

Missionaries of Hope: Asia and Oceania PMS Directors Unite in Sydney

On Wednesday, 19th February, 18 Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) National Directors from across Asia and Oceania gathered in Sydney, Australia, for a five-day intercontinental meeting. This summit, held from 19–23 February, witnessed to the spirit of the recent Synod on Synodality, emphasising participation, communion, and mission. The National Directors, representing over 20 countries, engaged in discussions about the work, challenges, and hopes for this global mission of the Church. As "Missionaries of Hope among all peoples," the theme for World Mission Sunday 2025, they sought ways to enhance their collective mission across the region.

"Catholic Mission is privileged to be able to host the intercontinental meeting of the Asia and Oceania National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies," shared Fr Brian Lucas, Catholic Mission National Director. "Australia has very strong relationships with our immediate neighbours, including supporting a regional office in Phnom Penh, and this opportunity for personal interaction sets a secure foundation for ongoing cooperation."

The group explored the challenges they face in their respective countries and identified best practices to support their mission. These meetings, now an essential and regular occurrence, complement the General Assembly meeting, which all National Directors participate in annually in May.

The five-day program also featured meetings with key representatives of the Australian Church, including Archbishop Charles Balvo, Apostolic Nuncio to Australia, and Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM, Bishop of the Diocese of Parramatta. Additionally, participants met with members of the Synod Assembly, such as Mrs Kelly Paget, Chancellor of the Broken Bay Diocese. A significant session focused on this year's Jubilee theme, "Pilgrims of Hope," offering fresh perspectives and illuminating the impact of their mission at the local and global level.

"We are coming together as two regions, Asia and Oceania. Sure, we have different problems and challenges and hope, and that's what we're discussing. Hopefully, we can be one voice to make positive changes, and support each other," shared Fr. Michael Cheng Chai, National Director for PMS New Zealand.

This summit provided an invaluable space for dialogue, learning, and reinforcement of the shared vision of the Pontifical Mission Societies, ensuring a strengthened commitment to their mission across Asia and Oceania. It was also an opportunity for the various offices to explore ways to optimise their work by sharing resources and knowledge. This collaboration is particularly crucial in

addressing upcoming challenges and opportunities, always keeping at the heart of their mission the goal of providing support to people most in need.

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About Catholic Mission

Catholic Mission is the Australian agency of the Pontifical Mission Societies – the Catholic Church’s global organisation dedicated to continuing Jesus Christ’s mission in the world: that all may have life to the full. Catholic Mission contributes funding and project support to critical church-run initiatives in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. These include spiritual formation, pastoral care, education, health, sanitation, and agricultural programs. Here in Australia, we form people to go out and be missionary in their professional and personal lives; to pray, advocate and act for those on the margins. Catholic Mission has offices in 27 Australian dioceses.