

NEWS STORY

Australian Religious at global gathering to prepare for Jubilee 2025

Imagine a night visit to the Sistine Chapel, with lights illuminating the magnificence and beauty of this sacred place, and over 200 consecrated men and women from 63 countries erupting in spontaneous song: *Laudate Dominum, Laudate Dominum, Omnes Gentes, Alleluia!*

That's one of the memorable moments recalled by Sr Philippa Murphy FDNSC, leader of the OLSH Sisters in Australia, who attended a global gathering of consecrated people in Rome, held 1-4 February 2024. "It was a powerful soul-felt moment," she said. "In our diversity we experienced authentic communion, a symphony of prayer."

The gathering, hosted by the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DICLSAL), engaged Religious and other consecrated men and women in four days of reflection on what it means to be 'pilgrims of hope' on the road to peace, in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2025.

Sr Philippa, who is Vice-President of Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) was joined by other participants from Australia including Peter Jones OSA (CRA President), Monica Vaughan of the Company of St Ursula - Secular Institute of St Angela Merici, and Anne Walker (CRA National Executive Director).

Consecrated persons from Religious Institutes, Secular Institutes and the *Ordo Virginum* were welcomed into a discussion about the impact of the Jubilee Year on their vocational calling. Participants were invited to consider deeply the joys and pains of living as consecrated persons in their personal and community life, church life and as part of our wider society.

Through talks, prayer and round-table sharing, participants were encouraged to listen to one another's stories. They heard real life stories of the cries of the poor, of people living in war-torn Ukraine, those martyred in Hungary and persecuted in China; stories of corruption, crime, and extreme poverty in parts of Africa, India and South America and of the globalisation of indifference and secularisation experienced in Japan, Australia and the USA.

Says Sr Philippa, "There were stories of heartbreak, and stories of hope and resilience. Despite our cultural, social and political differences, there was a great sense of solidarity."

Anne Walker, CRA Executive Director, commented, "A clear takeaway message from the four-day gathering was that consecrated life is alive and spirited around the world. Pope Francis has reinforced that 2024 is to be a 'Symphony of Prayer' for all the faithful in preparation for the 2025 Jubilee."

Participants from CRA have returned from Rome with the task of animating Jubilee preparations among consecrated persons in Australia, revolving around two key dates: an Australian-based celebration on 2 February 2025 and the significant Jubilee Year event in Rome in October 2025.

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