

For God's Sake,

Listen!

THEOLOGY FROM THE MARGINS:
WHY THE CHURCH MUST LISTEN TO THOSE WHO LEAVE



JACINTA BRIGHT





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All Scripture quotations are taken directly from the New Revised Standard Version Updated edition (NRSV), except for the title of 'Enlarge the space of your tent' which derived from Isaiah 54:2.

Participants' excerpts have been transcribed by the author from interviews, except for Sophie and Brian's excerpts, which were provided by each of them in written form after the interviews.

Ed note: Gospel/gospel

Gospel is capitalised in this book when used as a noun to refer to the Gospel, particularly the Gospel proclaimed or a specific Gospel account (for example, the Gospel according to Matthew, today's Gospel).

gospel is lower case when used adjectivally or in a general descriptive sense (for example, gospel values, gospel teachings, gospel spirituality, gospel message).

Note: Established liturgical terms such as Gospel reading and Gospel Acclamation retain the capital.

*'A Eucharist that does not pass over
into the concrete practice of love
is intrinsically fragmented...'¹*

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¹ Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est: On Christian love*, The Holy See, 25 December 2005, para. 14, viewed 21 March 2026, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html

For God's Sake, Listen! offers a powerful reflection on the current life and failures of the Melbourne Church... The answers [Jacinta] received through her many interviews have led her to deeper reflection on many current issues... Jacinta concludes her study with this synodal need for us to listen. For priests like me, even now retired, *For God's Sake, Listen!* became a lengthy personal examination of conscience.

Rev Dr Peter Matheson, PE

Jacinta Bright has 'listened', with empathy, respect, feeling and concern, and then through insightful reflection, written a powerful book, incredibly well researched... As you read *For God's Sake, Listen!*, you will experience many and varied feelings... but you will certainly be left with a strong sense of wonder... *For God's Sake, Listen!* calls us all to deeply listen, but – even more importantly – to take action.

Helen Anderson,
Former Principal in Catholic Primary Schools

This challenging and deeply personal work is a testament to a faith that dares to explore and pose confronting questions... The context is Australian, yet the universal resonance is clear, with far-reaching implications for those willing to engage, explore, learn from, and ultimately work collectively towards a more pastoral Church.

Dr Cecilia Francisco-Tan,
Systematic Theologian

In *For God's Sake, Listen!*, Jacinta Bright has provided the evidence that shows that many Catholics want the institutional Church to not only listen to their ideas, but also to respond, and then be open to change... In this time of synodality, this book could provide good reading for those who are prepared to join local parish groups with the hope that their ideas will not be dismissed but seriously considered.

Dr Rose Marie Prosser, Former lecturer in Practical Theology,
University of Divinity

For God's Sake, Listen!... has the power to open our minds. It is accessible and engaging... It gives permission and impetus for Catholics who are still engaged with the Church, those who question, those who have walked away, those who have faith but will not be part of the organised Church, to consider the current state of our Church, how we have arrived here, and how we may proceed in the future... Her interview method and writing model beautifully what it means to be synodal.

Cathy O'Brien, grandmother, active parishioner

Your work could only be undertaken and completed by someone imbued with the love of Jesus... I found the parts of your work that deal with individuals' reasons or experiences for leaving the Church most illuminating. These sections should be compulsory reading for those that have or had a stake in the Catholic Church in Melbourne. It certainly underscores the significance of the title: *For God's Sake Listen!*

Bernie Shinnors

As a retired Catholic school teacher, I found *For God's Sake, Listen!* both inspiring and thought-provoking. My husband, now 93, and I learned a great deal from it... The book raises some major issues... To truly follow Christ, we must love and accept all people. Otherwise, our faith risks becoming hypocrisy.

Jan Gavaghan, retired Catholic school teacher

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To my family, who have encouraged me, believed in me, and endured my stress at times. Thank you especially to Ivor, who always believes in me. To our children, their partners and our grandchildren, thank you for your love and support; may you always know you are loved deeply and eternally.

To my parents, for their faith, for the image of God they revealed to me, and for their love. Mum and Dad, you feel close to me.

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Dear Project Participants

I hope that, as you read this book, you will know that your experiences and insights have been heard and respected. This is our work together. Many who remain within the Church stand with you and continue to work for a more gospel-focused Church. Please do not judge the whole Church by what has wounded you. We, the People of God, are the Church, and many of us are striving to make a difference: volunteers, people in the pews, religious, ordained ministers, and those serving in Catholic schools, agencies and parishes. Some of us are also taking up our own leadership, trying not to give up because the Gospel grounds us, and because we still believe in the way of Jesus and in what the Church can become. If you long for the Church to grow in its commitment to the Gospel, please consider supporting us in whatever way you can, so that together we may help the Church become what God calls it to be. Above all, thank you.

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Foreword

“Enlarge the space of your tent” (Isaiah 54:2) is a biblical image that speaks with renewed urgency today. It calls us to imagine a Church less about walls and more about welcome; less about control and more about communion; less about preservation and more about mission. The tent is never complete – its canvas is widened by every life that seeks shelter at its edges.

For more than twenty years, I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Jacinta Bright. Over those years I have witnessed her rare blend of faith, courage, and honesty. She is deeply committed to the Catholic tradition, yet never afraid to ask the questions that matter most – questions about belonging, disillusionment, and hope. Jacinta listens with patience, discerns with care, and speaks with integrity. She is a woman of faith and a woman of the Church, yet one who knows that fidelity sometimes requires standing in uncomfortable places, giving voice to silence, and refusing to let God’s story be reduced to a single perspective.

This book, *For God’s Sake, Listen*, is the fruit of that fidelity. It emerges from Jacinta’s willingness to create space for voices we rarely hear: those who once felt at home in the Church but no longer do; parents, children, and friends who carry faith yet struggle with the institution; people who name both wounds and longings. These are not strangers at the margins but our children, siblings, and companions. Some no longer use the language of the Church, but their words echo with longing, disappointment, and, at times, remarkable resilience of faith.

Reading these pages is both sobering and consoling. Sobering because those who have walked away speak honestly of hypocrisy, abuse, and failure of compassion. Their words will unsettle anyone who loves the Church. Consoling, because their stories also reveal not the absence of faith, but its

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persistence. Many continue to pray and to seek God's presence, even after leaving the institution.

Jacinta does not offer these testimonies to condemn. She offers them as a gift of truth, a mirror in which we may see ourselves. Like all good mirrors, it is not about vanity but honesty. Renewal begins only when we dare to look clearly.

The Synod on Synodality has reminded us that listening is not an optional extra, but essential to being Church. If we are to be credible today, we must welcome every voice – especially those that challenge us most. This book embodies that synodal spirit.

As a priest, I was especially moved by Jacinta's courage in including her own children in this project. She did not keep the work at arm's length. Instead, she risked the vulnerability of real conversation. That openness is itself a sign of hope. It models the intergenerational dialogue families and parishes need: the courage to ask, and the courage to truly listen.

It takes great strength to let these voices speak without softening their sharpness. It takes even more to invite the Church to hear them without defensiveness. What Jacinta has done here is both pastoral and prophetic: she has created space where painful honesty can coexist with deep love.

Some readers will feel defensive. Others will sigh with recognition. That is the power of this book: it does not leave us untouched. It calls us to move beyond fear and nostalgia, and to imagine what the Church might look like if love – embodied, concrete love – were the true measure of integrity.

To read these pages is to sit in a kind of sacred listening circle. It will not always be comfortable. Some stories cut deeply, describing wounds inflicted by clericalism, hypocrisy, or lack of compassion. They expose the dissonance between what we proclaim in the Gospel and what we sometimes embody in practice. For some, that dissonance has led to their discarding the faith they grew up with. For others, faith has astonishingly survived even without ecclesial belonging.

Yet this is not a book of despair. It is truth-telling in the service of renewal. These testimonies are offered so that we may recognise the face we show the world – and then allow the Spirit to refashion us into something more authentic, compassionate, and credible.

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Jacinta reminds us that renewal is not only about structural reform but also about spiritual conversion. As Benedict XVI once wrote, the Eucharist itself becomes fragmented when love is not made concrete. Our credibility as Church is not measured by how many attend Mass but by how transparently we embody Christ's compassion, justice, and radical hospitality. These interviews reveal the consequences of failing in that vocation, but they also reveal how much yearning remains for a Church that heals, nurtures, and enlarges its tent rather than narrowing its doors.

As I read, I thought often of parents who long to speak with their children about faith but fear what they might hear. Jacinta shows that such conversations, though risky, can be tender, respectful, and even surprising. She points to a Church less concerned with defending borders and more committed to building bridges.

This book will unsettle some readers, console others, and challenge all. That is its gift. The prophetic word is never bland. It stirs, disrupts, and calls us closer to the God who is always more expansive than our institutions and more loving than our imaginations.

For two decades, I have seen Jacinta accompany people with gentleness and wisdom. In this book she accompanies the whole Church, inviting us to enlarge the tent, to face uncomfortable truths, and to trust that the Spirit is still leading us toward deeper communion.

My hope is that readers – whether lay or ordained, committed or questioning – will receive this book as an invitation: an invitation to listen, to humility, to believe that God is at work even in our fractures. Above all, an invitation to enlarge the tent, not out of fear of survival but out of love for the generations who long for a faith that is credible and life-giving.

Jacinta Bright has given us more than a book. She has given us a mirror held up to the Church and a lamp held out for its future. May we have the courage to look, to listen, and to walk forward together.

I commend this work wholeheartedly. May it unsettle, console, and inspire us to become the Church we are called to be.

Fr Steven Rigo

Introduction

This book stems from a series of interviews I conducted with people during which I sought feedback about why so many people no longer come to Mass or have walked away from the Church. What began as an exercise in information gathering for the Parish Pastoral Councils (PPC) of three partnered parishes became a project of listening and honouring. I had my own thoughts on why so many had left the Church, but what I didn't expect was the pain of many of the project participants.

Once engaged in the initial five interviews I became aware that those who shared with me were not simply helping me because I had asked. They were sharing from their hearts. These people still felt deeply about their experience of Church. This is because the Jesus' story and the gospel values that were still core to their being had once been at the heart of their identity and belonging in the Church. They now felt betrayed. Their decision to stop going to Mass, or to walk away from the Church, was made as a matter of conscience in each instance.

My listening became a way for me to learn, but also to honour the voices which would probably never otherwise be heard by those in Church leadership. People who leave are easily forgotten by those who move on to signs that the Church will survive regardless. I knew then that, for me, this work was important. I know so many who have left. I mourn their loss. I know their beauty before God. The following is how the project unfolded:

Phase 1 of the interviews

In February 2022, while I was still working as Pastoral Associate at St Mary's Parish in Greensborough, the Parish Priest, Fr Steven Rigo and I led a formation day for the Parish Pastoral Councils of three parishes that

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had recently been partnered: Sacred Heart Diamond Creek, St Mary's Greensborough and St Thomas the Apostle Greensborough North.² Steve led the morning session on 'What is Mission?' using Stephen Bevans' paper 'The Mission has a Church: An Invitation to Dance'.³ I led the afternoon session inviting those present to reflect on transcripts from interviews I had conducted. At that stage I had interviewed five people between the ages of 36 and 43. The questions I asked the participants in these interviews are as follows:

1. What is your Catholic background?
2. When did you stop going to Mass and why?
3. What nurtures your spirit?
4. Do you have faith in the Divine?
5. Do you care about the Church?
6. If so, is there anything you would like to say to the Church?

The purpose of these interviews was to listen to and record what these participants had to say and to share their responses with the members of the Parish Pastoral Councils.

Why was this information important to the Parish Pastoral Councils?

Some members of Parish Pastoral Councils (PPCs) can believe a major focus of their work should be to attract young people back to Mass. Harking back to what has worked in Australia perhaps 30 or 40 years ago, or for recent arrivals in Australia, the greater presence of youth in churches in the sub-continent, the belief is that youth Masses or youth groups will attract young people. Sometimes, amongst parish communities with a high migrant population, these initiatives still work.

² This partnership of parishes has now amalgamated to become Our Lady of the Valley, Diamond Valley.

³ Stephen Bevans, *The Mission has a Church: An Invitation to the Dance*, 2009, viewed 20 March 2026. https://data.over-blog-kiwi.com/0/51/25/32/20140225/ob_674873_bevans-mission-has-church.pdf

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However, where there is a lower migrant population, youth Masses and youth groups fail in their attempts to attract or hold the young.

World Youth Day (WYD) is a wonderful experience for those who participate, but despite the heightened fervour during the event most young people who participated are no longer connected to the Church. The efforts of parishes to engage these young people after their return are usually to no avail, perhaps, again, except for those parishes with a high migrant population.

The cultural landscape of parishes has changed considerably in the last 50 years. PPCs endeavour to represent their parishioners culturally, but also across age groups, and skill sets. Ongoing formation for PPCs is important if all members are to understand their role and responsibilities in parish leadership. Understanding the pastoral needs of parishioners and reading the signs of the times in the Church and the wider world are important skills when grounded in a theology of the mission. There are many pastoral needs in parishes, but discernment is needed to identify the priorities of the parish.

Parishioners, including parents and grandparents, grieve the loss of our young to their Catholic heritage, knowing that their life journey and the life journeys of their children and of generations to come will potentially be lacking a Christian faith. What do we do with this grief? Our young and others who have left, and we who grieve, are surely not just collateral damage while we wait for either the perfect Church to emerge, or trust that the Church will continue, as if those who have been hurt or disillusioned along the way do not matter. In all humility, what do we as the People of God need to learn? Is it simply providing new programs and approaches or is there also a need to examine why people leave, or why the message and person of Jesus does not seem to attract.

What was the process employed in this project?

I began this project by approaching five people, three of whom were my adult children. Our eldest daughter lives overseas and it would not be until some months later that I would interview her. The other two people in this initial set of interviews were mothers from the parish school.

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When I presented these five transcripts to the members of the PPCs I spoke of the emotion evident in participants and felt by me during these interviews. I asked them to read the transcripts, reflect on them, and come back to the group to share their felt responses, if they felt comfortable doing so. There were varied responses by the members. One older woman tearfully expressed appreciation for what was shared and said she would love to be able to have a conversation like this with her children. Some parents would be anxious about engaging their adult children with questions like these in case they were dismissed. Others, too, were moved, although there was some defensiveness in the group as well. The discussion amongst members was fruitful because assumptions were cracked open and concerns named. This kind of conversation can enable a consciousness in leadership that might direct pastoral focus. All sorts of possibilities emerge when we have the information we need. Some questions leaders might then ask are:

- How does one's image of God influence our leadership and, if those we love are absent from the Church, does God love them as they are?
- How do we project God's unconditional love to all we encounter, without agenda?
- What would have to happen for the Church to more fully represent God's love? What does this mean for our parish, or school, or organisation?

After these initial interviews and encouraged by the responses from Steve and members of the PPC, I continued interviewing.

As well as young people, I know of so many middle-aged and older people who no longer come to Mass. While some blame the interruption to people's usual practice during the long Melbourne COVID lockdowns of 2020 to 2021 as the reason for this, I suspected that was only part of the story.

Phase 2 of the interviews

Since the initial interviews three years ago, I have interviewed 23 more people, bringing the total number of project participants to 28, aged between 27 and 80. Nineteen of these are women and nine are men. For the most part, people had heard about my project and approached me, wanting

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to be interviewed, which I think is significant. Their previous investment in the Church had been meaningful and, as we will read later, they had felt betrayed because they experience the Church as betraying the gospels. These people wanted to communicate their experiences to Church leaders, in some way to hold them accountable.

Two of the project participants still go to Mass but approached me because they also wanted to share with me their concerns about the Church. All these people wanted to be heard.

My hope was to attract those from amongst the wider baptised community who had been invested in the Church and given some thought as to why they would withdraw or perhaps leave the Church altogether. I suspect a number of those I interviewed responded because they respect my work and trust me, or that those who approached them respect and trust me and would have communicated this.

I cannot claim that the people I have interviewed represent the range of experiences and views of the Melbourne Catholic community. This is not a study of randomly selected people. I can only present the replies of those who responded to the opportunity I offered.

Strong emotions were expressed at times by those who entrusted me with their thoughts and feelings. I hope they saw me as one member of the Church who cares.

A small number of participants did not answer all questions sequentially. As I listened to them, I decided it would not be helpful to interrupt their flow. For they were answering the questions without my prompting.

Considering assumptions

Church leaders and commentators, lay and ordained, often blame secularisation for drawing young people away from the Church. This assumption suggests that despite their Catholic upbringing our young people are shallow. Is this true? If there is truth in this claim, is it the whole truth? Are our young distracted by the current cultural influences of individualism, consumerism and materialism that can emerge in a more secularised world? Is it only the young? Do these same cultural forces exist within the Church too? If so, how might we see these characteristics play out?

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Will Church leaders be open to what our young people have to say about why they are no longer with us at Mass? What about middle-aged and older people who have left, or who are just holding on by a thread? If we decide to not listen to what people such as those interviewed have to say, what is behind that decision?

A clericalist Church might find it very difficult to hear what those who leave have to say, because in a clericalist world the ordained or those delegated by the ordained, believe they hold the wisdom and the truth.

Phase 3 of the interviews

I was not surprised by the reasons most participants gave for no longer participating in the Sunday Eucharist. However, a second concerning factor emerged, one that I did not expect and in fact almost missed. A significant number of participants aged under 50 came through Catholic education believing that the Church teaches that the Genesis accounts of creation are to be interpreted as historically accurate.

At first I glimpsed this response in the feedback of four participants. Curious, I contacted all in that age group, explaining and asking the following questions:

1. Was there any teaching for you at school that opened up ways of reading Scripture that were not literal?
2. Did you explore the relationship between religion, faith and science?

Seven of the eleven replied. Six people recalled, in one way or another, that they left school thinking the Church teaches the Genesis accounts of creation to be historically accurate. The seventh person responded:

There was very little education to students about 'how to read scripture' and just read it kinda attitude [a]nd answer the following questions on this handout sheet or the questions on your textbook. Much like any other subject.

These responses were enough for me to recognise this might be a broader concern. Is it possible that some or many students believe the Church teaches that the Genesis accounts of creation are to be interpreted as historically accurate accounts?

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I consulted with 9 professionals, who are either retired or currently employed in Catholic Education. These professionals confirmed that the experiences of these participants are likely to be accurate. This would seem to be a serious concern given that such a premise would seem to make the Church, and as such, Church teaching, unreliable or even a ridiculous proposition.

What is the impact upon a young person's faith, when what they are taught seems irreconcilable with what scientific theories provide as to the origins of the universe? The second part of this book addresses this concern.

In the pages that follow, I have sorted chapters into the themes emerging from the interviews. I reflect theologically and pastorally on how the concerns raised in this book might be addressed. I also reflect on the obstacles which have caused and will continue to prevent the Church moving forward in the Spirit, unless we work together to heal.

My background

I am a married woman with four adult children and nine grandchildren. In 2022 I retired after 32 years as a pastoral associate. Over that time, I was privileged to minister in four parishes in the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

I am not an academic, nor am I a researcher. The experience of 32 years in parish ministry, my studies in theology, my experience in spiritual direction, and my relationships with people within, on the margins of, and outside the Church, are what I bring to this project.

I have been blessed to work with many collaborative priests formed in the mould of the Second Vatican Council. As a member of the Association of Pastoral Associates which is now known as the Association of Pastoral Ministry Leaders, Melbourne, I have also met and collaborated with wise pastoral associates who also share this Vatican II vision. Together we have struggled with the effects of clericalism in the Church. I am well used to those who value the ordained above all others.

In the writing of this book, I have been supported with advice and editing by my Project Reference Group: Dr Robert Dixon, Professor Katharine Massam and Fr Steven Rigo.

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This project has been undertaken using ethical methods: all participants have read their transcripts and any amendments or changes have been honoured; pseudonyms have been used for all participants; and efforts have been made to protect the identity of participants, priests and others of whom the participants spoke.

My hope

I hope this book is in some way helpful for the Church. I hope those in positions of power – in leadership, administration, education, and indeed all of us who have the means to welcome or exclude – will take seriously what participants share.

When considering the stories shared by participants, in relation to clericalism, some may wonder who it is the participant is describing. Anger and hurt at the way one has been treated, or grief and despair at the increasing conservatism in the Church, is understandable and appropriate. However, this book is not written to expose individuals. To do so would not help anyone. More importantly, shaming others goes against gospel values.

Luke's Jesus warns us to "take the log out of our own eye before we might see clearly enough to take the speck out of our neighbour's eye" (Luke 7:5). I suspect that if our eyes were ever to be clear we would approach the other with gentleness and care, not seeking vengeance.

None of us are perfect but it is fair to say, especially when we claim to believe in the unconditional and redemptive love of God, that we can all learn from experience and be changed through grace. Consider how the Church and the world might be made whole if all humans were oriented towards love rather than greed, suspicion and opposition. This might seem a naïve hope but isn't the orientation of love the central building block for the reign of God. It is the orientation the Church is called to embody.

I hope that as we read the participants' stories, the significant toll that clericalism has on individuals and on the whole People of God will be revealed. I don't think those caught up in clericalism realise how damaging it is to individuals and the whole Church, and what it looks like in practice especially when clerical attitudes and behaviours are normalised.

My hope is that we come together as followers of Christ seeking wholeness, so that understanding, respect and new possibilities might bring healing

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and hope. Change is possible. The Spirit is active in many places and people stirring our hearts and our imaginations in the journey of becoming a Christ-centred Church. Let us look for the signs of the Spirit and participate in whatever ways we can.

Ways in which this book might be helpful

The questions posed after some sections and at the end of chapters may be helpful for individuals and groups to consider.

Parish Pastoral Councils, and other parish leaders, might be assisted to think about how the experiences recounted in this book will also be felt and known by some of your committed parishioners, by parents at the parish school, in our dioceses, in your own families, and by those others who are absent from our churches.

As individuals and together, we can make a difference, even if just in small ways. Defensiveness and judgmental thinking are not of God. If you are an ordained or lay Church leader, you need to deal with this in professional ministry supervision, otherwise it will inhibit your ministry.

Reflect on what is happening within yourself as you read the experience of others. Listen to one another as you share your responses to what you read. Real listening and reflection can change us.

This activity might be practised as an exercise in synodality: listening to others, to self and to the Spirit, reflecting, responding.

There may be concrete steps you can take in response to what you are reading and reflecting on with each other.

Dear parents and grandparents, if your children or grandchildren are not at Mass, or no longer connected to what was their Christian faith, I hope you find the contents of this book somewhat consoling. You are not alone. We are not alone. We are a community of people who love and who see the beauty in our children and grandchildren, and we can be assured that God loves them and us even more than we can imagine. God gives us this unique lens through which to experience love. Therefore, we have something important to reveal to the Church about the unconditional and faithful love of God.

FOR GOD'S SAKE, LISTEN!

We also understand each other. In a world that can see older people as unproductive, unintelligent, obstacles to progress (whatever progress is), carrying unwelcome baggage, guilty of bringing about the troubles in the Church and the world today – or just plain irrelevant, I see you. We see each other. God sees us and knows our hearts.

“Enlarge the space of your tent” (Isaiah 54:2)

The Catholic Church was recently engaged in a global process of discernment called *The Synod on Synodality*. The title of the Working Document for the Continental Stage of the Synod of Bishops is ‘*Enlarge the space of your tent*’. It was derived from Isaiah 54:2.⁴ This image of a wide-open space suggests a generous and hospitable environment where no one is excluded and where all voices are heard; where the margins become one with the centre. Rev Dr Patrick McNerney, Director, Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, explored the meaning of the title in his article in the Columban interfaith e-journal, in February 2022:

For the ancient Israelites, it was a message of hope, of expectation, of new possibilities. They had been deported and were living in exile in Babylon. They felt abandoned by God. They were without temple, ritual, and sacrifice, so they had no recourse to God. They were bereft, grieving, and tempted to despair. The Prophet Isaiah encourages them to widen their horizons, to see the new things that God was about to do – to bring them back to Jerusalem, to restore their fortunes, to re-build the Temple, to make it a place for all nations – a promise which Christians confess has been fulfilled in Christ, our mediator in heaven (see Hebrews 8-9).⁵

⁴ General Secretariat of the Synod, *Working Document for the Continental Stage*, Vatican, 2022, viewed 20 March 2026, <https://www.synod.va/en/synodal-process/the-continental-stage/resources-and-tools/documents.html>

⁵ Patrick McNerney, ‘Enlarge the space of your tent’, St Columbans Mission Society Media and Publications, 28 February 2022, viewed 20 March 2026, <https://www.columban.org.au/media-and-publications/newsletters-and-bulletins/interfaith-bulletin/archive/2023/interfaith-mar-23/enlarge-the-space-of-your-tent>
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INTRODUCTION

For the Synod, this title shows that God is bigger than our petty “tribal” concerns, that God is bigger than our small worlds, that God is bigger than our narrow visions, and that God reaches out to people of all nations and all religions.

It is into this ‘tent’ that I bring my interviewees.

Creating a space that welcomes these voices is important to me and others who have encouraged me along the way, including the participants. Some of what they share may be confronting. Some will resonate with what is shared and others might hear what they suspect their children and grandchildren feel about the Church. Let us pray for what God desires us to see, regardless of our place in or beyond the Church. To enlarge the space of your tent could equally be understood to mean enlarge the space of your heart, a message to each one of us and to the whole Church as the Body of Christ.