

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**For immediate release**

### **Challenging the status quo: ‘Mission: one heart many voices’ — Day 2 Wrap**

Bishop of Parramatta Vincent Long van Nguyen began Day 2 of the ‘Mission: one heart many voices’ conference in Sydney with a challenge.

The first Vietnamese-born bishop in Australia shared his dreams for the future Church in his adopted home and around the world, reiterating his call to “dismantle the pyramid structure of the Church”.

‘As a Church, we must find the courage to reimagine our future and venture into unknown chaos,’ he said during his keynote address at breakfast. ‘In doing so we will find love.’

Breaking free of the comfort zone and challenging the status quo were themes that carried throughout the day, as various workshops, masterclasses and the afternoon’s keynotes looked at the challenges confronting the Church, and how leadership for mission is crucial in meeting them.

Dr Cathy Ross, lecturer in mission at Oxford University, spoke in the afternoon session about the unique role of women in mission.

Drawing on the example of Mary Magdalene at the crucifixion of Jesus, Dr Ross examined mission in themes of hospitality and friendship; emptiness, hiddenness and weeping; comforting, consolation and healing; and looking and listening.

She proposed that to apply a feminist framework to mission is to alter our perspective on the world today and to move towards the kind of inclusive leadership and vision that is required at a particularly challenging time for the Church.

Professor Elaine Wainwright rsm, Professor Emerita in Theology at the University of Auckland then spoke about the need to adopt Pope Francis’ call to a new ecological conversion.

Professor Wainwright told of how documents such as *Laudato Si’* have heralded a move away from human-oriented definitions of the “poor” and towards a shared responsibility to care for the earth, work that Pope Francis says constitutes mission.

‘May we always be learning new ways of attending to the cry of the earth,’ she said. ‘In this way, the Gospel story can be heard in another key, one that is not simply human.’

Professor at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the UTS, Larissa Behrendt, will begin the final day on Wednesday with a keynote address on strengthening communities, before Father Frank Brennan closes the conference by envisioning a Church for mission in 2030.

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