



CONCERNED CATHOLICS CANBERRA GOULBURN MEDIA RELEASE

Pioneering development for deacons an inspiration for Australia's Catholics

22 June 2023

The establishment of Australia's first Catholic Diaconate Council by the Parramatta Diocese is a wonderful development which should inspire other dioceses to move towards a more inclusive culture.

The chair of Concerned Catholics of Canberra Goulburn, Francis Sullivan AO, said the initiative was a persuasive example of what was possible to move the church away from the tired strictures of clericalism towards an organisation that embraces the community and provides leadership for change.

"The Diaconate Council will serve as an advisory body to the bishop regarding the formation, ministry and life of deacons and their wives in the diocese," the Parramatta diocesan newsletter *Catholic Outlook* has reported.

"As Parramatta's Bishop Vincent Long has shown, it is vital to use the gifts and talents of the community and the diaconate council provides a long-needed step towards a more inclusive church structure," Mr Sullivan said.

"The initiative also provides a catalyst for the Australian church to take positive steps towards consideration of women deacons as foreshadowed at last year's Plenary Council.

"This is the sort of stimulus we need for next year's Synod of Bishops to get with the action and embrace the change the Church needs to revive its relevance to contemporary society.

"It has only taken 60 years, but it is great to see at last that the spirit of Vatican II is being taken up once more in Australia.

"Concerned Catholics of Canberra Goulburn hopes that the Parramatta development will stimulate the Canberra Goulburn Archbishop to act on the long-sought moves here to open the local church to more accountable and transparent practices that involve the laity," Mr Sullivan said.

Contact: Mark Metherell 0417 603 697