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Catholics For Renewal Inc.

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5th Australian Plenary Council: Has the diversity of voices been called?

Newsletter, 31 March 2020

A larger text .PDF version of this Newsletter is available [HERE](#).

For technical reasons some may not have received our February Newsletter "*The Rights and Responsibilities of Christ's Faithful in Australia?*". A PDF version may be downloaded [HERE](#).

1. COVID-19 crisis
2. Editorial - "Has the diversity of voices been called"
3. Summary document 4, CLERICALISM
4. Early Australian Catholic Councils/Plenaries
5. News Updates

The COVID-19 crisis has appropriately prompted urgent deep reflection, communally and individually. We think particularly about lives lost and those whose lives and livelihoods have been seriously or irrevocably damaged, and on how best this might be addressed moving forward. As timing has it Lent also calls for deep personal reflection now, on ourselves and others. Lent further highlights focused opportunities to support those in need, such as through [Project Compassion](#)

Stay safe and well, blessings to all, Catholics For Renewal.

EDITORIAL

5th Australian Plenary Council: Has the diversity of voices been called?

READ EDITORIAL [HERE](#)

a very limited extract follows:

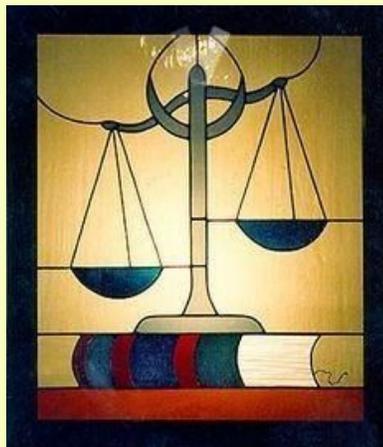
The President of the Plenary Council, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, has now 'called' 256 persons to participate in the forthcoming Plenary Council and announced their names.

The question now is: Will the so-called 'delegates' represent adequately the voices and voiced concerns of the people of God in Australia?

Previous plenary councils held in Australia were exclusively clerical gatherings: only bishops and priests were present. Laypersons could not be invited to participate. Vatican II changed that, allowing the participation of the laity; but the 1983 Code of Canon Law set limits.

In its submission to the Plenary Council, Catholics for Renewal argued that a significant lay voice had to be present if the Council was to give witness to the Church as a community of believers. In it, and in [Getting Back on Mission: Reforming Our Church Together](#), it recommended that at least one third of all those to be 'called' to participate in the Council should be non-religious lay women and men, that they be gender balanced, that each of the 35 particular churches (dioceses, eparchies, ordinariates) in Australia have a basic representation of 1 priest, and 1 male and 1 female non-religious lay person, and that more be called from the largest dioceses to represent the greater diversity within them.

It was pleasing to learn, therefore, when the names of those 'called' to the Council by the Council President were announced, that these recommendations had been taken into account. We note, however, that the significant diversity in the largest dioceses still lacks adequate voices.....Read the full editorial [HERE](#)



Antonio Mirales



CLERICALISM

Incremental set of 2020/2021 Plenary issue summary documents

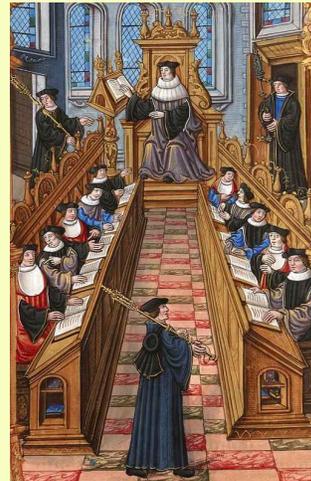
The 4th incremental Summary Document CLERICALISM is now published and available [HERE](#). It is also available with the three prior

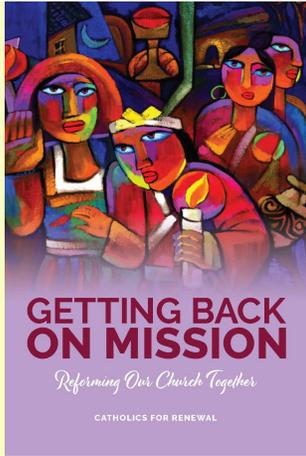
Summary Documents in this set, within 'Document 93' on our website [Documents](#) page. These documents are designed as brief, accessible overviews, with links to source material.

- 1) **Sensus fidelium** (sense of faith of Christ's faithful) [Dec. 2019]
- 2) **Synodal governance** for a pastoral church [Jan. 2020]
- 3) **Co-responsibility**: sharing in church governance [Feb. 2020]
- 4) **Clericalism** [March 2020]
- 5) Women and Ministry [April 2010]
- 6) Priests and celibacy [May 2020]
- 7) Subsidiarity [June 2020]
- 8) Signs of the times [July 2020]

Papers in the series **Early Australian Catholic Councils / Plenaries** available

Pending coronavirus, Australia's 5th Plenary Council may soon be upon us. Providing historical context and adding to his earlier articles in the series on the 'particular' (plenary and provincial) councils held in Australia since 1844 and published over time in *The Swag*, Peter Wilkinson's papers are being progressively reprinted with kind permission as Document 78 on the Documents page of the Catholics For Renewal website [HERE](#)





Getting Back on Mission: Reforming Our Church Together - "... a realistic, hopeful and authentically Catholic roadmap for the forthcoming Australian Plenary Council....." (Frank Brennan SJ, AO)

Getting Back on Mission is forward-looking and founded on trust in the Spirit – it is about hope. The book focuses on Jesus' mission for the Church; it addresses dysfunctional governance involving a lack of accountability and transparency, and the exclusion of the laity – particularly women. This is a contribution to the Australian Plenary Council 2020/21. Its purpose is twofold: to get the Church back 'on mission'; and to show how that can be achieved 'together'. The reforms proposed are based on sound evidence and analysis. For Catholics concerned for their Church, this roadmap for change is a must-read.

The book is available for \$29.95 from Garratt Publishing - Free Call: 1300 650 878 or online [HERE](#)

The following recent Catholics For Renewal website News & Opinion items provide a snapshot of current Church issues and may be accessed [HERE](#)

** Note that publication of links to these items does not necessarily indicate editorial support.*



The 4th of a progressive series of 8 Summary Documents 'Clericalism' published, 31 March 2020.

As coronavirus keeps parishioners homebound, Christian clergy debate online Communion.

Number of consecrated men and women decline, Vatican statistics show. Lack of resources, a priest shortage and the merging of dioceses in France.

Coronavirus indulgences evoke Francis' 'ridiculously-pardoning' church.

Women petition Cardinal Gracias for more decision-making roles

Melbourne's Plenary Council delegates announced.
A Letter from the Catholic Bishops of Victoria.
Australian Catholic Plenary Council delegates to be announced next week.
Full bench reserves decision in Cardinal Pell case.
'Synodal way' could call for women deacons.
Broome bishop voluntarily stands aside amid allegations.
2020 Plenary - what's ahead.
Synod of Bishops to take up theme of synodality in 2022.
Bishop backs local fight against crime.
Speaking the truth to power dangerous but important.
Leading Catholic figure Francis Sullivan calling for changes after sex abuse crisis.
Plenary Delegates in Service to the Gospel Mission.
Synodality and basic ecclesial norms.
Plenary Council - some issues discussed during the Catholic Social Services Vic conference from 23-24 February 2020, Melbourne.
Lay woman gets seat at Council of Priests' table.
Sullivan lays out challenges facing Church.
New Wine, New Wine Skins.
Abuse scandals could 'destroy' Church.
Church governance needs to walk the walk.
Reflections on the issues of Mandatory Celibacy for Ordination in the Latin Rite of Catholic Church.
Are Asian theologians still feeling Rome's sting?



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(thanks to those who have responded)

Our work is a labour of love - much labour and much love for our Christ-given Church. Please help support our intensive voluntary and mostly self-funded ongoing work. Purchasing a copy of Get Back on Mission ([here](#)) will also help.

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Website: www.catholicsforrenewal.org.au

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