

**Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform**

**Convocation Series: The Future of Catholicism in Australia**

**Convocation 1.**

**The Eight Spiritual Mountains of the Millennial Church**

**Joan Chittister**

2 May 2021

**Themes from the Chat Box**

The print-out flow of the Chat Box is not very helpful. Comments are most often made in response to what is being said on screen so the context may be obscure. Also, a response to a comment may be made after several other comments have intervened. Therefore, I have grouped comments under thematic headings. However, many do not fit neatly into such categories. I ask the reader to be generous. These are spontaneous responses in the context of an exciting experience, revealing feelings and values as much as, if not more than, thought-through positions. Due to the nature of Chat Box and grouping in themes, there are many non-sequiturs here. Kevin Liston

**Greetings and locations**

Forty messages of greeting and acknowledgement of country were posted.

**Comments grouped by themes**

**Plenary Council**

How many of these questions are being dealt with by the Plenary in Australia - or will they just feed us more platitudes?

Our Parish is planning to set up small Christian communities as part of our Plenary Council work.

Plenary Council faces huge problems in PROCESS (really listening to all voices) as well as CONTENT.

To everyone - get involved with your Plenary Council planning Group!!!

Can we submit that lecture to the Plenary Council?

Let's hope we can take some of this wisdom through to the Plenary Council.

Praying for a mighty wind to carry this perspective to the hearts and ears of all the voting bishops at the Plenary Council.

Let us pray that all involved in the Plenary Council can 'see'

In Luke 7 Jesus said to the Pharisee, 'Simon, do you SEE this woman?'

Maybe we can begin by asking for a change to the time being given to the delegates to speak ~3 minutes is my understanding

Have all the women stand throughout the plenary council so even if they can't be heard, they can be seen. and talk for 3 mins and you have to send written intention to speak!

That should be our response to the plenary council- it is an oxymoron!!!!!!!

Oh! The oxymoron reference made me laugh out loud!!!!

I am a member and know nothing about the 3 mins and notice situation. Where is this information, please?

The 3 minutes is on the Plenary Council Website.

Joan is right - the Council is a national discussion. "State" discussions should have preceded (and follow!) the council as diocesan synods.

Could not Sr Joan be invited (paid) to be an official observer and reporter on the whole Synod. She is a trustworthy and trusted long-time observer of prophecy and responses to same.

I am concerned about the composition of the PC. Not at all balanced

Joan's idea for structuring the speaking and voting sounds good.

The preparation work of the plenary council has included several years of consultation and discussion hearing many, many voices. My fear is the synthesis of peoples' input and the thrust of these hopes will be lost.

### **Plenary Council members**

I think more than 70% of Synod members are Archbishops, bishops, priests and religious. They are not figures representing a Synod of the laity. Many of the actual lay persons are employees of the church.

An important distinction – the PC now has members, not delegates.

All members will be physically present in July next year.

Equal members???

Do we know how many Bishops and other Plenary Council members are logged into this webinar?

### **We are the Church**

Remember...we are the church...

I am so moved by Joan's love of God and your passion, and clarity which moves you to action. I deeply want us to truly listen to each other and not sink into categories of us and them and blame. Let us take on the pain of the struggle and keep taking one step at a time.

Sr Joan, you fill me with courage to begin speaking. Now to discern whether to ride in on a white charger via the front door or to be more subtle.

Much food for thought and action re each doing our bit to help make the Church more concordant with what each of us feels to be the meaning of Christianity.

We are the Body of the Church. Together, we can reform the Church for the better.

We are responsible for making private concerns voiced so that they can be addressed. It is challenging when there can be a stigma attached to creating a 'lag' if efficiency is sacrificed in terms of things 'getting done' and moved through in a timely way.

As Sr Joan has said WE are responsible for taking our private concerns and making them public issues. That is the task of every individual with regard to all progress forward.

Where to begin?

If it really is up to us to be prophetic leaders, and I think it is, then does it really matter if members of the clergy are with us? Whatever happens or doesn't, at the Plenary Council we are being called to be the Good News in the Church that is rising from the ashes of the old.

I hope for a Church cleansed of criminals

The voices in this webinar, the voices that are shut down, the voices advocating for a church that calls us to listen 'to the Jesus story' need to be heard and not shut down with petitions and social media vilification.

Let's seize this moment to be truly a Church of the World.

### **Learnings and blessings**

What resonates with me is the affirmation that we must act from our whole being. The hope I have for the Church is that change and the mystery of God is with us in powerful ways that I do not yet understand. My whole being is filled with hope and connection and I deeply hope that I can keep in touch with this dialogue. Why are we spending so much time trying to reform the Church when it is the spiritual perspective that needs to be reformed?

Hopeful and affirming expressions of the realities we need to face if we are to build that future [Church].

Inspires us to continue working where we know the needs are rather than adhering to the practices and rigidity of the Church of the past. Thank you, Joan and organisers,

Dialogue ... A call to action ... Discernment ... Prayer ... Synodality ... Alive in the Spirit ... The Time is Now!

What resonated: we are the Church; we must live the Gospel: that the future must be our focus and not the past.

Be not afraid. Accept the gifts God has given us and go forth with boldness to effect the change you desire. There is much work to do.

The global perspective Joan described would imply that Christianity will only survive if it becomes united once again. Ecumenism does not appear to be a priority. We are still stuck on being Catholic.

surely a major impediment to reform is the arrogance of believing in infallibility and that the church has a special relationship with God denied to others. Come off the pedestal!

Thank you Sr Joan the concept of being part of this construction of the future provides me with hope although so much still needs to happen This has been a wonderful Sunday morning conversation.

Being mindful about everyone being an aspect of Christ is also key. It's an opportunity to engage with divinity whenever we meet someone.

Great reminders from Sr Joan that we are on a journey of transformation; we really need humility, hospitality, wisdom, & questions. Thank you, Joan.

Love to see Joan and Francis do a duet on Caring for Our common Home!

Joan has left us with challenges to take responsibility for change and ourselves!

This is a life changing moment, here now.

Makes me wonder what and how I can change in myself and my Church.

You have calmed our dissonance and freed us again to courage and confidence, thank you is not enough

We are prophets of a future not our own

## **Women**

Well, it's no surprise that the majority of the comments are from women, they are generally in greater numbers in churches, in the social justice work of the church, all power to women and men who are here today to understand our world and our faith

I think women have been in the church - but women have been the workhorses for so many tasks and support for parish outreach, the poor etc. Women need to transform this practical selflessness into leadership input.

I wish that half of the disciples were women!

I can give you 12 names who were women [disciples].

There WERE women in the close group of disciples

I am sure there were many women who were disciples, but they have been left out of the lectionary or have been given a bad rap

Best example of a bad rap is Mary Magdalene

Are we forgetting all the women who followed Jesus, the named disciples who actively supported his ministry?

The women followed Jesus on the road to the Cross - Mary stood at the foot of the Cross - true discipleship.

I've stood with other women and we wore black through a eucharist led by a bishop who would not allow women ministers of the Eucharist. Later we were accused of being divisive - my response was the Bishop was divisive - we were just making it visible.

A story worth telling. Thank you.

Thank you for your story.

Try a boycott.

So little is said about the obligations of fathers in this modern world. Placing guilt on mothers is so convenient.

In the AGE today is an article on who does what in the house

Lots of insightful thoughts on the role of Women in the Church and its future are outlined in Getting Back on Mission.

## **Governance**

The official response of our Bishops to the report, *The Light from the Southern Cross*, makes it clear, as did Archbishop Mark today, it's not just about "good management and governance" (M & G) but listening to the Spirit. That sounds like code for minimizing the importance of M & G. Yet our reality points to poor M & G as systemic weaknesses, central to many of the problems we decry or even encourage us to the exit. We have little idea just how the Spirit will get a hearing at our Council.

Thanks to Joan for a wonderful, prophetic address and congratulations to Peter Johnstone and his colleagues for setting up this important meeting.  
absolutely!

### **Young people**

The young women that I teach have stopped asking these questions - they see the modern church as irrelevant to them.

To listen to our young people to their needs for many pronouns and recognition of our internal experience of gender - she he they them us

How do we open the hearts of the young so they see this 'new' Spirituality of the heart rather than their closed understanding of the spirituality of the past?

Allowing the young to help give shape to how we can participate in church is very important.

I would love to play this recording to my students - would this be allowed?

I wondered the same thing. I hope and pray for a church led by people with the wisdom and understanding of Sr Joan.

### **Questioning**

Many of my friends have daughters that are questioning their place in the institution and they are leaving.

My sons are the same - they can see the discrepancy and they do not like it

It is a fear and question that many of my friends and I have.

### **Clergy**

My parish priest is trying to ignore Vatican II altogether!

How can we embrace the clergy in our road to real renewal? How to avoid a "them" and us" division?

This entire presentation should be listened to by all clergy in Australia and enact what is suggested

We could start with an inclusive lectionary! And cease what one writer calls "the veneration of the ordained".

I wonder how many clergy are participating in this webinar, if any at all.

Great thought!

### **Identity**

There are massive questions about identity as a whole. In this new way of being Church, we also have to look at how we are, who we are and our place in this new way of being Church. An important dialogue to have about change - change management if you will!

### **Marginalised people**

We all need to help the homeless - see [StableOne.org](http://StableOne.org)

I keep thinking of First nations peoples of Australia. They are the poorest and most imprisoned in our country, crying out for an enshrined VOICE in our Constitution. What are our Parishes doing about supporting this?

Jesus reached out to the woman who was six times abandoned by men! An amazing insight!

### **Inclusion**

Another group of people who are working for inclusion are those in interchurch and interfaith marriages, of which there are more than Catholic-Catholic in a number of countries. More can be found on this at <http://interchurchfamilies.org>

I am not a member of a church. I use Centering Prayer daily and follow the mystics readings on my own. How can the Church bring along those who have “left” the church?

When church leadership does speak up about change and use language of inclusivity, they get vilified.

The loudest voice in our church in Australia at the moment seems to be from those who know 'the truth'.

Very dualistic, no room for conversation and dialogue, hearing shared wisdom.

### **Synodality**

Sister Joan. Thank you for describing a meaningful process of collaborative dialogue and discernment that many of us have experienced in non-Church settings but certainly for me, rarely in the Church.

### **Teilhard de Chardin**

I absolutely agree with Sr Joan’s celebration of Teilhard de Chardin’s testimony.

### **Follow-up**

Can anyone recommend a book to read more about the mountain? What a wonderful spiritual map!

The Bible.

### **Timing of next Convocation**

Perhaps a Sunday morning is not the best time for clergy as they have so many commitments on that day.

Maybe a Saturday might be better?

Thursday nights are much better (for zoom meetings).

### **Fire**

Being fire is dangerous!

Thank you, Andrea. Transformed into fire indeed!

Keep the fire burning friends!!!

### **Monasteries of the heart**

As a member of Sr. Joan's Monasteries of the Heart community, I encourage you to join us online. You can hear much more from her. All are welcome!

### **Messages of thanks and appreciation**

125 messages of thanks and appreciation were posted, all of them positive and enthusiastic.