

Mystery and Mission Conference, 2023
The Art of Liturgical Celebration

Liturgy and liturgical music were the focus as 500 delegates from Australia, New Zealand and Fiji gathered in Brisbane from 28-30 September for *Mystery & Mission: The Art of Liturgical Celebration*. The National conference was presented jointly by the *Australian Pastoral Musicians Network* (APMN) and the *National Liturgical Council* (NLC) of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Lay, religious and ordained liturgists, musicians, conductors, cantors, composers and presiders, along with Catholic school religious education leaders, teachers, music specialists and chaplains engaged in three days of diverse professional learning, formation and had the opportunity to network and socialise with others from throughout the Pacific.

A feature of the event was the range of prayer and liturgical experiences offered. These included Morning and Evening Prayer of the Church with particular highlights being the powerful integration of First Nations and Christian spirituality, symbol and ritual in the conference opening prayer and the vibrant and uplifting Conference Mass in St Stephen's Cathedral.

Engaging and inspiring keynote addresses presented by Professor Timothy O'Malley (University of Notre Dame, USA), Sarah Hart (liturgical musician, USA), Rev Dr Tom Elich (Liturgy Brisbane) and Associate Professor Maeve Louise Heaney VDMF (ACU) were supported by thought-provoking presentations from featured speakers, Dr Jason McFarland and Cathy Murrowood.

Delegates benefitted from 50 breakout workshop options presented by local Australian experts covering a broad array of topics including the art of presiding, principles for choosing liturgical music, music for sacraments, copyright considerations, liturgical proclamation, liturgical architecture, psalmody, liturgies with children and families, composing for liturgy, leading and accompanying sung prayer, liturgical experiences with young people, liturgy as evangelisation, hospitality and masterclasses for cantors, organists and guitarists.

Conference co-directors, Dr Clare Schwantes (NLC Chair) and Michael Mangan (APMN Chair) were thrilled with the spirit of celebration, mutual support and camaraderie which was evident throughout the event and are confident that the fruits of the gathering will benefit the liturgical life of parishes, schools and other Catholic agencies. The next conference is scheduled for 2025.