

MEDIA RELEASE
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***INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS* (WORKING DOCUMENT) RELEASED FOR PLENARY COUNCIL JOURNEY**

The working document for the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia provides a catalyst for the Church to renew the journey of prayer and discernment toward the first assembly in October, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB says.

The document, known as an *instrumentum laboris*, draws heavily on the voices heard during the Listening and Dialogue and Listening and Discernment phases of the Plenary Council, but also from other key sources. It is entitled *Continuing the Journey*.

“This is an exciting step forward and we take it together, amidst a time of great change. More than 220,000 people participated in the first stages of Listening and Dialogue, and those voices can be heard clearly in the working document,” said Archbishop Costelloe, president of the Plenary Council.

“As writers, we drew inspiration from Scripture, writings and teachings of the Church including the documents of the Second Vatican Council, encyclicals and papal exhortations, Australian bishops’ pastoral letters and more.

“The abundance of wisdom in the writings of our rich tradition, together with the papers of the Plenary Council discernment thus far, provided an incredible foundation for the content of this working document.”

Archbishop Costelloe said an *instrumentum laboris*, whether for the Plenary Council, for a Synod of Bishops in Rome or a local synod, “seeks to offer an account of what the People of God have expressed as an invitation for ongoing discernment”.

A number of key themes emerge in the document, including:

- renewing a Christ-centred Church that heals wounds and warms hearts;
- strengthening practices of discernment and synodality;
- the call to co-responsibility in mission and governance;
- embedding a response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse;
- renewing and supporting the ordained ministry;
- promoting discipleship in parishes, families and young people;
- forming prayerful and Eucharistic communities that are eager to engage in society for the service of all;
- proclaiming the Gospel in a change of era;
- renewing the Church’s solidarity with First Australians and those on the margins of society;
- promoting an integral ecology of life for all persons, societies and our common home, the Earth.

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Plenary Council facilitator Lana Turvey-Collins said a reflection guide has been developed to help people throughout the country engage with *Continuing the Journey*, maintaining the national focus for the Council.

“A document has the most value when it is brought to life through dialogue and response,” she said.

“In this particular time of changing norms in society and the emerging reality of post-COVID life, it is increasingly important to have as many faith communities, groups, agencies and individuals participate in this continued discernment as possible.

“Every single person is needed for God’s mission today.”

Archbishop Costelloe expressed his gratitude to the other members of the *instrumentum laboris* writing team: Daniel Ang, Trudy Dantis and Fr Kevin Lenehan.

“The Plenary Council has drawn upon the faith, the knowledge and the expertise of countless people during the journey so far,” he said.

“In Daniel, Trudy and Fr Kevin we were once again blessed with a range of experiences and insights that helped make the document what it became.”

Citing the working document, Archbishop Costelloe says it “invites the whole Church, and in a special way the delegates to the Plenary Council, into a deeper discernment which can help us hear the voice of the Holy Spirit emerging from the multiplicity of voices”.

“Every part of this journey so far has been embedded in prayer and, similarly, I invite people to recognise the need to engage with the *instrumentum laboris* with an open heart, an open mind and a receptive spirit,” he said.

Archbishop Costelloe said *Continuing the Journey*, in addition to being a document of value in and of itself, will also help with the creation of the agenda for the Council’s assemblies.

Access the *instrumentum laboris* at [the Plenary Council website](#).