

President's Inaugural Annual Report

It is an honour and a privilege for me to report to you about how Concerned Catholics Tasmania (CCT) has been travelling since its incorporation, less than a year ago, on 26 May 2020.

CCT's Vision is for an inclusive Church which welcomes all in the spirit of the Gospels, and in which the talents, gifts and wisdom of all Catholics, female and male, whether lay, religious or ordained, contribute at every level of participation and decision making in the Catholic Church in Australia.

Part of our CCT committee's strategy has been to model how we believe our Church should be. We make every effort to be inclusive and welcoming. At our launch last October, we engaged the talent and wisdom of Francis Sullivan. Francis made it clear that we need to move toward a co-responsible church and the importance for him to take personal responsibility for deepening his spirituality and prayer life. CCT is keen to help Catholics in Tasmania do likewise.

Then, late last year, local talent enabled CCT to host a gathering in each of the three regions on the governance report, entitled *The Light from the Southern Cross – Promoting Co-Responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*. Earlier this year, Fr Michael Tate led regional Lenten gatherings with scripture reflections, that spoke beautifully to an inclusive, transparent church.

Meanwhile Trish and Vin Hindmarsh have represented CCT at a national level with the Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR), which culminated on 1 May this year with a wonderful and challenging encounter with Sr Joan Chittister via Zoom. Keep an eye out for two further sessions later this year.

CCT has been able to provide a platform for Catholics in Tasmania to engage in conversations at local, national, and international levels to do with our spirituality and how best that might be lived out and the future of our church. Francis Sullivan, Fr Richard Lennan, Fr Michael Tate and Sr Joan Chittister all in the space of a year. How would we have had access to their thoughts and wisdom without CCT?

At a Diocesan level, CCT's efforts have been resolute but slow to bear fruit. CCT representatives have met with Archbishop Julian three times and discussed the Diocesan preparation for the Plenary Council, the need for a Diocesan Pastoral Council and how the laity might be engaged in the evangelising mission of our Church in the Diocese. It was pleasing to see Archbishop Julian's engagement with the faithful at the Preparation for the Plenary Council event organised by the Diocese on 24 April 2021.

The Plenary Council will not conclude until late 2022. Further, Pope Francis has chosen as the theme for the next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of

Bishops, also to be held in 2022, “For a synodal Church: communion, participation, and mission”.

Remember, our mission is to ensure Catholic lay people in the Archdiocese of Hobart have an effective role and voice in its administration and direction, and an effective means of providing support to one another as we work collaboratively to carry out the mission of our Church.

Our sense is that the development of a more collaborative and co-responsible approach in our Diocese will be slow. However, we continue to seek change that taps into the latent resources amongst the Tasmanian faithful and engages us in advancing the mission of the Church here in Tasmania. The Diocesan Plenary sessions are indicative of some small progress having been made.

Nevertheless, perhaps we are in an Advent or Lenten time; a time of waiting and preparation. Learning more about synodality and being synodal is part of that. Thinking and imagining what a Diocesan Pastoral Council might achieve and how it might be composed is also part of that. Praying about how those hopes might come to pass and enthuse Catholics in Tasmania to attend to mission is part of being CCT. Whether we work with Archbishop Julian or his successor, we need to be ready for discerning how best we might be Church for ourselves and for others.

Finally, I would like to give thanks to all those who are helping us on the CCT journey. First, I thank you, our members and supporters. Your attendance and membership are the committee members’ inspiration. You energise and enliven us.

Thank you to all our committee members for your hard work this year. We started off walking together and are now running to keep up.

To Vin and Trish, thanks for keeping up our links with ACCCR and keeping CCT in the loop of national events.

To Chris Reynier and Carmel Taylor, thank you for your efforts, especially in bringing a Meander Valley Parish lens on how a Catholic community can be so easily damaged, and the hard work needed to rebuild and enliven.

To Kathy Cuthbertson, thank you for your tireless work attending to the conception and maintenance of our website.

To Donna, thank you for your clear thinking and organisational skills which are put to good use in your role as treasurer and the organisation of this event today.

To Sue Hyslop, thank you for your energy as Secretary and all that entails, including building our mailing list to disseminate information.

To Judy and Carey, thank you for your wise words and facilitation skills.

To Chris Smith, our vice president and editor of our Newsletter, thanks for all your efforts and wise words.

Finally, to Sue Chen, thanks for your organisational skills, moderating influence and support.

May the joy and peace of Christ be with you and remain with you always.