



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

### Ashleigh Green named to new Vatican advisory group

**Media Release**

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Broken Bay's Ashleigh Green will represent young Australian Catholics on the Church's new International Youth Advisory Body, which the Holy See has just established.

Miss Green, who was the Australian delegate at preparatory meetings for the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, said that experience was a transformative one for her as a Catholic.

"Some of the young people I met challenged me to look at my faith as a gift and not just something to be taken for granted," she said.

"I mixed with young people from countries where Christians are persecuted, where they have to flee their countries in order to practise their faith. I met one young person from Syria who, for years, travelled from country to country as a refugee, and said that the Church was her only home.

"I was challenged not only to appreciate my faith but to consider how a young refugee would feel if they turned up at my parish. I was challenged to ask myself: 'If a young refugee came to my parish, would they experience welcome?'"

It was from that Synod of Bishops on Young People that the recommendation came for an international advisory group to be established.

When she received the invitation to be a member of that group, Miss Green went through a range of emotions.

"At first I was just shocked. Then came the excitement. And then an overwhelming feeling of responsibility," she explained.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would be given such a platform in the Church. I am committed to using it well – not for my benefit, but for the young people of Oceania and beyond."

Miss Green works for CatholicCare, the social welfare agency of the Archdiocese of Sydney. The 28-year-old said that work will also significantly shape the way she represents her fellow Catholics.

"I will continue to make a case for a Church that engages young people who are disconnected and marginalised," she said.

"We now have the wisdom of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit* to draw upon, which speaks to the dignity of all young people, but particularly young people who are hurt and suffering.

"One of the key themes of *Christus Vivit* is 'accompaniment' and I am committed to building a Church that is more about relationship and less about a one-size-fits-all approach."

Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE, the Bishop Delegate for Youth, said Miss Green will be a strong voice for young Australians and young Catholics across the world.

"Ashleigh has been someone who has represented herself, as a young Catholic woman, and represented the Church in Australia with great distinction as we all prepared for the Youth Synod," he said.

“Our Church in this country is blessed to have such fine young people and Ashleigh will be able to take her wisdom to the universal Church through this group, but also bring wisdom back to us to help grow the Kingdom of God here.”

The first meeting of the International Youth Advisory Board will take place in April. Miss Green said “in the spirit of a true Millennial”, she will be sharing her experience using social media, multimedia and blogs.

“This appointment isn’t about me. It is about the young people of Australia and I’ll do whatever I can to share this journey with as many people as possible.”