



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR EVANGELISATION, LAITY AND MINISTRY

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Ecclesial communities and movements gather in Sydney

Representatives of 25 ecclesial communities and movements met with Australia's Catholic bishops in Sydney from August 21 to 22 to strengthen their relationships and discuss ways to effectively collaborate.

Hosted by the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry (BCELM), the event was the first gathering of new movements and communities in more than a decade.

Commission chair Archbishop Christopher Prowse said the gathering was a momentous occasion for those present.

"It was wonderful to be able to spend time learning about the diverse and varied movements and communities that are active in Australia," he said.

"I am hopeful that the enthusiasm and commitment of the participants will lead to a stronger sense of co-responsibility between movements and communities moving forward."

The gathering presented a unique opportunity for representatives of movements and communities to begin dialoguing with the seven bishops from the BCELM who were in attendance.

A major aim of the gathering was to encourage movements and communities to identify their charisms and share how they are placing them at the service of communion and mission in local churches.

BCELM Advisory Council member Shayne Bennett said the gathering was a significant moment for the Church in Australia for several reasons.

"The meeting of the leaders of lay movements and ecclesial communities with the BCELM together with the Bishops' Advisory Council was in itself historic. This was a practical expression of synodality within the Catholic Church in Australia," he said.

"The theme of 'Charisms for the Mission of the Church' gave the lay leaders an opportunity to describe how they were living out their mission both in the Church and in the world.

“One of the surprises of the gathering was that many of the lay leaders discovered one another, some for the first time, and realised the powerful impact of other groups and communities who had been called into being by the Holy Spirit for the renewal of the Church.

“My hope is that this experience of communion develops into a deeper collaboration both with other lay leaders and with their bishops.”