



MEDIA RELEASE  
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### ***New Catholic Leadership Foundation Launched to Empower Lay Leaders***



The Catholic Leadership Foundation has been established to provide high-quality formation programs and resources for Catholics, particularly lay Catholic leaders. Sponsored by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the Foundation is a direct response to the aspirations voiced by the People of God at the Australian Plenary Council (2021-22) and the recent Synod on Synodality (2021-24).

The Foundation is pleased to announce the appointment of Virginia Ryan as its inaugural Chief Executive Officer. Virginia brings a deep passion for lay Catholic leadership, spiritual formation, and a love of the Scriptures. She has extensive experience in Catholic education, previously serving as the Workstream Lead – Evangelisation and

Catechesis for Catholic Schools Broken Bay and as an Executive Leadership Coach for the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn. Her governance experience includes roles as a founding member of Good Samaritan Education and the Broken Bay Institute, Chair of the Educational Centre for Christian Spirituality, and as a Director for EREA NSW Colleges.

Reflecting on the vision for the Foundation, Virginia said the Catholic Leadership Foundation seeks to inspire and equip lay leaders with the spiritual and practical formation they need to minister with faith, wisdom, and hope.

“Our programs will help leaders deepen their relationship with Christ, strengthen connections with other leaders, and embrace their missionary calling in a rapidly changing world.”

“We are incredibly grateful to the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for their generous sponsorship and commitment to leadership formation. Their legacy will guide and strengthen our work as we embark on this journey of leadership formation and renewal.”

The Foundation will focus on four strategic priorities from 2025-2028:

1. *Into The Deep*: Establish and develop an intensive ministry development and formation program for Catholic leaders. The Into the Deep Program is a 12-month extended leadership formation program designed to deepen and strengthen participants' relationship with Jesus and be renewed as a missionary disciple.
2. *With Burning Hearts*: Develop and promote initiatives to assist Catholics in reading and praying the Scriptures as an encounter with Jesus.
3. *So I Send You*: Establish and develop a professional networking platform for the ongoing communication, information, and formation of lay Catholic leaders.
4. *With Others For Others*: Partner with dioceses and religious institutes to promote and enable other programs and initiatives aimed at the formation of Catholic lay leaders.

For further information contact Virginia at [ceo@catholicleadershipfoundation.com](mailto:ceo@catholicleadershipfoundation.com)

Mobile: +61407820958