

Concerned Catholics CG Public Forum

9 June 2022

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture Canberra

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I'm not a member of the Plenary Council.

I'm not in any privileged position in the Church.

I'm not involved in Parish Life.

All I can offer is the feedback that I've received from some WATAC members when I invited them to respond to these questions which the panellists have been asked to use as a framework for their presentation tonight.

Where is the Church now?

- Dying
- Crossroads
- Hanging by a thread
- Stuck in neutral and sliding backwards

What can we expect from the Second Assembly?

- Old answers to the same questions

What is the Future of the Church?

- Courage
- Deep listening
- Inclusion
- New ways of worship
- A place for prophets and the mystics
- Focus on Jesus and shed complex medieval argument such as ontological change, describing homosexuality as disordered, women as commentary and not equal; all justifying a male priesthood and the patriarchy.
- Renewal of our parishes will only come with vibrant parishes. This will happen only if we create paid positions for pastoral associates, secretaries, youth ministers and liturgy team members and stop relying on WEARY volunteers.

My personal approach to the three questions is oblique. I'll use three symbols to elaborate.

Firstly, a box of tissues. I've been reflecting on why the Zoom presentation by Joan Chittister where I was chair of the session, brought me to tears. Certainly, I was touched by the content. I believe it was that her approach called us to be in touch with our own deep

spiritual experience of Jesus. It was an invitation to move from complex illogical rules, devotional practices and a marshmallow Jesus, to the changing and disturbing call to live the Gospel and to actually be Eucharist.

Secondly a first aid book, I would have brought along a defibrillator if I could have found one. I recently completed a first aid course and one comment from the instructor stayed with me. **Any attempt at resuscitation is worth it.**

Regardless of the fault of the Plenary Council process it is an attempt at resuscitation, and I think we should take heart that it is happening and that it will be good for the Church in Australia.

Thirdly, what colour is this vest? Teal. At the recent election we saw the impact that ordinary people mobilized around shared values can have.

Joan Chittister recently said that we will have an adult Church when we have adult Catholics.

Let's become teal Catholics, adult and active shaping the Church that we want to have.

Of course, this teal Church would have a special place for women.

Let's make it happen.

Thank you.

Andrea Dean
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