

# Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### ***'No Laity, No Church'*** **Catholics challenge leadership of their Church**

The late Cardinal George Pell may have galvanised the mood for reform in the Catholic Church. More than a thousand Catholics have already registered for a forum on Pope Francis' commitment to an inclusive Church - what Cardinal Pell described as both a "toxic nightmare" of synodality and "an outpouring of New Age good will,"

The Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform will present a virtual Convocation of Catholics on Thursday 2 February 2023 across Oceania to support Pope Francis' commitment to a synodal Catholic Church.

The Convocation is titled '*The Synod on Synodality - Why we should care*'. Catholics are increasingly questioning their Church's centralised and patriarchal control.

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, has agreed to open the Convocation in a sign that the Catholic Church may be becoming more responsive to an informed and questioning laity as envisaged by Francis.

Synodality means a listening leadership, a form of leadership that has not been the norm in the Catholic Church. The Church's leadership remains essentially patriarchal and autocratic.

In an ironic twist, synodality and Pope Francis' commitment to inclusiveness were condemned by the late Cardinal George Pell in an apparent attempt to undermine Pope Francis. Shortly before his unexpected death on January 10, Pell a prominent ultra-conservative of the Catholic Church denounced Pope Francis' Synod on Synodality, calling it a "toxic nightmare". His views have galvanised support for Francis' initiative across the world.

The Convocation of Catholics will comprise a panel of recognised Catholic leaders including Susan Pascoe AM, the chair of the Oceania Bishops taskforce and a member of the Synod's global methodology commission, and Francis Sullivan AO, the former CEO of the Church's response to the Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Kevin Liston from the Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform commented:

"Catholics are increasingly accepting responsibility for the state of their Church. And the bishops of the world are being told that a patriarchal and autocratic leadership is ineffectual in the modern world. Worse, it is unChristian."

"We no longer live in a society where well-informed and educated people will simply do as they are told by a select group of often isolated men. Catholics see a Church that needs to get back to its Christian mission with inclusive and non-discriminatory leadership."

This Convocation of Catholics is sponsored by Garratt Publishing and the Yarra Theological Union (University of Divinity).

Free **REGISTRATION** for the Convocation is available at: [www.garratt.com.au](http://www.garratt.com.au)

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