



## **Bishops' Plenary Meeting – November 2004** **News Briefs**

### **Program for Year of the Eucharist**

Australia's bishops have approved a program for the celebration of the Year of the Eucharist which aims to be an agent of evangelisation on the importance of celebrating Sunday Mass.

The program, prepared by the National Liturgical Commission, is set in the context of the Sundays of Easter and is linked with a proposal for a period of Eucharistic devotion from Trinity Sunday to Corpus Christi.

The preamble to the program says it has been designed using the dynamics of small group discussion which could be adapted to a large parish gathering or individuals.

It is hoped that Youth Groups, parish groups, families and individuals will use the program. It will also be of much value to those undertaking the RCIA program.

"It can serve as a tool of evangelisation on the Eucharist," the program says.

"A simple and repeated structure has been chosen to shape the meeting and to leave room for the Spirit to guide the discussion."

The program is based on the teaching of the Holy Father in the document *Dies Domini*.

Participants will be invited to purchase the *Dies Domini* text, or download it from the Vatican website to study the document.

Meanwhile, the bishops have resolved to strengthen their own commitment to setting aside the Lord's Day, by cancelling the Sunday afternoon session of their May Plenary meeting.

Previously the bishops gathered for Mass and a spiritual reflection on Sunday morning, followed by lunch and an afternoon session of their Plenary Meeting.

From next May's meeting, they will spend all of Sunday in worship, prayer, reflection and recreation. They will make up the lost meeting time by extending some weekday sessions.

## **Research project into Disconnected Catholics**

A new research project is to be undertaken among Catholics who have disconnected from parish life in recent years.

The bishops approved the project which will be carried out by the Pastoral Projects office in order to find out more about the reasons why people are ceasing to attend Mass.

It is hoped the research will also identify what can be done to stem the flow or reach out to those who have gone.

The issue will initially be investigated using interviews and focus groups and build on existing relevant research.

A report on the research is expected to be completed by late 2005.

The bishops also resolved for the Catholic Church to again take part in the National Church Life Survey, to be conducted in 2006.

## **ACBC appointments**

Fr Peter Brock is to be reappointed as the Executive Officer of the National Commission for Clergy Life and Ministry.

The bishops approved a second three-year term for Fr Brock, who is a priest of the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese.

Fr Brock spends much of the year travelling the length and breadth of the nation, visiting clergy in every diocese and caring for their welfare and development.

A recent focus of his work has also been the development of the diaconate across Australia.

In other news, Bishop Pat Power was elected to the Canon Law Committee and Bishop Michael Malone to the Social Welfare Committee to replace the newly retired Bishop Geoffrey Robinson.

And Bishop Peter Ingham was elected to replace Archbishop Denis Hart on the executive of the Federation of Bishops Conferences of Oceania. Bishop Ingham will join Bishop Pat Dougherty as Australian representatives. Archbishop Hart stood down from the executive due to a clash of commitments at the time of the Federation meeting next year.

## **Conference to send to young people to Cologne**

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference will send two young people to Cologne, Germany, next year as delegates to the 2005 World Youth Day celebrations.

They will join a large number of young Australians, youth ministry leaders, priests, religious and some bishops who are making the pilgrimage to Cologne.

Australians have been big supporters of past World Youth Day gatherings in Toronto, Paris and Rome.

Investigations are continuing into the viability of Sydney making a formal bid to host the 2008 World Youth Day.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council is also preparing to sponsor indigenous young people to World Youth Day in Cologne.

## **Interfaith fellowships for young Catholic women**

The Commission for Australian Catholic Women (CACW) is to establish a Fellowship program for young Catholic women to be trained and mentored as leaders in Interfaith Relations.

The bishops approved in principle the project at their Plenary meeting for 10 CACW Women's Interfaith Fellowships to be awarded in 2005.

The Fellowships, to be conducted through the existing resources of the Australian Catholic University (Signadou campus), will lead to the award of a post-graduate Certificate in Interfaith Relations.

In their proposal, the CACW said the Fellowship program was targeted at young Catholic women.

"This group is well placed to bring to the project the special qualities that will promote the values that underpin a tolerant society," they said.

"CACW Women's Interfaith Fellowships are available for young Catholic women to become skilled in leadership, theology and the principles of interfaith dialogue, to work towards the building of religious understanding and peaceful coexistence, and to provide models for encounter, dialogue and cooperation within and among religious and spiritual communities."

Recruitment for the Fellowships will be through advertisements in the Catholic press, the ACU, the University of Notre Dame Australia, CACW and nomination by Diocesan offices, Catholic Education Offices, Ecumenical and Interfaith Commissions.

Priority will be given to women aged 25 to 36 who have a first degree in any relevant discipline and show potential for leadership in Interfaith Relations.

### **Parish Media Kit ready to roll**

Parishes across Australia will receive a helping hand in dealing with their local media when copies of the Parish Media Kit begin arriving in parishes early in the New Year.

The kit has been prepared by the Bishops' Committee for the Media to equip parish communities to share their Good News with skill and confidence.

It will help to identify what News is. It will offer tips for identifying the news within your parish community and for providing it in the most effective way to your local media.

The kit will also examine the responsible use of the media and put forward some general principles which guide the Church's relationship with the media.

The committee will also begin work next year on a Pastoral Letter on the Church and the Media.

### **Muslim-Catholic Dialogue to be established**

The Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations is to establish a formal dialogue with the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and other peak Muslim associations.

Bishop Issam Darwish is to make arrangements to set up the discussions.

It is envisaged that the first exchange might take place in the first half of 2005.

During their Plenary Meeting, the Bishops' also noted Bishop Kevin Manning's recent award from the Affinity Intercultural Foundation for his work in interfaith dialogue.

### **National program to be developed for parish council formation**

The possibility is being examined of developing a national program for the training and formation of parish councillors.

The Bishops' Committee for Laity will investigate further developing the program, which it is hoped would assist pastoral councils in the understanding and exercise of their ministry.

The program would consist of seminars on topics related to the history, theology, functions and spirituality of pastoral councils.

A team of experts, including adult faith educators would assist in formulating a program and implementing it.

## **Group to take stock of RCIA**

A task group is to be formed to review the practice and resourcing of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

The review comes through the Bishops' Committee for Liturgy, at the request of the Catechumenate Network.

The RCIA program is grounded in the liturgical, doctrinal, educational and evangelistic areas, and therefore a representative from the Bishops Committees for Liturgy, Doctrine and Morals and Evangelisation would be appointed to the task group.

## **Other ACBC appointments**

**The following motions regarding appointments were passed at the November Plenary Meeting:**

That Conference appoint Mrs Carmel Fitzgerald a member of the National Commission for Clergy Life and Ministry for a three year term from 1 February 2005.

That Conference approve Bishop Peter Ingham as the Catholic nominee to the Board of CWSA and Michael Brown and Fr Michael Delaney as nominees for Company Members of CWSA

That Conference approves Ms Josephine Laffin's appointment as a member of the Catholic team in the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue.

That Conference approves two Catholic Parent Representative to NCEC for the next term of office, one of whom will have a child of school age at the time of appointment.

That Conference appoint the following for membership of NCEC for the period 2005-2008

Bishop Manning  
Bishop Coleridge  
Mgr Tom Doyle (chair)  
Sr Patty Andrew osu (ACLRI)  
Sr Gabrielle Morgan pbvm (ACLRI)  
Professor Peter Sheehan (ACU)  
Professor Jennifer Nicol (Notre Dame Australia)  
Mr Allan Dooley (Director, SA)  
Dr Brian Croke (Director, NSW)  
Dr William Griffiths (Director, NT)  
Mr Geoffrey Joy (Director, Canberra/Goulburn)

Mrs Susan Pascoe (Director, Vic)  
Mr Ron Dullard (Director, WA)  
Mr Dan White (Director, Tas)  
Mr Joseph McCorley (Director, Qld))  
Mrs Grainne Norton (Catholic Parents)  
Mrs Jane Melihah Ceolin (Indigenous Representative)

That Conference approves the appointment of Mr. Tony Olthof as an ACCER Commissioner for the period from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005.

That Conference approves the reappointment of Mr. Michael McDonald as an ACCER Commissioner for the period from 1 January 2005 to 31 December

That the following be appointed to serve as Members, Consultants and Music Consultants to the National Liturgical Commission.

Members:

Rev Gerard Moore sm (2001-2004) (2005-2008)  
Rev Christopher Willcock sj (2002-2005)  
Rev Paul Bird cssr (2004 –2007)  
Very Rev David Orr osb (2004-2007)  
Sr Veronica Rosier op (2004-2007)  
Sr Ursula O'Rourke sgs (2002-2005)  
Sr Kerry Willison rsm (2002-2005)

Consultants:

Rev Patrick Flanagan (2004-2007)  
Rev Russell Hardiman (2004-2007)  
Rev Frank O'Loughlin (2004-2007)

Music Consultants:

Dr Geoffrey Cox (2004-2007) – Melbourne  
Mr Bernard Kirkpatrick (2004-2007) – Sydney  
Mrs Cathy Murrowood (2004-2007) – Hobart  
Rev Timothy Deeter (2004-2007) – Perth

That ACBC make the following appointments to the CWA Board following the CWA annual meeting:

Mr Bernard Boerma – CEO Centacare – Sydney, Ms Helga Biro – Director, Centacare – Sydney, Ms Pauline Robertson – Centacare Employment & Training – Perth.

And that Mr David Beaver be reappointed to fill the casual vacancy left by the resignation of Sr Meredith Evans for 12 months.

That ACBC ratify the appointment of Mr Frank Quinlan as the Executive Director of Catholic Welfare Australia, as foreshadowed at the May 2004 Plenary.

That ACBC appoint Mr Patrick Kennealy to replace Mrs Joan Clements as the OMR&RCA Ltd nominee, and that Mr Brian Nolan continue as the ACBC nominee on the NFPP Board until a replacement can be finalised.