



CONCERNED CATHOLICS CANBERRA GOULBURN MEDIA RELEASE

Francis Sullivan to chair Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn

Wednesday 14 December 2022

At a time of profound challenge for the Church, Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, has continued to grow thanks to the support of the many Australian Catholics seeking a more listening church, one that is more meaningful to Australia in the 21st Century.

CCCG is about to enter its sixth year with a new chairperson, the widely respected Catholic leader, Francis Sullivan, who headed the church's Truth Justice and Healing Council in responding to the Royal Commission on the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Mr Sullivan says that in the face of the resistance of the Church hierarchy to desperately needed reform, CCCG has provided an enlivening forum for people seeking a church that follows the path of Jesus Christ.

'We have been most fortunate to have had John Warhurst, our foundation chair, to lead us with fresh and astute thinking since CCCG's first public meeting back in April 2017,' Mr Sullivan said.

'I join with our committee in thanking John for his superlative leadership. My aim is to follow John's example in promoting reforms and maintaining a frank dialogue with church leadership. John, with the strong support of CCCG members has presented to a variety of faith and learned organisations.

'In 2023 we aim to provide a range of opportunities to assist people in deepening their faith journey and to keep engaged with the unfolding synodal process.

'While the steps by most of our bishops toward a more open and inclusive church are small, there has been more acceptance of discourse on issues including women's role in the church, the place of lay leadership and the position of LGBTQI+ faithful.

'These issues drew some attention at this year's Plenary Council, in discussions which might not have occurred without the preparatory work and advocacy of CCCG in concert with the Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform.

‘As the hiatus following the Plenary Council has shown, the path to reform is not easy and the task for CCCG remains.

‘We are also participating in the universal church’s “Synod on Synodality” which we would hope would set a goal for bishops to “journey together” with lay people. It is a topic on which CCCG has already made a submission, drafted by Terry Fewtrell.

‘Also, next year an issue of central importance to Australia will be the referendum on the Voice to Parliament, enshrining in the Constitution the means to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide advice to the Parliament on policies and projects that impact their lives.

‘CCCG will be looking to provide opportunities to draw the Catholic community together to discuss these issues of fundamental importance to us all.

‘Despite the disruption of COVID, we have continued to draw a keen response to our various public forums including zoom events, demonstrating the demand many faithful Catholics feel for thoughtful and mature conversation on the big issues confronting the church.

‘A high point of CCCG’s year has been the online broadcast of six nightly sessions of the *Plenary Tracker* providing an independent stage for expert commentary on issues of the day during the Plenary Council assembly.

‘Many of the hundreds of supporters who subscribe to our website, concernedcatholicscanberra.org have expressed their appreciation for the platform and the outlet CCCG provides for views and debate to promote a church response to 21st Century realities.

‘Their interest and support has invigorated CCCG. To them and to all people, we hope that the Christmas promise of new life will be a source of nurture and inspiration for the year ahead,’ Mr Sullivan said.

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