



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Launch of local and national Synod consultation**

Catholics around Australia are being asked to contribute to a global discussion on the future of the Church.

At a local (diocesan) level, consultation contributing to the next session of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will start on February 1.

Groups of Catholics will gather and reflect on the question of “enhancing the differentiated co-responsibility in the mission of all members” and provide feedback. The discussion will focus on identifying the paths to follow and the tools that could be adopted in different contexts and circumstances to enhance the unique contribution of each baptised person.

The dioceses will then report their findings.

Dioceses are also encouraged to provide a two-page testimony of their experiences of synodality, including any best practices that they consider significant.

As well, Catholics will be encouraged to promote new initiatives which will help to grow as a synodal church on mission.

“This work does not require restarting the synodal process again in dioceses but rather it is built upon the outcomes of the synodal experiences from previous stages of consultation,” said Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe.

National Centre for Pastoral Research Director Dr Trudy Dantis said: “In responding to the questions, dioceses and groups are invited to focus on the ‘how’ and to choose aspects that enable them to make contributions based on their own situation, character and experience.”

Catholic leaders will also reflect at a national level on the question of the “differentiated co-responsibility”, particularly on the relations between Churches, between groupings of Churches at different levels and with the Bishop of Rome.

Diocesan contacts and Synod group leaders will receive training in February, led by the National Centre for Pastoral Research, and an online submission portal will be set up in late March to collate feedback from dioceses.

A synthesis report of the diocesan and national reflections and a collation of diocesan testimonies will be sent to the Vatican by May 15.

The next session of the Synod - which was initially held from October 4-29, 2023 - will be staged in October in the Vatican.

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