

SAINT ALOYSIUS PARISH – SHENTON PARK

NOTES FROM THE PLENARY COUNCIL 2020 INFORMATION NIGHT (14 SEPTEMBER 2018)

- A. **Archbishop Mark Coleridge** (President of Australian Bishops Council)
- a. His perception of Synodality arose from his experience of it at the Synod of Bishops on the Family (2014/2015). It is the mutual teaching and listening/learning of the clergy and the lay – the ‘docens’ and the ‘discens’. Both parties are infused with the same Holy Spirit, equally capable of expressing God’s truth.
 - b. Synod (lit. walking together) imagines the Church on a Journey. It is prefigured by the Abrahamic journey at God’s direction, where Abraham knew not where he was going. It is an arch-symbol for the pilgrim church, the people of God wandering through the desert of endless discomfort and suffering towards a holy land.
 - c. See that a journey is a dislocation – moving from this location to that. It is challenging and threatening, but to stand or to go back would be failure.
 - d. The Holy Spirit, the Consoler, is the Disrupter and so the process will not be straightforward (to our eyes) but confusing and ‘messy’
 - e. We are and must be a Listening Church. Listening is hearing plus discerning what is the substance in a context of mutual learning. Discernment is listening in prayer.
 - f. Discernment requires (a) Open Dialogue – two way, (b) Mutual Criticism – healthy, (c) Reference to the External.
- B. **Maria Harries** (Parishioner)
- a. Archbishop Mark came to see that the Plenary Council/Australian Synod could shape the Global Church, setting a path for the others to follow.
 - b. Pope Francis (Oct 2015) expounded his vision of Synodality. He saw the Church as an inverted pyramid, with Ministers being servants to those they support.
 - c. Bishops must come to learn to listen, and many cannot or will not do that.
 - d. Understand that there is comfort in being under Authority, and hence a reluctance to change and become self-responsible.
 - e. We, the people, are capable of dealing with the challenges of the Plenary Council
 - f. PC2020 is not in response to the Sex Abuse crisis, but to address the problems which underlie the abuse. And the key issue is Power, abuse of the power over others, and the endemic hierarchical structures of modern life are root cause of power relations. Celibacy in itself is not the cause of abuse, nor homosexuality.
 - g. Our tasks are (1) Speak the Truth, (2) Challenge the authority of the Church (c) Accept our roles as disciples
 - h. Language will block any invitation for people to engage – Plenary, Synod, Magisterium, etc
- C. **Lana Turvey-Collins** (National Facilitator for Plenary Council 2020)
- a. Reliance on the Holy Spirit is in every person, in every word
 - b. Why have a Council? (a) We live in and are different from the world of 1937, (b) The Church is humbled and adrift in the sex abuse crisis and Royal Commission, and (c) The Church must learn anew how to engage with today’s people in all their diversity.
 - c. We are to Speak our truth courageously and boldly, and Listen humbly and carefully
 - d. The Plenary Council question is: **What do you think** (a challenge to you personally) **God** (the belief in God is core) **is Asking of Us** (how must we respond and change) **in Australia** (here) **at this time** (now) ?
 - e. Dialogue/Listening sessions will start with a prayer, move into a time of personal, quiet reflection, have a time of sharing, discussing and listening, try to summarise responses and finish with a prayer of thanksgiving. Summaries will be submitted on-line. Teams will analyse all submissions, looking for themes to be developed and become the Agenda for the Council
 - f. It will work if all of us can be involved, and make the effort to hear God speaking within us.