



Pastoral Ministry CONNECT

VOL. 10 | WINTER 2024

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we minister and all who have contributed to our story.

Welcome to the Pastoral Ministry Network - your network that accompanies you, sharing fresh homegrown resources and exploring together new ways of living and growing our faith in Jesus Christ.

PMN Member Survey 2024

The PMN Committee is seeking your feedback as we continue to provide support to people working in pastoral ministry. If you haven't been able to already, please take a few minutes to complete this survey to share your thoughts on the offerings of the Pastoral Ministry Network. Please click on this link

<https://forms.gle/XonUWmMfntRsShuB7>
to share your thoughts about what PMN would like to offer this year.



Upcoming Events

Richard McMahon, co-chair of PMN, will offer an introduction into the Pastoral Ministry Landscape, followed by conversation and sharing. Register [here](#)

Let's have a yarn ...

Wednesday 31st July 2024,
7.00pm - 8.00pm AEST

**Sharing wisdom in the
Pastoral Ministry landscape**

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/LHAY310724>

Hope to see you there!

 Pastoral
MINISTRY
network Your forum for networking, developing
and enriching collaborative ministry

**NEXT
WEBINAR**



The Pastoral Ministry Network is able to provide 3-4 webinars per year focusing on parish life. If you have a particular topic that you would like PMN to offer, please send an email with the suggested topic to info@pastoralministrynetwork.org

Evangelisation

A report on the **Evangelise: A Synodal Way** Conference at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney, 12-14 June 2024

by PMN Treasurer, Carole Gan

I had the opportunity to represent the Pastoral Ministry Network at the *Evangelise: A Synodal Way Summit* that was hosted by the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry in June. 61 participants - Australian Bishop's representatives from 21 arch/dioceses and leaders of organisations in relation with the commission attended the by-invitation only summit.

The summit reflected on the BCELM's statement: *Evangelisation: Encounter, Discipleship, Mission*, particularly, how to support evangelisation in a synodal way and strategies for evangelisation in the world today. What was highlighted during the summit was the importance of spiritual conversations and relationships in the "business of mission". Workshops on offer covered synodality in parishes/ communities, the Eucharist, ageing, governance, catechists, sports ministry and digital technology.

There was ample opportunity to network and learn more about what is happening around the country, something many delegates found very useful in this first post-Covid in-person conference organised by the National Centre for Evangelisation.

25 participants attended the follow up Zoom meeting on 24 July, and many of the discussions centred around what delegates had been doing since the summit. The National Centre for Evangelisation also shared its plans for the ongoing opportunities for delegates, yet to be finalised.



About 10 years ago, there was a shift in the focus within diocesan office structures from support for parish ministry at grassroots level to evangelisation. Whilst evangelisation remains the wider focus today, diocesan structures are currently shifting to support the mission aspect of evangelisation.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse reminded us that what is more important in mission is the building of relationships rather than resources. Diocesan offices focus on strategy as they should. However, there also seems to be a cry from parishes for practical help in their living out mission.

With my PMN hat on, I was keen to look for opportunities in which we could assist members and the wider church. Whilst the opportunity for online conferences, education and formation have made it easier for ministry practitioners in parishes to attend, there is no denying the plentiful benefits of being able to meet in-person and share ideas and experiences around a table, over a meal or cuppa. Aware that cost is the limiting factor for most parishes especially in rural areas, the PMN is now looking at ways to provide low-cost formation and networking for parishes.

You can watch presentations from the Conference at <https://www.evangeliseplus.com.au/>

Latest Research

ABSENT FROM THE TABLE: Australian Catholics who do not regularly attend Sunday Mass



In 2007, the ACBC commissioned a project, Catholics who have stopped attending Mass, which focused on once active Catholics who had ceased participating in Mass and their parish, and the interpersonal, cultural and societal factors that led to their disengagement with liturgy and ecclesial life. In the decade and a half since, there has been a continuing decline in the participation of Catholics in the sacramental life of the Church, not only in the Mass and Eucharist at its heart but in other sacraments, including baptism and matrimony.

The pastoral issue of declining Mass attendance was raised during the Plenary Council and the Synod of Bishops processes. “Attention to falling Mass attendance” was one of the key themes raised in the Final Report for the Plenary Council Phase 1: Listening and Dialogue where participants voiced concern over the diminishing number of attendees. Decree Nine of the Plenary Council acknowledged the need for greater “renewal in catechesis, formation, and devotion” to the sacrament of the Eucharist. The Synod of Bishops Australian Synthesis report identified the “Importance of liturgy to faith” as one of its key themes, with respondents noting the reality of many Catholics not participating in the liturgical life of the Church for a variety of reasons and calling for “life-giving, faith-supporting celebrations with the opportunity to share their faith, and to heal and build community relationships”.

The Absent from the Table project explores these concepts in more depth and seeks to provide a contemporary picture of the motivations behind declining Mass attendance among Catholics. The project is being undertaken in two phases. The first phase, which will take place from June to November 2024, will include an online survey that will be distributed to a wide population of Catholics. The second phase, which will be undertaken in 2025, will include in-depth interviews with 20 participants, based on a geographical and demographic mix, from those who have indicated their interest to be involved during the first phase.

The findings from these studies will provide insights into the contemporary reasons why participants do not attend and the implications of this for the wider Catholic community and the Catholic Church in Australia. The insights would enable parishes, movements, and school communities to respond to the trends in participation we are seeing in the Church, update the Church’s awareness and understanding of the present-day context, and enable responses and collaboration around the underlying factors for non/dis-engagement.

Phase 1 Online Survey

The online survey is available until Tuesday 20 August 2024 and is open to people who:

1. Self-identify as Catholics and are 18 years and over.
2. Do not regularly* attend weekly Mass on Sundays.

*Regular weekly attendance is defined as physical attendance at Sunday Mass three or more times a month, including the Saturday vigil celebrated in many parishes.

If you would like to participate in the online survey, or invite someone to consider being part of the survey, please email us at ncpr@catholic.org.au or visit the website https://acu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2soKeAtFMEYGfOW

The image shows three overlapping reports titled '2021 Catholic Social Profiles'. Each report features a map of Australia with a specific region highlighted in blue. The reports are presented in a clean, professional layout with a light blue background.

2021 Catholic Social Profiles

The National Centre for Pastoral Research analyses Census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and produces national, diocesan and parish-level reports on the Catholic population as part of the National Catholic Census Project. The 2021 National, Diocesan and Parish Social Profiles are now available.

[Click here to read the reports](#)

Visit <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/> to see the latest research and for information about parishes and diocese via the Catholic Social Profiles based on 2021 Census data. An invaluable tool for parish planning.

A word from our Co-Chair

What is the Cost of Synodality?

With synodality becoming increasingly the buzz word in the Catholic Church, there is a desire to implement synodal approaches, engaging in strong consultation and ensuring healthy co-responsibility. What is also desperately needed is a recognition of past efforts, an appreciation of the limitations of synodality, and an attendance to hurt and disenchantment.

Recognising and honouring the past is critical to the present success of synodality. Synodality, and any planning process, sometimes broadcasts itself as the “first time” or “new” approach to being church within a particular context. Such language takes no account of many people, usually committed church folk with no titles or positions, who have engaged in grass roots efforts over long periods. How much richer are our synodal processes when there is gratitude expressed for past efforts, and where possible, a naming of processes, outcomes and learnings which have proceeded the present work.

Appreciating the limits of synodality: whatever structures are created to facilitate healthy synodal and co-responsible practices are only successful in so far as the good will and support of canonical leadership. In other words, diocesan synods and pastoral plans, and parish visioning and missioning, only occur due to the good will of the appropriate ordained leadership. When that leadership changes, or indeed, if the ordained leader has a change of heart, the synodal structures and efforts can just as quickly cease or be put on hold.

There is no current safeguard against this in canon law, and therefore, the People of God need to embrace this risk as one of the elements of synodality.

Which leads to a final requirement, attending to present hurt and disenchantment. Synodal practices always need to be accompanied by high level pastoral care and support, especially for those invited to commit to co-responsible leadership, for when it fails for the above reason, it is a source of distress and disenchantment for those who participate. New leaders may want to start a fresh round of synodal processes, but do well to always be aware of the struggle of our church who repeatedly has the door open to synodality only to have it closed again.

Richard McMahon
Co-Chair
Pastoral Ministry Network



To discuss this and other issues
in the Pastoral Ministry
Landscape, connect with
Let's Have a Yarn
Wednesday, 31st July at 7pm.
Register here
<https://tinyurl.com/LHAY310724>

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Thank you to all members of the Pastoral Ministry Network. Your membership has enabled the mission and vision of our network to continue, for members to attend the Oceania Pastoral Ministry Webinars and access them afterwards, take part in enriching network opportunities through Let's Have a Yarn and great discounts and benefits to the Alive in the Spirit Conference.

As your one year membership comes up for renewal, **Memberships will be automatically renewed.**

If you do not wish to renew your membership please contact us as soon as possible and we will remove you from the auto renewal list. If your subscription is renewed, you can always contact us and we will reverse the fee.

If you want to remain connected but finances prevent you, please contact us and we will work out something between us. Our priority is always to support those in ministry.

Email
info@pastoralministrynetwork.org

Your contribution to Pastoral Ministry Connect is very welcome!

To submit or suggest an article for Pastoral Ministry Connect or to share a story of your community, please contact us via the details below. We're always looking for good news stories to share from those working in pastoral ministry.

The collective wisdom of people working in the area is what makes the Pastoral Ministry Network a great place to network and support each other.

This newsletter is sent regularly to all PMN members. Please add info@pastoralministrynetwork.org to your address book or add us to your safe senders list. Contents of this electronic newsletter are copyright © 2024 Pastoral Ministry Network.

PMN Executive

Co-chair: Fr Michael Alcock

Co-chair: Richard McMahon

Secretary: Carmel Fenton

Treasurer: Carole Gan

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Contact Us

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www.pastoralministrynetwork.org

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network

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One login

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CORPORATE

AU **\$1000**

12 month membership
15 logins

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