



**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE**

**MANDATE**

OF THE

**BISHOPS COMMISSION**

FOR

**EVANGELISATION, LAITY AND**

**MINISTRY**

NOVEMBER 2020

## Preamble

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20 (NRSV)

Jesus’ final words to the apostles are the centrepiece of the Christian mission to evangelise. We are commissioned to go forth inviting people to discipleship, grounded in Jesus’ ongoing living presence in the Holy Spirit.

*The primary focus for evangelising is the love of Jesus which we have received, the experience of salvation which urges us to ever greater love of him (Evangelii Gaudium n.264)*

*Those who have opened their hearts to God’s love, heard his voice and received his light cannot keep this gift to themselves. (Lumen Fidei n.37)*

Evangelisation is characterised by an *encounter* with the living Jesus, formation in *discipleship* and *mission* in the world.

*Being Christian is not the result of an ethical or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. (Deus Caritas Est, n.1, Benedict XVI)*

ENCOUNTER: At the heart of evangelisation is an encounter with the living Jesus and understanding that “*Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.*” (Evangelii Gaudium n.164) Jesus invites us into relationship with him, to participate in his Church and to carry his love into the world. Our relationship with Jesus is sustained by the Holy Spirit through the intimacy of eucharist, sacraments, scripture, prayer and mercy.

*In these three truths – God loves you; Christ is your saviour; he is alive – we see God the Father and Jesus. Wherever the Father and the Son are, there too is the Holy Spirit ... when you receive the Spirit, he draws you ever more deeply into the heart of Christ, so that you can grow in his love, his life and his power. (Christus Vivit, n.130)*

DISCIPLESHIP: *In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. (cf. Mt 28:19; EG n.120, cf. Lumen Gentium Chapter 2)*

Disciples are called to listen with openness and generosity to God’s Word, responding to the deeply personal invitation to follow after Jesus as friend and shepherd, so as to live out his commandment of love in a community committed to service and witness.

MISSION: *The whole Church therefore is called to evangelise, and yet within her we have different evangelising tasks to accomplish (Evangelii Nuntiandi n.66)*

Bishops, priests and deacons, and those laity called to ecclesial ministry, gather and sustain the People of God through sacrament, teaching and proclamation. Religious, laity, families

and young people, carry the Gospel into the world transforming it through witness, word, holiness, mercy and life (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* n.66-73). Equally, ordained and lay are co-responsible for the Church's mission and must be formed accordingly (cf. Benedict XVI, *Church Membership and Pastoral Responsibility*, 26 May 2009).

*For the Church, evangelising means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new. But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel (Evangelii Nuntiandi, n.18)*

## **1. Membership and Meetings**

- 1.1. The Commission shall comprise eight (8) bishops as determined by the by-laws of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.
- 1.2. The Commission shall meet prior to the biannual plenary meeting of the Conference as determined by the Permanent Committee.
- 1.3. The Commission shall meet using communications technology when the agenda or circumstances warrant.

## **2. Areas of Responsibility**

The Commission sets priorities in consultation with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, planning and developing strategies at the national level in the following areas of responsibility:

- 2.1. Evangelisation
- 2.2. Active participation of all the baptised in the life of the Church
- 2.3. Catechesis and faith Formation
- 2.4. Co-responsibility in ministry and mission
- 2.5. Lay ecclesial ministers
- 2.6. Film and Broadcasting
- 2.7. Parishes
- 2.8. Youth and Young adults
- 2.9. Clergy Life and Ministry – including bishops, priests, deacons
- 2.10. Catholic religious
- 2.11. Wellbeing and participation – including disability, sport, culture
- 2.12. Migrants and refugees

### 3. Particular Functions

- 3.1. The Commission guides and supports the activity of the Church and its agencies in these areas:
  - 3.1.1. Outreach to all: those who have no faith; those who do not share the Catholic faith; those who are disconnected from the Church; those seeking to become members of the Church and those who are actively involved in the Church
  - 3.1.2. The life and mission of evangelising communities
  - 3.1.3. The formation of a co-responsible laity that live out their baptismal vocation through participating in the life and mission of the Church and in the lay apostolate
  - 3.1.4. Particular groups of Catholics: Women, men, young people, disabled, ecclesial movements, Associations of Christ's Faithful, and Associations of Catholic Professionals
  - 3.1.5. Those appointed to ministry within the Church
  - 3.1.6. Catechesis and faith formation
  - 3.1.7. The Pontifical Mission Societies
  - 3.1.8. Supervising the National Centre for Evangelisation and the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office.
- 3.2. The Commission, as approved or requested by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, develops national policies in specific areas of its responsibility.
- 3.3. The Commission undertakes public and private advocacy in support of its areas of responsibility.
- 3.4. The Commission undertakes such specific projects as the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference may from time to time approve or request.
- 3.5. The Commission will designate bishops to act as its delegates in the following areas:
  - 3.5.1. Evangelisation and Missionary Discipleship (including women and youth)
  - 3.5.2. Ministry (including clergy, religious and lay ecclesial ministers)
  - 3.5.3. Ecclesial movements, Associations of Christ's Faithful and Associations of Catholic Professionals
  - 3.5.4. Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office

### 3.5.5. Catholic Mission

## 4. Advisory Role

The Commission advises the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and its Members on issues that arise in the areas of its responsibility and, where appropriate, makes recommendations for action that might be undertaken at a national level.

## 5. Advisory Body

The Commission establishes, in accordance with the mandates in Schedule 1, the following advisory body to assist it in its responsibilities:

5.1. Council for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry

## 6. Relations

The Commission will maintain links, liaise with and host informal forums with key bodies to assist in serving its mandate

6.1. Links with the Holy See:

6.1.1. Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples (including Pontifical Mission Societies) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelisation

6.1.2. Congregation for Clergy

6.1.3. Congregation for Institutes of the Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

6.1.4. Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life

6.1.5. Dicastery for Communications

6.2. Liaison with key national and international bodies:

6.2.1. National Council of Priests

6.2.2. Australian Confraternity for Catholic Clergy

6.2.3. National Association of Deacons

6.2.4. Australian Catholic Diocesan Vocations Directors Conference

6.2.5. Australian Network of Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinators

6.2.6. Mission Planners Network of Oceania

6.2.7. Catholic Mission

6.2.8. SIGNIS – the World Association for Catholic Communications

6.2.9. CHARIS – Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service

6.2.10. Catholic Biblical Federation

6.2.11. Aid to the Church in Need

6.3. The Commission will host ad hoc informal forums to listen to and to inform networks associated with its areas of responsibility.

6.4. The Commission may approve the establishment of relations with other organisations.

## **7. Offices**

The Commission supervises the work of the following offices of its Secretariat in accordance with the mandates detailed in Schedule 2.

7.1. National Centre for Evangelisation

7.2. Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office

## **8. Secretariat**

The Secretariat for Evangelisation: Laity and Mission assists the Commission in fulfilling its tasks.

**Schedule 1: Mandate for Advisory Body**

Name:	Council for Evangelisation, Laity and Mission
Area(s) of Responsibility:	<p>The Bishops Commission for Evangelisation: Laity and Ministry establishes an advisory body which will be co-responsible in its contribution and discernment of matters pertaining to the Commission's mandated responsibilities (item 2), functions (item 3) and relations (item 6).</p> <p>In particular the Council will assist with insights, experiences and consultation with local Catholic communities.</p> <p>The Council will provide advice, individually or collectively, to the Commission with all decisions remaining the responsibility of the Commission members.</p>
Number of Members:	<p>Appointment of up to eight (8) councillors, with areas of speciality in evangelisation, clergy life and ministry, youth and laity.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Commission will represent the Commission, or appoint a representative, at any additional meetings of the Council.</p> <p>The Council Chair will ordinarily include the Chairman of the Bishops Commission and the Executive Secretary in discussions and consult them as part of the process of developing advice to the Commission.</p>
Appointment of Members:	<p>Following the appointment of members to the bishops' commissions at the May Plenary Meeting, the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation: Laity and Ministry will appoint councillors for the three (3) year term and will report these appointments to the Conference at the November Plenary Meeting. The Commission may re-appoint councillors for one or two subsequent terms.</p>
Appointment of Chairperson:	<p>The Bishops Commission for Evangelisation: Laity and Ministry, on recommendation from the Council, will appoint the Chair for a three (3) year term from the membership of the Council.</p>
Frequency and Place of Meetings:	<p>The Council will be part of, and contribute co-responsibly to discussion, at the Commission's twice-yearly meeting.</p> <p>Meeting dates will be set by the Commission and its Executive Secretary.</p> <p>The Council may meet at other times as required using communications technology as the circumstances warrant.</p>
Administrative Support:	<p>The Commission's Executive Secretary will provide administrative support to the Council.</p>

**Schedule 2: Mandate for Offices**

Name:	National Centre for Evangelisation
Area(s) of Responsibility:	<p>The National Centre for Evangelisation (NCE) is to strategically promote and empower the Church’s mission to evangelise and the formation of missionary disciples. (Ref: <i>Preamble: Encounter, Discipleship, Mission</i>).</p> <p>The NCE is to assist the Commission in meeting its areas of responsibility (<i>Item 2</i>) and particular functions (<i>Item 3</i>).</p> <p>The NCE is responsible to the Commission for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice on national evangelisation strategies and support;</li> <li>• Resourcing a communal understanding of evangelisation and associated ministries (e.g. youth, women, etc.) empowering local enhancement and national effectiveness in the formation of co-responsible missionary disciples;</li> <li>• Accompaniment and catechetical formation to enquirers in order to nurture their encounter with Christ and his local Church;</li> <li>• Promotion of Catholic teaching and information by engaging with social, cultural and ecological concerns (e.g. film and broadcasting, sport, wellbeing, etc.);</li> <li>• Coordinate and collaborate, particularly within the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, on national initiatives to enhance evangelisation and missionary discipleship;</li> <li>• Networking with dioceses, organisations and bodies to listen and share resources and strategies for evangelisation to ensure best practice;</li> <li>• Active involvement in the Plenary Council journey and to lead intuitively and proactively on its outcomes.</li> </ul> <p>The initiatives of the NCE include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic Enquiry Centre;</li> <li>• Australian Catholic Youth Festival;</li> <li>• Women’s Leadership for Mission;</li> <li>• Office for Film and Broadcasting;</li> <li>• Proclaim – Evangelisation Conference;</li> <li>• World Youth Day.</li> </ul> <p>In carrying out its mandate the NCE seeks to empower, resource and collaborate with ordained and laity networks across the diversity of the Church.</p>



	<i>N.B. italic references are to the BCELM Mandate</i>
Appointment of Director:	The Director will be appointed on a standard ongoing employment contract by the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry as a permanent employee of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. The Director concurrently holds the office of Director of the National Centre for Evangelisation and the Director of the Catholic Enquiry Centre.
Staff:	The Office will employ staff as required from time-to-time to assist the Director in meeting the Mandate.
Accountability:	The Director is accountable to the Bishop Delegate for fulfilling the Mandate of the National Centre for Evangelisation. The Director will be accountable to the General Secretary or the Executive Secretary of the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry (as mutually agreed) for fulfilling the position of Director. Staff are accountable to the Director.

Name:	Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
Area(s) of Responsibility:	<p>The Office's primary objectives are to advise the Conference on and facilitate the negotiation of the Catholic Church's Labour Agreement with the Australian Government.</p> <p>The Office is responsible for the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advise and serve the Conference at both a national and international level on migrant and refugee issues, including the development of Church policy.</li> <li>2. Act as an official Church voice approved by the Conference on issues relating to migrants and refugees.</li> <li>3. Act as a channel of communication between diocesan offices and the Conference on matters of migrants and refugees.</li> <li>4. Provide a mechanism for effective consultation and coordination among Catholic bodies and other groups involved in migrant and refugee activities, including Directors of Catholic Immigration/Multicultural Offices and Episcopal Vicars.</li> <li>5. Make appropriate representation to Government and other bodies on matters relating to migrants and refugees.</li> <li>6. Negotiate, implement and monitor the Catholic Church's Labour Agreement in Australia.</li> </ol>
Appointment of the Director:	The Bishops Commission Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry will appoint a priest as the Director. The Director will be appointed by the Commission on a standard ongoing employment contract as a permanent employee of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.
Staff:	The Office will employ staff as required from time-to-time to assist the Director in meeting the Mandate.
Accountability:	The Director will be accountable to the General Secretary or the Executive Secretary of the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry (as mutually agreed) for fulfilling the position of Director. Staff are accountable to the Director.