

Grovely, Samford, Mitchelton GSM

Faith Matters

Posted Newsletter Articles

2022

December 24, 25

The Christmas crib has a long tradition but for more than 12 centuries after Jesus was born it did not exist. **It was started by St. Francis of Assisi** (the founder of the Franciscan Order) in **1223** and from there it spread quickly to other parts of the then Christian world. The crib presents a highly sanitised view of the birth of Jesus, nothing like it was for Joseph and Mary in Palestine at that time.

We need to look below what we have become accustomed to over the centuries and see the birth of Jesus in the context of the culture and customs of that time. In his 2014 booklet, “What Are We Waiting For – Finding Meaning in Advent and Christmas”, Fr. Richard Leonard puts the case as to how messy this event really was.

- The norm then was that Mary would have been about 13 and Joseph about 19 – a far cry from the old man image so often given to Joseph.
- Mary and Joseph were homeless and the baby was born in a cave or stable where animals were housed.
- As Fr. Richard Leonard says, “imagine the smell”.

Our lives as human beings are messy as well. **However, this quote from Fr. Richard says it all. “The nativity tells us that God is ok with our mess, not to simply leave us there but to show us the way, truth and life that lead us to the fullness of life in this world and the next”.**

That is the good news. Have a happy and blessed Christmas.

December 17, 18

In 2014, Fr. Richard Leonard (Jesuit priest) wrote a small book called “What are we waiting for? – Finding Meaning in Advent and Christmas”. Parishioners, familiar with past writings in Faith Matters (formerly called Adult Faith Education), will know about Fr. Richard’s writings.

In an Adult Faith Education event he spoke at St. Williams (to a packed church back around 2014/15), on his book **“Where the Hell is God?”**. A number of his books are in the Faith Matters borrowing library in the St. Vincent de Paul shop in the Grovely church. He is an excellent author re religious and spiritual matters, with some humour as well. All his books are worth reading as you search for a more mature faith.

Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent, just a week away from Christmas. In his book, Fr. Richard quotes a short poem from Rev. John Bell of the Iona community. It highlights the event we are preparing for during the last week of Advent.

Light looked down and saw darkness.

"I will go there", said light.

Peace looked down and saw war.

"I will go there", said peace.

Love looked down and saw hatred.

"I will go there", said love.

So he, the Lord of Light, the Prince of Peace, the King of Love, **came down and crept in beside us.**

December 10, 11

There is an interesting change in the Church's liturgy today. The theme is one of rejoicing because we are well on the way to preparing for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. Today is called "Gaudete Sunday". The meaning of this Latin word is "to rejoice". There is a change in the colour of the vestments (rose) to highlight this change in mood.

A similar thing happens half way through Lent when "Laetare Sunday" is celebrated. This Latin word has a similar meaning to Gaudete – a time to be joyful. Both Advent and Lent are associated with the theme of repentance as we look at how we can change some of our behaviours to prepare for the birth of Jesus and then for his resurrection.

The Church takes the view that we need a short break from our preparations to celebrate how we have gone thus far, and then to give us the motivation and perseverance to continue the journey to the very end. If we do, we will receive the limitless blessings, love and peace, which the Christ child is so eager to bestow on us.

The sacrament of Confession (Reconciliation) In a recent Catholic Leader there was an article about a recent Vatican seminar about some reasons why the sacrament seems to be avoided more these days. Some points are noted here as many people probably do not have the opportunity to read the Catholic Leader. It is true that the practice of confession has decreased.

Some reasons given were: I don't know what to say. I'll be embarrassed. I always say the same things. I'm not committing serious sins.

This statement was made at the end of the article. "The sacrament of Reconciliation is too important and too essential to give up for any reason. Divine mercy is always waiting for us".

December 3, 4

In 1996, Fr. Richard Rohr (Franciscan priest and founder of the Centre for Action and Contemplation in New Mexico, U.S.A.) wrote a book called **"Jesus' Alternative Plan – The Sermon on the Mount"**. This year he wrote the **second edition** of the book which some parishioners may wish to purchase online.

In the book he argues Jesus was about starting a "new world order", a way of viewing the world through a totally different lens to that being used by the people of his time. Matthew outlines this new world order found in Jesus' teachings in his Gospel Ch. 5-7. Luke has a section on the Beatitudes too but it is quite short – Luke 6; 17-49.

One does not realise just how radical Jesus was until one studies the full context of the culture of that time –political, economic and religious. No wonder he had to be killed by his opponents since he was turning society upside down, challenging everything the world order of his time represented. One man had to die for the good of the people.(Jn 11: 50).

Jesus' Father had sent him to deliver a liberating "Good News". He was not sent for the purpose of being killed on the cross. This happened because he upset so many powerful people who had to kill him because his message was such a threat to the established order at that time.

We speak about the need for "conversion", especially in the church seasons of Advent and Lent. Fr. Rohr's point is that "conversion" is all about us turning to the new world order from the secular one we find ourselves in at this time in the 21st century. This is a paradigm shift – one which John the Baptist hinted at and which Jesus promoted, modelled and died for.

Would one way to prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas be to gradually read Matthew, chapters 5 to 7, in the remaining Advent time (20 days) and to reflect on how we, in our daily lives, are following a "conversion path" to this "new world order", using Jesus as our model?

November 26, 27

The phrase "Synod on Synodality" is frequently used these days because this project has been happening in the global Catholic Church for some time now. People may be confused by what this phrase actually means.

The word "synod" describes a process which has been championed by Pope Francis since he became Pope quite a few years ago. It certainly was not on the agenda of the 2 Popes before him. It gathers people together in a process of discussion and prayer where all participants are prepared to really listen to each other, no matter how opposed the viewpoints may be, and so reach a decision for change which is accepted by most participants.

For the global Catholic Church this has usually meant it is a gathering of Cardinals, Bishops and other clergy who make decisions and then pass them on to us, the laity. However since Francis became Pope (March 2013) he has encouraged the inclusion of the laity in the Synodal process and this is gathering strength. Mind you, he has his share of opponents and not only on synods.

In this coming world synod on the topic of "synodality", Francis is seeking to erase any confusion about what a synod is, how it works and to achieve a consensus that this is the way forward for the 21st century Church.

The Catholic Church in all countries has been preparing for this Synod for more than a year and the gathering will take place in Rome in October 2023. Recently Rome announced that another set of meetings will also occur in 2024.

Today begins Advent - four full weeks until Christmas Day. A wonderful time to meditate on God's gift of His Son.

November 19, 20

November 12, 13

Today's liturgy of the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time is followed by the Feast of Christ the King next Sunday. This will then be the end of the 2022 Church's Liturgical Year, with the new one for 2023

starting the following Sunday with the first week of Advent. There are four weeks of Advent prior to Christmas.

Do you want to prepare as best you can for the birth of Jesus at Christmas? There are many ways of doing this but one way quite a few people have found simple and helpful is to purchase the booklet, "Heart of the Disciple" for \$5. Copies are available at the Church shops at the end of all Masses this weekend. You do need to know that all books could be gone by next weekend and Brisbane Evangelisation has no more left to sell to parishes.

As stated last week, November is the month dedicated to the Holy Souls, those people who have passed to the next life. Among them are many of our own relations and friends whom we often think about and pray to God that they be with him in eternal life, as promised by the Resurrected Christ.

It is difficult to know how this works. Is it possible to communicate with them and if so, how? A few weeks earlier in the Faith Matters item we mentioned an article written by Fr. Ron Rolheiser, Oblate Priest and renowned theologian in the U.S. It is found on the Faith Matters website – click on "Plenary Council and Associated Articles" and look for the article at the top.

You will find the article challenging in a few areas if you have not been exposed to his line of thinking. For example – his view on Purgatory is not what you may have been taught when you were going through school. We are in the spiritual world after we die – a world in which Heaven, Purgatory and Hell are definitely not physical places. After death we do not go on a journey to another place – for example from earth to Purgatory and then from Purgatory to Heaven.

November 5, 6

October 22, 23

On Tuesday October 11, 2022, Pope Francis celebrated a Mass in Rome to mark the 60th anniversary of the opening of the Vatican Council in 1962. The homily he gave at that Mass is on the Faith Matters website, and we thank the Vatican for allowing this to be copied. You may wish to read it – most inspirational as to what we are to be, as Church.

Speaking from the background of what Vatican 2 sought to achieve and how it saw the Church of the future, the Pope made 3 points about how we should view the Church today. Part of the Gospel of this Mass was "Do you love me?...Feed my sheep". (Jn21: 15 & 17).

"Do you love me?" The Second Vatican Council was one great response to this question. To rekindle her love for the Lord, the Church, for the first time in her history, devoted a Council to examining herself and reflecting on her nature and mission. She saw herself once more as a mystery of grace generated by love; she saw herself anew as the People of God, the Body of Christ, the living temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Pope says we need to look at the Church from above, through God's eyes, full of love, not from our agendas first and only then, from the Gospel.

"Feed my sheep." This is the second way of looking at the Church that we learn from the Council: looking around. In other words, being in the world with others, without ever feeling superior to others, being servants of that higher realm which is the Kingdom of God.

Pope Francis has made many statements about how he and we should interact with our neighbours, especially with the poor and neglected.

The Pope says that the third way of looking at the Church is to see the whole, not the parts, to see all of us, together.

"Do you love me?" The Lord then says: "Feed my sheep" He does not mean just some of the sheep, but all of them, for he loves them all, affectionately referring to them as "mine."

October 15, 16

Over the years the Faith Matters team has developed a library of religious books which it has made available to parishioners to borrow. Over the covid period this project took a backward step but we are now resurrecting this borrowing library.

The library exists in the St. Vincent de Paul shop at Grovely which is usually open at the end of each Mass on weekends. A parishioner at Mitchelton or Samford who cannot come to Mass at Grovely and who wishes to borrow a book, can ring up the Grovely parish office and leave a message for the F. M. team as to which book he/she would like to borrow. The team will follow up from there – just give your phone number for the team to contact you. We will take it from there.

During the weeks before the end of this year **you are invited to pop in and see what is available after Mass.** There are more than thirty titles and multiple copies of many of the books. Just fill in the borrowing sheet with your name, the date and the title of the book. You may keep the book until you have finished - then return it and mark the date of the return.

The majority of the authors have written these books in more recent times. We hope to put all the books, authors and date of publication on the Faith Matters' website over the next month or so, with a short statement on each one. Many of these books are written by people who will often prod you to reflect on what you actually believe about your religion or will develop your concept of spirituality.

The season of Advent is about 6 weeks away. The popular Advent booklet will be available for sale soon and we will advertise when it is available.

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October 8, 9

The Emmaus story (Luke 24:13-25), a symbol of our life journey, has 2 disciples walking to Emmaus, not long after the death of Jesus, when they are joined by the resurrected Jesus. They do not recognise him until they reach their destination and he breaks bread with them.

An article by the Marist Brother, Mark O'Connor, (Vicar for Communications in Fr. Vincent Long's Diocese of Parramatta, Sydney), writing in Catholic Outlook (4/10/22), mentions the 2 types of pilgrimages/journeys referred to by the great theologian, Karl Rahner.

The first is like a "summertime of spirituality" where "some people are gifted with a sense of certainty and conviction that the beauty and truth of God are very nearby". Perhaps we mainly experience this in our later years.

The second is like a "wintertime style of Faith" where "people, battered and bruised by the chaos and suffering of the world, need to go on an inner pilgrimage to address the mystery of pain and chaos all around them". This is most of us.

Rahner says that "the second journey is the more typical one of contemporary Catholics struggling to believe. This goes on in our soul as we seek to discover the hidden Christ who mysteriously dwells in our own very hearts".

At times, we recognise Jesus in our lives and the feeling can be euphoric. This can sometimes happen when he breaks bread with us at Mass. **Most times though, the journey is a hard slog and we just have to live out our faith and trust the God who dwells within us. He always has our back, no matter what.**

October 1, 2

For many years the month of October has been regarded as the month of the Rosary – a long held tradition honouring Mary, the mother of Jesus. Vatican 2 did away with some types of devotions but others continued, such as devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus etc and especially, the Rosary. This prayer has stood the test of time - many centuries.

Pope John Paul 2 had a special devotion to the Rosary. Just after he became Pope in 1978 he said, "The Rosary is my favourite prayer". Especially after the terrifying attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, he said, the revival of the Rosary can be a valuable part of Catholics' efforts for peace. He also stated that the Rosary had been a prayer of and for the family.

Up till then, people had used the 15 mysteries (5 Joyful, 5 Sorrowful and 5 Glorious) but **Pope Paul 2 introduced another 5 mysteries which he called the "Mysteries of Light"**. These were 5 significant moments in the life of Jesus – The Baptism of Jesus, The Wedding Feast of Cana, The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, The Transfiguration, The Institution of the Eucharist.

The Madonna magazine, published by the Jesuits, contains articles of general and spiritual interest. We have some fairly recent ones for you to borrow in the church SVDP shop. There is no need to sign your details in the pink book for these. It's up to you - either pass the magazine on or bring it back for others to share.

September 24, 25

Pope Francis has championed the process of a Synod from the start of his pontificate, so much so, that he has now pioneered a Synod devoted to achieving global acceptance of this approach by all Catholic clergy and laity. It is called **"A Synod on Synodality"**, now being prepared for its occurrence **in Rome in October 2023.**

In his book, "Let us Dream", the Pope uses the word "overflow", which is similar to a breakthrough when people with different points of view come to an agreement which is accepted by all. Synodality does not lead to everyone being satisfied with the outcome.

"This is what I mean by 'overflow' because it breaks the banks that confined our thinking and causes to pour forth, as if from an overflowing fountain, the answers that formerly the contraposition didn't let us see".

The Pope also refers to how the media attempts to reduce a Synod to a single issue and if that does not receive a positive answer, it regards the whole Synod as somewhat flawed. An example would be, when at the Synod on the family, the message seemed to be that everything hinged on whether the Church allowed divorced, or separated and remarried people to access the sacraments.

What eventually happened was not a "yes" or "no" but rather, after much debate, the position was reached as stated by the Pope - "Because of the immense variety of situations and circumstances people found themselves in, Aquinas's teaching that no general rule could apply in every situation, allowed the Synod to agree on the need for a case by case discernment. There was no need to change the Church's law, only how it was applied". (P 88 of his book "Let us Dream") Each situation is now to be determined on its own specific circumstances. "We could move on from a black or white moralism". (p. 88) What a breath of fresh air. This solution was there all the time – the synodal process discovered it.

September 17, 18

"Let Us Dream", a book by Pope Francis was published in 2020. It is a smallish book (about 150 pages) with a sub title of "The Path to a Better Future'. It is divided into 3 parts – "A time to See", "A time to Choose" and "A Time to Act". In "A Time to Choose", Francis deals with the term "Synodality" from pages 81 to 94.

A process of "synodality" to effect required change in the Church has been one of his major goals from the very start of his pontificate. He has presided over 3 world synods to date – The Family (2014/15), Young people (2018) and Amazonia (2019).

This week and next, I will quote some excerpts from his book to help you understand this process. It will be front of mind for Francis while he remains the Pope.

“The term comes from the Greek syn-odos, **“walking together”** and this is its goal: not so much as to forge agreement as to recognise, honour and reconcile differences on a higher plane where the best of each can be retained.”

“Synodality starts with hearing from the whole people of God. **A church that teaches must be firstly a church that listens.**”

“Consulting all members of the church is vital because as the second Vatican Council reminded us, the faithful as a whole are anointed by the Holy Spirit and **cannot err in matters of belief**”. (Lumen Gentium, Chapter 2, article 12)

“In speaking of synodality, it is **important not to confuse Catholic doctrine and tradition with the Church’s norms and practices**. What is under discussion at synodal gatherings are not traditional truths of Christian Doctrine. The synod is concerned mainly with how teaching can be lived and applied in the changing contexts of our time.”

Synodality involves both clergy and laity honestly listening to the different viewpoints of each other and then moving to a position that takes the best of these views and reaches a point where everybody accepts the final position.

August 27, 28

The Madonna magazine, produced by the Jesuits in Melbourne for many decades and published each quarter, seeks to present a number of articles devoted to spirituality in daily life. The lead article is always written by Fr. Chris Gleeson S. J. who is an outstanding spiritual writer and whose article is always well worth reading and meditating on.

In the just released Spring edition (Sept. Oct. Nov.) his topic was “look to the good”. All of God’s creation is good. Genesis says “God saw that it was good”. God is good. Hence we can find God in everything and every person. We just need to look through the lens of Faith and Hope.

Each publication has a theme for the various articles. For instance in the spring edition the theme is “Creation”. A major feature of the magazine is that the references for all the Mass readings over the three months are listed, followed by a short message based on the theme of the readings, which one might meditate on at some time during the day.

Since we currently live in tough times with inflation testing everyone, the yearly subscription of \$58 could be a barrier for people. To assist people who might be interested, some past copies have been left in the Vinnies shop in the Grovely church. Go in and check out the magazine after weekend Mass. Perhaps it is for you, perhaps not. Please just peruse it, not borrow it, at this stage. Borrowing may come later.

The theme of the recent winter edition was “Prayer”. Fr. Gleeson’s editorial was called “Prayer has many faces” and the initial sentence was “Thankfully there is nothing complicated about prayer. It is simply an encounter between ourselves and God”.

Subscription details – www.madonnamagazine.com.au or phone (03) 9421 9666. Rates include GST and delivery within Australia.

August 20, 21

People were interested whether the Plenary Council would make any decisions on the three Rites of Reconciliation, considering the vast expanse of a significant number of parishes in Australia. The answer is that the two motions relating to this matter were passed at the Council.

In the voting system there were two types of votes:

Consultative – these votes related to every member of the group who was not a bishop - approximately 86% of the vote. These votes were not counted of course but were a guide as to the thinking of this group.

Deliberative – The Bishops - approximately 14%. This system occurred because this was a Plenary Council. Had it been a Synod, which is Pope Francis' preferred mode, the situation would have been different. These votes were the only ones that counted.

In addition, the vote could be agree, agree but with modification to the motion, disagree.

Motion 5.5 read as follows.

That the Bishops Commission for Liturgy institute a sustained program of catechesis of the sacrament of Penance to promote an understanding of the conditions for and appropriate practice of each of the three forms of the Rite of Penance. **Consultative 164 - 7 - 37 Deliberative 38 - 0 - 2 Motion passed.**

Motion 5.6 read as follows.

That the Plenary Council request that the Pope consider whether the Third Form of the Rite of Penance might have wider use on occasions when it is particularly appropriate, granted an understanding among the faithful of its distinctive nature and requirements. **Consultative 143 - 3- 58 Deliberative 27 - 2 - 11. Motion passed.**

It is interesting to note how the voting pattern is so different between the two motions.

All the motions of the Council now go to Rome and a result will be known in due course. How long – who knows?

August 11, 12

In a publication by the Catholic Adult Education Centre in Sydney called "Inform", Sr. Patty Faulkner wrote the March 1999 issue entitled "How Big is God". Yes, this is the same person who wrote the article on the recent Plenary Council which you can find on our website under "Plenary Council and Associated Articles". Well worth reading.

In the 1999 article she researched images of God in the Hebrew Scriptures, commented that the way to God is through our imagination and that a rich variety of images lets God be God. **Meditating on images of God can be a help in a prayer life where one wishes to develop a deeper relationship with the divine.** Listed below are some of the images of God and their Scriptural references she found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Her full list included another 18 or so – eagle, fire, wings, judge, creator, water, light, saviour, redeemer etc.

Mother - Isaiah 49:15 **Father** - Deuteronomy 1:31 **Fortress** - Psalm 18:2

Gentle breeze - 1Kings 19:9-13

Shield - Psalm 7:10 **Rock** - Psalm 94:18-22 **Potter** - Jeremiah 18:1-6 **Shepherd** - Psalm 23

Then, in the Gospels, we have so many images of God in the actions of Jesus and in his parables.

As Sr. Faulkner writes, “For now, human words and images are all that we have. One day we will move beyond the image. In the fullness of time, St. Paul reminds us, we will no longer “see through a glass darkly”, through a dim mirror; God will be all in all and we will see him face to face.”

The most recent Catholic Weekly had an article in it called “Holy Spirit, both comforter and disruptor”. The article highlighted how powerful the moment was when a significant number of people at the Council (mainly women, but not all) stood to the side in protest, when the bishops’ vote about the role and dignity of women in the Church, failed. This completely stopped Council proceedings. The fact that meaningful discussion after that, by all members (clergy and laity), finally led to motions that were accepted by the Council, was regarded as an excellent example, of the power of synodality and the action of the Holy Spirit.

A statement by one of the members should be noted. “This was probably a defining moment for the Church”. Let’s hope so.

August 6, 7

In a recent item we referred to the fact that the media was suggesting the Pope might be retiring, owing to seeming ill health, as demonstrated by his use of wheel chair, walking stick etc. Almost immediately, Francis came out to say he was going nowhere at this stage. But during his current trip to Canada, where he had to use both chair and stick, there was a slight change in how he viewed the situation – **not that he was considering retirement pretty soon but an acknowledgement that he would step down if he felt he could not continue to do the papal duties.**

His good health should be an ongoing intention in our prayers, as he has started a path to change throughout the global Catholic Church and this needs to continue – **specifically, the role of synodality in the change process within the Church.** In doing so he has faced and is currently facing significant opposition, particularly among bishops in the United States and parts of Europe.

The good news? The synodal process was seen in action during our recent Plenary Council, when, on the Wednesday, the Council process was halted and a synodal process led the group to a positive outcome. Such open discussion and close listening on the part of both clergy and laity involved in the Council, was what synodality is all about. **Go, Pope Francis, in your efforts to bring about a synodal approach in the Church’s move to update itself for the 21st century.**

This August has three Mondays in a row where we celebrate major events in the life of the Catholic Church.

- **Tomorrow (8/8) The feast of St. Mary of the Cross, MacKillop.** What a woman - an inspiration to everyone. It is worth the time to find out more about her practicality, common sense, courage and faith.
- **Monday (15/8) The Assumption of our Lady into Heaven.** The older ones among us remember the way the Holy Days of Obligation used to operate – what stress, especially if it fell on a weekday and you were a worker. Thankfully, most have gone, but this one remains – not to worry, as our approach to Holy Days of obligation is less stressful these days.
- **Monday (22/8) The Queenship of Mary.** Being the mother of Jesus, she is a “go to” person if you have a problem.

July 30, 31

Last week we placed 2 articles on the Faith Matters website which were written by a man who was associated with the Plenary Council, no less than Fr. Frank Brennan S.J.

A noted Jesuit writer, Sr. Patty Faulkner, (Leader of the Good Samaritan Sisters) a well-known spiritual writer who was an actual member of the Council, and so saw first-hand what actually happened at the Wednesday meeting of the Council when the Bishops failed to reach a two thirds majority vote on a motion which involved "Witnessing to the Equal Dignity of Women and Men."

Far from succumbing to sheer frustration, anger and bitter disappointment among a sizeable group of members, all the members, including the Bishops, agreed to a plan over the next few days, to come up with a motion that would be accepted by all Council members. This did happen before the end of the Council and was a powerful example of how synodality is a process which can lead to consensus despite significantly different points of view.

This positive outcome led Sr. Faulkner to write the two concluding paragraphs of her article, in which she highlights Pope Francis' approach to and strong support of the process of synodality. Her full article has been placed on the Faith matters website under "Plenary Council and Associated Articles."

"In his wonderful book, [*Let us Dream*](#) (p77-78), Francis says that 'our main task ... is not to disengage from polarisation but to engage with conflict and disagreement in ways that prevent us from descending into polarisation. This means resolving division by allowing for new thinking that can transcend that division. "Thus, the 'winner' from the Australian Catholic Church's Plenary Council is Pope Francis and his commitment to synodality. Members of the Plenary Council learnt from experience that synodality is not for the faint hearted and that real tensions are inherent in a true synodal journey. They also experienced the traits of synodality: collaboration, inclusion, listening to all the voices, and consensus building. Above all, the Members dared to dream".

July 23, 24

A homily by Fr. Frank Brennan S. J., given the Sunday after the close of the Council, was placed on the Faith Matters website last weekend. It outlined aspects of what happened at the Council's Wednesday morning meeting, when a vote, passed by all members that day who were not bishops, was then overturned by the bishops' vote the next day.

The following Sunday he gave a homily where he detailed the events in more detail and drew some conclusions from what occurred. There is no doubt that this event is a bit of a turning point for the way women and their potential for making a worthwhile contribution to the Church in this century, will be viewed in future by the bishops. Something has definitely changed. The fact that a number of bishops changed their vote on the follow up session on the Friday indicates some change of attitude. How significant the change is, will only be known if positive future action occurs.

This article has also been placed on the FM website in the "Plenary Council Associated Articles" section on the home page.

Another article has been put there as well about a meeting between Fr. Richard Rohr and Pope Francis. We hold some of Fr. Rohr's books in our lending library, particularly "The Divine Dance" (about the Trinity in our lives) and "The Universal Christ" – a concept that many Christians, who might think that Christ is Jesus' second name, are not familiar with.

Pope Francis lauded the teaching of Richard Rohr and encouraged him to keep going. The problem is that Fr. Rohr is getting on in age and may not be far off retirement. Read the article – better still, read some of his books.

If borrowing books from the lending library in the Grovely church book shop please do not forget to fill in the details in the book provided.

July 16, 17

Two documents have been placed on the Faith Matters website. They are the top 2 articles under “Plenary Council and Associated Articles.”

One is by way of explanation as to why the situation which occurred on the Wednesday of the recent Plenary Council meetings is so important for future developments in the Australian Catholic Church. It is a homily given By Fr. Frank Brennan S. J. on July 10 just after the Council had finished. Fr. Brennan’s credentials are well known.

The article details the drama after the vote on women in the Church and their possible increased involvement was passed by the members who had a consultative vote (not counted), but then did not get a majority when the Bishops voted on it the next day. The Council agenda was disrupted that afternoon as the members discussed the situation. Read all about it. Fortunately a changed motion was passed on the Friday by both the Bishops and the rest of the members.

The other document is by Marilyn Rodrigues who writes for the Catholic Weekly in Sydney. This article speaks about various motions that were passed and some that were not. There is some interesting information in this article but it is just one of many articles circulating about what results came from the Council.

One notable point is that there is provision for a report to be given (in 2023 and 2025) about the progress being made on the decisions of the Council. This is excellent because it ensures that work continues after the Council and any decisions are not relegated to the bottom drawer.

Next week we will promote the lending library at the Grovely church. 1) We will list all the books which are available for borrowing. 2) We will spell out the process for borrowing, as well as what parishioners not at Grovely Masses can do to access the system.

July 9, 10

The second meeting of the Plenary Council has concluded. What follows is some background about what happened half way through the Council.

Voting at the Council. There are 277 members at the Council. 43 are Bishops with a deliberative vote (one that counts) while the remaining members have a consultative vote (one that doesn’t count). This is being written last Wed. night after a most disappointing day for women. The consultative vote on the motion regarding the role of women in the Church passed but the deliberative vote did not – hence the motion was defeated.

The negative response from members, especially women, was immediate, and proceedings had to be interrupted. On Thursday, John Warhurst, chair of the Concerned Catholics Canberra- Goulburn and a member of the Plenary Council, in his daily blog on the Council’s proceedings, dealt with the ramifications of the deliberative vote of the Bishops not passing the motion. His blog has been placed on this website – click on “Plenary Council and Associated Articles” above.

However, something had to be done quickly so that the business of the Council could proceed. There is a statement by the ACBC (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference) which has been placed on this website just

under John Warhurst's one click on "Plenary Council and Associated Articles" above. Its title is "Members will reconsider two Plenary Council motions". By the time you read this the above will be history, you will probably know how this worked out and the Council will have concluded its second meeting.

Good news from Pope Francis Recently there has been speculation as to the Pope's health and whether he might have to retire earlier than planned. He has responded that he will continue in his role for the foreseeable future and will stay there while he is able to fulfil the role. We need him there – he is a breath of fresh air.

July 2, 3

The long awaited second and last meeting of the Australian Plenary Council begins in Sydney today and ends on July 8 with a Mass in the cathedral which is open to the public and not just to the participants.

Those who have the time may wish to gain an idea of what has happened each day by registering for **The Plenary Tracker program**. Those who wish to do so can go to the Faith Matters' website (above) where all the details can be found as well as the icon for registration. Of course many may not be able to do this as the start time is 7.30pm and homes are very busy places at that time.

If you want just a brief outline, why not go to the FM site anyway – on the home page is "Plenary Council and Associated Articles". Click this and the first article is the one you want and if you want to register, the icon is there as well.

30 motions will be voted on. These should be published soon. Prayers to the Holy Spirit for worthwhile recommendations to go to Rome would be a good thing to do – knowing how the first meeting could have gone much better than it did, we certainly need lots of prayers for this one.

Faith Matters' lending library (in the Vinnies shop in the Grovelly church)

Lots of books there to get you thinking about growth in your adult faith. Parishioners who do not attend Grovelly can email pcondon@westnet.com.au about the process for borrowing a book from the lending library.

We have now added 4 copies of **Kevin Treston's latest book – "Telling our Faith Stories – my story and your story within the great story of the universe"**. All of us have moments which are important in our faith journey and which perhaps guided us to new awareness of God in our lives.

This book uses some examples of such times in Kevin's life which hopefully help you to remember and reflect on similar times in your life. He will also challenge your thinking re some elements of the Church today in light of so many changes that have occurred over the last 50 years. He has written more than 15 books and evangelised in Australia and three or four other countries over more than 50 years.

June 25, 26

We are only a couple of weeks from the second and last meeting of more than 260 "Members" of the Australian Plenary Council. When it started back around the middle of 2019, who would have thought that it would have been derailed by Covid for such a long time. After this series of meetings (July 3 to 9 in Sydney) a series of recommendations will be forwarded to Rome by the Bishops.

These recommendations will be the result of discussions on at least 30 motions which were derived from the first meeting. Whether there will be enough time to give serious consideration to these motions remains to be seen. This was one of the criticisms of the first meeting. **Since this is a**

Council and not a synod, any decisions by Rome will be made with reference to Canon Law and this could be an impediment. We will just have to wait and pray.

Now that the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost have happened, we have a series of Sundays in “Ordinary Time”, from today (the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time) to the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time on November 13. The Church’s Liturgical Year finishes the next Sunday (Nov. 20) – feast of Christ the King. Then we begin the 2023 Liturgical year with the season of Advent.

The Gospel on each of the Sundays in Ordinary Time will focus on ways that we can follow Jesus as disciples.

Next week we are adding to the Faith Matters’ lending library (in the Grovely church shop) 4 titles of **Kevin Treston’s latest book – “Telling our Faith Stories – my story and your story within the great story of the universe”**. This will be well worth reading, as are all his books, a number of which are currently in the library.

June 11, 12

The feast of the Trinity occurs today. One of the most significant books written on this topic in recent times is “The Divine Dance”. It was written by Fr. Richard Rohr (a Franciscan priest with an international reputation as a spiritual writer) and Mike Morrell.

The foreword of this book was written by William Paul Young, author of “The Shack” and a comment on the book was written by the well-known U. S. Jesuit priest, Fr. James Martin.

Here is his comment – “Richard Rohr is one of the great spiritual masters of our time, indeed of any time. His superb new book on the Trinity (2016) is vintage Rohr – clear headed, provocative, inspiring, challenging, and, most of all, suffused with the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity will, of course, always remain a mystery, but after reading Fr. Rohr’s book, you will experience it as a mystery that can, and will, transform your life.”

For many centuries the Trinity was almost a forgotten aspect of our religion. That is now changing. This book needs to be closely and carefully read. A number of Rohr’s ideas will blow your mind and your prayer life will benefit greatly.

We are created to live in the flow and the relationship of the Trinity. As Rohr says, “We are always just in the river. Don’t try to push the river or make the river happen: it is already happening and you cannot stop it. All you can do is recognise it, enjoy it and ever more fully allow it to carry you.”

The Trinity is within you, within your neighbour and within all of creation.

May 7, 8

Getting up to date with preparations for the second meeting of the Plenary Council.

After 3 years of preparation and the first meeting (2021), the Australian Plenary Council (currently being closely watched by the Church in many countries) will conduct its second and final meeting in Sydney July 4 – 9. At the first meeting, discussions occurred between 277 people (called “members”), representing all the Dioceses in Australia. Our numerous responses prior to this meeting, led to 16 items to be discussed at that meeting. Since it was decreed that a Bishop had to be in each group and there were only 14 Bishops available, there could be only 14 discussion groups. Hence 2 of the groups had to deal with 2 questions – hardly desirable, given the limited time available for discussion.

Prior to the first meeting, a major report (“The Light of the Southern Cross”) was produced by the Bishops. Some criticism occurred re this document. This first meeting led to a number of proposals to be

discussed prior to the second meeting. Over this time the ACCCR (Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform) has been very active in highlighting the need for significant reform in the Church. Of the 20 groups in ACCCR, "Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn" has been one of the most vociferous and it would seem with good reason. The criticism centred around the process used for the first meeting – that it could have been more efficient and effective so as to lead to better discussion and more quality outcomes.

This year a group of "members" has reflected on the proposals from the first meeting and has now produced a report called "Towards the Second Assembly – a Working Document for Members 28/2/2022". This report is a work in progress to be discussed by the members and will eventually lead to an agenda for the second meeting in July this year. John Warhurst (a Plenary Council member and chair of CCCG) had criticised the fact that this document is in-house and generally not available for the rest of us to read and think about. A copy of his article is on the Faith Matters' website (www.faith-matters-gsm.com.au) under "Plenary Council and Associated Articles".

We need to pray frequently to the Holy Spirit that the result of this Council reflects serious reform and is not constrained by some members. If the contributed ideas of all of us are not adequately listened to, many will not be inclined to be so heavily involved in any future Council or Synod.

April 30, May 1

In explaining the background to the inspirational piece of Art in the St. Williams church (which was unveiled last Sunday), the artist (Dianne Minnaar) mentioned that some symbols in the painting were linked to a painting by William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), called "The Light of the World", painted between 1851 and 1853.

His painting shows the figure of Jesus preparing to knock on an overgrown and long-unopened door, illustrating The book of Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me". The door in the painting has no handle, and can therefore be opened only from the inside. We, ourselves, have to answer the knock, open the door and and let Jesus in to our minds and hearts.

Nicky Gumbel, the founder of the Alpha Course, interprets both the verse and the painting in this way. He writes:

"Jesus, the Light of the World, stands at a door, which is overgrown with ivy and weeds. The door clearly represents the door of someone's life. This person has never invited Jesus to come into his or her life. Jesus is standing at the door and knocking. He is awaiting a response. He wants to come in and be part of that person's life."

God has given human beings two gifts which distinguish them from lower forms of life – intellect and free will. He will never interfere with our free will. The handle has to be on the inside of the door because only we can make the decision to open the door and let Jesus in.



Back to the Grovely piece of art. Be sure to visit the Grovely church and sit and ponder this wonderful piece of art which has the theme “Let the children come to me”. What a significant addition to our place of worship.

A copy of Holman’s painting, “The Light of the World”, can be found under “Plenary Council and Associated Articles” above.

April 23, 24

On July 16, 1054, Christianity split into the Roman Catholic Church in the west and the Orthodox Churches in the east. This was called the Great Schism. In a recent piece of writing, the noted Franciscan spiritual writer, Fr. Richard Rohr, compared the depiction in art of Jesus’ Resurrection, between the western church (ours) and the eastern orthodox church in countries like Syria, Turkey, Greece, Egypt etc. **In the former**, Jesus is raised from the dead, in solitude, with no one else around, apart from the few people who arrived there early on the Sunday. **Incidentally, in all the Gospels, the first people to arrive at the tomb to check it out were all women.** However, **art in the Eastern Church** depicts Jesus, at the time of His Resurrection, as being surrounded by crowds of people, some haloed and some not haloed. What an interesting difference between the two lines of thought.

There are many differences between the Eastern Churches and the Western Church. A major difference stems from the way the people in these two areas tend to think. We in the west are what is called dualistic thinkers – ie people, decisions, judgments are good or bad, right or wrong, yes or no. There is no in-between in many cases. On the other hand, people in the east, in the main, are non-dualistic thinkers – there can be compromise and there is both good and bad in a person, a decision or a situation to be judged. This difference is reflected in how the two groups of churches approach some elements of religion and spirituality.

Jesus was a Palestinian, an eastern person, and was certainly a non- dualistic thinker. So many of his actions and parables show him to be so. What better example than the Gospel story about the woman taken in adultery a few weeks ago. Non-dualistic thinkers are very much at home in His kingdom.

April 16, 17

The Triduum (the 3 days from Holy Thursday, leading to Easter Sunday as the climax) is a time of such varying experiences for Jesus and for us, as Christians in 2022.

- The high of Holy Thursday is Jesus’ institution of the Eucharistic meal and our participation in it.
- The deep, deep low is the enormity of pain, humiliation and sense of abandonment for Him on Good Friday and for us too, as we (in 2022) remember His suffering for us.
- The liturgy on the Saturday night leads to the utter joy and celebration of Jesus’ Resurrection on Easter Sunday, after having achieved the mission given to Him by His Father – and we share in this joy at the Mass that Day.

Everything we do in religion or spirituality hinges on the fact that Jesus has actually risen from the dead. If he hasn’t, there is no point in anything we do in relation to them both. All we have to do is believe in the Resurrection and act accordingly, and then let the flow of the Trinitarian God sweep us along in a massive torrent of love, joy and peace. The best part is that all this is sheer gift. We cannot do anything to merit it. It just happens. How wonderful is our God!

The Faith Matters team wishes our pastors, the office staff and all parishioners, a faith-filled Easter season – may we all bask in the fruits of Jesus' Resurrection.

April 9, 10

Today's second reading (Paul's Philippians 2: 6-11), was often known as the Carmen Christi (Hymn to Christ).

Verse

6 Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.
8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every
name
10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and
under the earth,
11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This hymn was used in the early Christian church to teach and really stress the pre-existence, incarnation and the full divinity of Jesus Christ. For many centuries the Church stressed the divinity of Jesus more so than his humanity. In more recent times there has been a pronounced effort by theologians to acquaint us with the humanity of Jesus as well - to see him as he lived in the Palestine of 2000 years ago, a culture and way of life so completely different from what we experience. As a result, we see the humanity of Jesus shine through.

On a different note, we enter into the Triduum this coming Holy Thursday. A triduum is a religious observance lasting three days. The best-known example today is the liturgical Paschal Triduum (the three days from the evening of Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday). May all of us fully participate in this triduum so as to rise with Christ on Easter Sunday.

April 2, 3

Last week we announced the restart of the Faith Matters library in the St. Vincent de Paul shop in the Grovely church and listed some books available at Masses on weekends. For parishioners in Mitchelton and Samford and for others who cannot get to these Masses, a book may be ordered by ringing Pat Condon on 3351 1163 and leaving a message if he is not home.

Today we add other books that are now in the library.

Kevin Treston "A Modern Credo" (3) "Opening Doors" (5) "Sayings for the Soul) (5)

Fr. Richard Leonard A Jesuit priest and an excellent writer who is acknowledged by thousands of people who have read his works which are usually titled in a humorous and quirky way so as to gain attention. A great style and an excellent and thought-provoking approach.

'What are we doing on earth for Christ's sake" (1) "Hatch, Match and Dispatch" – a look at the sacraments. (?) "What Does It All Mean?" (1)

At the moment we do not have copies of **“Where the Hell is God?” (probably one of his best books). If you have pain, suffering and loss in your life at the moment you may want to purchase this book. It is a standout.**

The library also has one well used copy of “Jesus before Christianity” by Albert Nolan (1972). A masterpiece - a great account of Jesus, the man who lived in the context of the times and culture of Palestine 2000 years ago. Many people have viewed Jesus differently after reading this book and it changed their life. He was human, as well as divine. For some info re the book, go to the Faith Matters website (above) and click on “library loans”.

March 26, 27

The Faith Matters lending library is kicking off this weekend in a newer format, in which we aim to give parishioners a clearer picture of the type of books for borrowing that are contained in the Vinnies’ shop at the Grovely church. We are also conscious that parishioners in Mitchelton and Samford need a process to borrow a book if they wish to do so.

They can do this by emailing pcondon@westnet.com.au with the title of a book they wish to borrow. It will be left in the Grovely parish office for them to pick up at their convenience. The times the parish office is open are contained on page 1 of the parish newsletter. The book is returned to the Grovely office.

Today we highlight 2 books by **Fr. Richard Rohr - Franciscan priest and head of the Centre for Action and Contemplation in America – CAC.** Fr. Rohr is a spiritual writer of international significance. He is noted for many books and we will obtain more of them over time.

The Divine Dance (2) The Universal Christ (3) These 2 books will change the way you think of the Trinity and the term “The Christ”. Christ is not Jesus’ second name. These books need a lot of reflection as you go through them and you may wish to read them a second time, later on. The number of books available above is in brackets after the title.

We also highlight one of our own Brisbane spiritual writers – Kevin Treston. He has written many books and has done work in 3 or 4 other countries. His writings may challenge your thinking. We list three of his books here and others next week.

Who Do You Say I Am? (5) The Wind Blows Where It Will (4) Emergence For Life, Not Fall From Grace (2) This writer is one worth following.

The feast of the Annunciation occurred last Friday. Mary, a young woman, said yes to a messenger from God and the rest is history.

March 19, 20

Prior to the start of Covid, Faith Matters had developed a borrowing library, housed in the St. Vincent de Paul shop in the Grovely church. During Covid, interest in borrowing these books significantly waned, however the current thinking is that the situation has improved (masks gone etc) and it is time to resurrect this project.

The collection of books in the library contains some of the best works of **Fr. Richard Rohr** (internationally well- known **Franciscan priest** and spiritual writer), **Kevin Treston** (here in Brisbane and a challenging and forward thinking writer) and **Fr. Richard Leonard (a Jesuit priest** in Sydney whose writings are respected across Australia and beyond).

It will take another week or so to get this borrowing library in order for a re-opening. The process will be simple – just write your name and phone number or email address in the exercise book near the books, and list the book and date of borrowing. By next week's newsletter we should have a list of the books in the shop on the Faith Matters' website (see above).

Many of the books are in the Vinnies' shop this weekend and you are free to borrow one before the official start. We will soon have a system for parishioners in Mitchelton and Samford to use the library as well. Since we have only one copy of some books and a few copies of the rest we would need to establish a set time the book can be out in a person's name.

Mention should be made of our website www.faith-matters-gsm.com.au . We are currently updating it. Here you will find interesting articles (Plenary Council, the world Synod etc) copies of past Faith Matters' newsletter items, the Pope video which changes each month), information about books available for borrowing. Have a look.

"The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending and to have the two as close together as possible". (George Burns)

March 12, 13

The promotion of the booklet for Lent ("The Spirit and the Cross") resulted in the **sale of 120** of them at Grovely, Mitchelton and Samford. **Thanks to all those who bought one.** The reflection for last Tuesday, (March 8) re the "Our Father", deserves to be summarised here as it is an interesting perspective on this prayer. It links with the text from the Scriptures – Matthew 6: 9-10.

The opening paragraph has this sentence - "When God tells us what to say to God we do well to pay attention". We are aware that one way to pray this prayer is to see that it comprises 7 petitions. Another way though is to see that it can be divided into 4 sections.

- We hallow God's name and we align ourselves with God's will, rather than asking God to do ours.
- We make a simple request for the daily provisions we need. "It's a request that God will provide us with what we need (not want) on this day."
- "There's the request for forgiveness and that it be granted to us to the degree that we forgive others".
- "Finally there is a request for protection from temptation and evil".

A final powerful point is that in Matthew 6: 14-15 Jesus stresses that "God's forgiveness of our sins is contingent on us forgiving others who sin against us". The "Our Father" is a powerful prayer which probably should often be said in an effort to draw closer to God, especially during Lent. Our religion and our spirituality is all about relationship with God, not about laws and regulations, important though these may be. This was one of Jesus' most important messages to the world.

Faith Matters acknowledges and thanks Brisbane Evangelisation for the use of the above ideas from "The Spirit and the Cross".

March 5, 6

There were **281 delegates** who represented all the Australian Dioceses at the first meeting of the Plenary Council. These people are now called **members instead of delegates**. If you wish to see who these people were at the first meeting and who will represent you at the second meeting, copy and paste this website

into your browser <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/members> . Scroll down the list and find those who represent you in this archdiocese.

During March, this group will be meeting to further discuss the ideas which came out of the first meeting. At that meeting they had 16 questions to discuss – these came from all the submissions (over 20,000) that Australian Catholics made earlier on. From these March meetings, and others later on, will come the agenda for the second meeting in July. **Note – the results of the second meeting will be determined by the vote of the Bishops.** Other members, such as priests, Religious Order people and lay people will not have a vote which counts. It will be interesting to see what finally goes to Rome. Change is definitely needed in a number of areas and this is well worth talking to the Holy Spirit about.

The month of March is packed with so many important events within the Church. The season of Lent, St. Patrick (17th), St. Joseph (19th), The Annunciation of Mary (25th). During the “heavy lifting” throughout Lent we do get a number of occasions when we can take a breather and then get back into it with greater determination to see it through. As well as the 3 feast days above we also have the fourth week of Lent which is called “Laetare Sunday”. Laetare means joyful in Latin.

In the meantime we try to do some meaningful things each day of Lent as we prepare for the Resurrection of Jesus on Sunday April 17. Make no mistake about it – if there was no Resurrection of Jesus we are wasting our time.

February 26, 27

The deadline for anyone wishing to make a submission to the Synod in Rome in 2023 has been extended to March 13. For details click here - <https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch>. If you make a submission via this link you are allowed 250 words, but you can write a much longer submission if you have time – just forward it independently to the organising group. For most people, the link above is the way to go as it is so easy to do.

There are three key concepts for the Synod in Rome – communion, participation and mission. To help you in your thinking you could download the article called “Submission to Synod on Synodality First Phase 2020-2021 - Concerned Catholics Canberra –Goulburn” on the Faith Matters website (above)) in the “Plenary Council and Associated Articles” section. (Page 5).

On the Parramatta Diocese (Sydney) website there is an article entitled “The History of Synodality – it’s older than you think”, written by Fr. John W. O’Malley, S.J. who is University Professor emeritus in the theology department at Georgetown University (Washington U.S.A.). It is a lengthy article but well worth the read if you wish to know the origin of the word, even in the early Church and how it has evolved to what Pope Francis considers it to be today. You can find it on the Faith Matters website in the same place as the article mentioned above.

It is a fact that Bishop Vincent Long (Bishop of the Parramatta Diocese) has been one of the most forward -thinking bishops with respect to the changes that need to be made if the Church is to fulfil, more effectively, its God-given role in the 21st century. He practices true synodality in his Diocese and has conducted significant meetings of parishioners with respect to both the Plenary Council and the Vatican Synod. The same cannot be said for a number of other Dioceses around Australia.

February 19, 20

Ash Wednesday - the start of Lent - is just over 2 weeks away - March 2. The popular small book to assist with preparation for the Easter period of the Church’s liturgical year is “The Spirit and the Cross”.

There are 2 more weekends (including this one) in which to purchase one from any of the three churches - \$5.

The great selling point about this booklet is that it also serves as a book of meditations for the whole year – a dual purpose. This year, its content is written by Deacon Peter Pellicaan, the head of Brisbane Evangelisation. You might remember the time when Faith Matters, (then Adult Faith Education) had him out to Grovely to speak about the journey which led him to the Catholic Faith. He was an inspirational speaker.

With the deadline for the Vatican Synod in 2023 being short March 13, many people will probably make an individual submission to the Australian bishops. This is quite simple as you just copy and paste into your browser <https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch> . Scroll down until you get to the link “submit your response here”. After a few questions about yourself you have a chance to write 250 words and send it off. Perhaps you and a few friends might like to do this as a group.

We mentioned that the Canberra Goulburn group had made a lengthy submission which you could look at if you needed help as to what to say. A copy of this submission has been placed on the Faith Matters’ website (above) under the heading “Plenary Council and Associated Articles” (PC). Note – This submission starts with an introduction, in which it takes the view that what it presented to the Australian PC is the basis of its submission to the Vatican synod, plus some other issues that have since emerged. Be prepared – some of its critique (based on the experience of some of its members who participated in the recent first meeting of the PC) are hard-hitting. It hopes the second PC meeting format is better structured so as to achieve a more effective outcome.

After the introduction, the submission to the Vatican synod follows and then the submission the group made to our Plenary Council.

February 12, 13

NR

February 5, 6

The reflection booklet for the coming Lenten period, “The Spirit and the Cross”, is popular, going on the sales last week. One comment by the author is that the reflections are relevant, not only for the days of Lent, but can also be used for worthwhile reflection throughout the year. This is a bonus.

Copies available (\$5) after all Masses this weekend in all 3 parish churches.

The Plenary Council is preparing for its second meeting in Sydney, July 4 -9, 2022 and all the participants from the first meeting are analysing the data to date, in an effort to come up with the agenda for the next meeting.

At the same time, preparations are being made in Rome for a Synod for the global Catholic Church, which was the idea of Pope Francis. This synod (note- it is called a Synod of Bishops) is based on true listening by all involved – not just hearing the opinions of others (clergy plus laity) but careful listening, hopefully leading to decision-making by a wider group.

However only one woman at this stage has been given authority to vote at the synod.

Xaviere Missionary sister, Nathalie Becquart, one of 2 undersecretaries to this Synod of Bishops will be the first woman with a right to vote at a meeting of the Synod of Bishops. This was announced back in Sept. 2021 but since then the Vatican has not indicated any other woman can vote. Hope springs eternal.

“Listening” is the key word in the synodal process. Speaking about the importance of “listening”, Pope Francis said, “It is the first indispensable ingredient of dialogue and good communication. Communication does not take place if listening has not taken place”.

January 28, 29

Firstly, a sincere apology for our mistake last week – Ash Wednesday is March 2, not Feb. 2 next week. The Lent booklet, called “The Spirit and the Cross”, has arrived – 80 copies (\$5)

How to get a hold of one in the next few weeks.

- People who can come to weekend Masses at Mitchelton and Grovely – buy one at the Vinnies shop.
- People at Samford Masses - some will be on sale at the front of the church.
- People not coming to Mass at all 3 places - Covid – call in or ring the Grovely parish office (3355 3690) Mon. to Fri. 9 am to 1 pm.

People coming to Mass at all 3 places – perhaps you know people interested in buying one who cannot get to Mass - could you please let them know about it?

Some information about the booklet.

- A small book that is easy to carry, and read, while commuting or sitting at home. (18cm x 11cm, 128 pages)
- Daily reflections for Ash Wednesday to Good Friday, Easter Monday to the Second Sunday of Easter
- For each day there is a double page spread with: the date; a Scripture verse; a short reflection; a quote from Pope Francis; and a short prayer
- It has an Introduction and how to use the book
- At the back of the book there are suggestions for group use and questions for reflection and sharing.

The readings in the book could be used at any time of the year as well – such is the reflective nature of the content.

January 22, 23

Last week we mentioned we are in the period of “Ordinary Time” in the Church’s Liturgical Year. Today is the third Sunday of Ordinary Time and this will continue until Feb. 27 which is the eighth week in O.T. The Wednesday after that will be **Ash Wednesday (Feb, 2)** which commences the period of Lent, during which time we try to change our lives for the better as we prepare for **the Church’s main game - the Death and Resurrection of Jesus.**

Make no mistake about it – if there was no resurrection of Jesus we have been wasting our time doing the things we do in the Christian Faith. **Without the Resurrection we have nothing- give that idea some thought in the coming week.**

Last year, Evangelisation Brisbane replaced what was called “The Lent Program” with a special booklet (Look to Jesus) and hence, a new process for Lent. The original program lasted many years. In 2021 The Archdiocese ran out of the “Look to Jesus” booklet, because the grapevine got to work as Lent proceeded

and people realised its real value. We were able to get 80 for our parish and they just walked out the door at \$5 each - a steal, really.

This year the booklet is called “The Spirit and the Cross” and we have ordered 80 for starters. In the weeks ahead we will give you an idea of the booklet’s approach and style, but for now, we are awaiting their delivery and **will let you know when they get here.** “First in – best dressed.”

January 22, 23

Gaudete Sunday – This Sunday could almost be called “Happy Sunday”. Each year on the third Sunday of Advent the penitential mood of the season lifts. The readings in the celebration of this Sunday’s mass reflect this. The candle is pink today and the priest’s vestments are rose pink: pink for joy. We are to take a break from our more solemn deliberations and “rejoice in the Lord”. The Church is giving us a foresight of the joy we associate with the birth of Jesus at Christmas, and the peace we associate with the coming of Christ at the end of time.

The Scripture readings urge us to be joyful. Check them out again later today. (References for the readings for each week are found on page 2 of the newsletter.) Zephaniah tells us to cry out with joy, rejoice, sing joyfully and do not fear any misfortune. Paul tells us in Philippians ‘rejoice...rejoice’ and ‘the Lord is near’, while in Luke’s Gospel, John the Baptist is encouraging people to act with integrity and compassion to ready themselves for the coming of the Lord.

Readying ourselves for Christmas can be as momentous or as small as our lives allow. It’s quite possible to act with integrity and compassion in one’s ordinary day: denying the sharp criticism or retort in favour of a quiet response; a small prayer for someone else, as one goes about one’s daily activities; a little patience to listen instead of talking; eye contact and a smile for a stranger; a little courtesy to another driver or shopper during the pre-Christmas rush.

Today we can allow ourselves to throw off the sombre atmosphere of Advent and respond to the joyful anticipation of the birth of Jesus and his second coming at the end of time – to rejoice in the fact that He is here right now with us, in us. Emmanuel.

Lord, teach us your ways and help us to be generous, gracious and just so that all can rejoice in the Lord.