

Synodality and Theory U, A Powerful Mix at the Upcoming Mission Conference

Mission: one heart many voices 2025 will bring “synodality” and the global transformational leadership model, Theory U together as parallel sources of wisdom that, when combined, provide a roadmap for bringing the Church to its new self.

If Pope Francis’ “synodality”, which seeks to renew the Church, is characterised by deep listening, dialogue, spiritual conversations, and discernment, then Theory U is the perfect partner.

“The beauty of Theory U is that it offers a step-by-step model to guide the work of co-creating in deep listening and dialogue to help bring about the new approaches that are needed for the times we live in,” said Jenny Collins-White, Catholic Mission’s Associate Director of Mission Formation. “This model can be used by anyone seeking to uncover new ways of operating when the old ways have brought us to where we are now. The model and its tools and practices can be implemented by local communities and large organisational leadership entities alike.”

Pope Francis has highlighted participation, community, and mission as critical characteristics of a Church transformed that is fit for the future, where the world is in need of faith and vision. “A Church where people fully participate, build community and act to include those who are often excluded is a listening Church focused on the ‘other’. The Church needs to continue to hold this space of loving the ‘other’, it is, after all, the foundation of peace locally and globally,” Jenny added.

Archbishop Anthony Fisher, in his Synodality in Practice reflection, calls us to a “willingness to listen, dialogue, share, so all the faithful might assume their co-responsibility for the mission”.

Since the Plenary Council began its deep listening in Australia in 2018, Catholic Mission has been building its expertise in the Theory U leadership model that was similarly using deep listening and dialogue as foundational principles of its framework. In fact, the author of the Theory U model, Otto Scharmer, has said you can “listen yourself into change”. It is this knowledge and expertise that will be on offer at the May 19–21 conference through keynote speakers and workshops.

Exploring Synodality will be the focus of dialogues with international theologians Fr Richard Lennan, Dr Estela Padilla, and two of Australia’s representatives at the Rome Synod, Bishop Shane Mackinlay and Mrs Kelly Paget. Theory U will be layered onto the Synodal approach through practical workshops delivered each day of the conference.

For more information and to register, go to: 2025.mohmv.com.au/

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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.