

Walking Together: Honouring Pope Francis' Vision for a Missionary Church

Since 2013, the *Mission: one heart many voices* conference has been inspired by Pope Francis' words and direction for the global Church. As we join our brothers and sisters in mourning Pope Francis, we also celebrate the extraordinary legacy and profound impact he has left on the Church, and his "dream of a completely missionary Church, and a new era of missionary activity among Christian communities".

As Pope Francis proclaimed during his Homily at the Concluding Mass of the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 27 October 2024, he envisioned a Church that is "not a static Church, but a missionary Church that walks with her Lord through the streets of the world." To continue bringing forth this vision, we are called to walk in the footsteps of the Lord, opening our minds and hearts to our brothers and sisters.

Mission: one heart many voices 2025 will explore this transformative journey by bringing "synodality" together with the global transformational leadership model, Theory U. These two sources of wisdom, when combined, offer a roadmap for guiding the Church into its new self.

If Pope Francis' "synodality" seeks to renew the Church through deep listening, dialogue, spiritual conversations, and discernment, then Theory U is a natural companion. "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," says 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 consistently highlighted participation, community, and mission as critical characteristics of a Church fit for the future—a Church that responds to a world yearning for faith and vision. As Jenny adds, "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."

Archbishop Anthony Fisher similarly calls us to a "willingness to listen, dialogue, share, so all the faithful might assume their co-responsibility for the mission", reinforcing the central role of collaboration and co-responsibility in the Church's mission.

Since the Plenary Council initiated its deep listening process in Australia in 2018, Catholic Mission has strengthened its expertise in Theory U—a model grounded in those very principles of listening and dialogue. As Otto Scharmer, the author of Theory U, states, you can "listen yourself into change".

Mission: one heart many voices 2025 will offer participants the opportunity to experience this integration of Synodality and Theory U first-hand. Keynote speakers and workshops will guide

participants in building the skills necessary to carry forward a missionary Church. Dialogues on Synodality will feature international theologians Fr Richard Lennan and Dr Estela Padilla, alongside Australia's Synod representatives Bishop Shane Mackinlay and Mrs Kelly Paget. Theory U practices will be woven into the program through practical, daily workshops.

As we embark on this conference journey together, we hold close these words of Pope Francis to us all in his Easter message 2025: "Christ, my hope, has risen!"

For more information and to register, go to: www.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.