



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Media Release

September 13, 2024

Australian participants head to Rome for Synod

Australian Catholics will play a key role in a month-long global event aimed at shaping the future of the Church.

Fifteen Australians will attend the second session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome from October 2 to 27, which has the theme “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission”.

A two-day spiritual retreat from September 30 will end with an evening mass with Pope Francis.

The work of the second session is expected to get underway after the opening Mass on the morning of October 2, with the final Mass scheduled for the morning of October 27.

The process began in October 2021, inviting people all over the world to express their understanding of a “synodal” Church and provide input into priority issues. After several rounds of global consultations, a “synthesis report” was then produced following the first session held in Rome in October 2023.

The task of the second session is to complete the discernment begun at the first session and offer the result of this discernment to Pope Francis in a final document.

The second session will be guided by a document known as the *Instrumentum laboris*, which summarises the “fruit” of the consultation.

Australia and other countries provided a “[national contribution](#)” ahead of the second session. This document brought together the thoughts of hundreds of Catholics on how to improve the way the Church practices synodality and co-responsibility in mission.

Social media, liturgy and faith, reaching out to families and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministry, the equal dignity of women and men, working with other churches and encouraging the use of peoples’ unique gifts were themes from the consultations.

The work of the synodal assembly – through plenary sessions known as “general congregations” and working groups - will be divided into five “modules” which mirror the sections of the *Instrumentum laboris*: Foundations, Relations, Pathways, Places and Conclusion.

The concluding module will be devoted to the discussion and approval of the final document which will go to Pope Francis, who is responsible under the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio* for its implementation.

The Australian participants are:

- Australian Catholic Bishops Conference President and Archbishop of Perth, Timothy Costelloe SDB
- Member of the Council of the Synod of Bishops and Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher OP
- Archbishop of Adelaide Patrick O'Regan
- Bishop of Sandhurst Shane Mackinlay
- President of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania and Bishop of Broken Bay, Anthony Randazzo
- Mr John Lochowiak
- Ms Kelly Paget
- Fr Sijeesh Pullenkunnel
- Professor Renee Kohler-Ryan
- Dr Trudy Dantis

Australian facilitators and experts include:

- Dr Sandie Cornish
- Br Ian Cribb SJ
- Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe
- Fr Ormond Rush
- Fr Asaeli Raass

Media Resources:

Live transmissions of some events will be available at www.vaticannews.va

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has a [synod web page](#)

The Vatican synod website can be found at www.synod.va