



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Australian dioceses prepare for Synod of Bishops launch

MEDIA RELEASE

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Dioceses across Australia will this weekend hold launches to mark the commencement of local participation in the two-year journey towards the 2023 Synod of Bishops.

Last Sunday, Pope Francis celebrated a Mass to launch the global process for the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which has the theme “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission”.

“Celebrating a Synod means walking on the same road, together,” the Holy Father said in his homily.

That path of walking together will see dioceses conduct local consultations that inform national reports that will help shape preparations for the Synod of Bishops, including the drafting of its *instrumentum laboris* or working document.

There will also be regional consultations for episcopal conferences, with Australian bishops to meet with members of the New Zealand, Pacific Island and Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands bishops conferences to prepare for the 2023 gathering in Rome.

Dioceses across the country have been invited to celebrate Masses this weekend using special prayers and readings to mark the Synod’s launch.

Bishops Commission for Liturgy chair Archbishop Patrick O’Regan, in a letter to dioceses, said liturgical unity across the country would “[highlight] to all the faithful the importance of the Synod for the Catholic Church around the world and their communion in prayer with all participants”.

Archbishop O’Regan encouraged his brother bishops to “ensure that we provide every opportunity for the Church throughout Australia to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit at this time to join in one heart and voice in the liturgies that will be celebrated internationally”.

The liturgical resources for parishes and other resources can be accessed on the Synod page on the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference website: <https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch>

Sophy Morley, a member of the national Synod of Bishops committee and a liturgical adviser, said the resources include texts from the Lectionary and the Roman Missal, as well as music suggestions for the Church in Australia.

She said that using the particular Lectionary Mass texts, as recommended, to celebrate the Synod’s Opening “will help the People of God to call upon the Holy Spirit’s wisdom and guidance for the whole Church”.

“May this weekend’s launch and our journey toward the Synod inspire us to join with our sisters and brothers, with Pope Francis and the entire Church, on this global journey towards a Christ-centred Church that is focused on communion, participation and mission,” she said.

More information on the local consultations that are part of the Synod process will be published next week.