



Church Governance



A conversation between the
Christian Tradition and
contemporary insights of
corporate governance

Acknowledging Diverse Experience

- Parishes
- Diocese

Being careful not to absolutize local experience. Our experience is always relative.

Set within a wider universal experience
which must be careful of 'ideological
colonization'/neo-colonialism

We cannot expect Universal Law to address every Context

A Gregorian Reform in Reverse

11th Century religious **reform** movement
associated with Pope Gregory VII
(reigned 1073–1085)

Genuinely promoting the
Principle of Subsidiarity

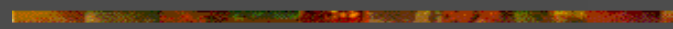
The Opportunity of the
Plenary Council 2020





Recommendation 16.7

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should conduct a national review of the governance and management structures of dioceses and parishes, including in relation to issues of transparency, accountability, consultation and the participation of lay men and women. This review should draw from the approaches to governance of Catholic health, community services and education agencies.





But on what basis is this review to take place?



Faithfulness to the Sources of
our Christian Imagination



Imagination

The capacity to form images in
the mind that enable us to act
and to act transformatively



All behavior begins in the
imagination

The way we form an image
of something enables or foreclose action

“Great buildings begin with great ideas.”

Romaldo Guirgola



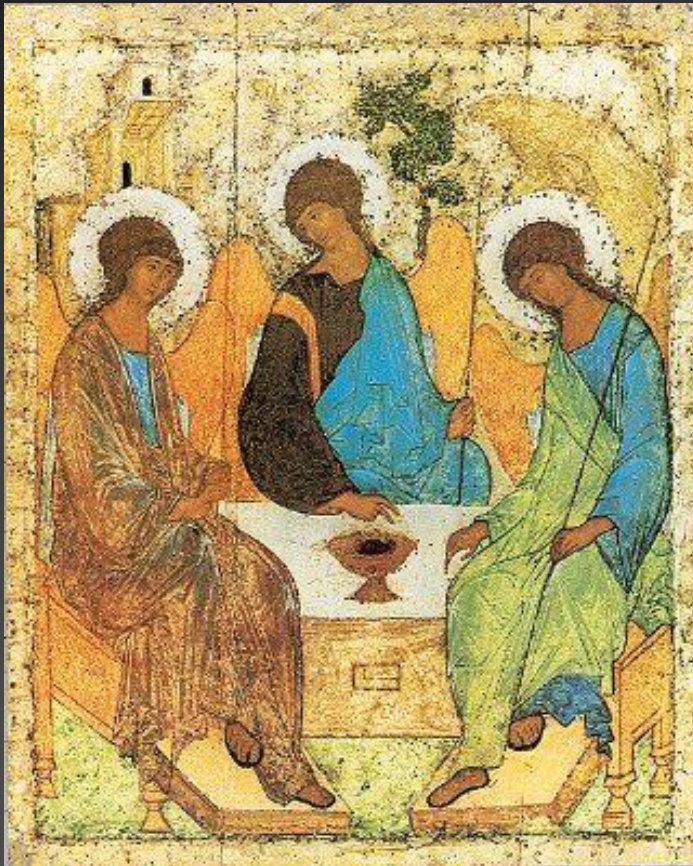


The God Image

Source of Action

“A Community in Missionary Tension”

John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, n.12



“The Church’s communion in God’s Trinitarian life - the key to its identity. We can only understand the Church when we engage its God-given mystery.”

Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 152

The Church in its practice is to be the Icon of the Trinity

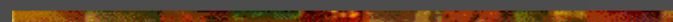
Cappadocian Fathers/Richard of St Victor



“... humanity, made in the image and likeness of God who is a ‘communio of persons,’ is called to be a fraternal society, comprised of sons and daughters of the same Father, and equal in personal dignity. The human and social implications of the Christian concept of God are immense.”

Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, n.100

A practice that is invitational, dialogical, reconciling, healing, open, transparent, accountable





The Trinity is our Social Strategy

Leonardo Boff

“The Trinitarian communion
is the perfect model for society”

Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 1988

Accountable to this Imagination

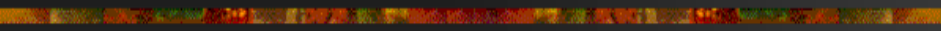
- ❖ Gives rise to an Ecclesiology of Communion

A particular reception of Vatican II

Consolidated in the 1985 Synod of Bishops

- ❖ “The challenge of the Church in Oceania is to come to a deeper understanding of local and universal communion and a more effective implementation of its practical implications.”

❖ *Ecclesia in Oceania* (2001) n.37



In short, there is an urgent need to consider how the ecclesiology of communion might move from the pages of official documents and theological texts into the lived reality of the church in Australia. Achieving general 'ownership' of this ecclesiology requires something other than instruction in theological thinking. What is necessary is that the practices of the church, at every level, embody that ecclesiology.

Richard Lennan, *Research Project on Catholics Who have Stopped Attending Mass* (Feb 2007), 54.



Novo Millennio Ineunte, 2001

The Church the home and the school of communion: that is the greatest challenge facing us in the millennium . . . now beginning (n.43)

- Effected through a spirituality of communion
Expressed in a quality of relationship and solidarity with others
 - Developed by structures of communion (n. 44)
Forums of listening and consultation . . . Supplying institutional reality with a soul (n. 45)
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Synodality

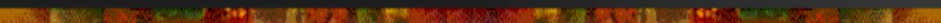


It is precisely the path of synodality that God expects of the Church of the third millennium

. . . an essential element of the Church

Commemoration for the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops (17 October 2015), n.9

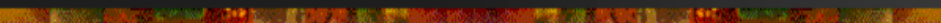




Preposition *syn* meaning “with” and the noun *hodos* meaning “path”. It is about a path taken together, under the guidance of the Risen Lord, by all the people of God with the wide variety of its members and a responsible and converging exercise of the various charisms and ministries for the sake of the common good.

Antonio Spadaro, “The Synodal Church” *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 2018





Synodality is the specific *modus vivendi et operandi* of the Church, the People of God, which reveals and gives substance to her being as communion when all her members journey together, gather in assembly, and take an active part in her evangelizing mission.

International Theological Commission, "Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church," 2 March 2018

The reform of the Church requires we make a step forward in adopting a renewed synodal praxis that is able to engage everyone.

Antonio Spadaro, "The Synodal Church" *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 2018



Listening, Dialogue and Shared Discernment



The ecclesiology of communion and the specific spirituality and praxis that follow from it involve the mission of the entire People of God, so that it becomes ‘necessary today more than ever . . . to be formed in the principles and methods of a way of discernment that is not only personal but also communitarian.

International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” 2 March 2018



What does this look like . . . in Australia?

- At a parish level?
- At a diocesan level?
- At a national level?

*How do we establish Circles of Listening, Conversation
and Discerning at the service of our Mission?*

*A new way of being Church, a new way of leadership -
one that begins always with listening.*

If we take the Tradition seriously – Trinity, Communion, Synodality – we have the foundations of good and healthy governance.



■ Inclusion

- Participation
- Consultation and Dialogue
- Empowerment

■ Accountability

- Collaboration
- Planning
- Appraisals

■ Transparency

- Communication
 - Reporting
- 

Do we dare to live from our Christian Imagination
or not?

