and the Media will be launched early next year following approval by the Bishops at their Plenary Meeting.

Entitled, "Go Tell Everyone", the Pastoral Letter has been a project of the Bishops' Committee for the Media.

The Bishops are offering the document as a guide and an encouragement to living life in the media age. It draws on the Church's years of rich teachings in the area of social communications since the Second Vatican Council and relates those teachings directly to our own circumstances in Australia at the beginning of the 21st Century.

"Taking those teachings we can plot a path forward for the church to effectively evangelise through the media and for each one of us to be responsible consumers of the media," the document says.

The Pastoral Letter will be launched in Sydney on February 16, 2006 by Archbishop John Foley, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

The Bishops' Committee for the Media is now working on stage two of the project, which will be to translate the essence of the document into a multi-media teaching device for school students undertaking Media Studies courses.

New face for National Commission for Clergy Life and Ministry

Fr Frank Devoy, a priest of the Lismore Diocese, was appointed as Executive Officer of the National Commission for Clergy Life and Ministry.

Fr Devoy takes up the position which became vacant following the resignation of Fr Peter Brock who will return to his diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Fr Devoy was the Parish Priest of Byron Bay Parish. His appointment with the NCCLM is for a period of one year from January 2006.

The Bishops thanked Fr Brock for his work with the Commission.

The Commission is an agency of the ACBC and is concerned with both the "life" and the "ministry" of those who are ordained.

ACBC structure under review

The Bishops have endorsed in principle a review of the structure of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Such reviews are held periodically to ensure the operations of the Conference continue to serve the Church in the best possible way.

Broad consultation will take place with Conference staff, Commissions and other Conference bodies.

A working party has been established to prepare a comprehensive discussion paper for the May Plenary Meeting.

Indigenous gathering at Alice Springs

Plans are well underway for a gathering in Alice Springs in October 2006 to mark the 20th Anniversary of Pope John Paul's visit in 1986.

The gathering is being organised by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Commission and will take place from October 2 to 7.

Each day of the event will have a keynote address drawn from topics covered in Pope John Paul II's famous address to indigenous people as well as new challenges facing the Catholic indigenous communities, future ministry and Advent and Christmas through indigenous eyes.

In preparation for the event, Aboriginal message sticks are circulating through each state and territory on their way to Alice Springs, drawing together the support of many parishes and communities.

Guidelines for the Permanent Diaconate

Guidelines for the Permanent Diaconate in the Church in Australia have been approved by the Bishops and endorsed for a period of five years.

The Guidelines help to clarify the role of Permanent Deacons in the Church and will assist Bishops in implementing or fostering the Permanent Diaconate in their Dioceses.

Permanent Deacons are members of the clergy, having received the sacrament of orders and some deacons are married.

However, their ministry is distinct from that of a priest and the Guidelines will help to set forth the particular attributes of their ministry.

There are about 60 to 70 permanent deacons in Australia at the moment and that number is expected to double within five years.

Changes to Catholic Welfare Australia Constitution

Catholic Welfare Australia is undergoing some changes to its governance which will result in a new name – Catholic Social Services (Australia).

The changes are also reflected in some amendments to its Constitution and to the make-up of its Board.

The name Catholic Welfare Australia is to be changed to Catholic Social Services (Australia) to better reflect the body's mission, while the name of Centacare Limited is to be changed to Catholic Social Services Australia Limited. Diocesan Centacare agencies not be affected by this name change and will continue to trade as Centacare.

The number of people on the Board will be reduced from 14 to nine, consisting of:

- 1) A Bishop nominated by the Bishops Committee for social Welfare.
- 2) A Chairperson.
- 3) A member nominated by ACLRI.
- 4) Three members elected by the members of Catholic Social Services at the annual general meeting

5) Three members appointed following consultation conducted by the Bishops committee for Social Welfare.

Under the changes approved by the Bishops during their Plenary meeting, the membership of the CSSA board will mirror the board of CSSA Ltd.

Plans being considered for new evangelising body

The Bishops have agreed to consider setting up a National Office of Evangelisation.

The Bishops Committee for Evangelization and Mission has carried out a series of consultations among a representative group of Bishops concerning the feasibility of the formation of a Bishops National Office of Evangelization, finding general support for the idea.

Under the proposal being considered, the Conference would:

- Establish an agency entitled the *Bishops National Office for Evangelization*.
- The Catholic Enquiry Centre would continue its current mission of providing information to enquirers considering the Catholic faith.
- The Catholic Enquiry Centre would become one of the works of a broader agency, the *Bishops National Office for Evangelization*.
- The mission of the *Bishops National Office for Evangelization* would be as follows:

The *Bishops Office for Evangelization*, taking into account the needs of the great diversity of cultures and environments in Australia, assists and supports the Bishops of Australia in their work of promoting and developing works of evangelization.

- A Director would be engaged for the *Bishops National Office for Evangelization* who would also have responsibility for the continuing work and operations of the Catholic Enquiry Centre.

Common Marriage Policy

The Bishops have approved the Common Marriage Policy document which fosters a uniform approach to pre-marriage education in Australia.

It was first approved by Conference some years ago. Following a review the Committee endorsed a revised text and commended it to bishops for application within their dioceses.

The document will be produced in printed form and also on the ACBC website.

Statements issued from Conference

The following statements were issued at the conclusion of the Plenary Meeting and can be found at www.acbc.catholic.org.au.

- [*Australian Bishops welcome Vatican Instruction on the question of admission of homosexual men to seminaries and the priesthood*](#)
- [*A letter from the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference to Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong*](#)
- [*Catholic Bishops call for changes to workplace legislation*](#)
- [*A statement on terrorism by the Catholic Bishops of Australia*](#)
- [*A statement from the Catholic Bishops of Australia to mark the 40th anniversary of Nostra Aetate*](#)
- [*Australian Catholic Bishops' statement on RU486*](#)

Conference Appointments:

- The Bishops Committee for Liturgy has confirmed the appointment of Mr Bernard Kirkpatrick (Archdiocese of Sydney) as Executive Secretary of the Board of the Liturgical Music Resource. The Board is proceeding in its work and currently is compiling a list of recommended texts and music for the Season of Advent.
- That Rev Patrick O'Regan (Diocese of Bathurst) be appointed to membership of the National Liturgical Commission for an initial term of three years:2006-2009
- That Sr Ursula O'Rourke sgs (Archdiocese of Brisbane), Sr Kerry Willison rsm (Archdiocese of Perth), Rev Christopher Willcock sj (Archdiocese of Melbourne) be reappointed to a further term of three years as a member of the National Liturgical Commission 2006 – 2009.
- That Mrs Elizabeth Harrington (Archdiocese of Brisbane) be appointed as a consultant to the National Liturgical Commission for a term of three years 2006-2009.

- That Mrs Elizabeth Harrington (Archdiocese of Brisbane) be appointed a member of the Australian Consultation on Liturgy representing the Catholic Church for a term of three years: 2006-2009.
- That Conference ratifies the appointment of Mr Bernard Boerma (Director, Centacare Sydney), Mr Tony Davies (Director, Centacare Port Macquarie) and Ms Helga Biro (Director, Centacare Cairns) to the Board of Catholic Social Services Australia.