

For immediate release

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Having the Courage to Love, to Heal and to Transform

Courage starts with a first step.

For those attending the Mission: one heart many voices Conference in Sydney in May 2027, that first step may simply be choosing to register, making a commitment to be part of a movement seeking to strengthen the future of the Church, mission and communities across Australia.

With the release of the 2027 conference program, the theme *Courage to Love* is not only woven through the words and conversations of the three-day gathering, but through the experience the program invites participants to share.

At its heart is an understanding that courage also requires vulnerability. By creating a space where synodality, listening and encounter are central, the conference seeks to turn that vulnerability into a strength and an opportunity for transformation.

Beginning with the courage to heal

The conference will begin on Monday 3 May with Courage to Heal: Healing Land and People, a deeply meaningful opening experience at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney, followed by a pilgrimage into the Sydney CBD to the conference venue.

Beginning the conference in this way represents a commitment to reconciliation, acknowledging shared and difficult histories while creating space for healing and a different future to be built together.

The conversations begun that morning will continue during the conference's first afternoon, including a session led by Dr Stan Grant and Professor Kelly Humphrey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Indigenous at Australian Catholic University.

"Starting with this ceremony was a cornerstone on which the conference was built. It is the strong foundation we need to enter this space and explore what courage really asks of us," said Jenny Collins-White, Mission Formation Director at Catholic Mission.

"We are embodying the courage to heal. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders have called us into a time of healing our land and all peoples, healing ceremonies lay a strong foundation for our future where we are many but one."



From healing to transformation

The journey continues on the second day as participants explore the Courage to Transform, with internationally recognised voices joining Australian mission leaders and practitioners.

Among them will be Sr Nathalie Becquart XMCJ, whose international work in synodality has placed her at the centre of one of the most significant conversations currently taking place within the global Church.

Sr Nathalie will lead participants in exploring how synodality is both encouraging and challenging the Church to transform, and what this means for people living mission within their own communities.

Dr Otto Scharmer will then join Maryknoll Priest Fr Gene Toland to take the conversation further, exploring some of the practical tools and approaches available to communities as they continue to develop synodal ways of working, leading and being in mission.

Together, the sessions reflect one of the central ambitions of the conference: not simply to talk about courage, but to create opportunities to practise it.

Making space for the voices of mission

That same commitment to participation has shaped the conference itself.

For the first time, Mission: one heart many voices has opened a Call for Abstracts, inviting people engaged in mission, ministry and community work to contribute their own knowledge, experiences and ideas to the conference program.

"If we want to talk about synodality, then our process should also reflect it. Opening sessions to the people who live mission every day was an essential step for us, so that the conference truly reflects the people in the room and, together, we can co-create something special," said Lana Turvey-Collins, Mission Formation Facilitator at formation.org.au.

Another new element in 2027 will be a cocktail reception on the second evening, hosted by formation.org.au, celebrating the people behind mission and ministry and creating an opportunity for connection across organisations, communities and generations.

Across three days, *Courage to Love* will invite participants to heal, listen, transform, share and be present.

Courage is not simply something discussed from a conference stage. Sometimes, courage starts with taking the first step and entering the room.



Mission: one heart many voices will take place from 3 to 5 May 2027 at the Sydney Masonic Centre. Register today here: <https://events.humanitix.com/mission-one-heart-many-voices-conference-2027>

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Astrid Delayre
Communications Officer

Tel: 0458 489 877

Email:
media@catholicmission.org.au

Website:
catholicmission.org.au

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.