

Pastoral Research Online

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Farewell to NCLS

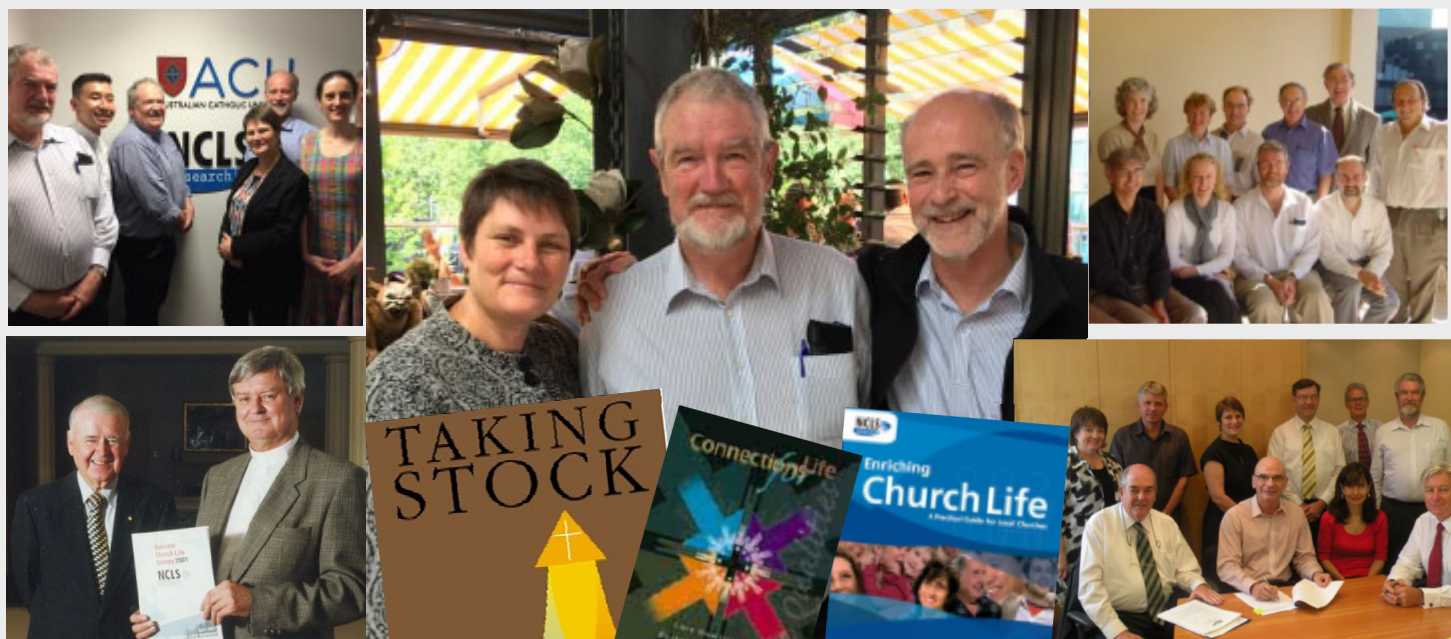


Photo credits: NCLS Research

Dear Readers,

The end of June marked the withdrawal of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference as a sponsor of NCLS Research. Over the last 20 years, this partnership has meant a close association between the NCPR and NCLS Research with both offices sharing staff and resources. While we are sad to see this end, we will continue our close relations and hope to work together to produce relevant and engaging research. We will bring you more details on the 2021 National Church Life Survey in the next newsletter.

This month we are happy to announce the release of the 2016 Diocesan Social Profiles which are now available for download from our website. Work on the Parish Profiles is already underway and we have begun discussions with dioceses regarding parish boundaries.

The Final Report for Phase One of the Plenary Council report has been published and we are now working on diocesan reports which will be released in the coming months. In addition, we have also published four special reports from the 2016 National Church Life Survey. Details on all these and more inside...

Available Now!



2016 Diocesan Social Profiles

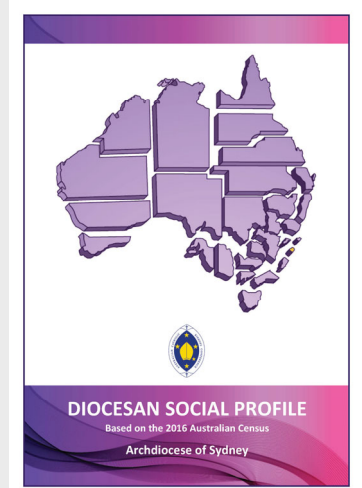
Diocesan Profiles now released

The 2016 Social Profiles of the Catholic community in each of the 28 geographical dioceses in Australia have now been released on the NCPR website. A printed copy of the profile has been sent to each of the relevant bishops. The profiles can be viewed online or downloaded for printing at:

<https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/2016-diocesan-social-profiles/>

Profiles for individual parishes are expected to be available by early 2020.

Below are the top five dioceses for various measures, based on their diocesan rank. All figures refer to Catholics only, where the term 'Catholic' refers to all persons who identified themselves as Catholics in the Census. The figures for Catholics in the whole of Australia are included in each table for comparison.



Total Catholic population			Highest % Catholic			Highest median age ¹			Lowest median age ¹		
Rank	Diocese	Population	Rank	Diocese	%	Rank	Diocese	Age	Rank	Diocese	Age
1	Melbourne	1,067,030	1	Wagga Wagga	29.5	1	Lismore	46	28	Broome	32
2	Brisbane	708,701	2	Bathurst	28.2	2	Hobart	45	27	Darwin	34
3	Sydney	594,145	3	Parramatta	27.9	3	Adelaide	43	26	Townsville	35
4	Perth	429,715	4	Townsville	27.4	4	Port Pirie	43	25	Rockhampton	36
5	Parramatta	322,677	5	Wilcannia-Forbes	27.2	5	Sandhurst	42	24	Geraldton	36
	Australia	5,291,834		Australia	22.6		Australia	40		Australia	40
Data from Table 1			Data from Table 1			Data from Table 1			Data from Table 1		
Highest % who speak a language other than English at home			Highest % of couples of mixed religion ²			Highest % separated or divorced ³			Highest median annual family income ⁴ (\$)		
Rank	Diocese	%	Rank	Diocese	%	Rank	Diocese	%	Rank	Diocese	Income (\$)
1	Sydney	37.8	1	Hobart	71.7	1	Lismore	14.3	1	Darwin	121,974
2	Darwin	33.9		Maitland-Newcastle	66.3	2	Hobart	13.9	2	Geraldton	121,765
3	Parramatta	29.2	2	Armidale	66.2	3	Maitland-Newcastle	13.0	3	Broken Bay	120,140
4	Melbourne	28.1	4	Lismore	65.8	4	Brisbane	12.7	4	Sydney	117,208
5	Adelaide	23.0	5	Bunbury	63.0	5	Cairns	12.5	5	Canberra & Goulburn	114,474
	Australia	20.1		Australia	55.9		Australia	11.2		Australia	100,270
Data from Table 4			Data from Table 7			Data from Table 6			Data from Table 7		

1. Median age: Half the Catholic population of the diocese are above this age, half are below it.
2. Mixed religion: Married or de facto couples where only one partner is Catholic as a percentage of all couples where at least one partner is Catholic.
3. Percentage of Catholics aged 15+.
4. Media annual family income: Fifty per cent of families have a higher income, fifty per cent a lower income. Family income is the sum of the incomes of all family members aged 15 and over.

DID YOU KNOW? The National Centre for Pastoral Research has Census data based on Catholic parishes and dioceses from the 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016 National Censuses. This data is available for use by Catholic parishes, schools and agencies. The NCPR conducts Census training workshops to familiarise you with using and understanding the data. To find out more, email us at ncpr@catholic.org.au or visit the website: www.ncpr.catholic.org.au

Journey to Plenary Council 2018-2020 Update

Listen to what the Spirit is saying

On 28 July 2019, the NCPR released the final report of the Plenary Council Listening and Dialogue phase. The report, titled *Listen to what the Spirit is saying*, is a comprehensive analysis of the qualitative submissions made by over 222,000 people as part of the first phase of the Journey to Plenary Council in 2020.

The 314-page report provides insights into the 17,457 individual and group submissions received from May 2018 until March 2019. It also outlines the Listening and Dialogue process, including the questions asked, the research methodology and the preparation of the final report. Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, president of the Plenary Council, said he hoped when people read the report they “will be encouraged by the passion and commitment which the invitation to enter the journey has generated in such an extraordinary way”.

This has been one of the most ambitious projects the Church has ever undertaken. For the bishops to invite the people of God in Australia to respond to such a broad question was a courageous move and the response in Phase One was overwhelming.

As researchers, we could not have predicted the number of voices from which we would hear, but we were able to use high-level research and analysis tools to understand the threads and topics on which people spoke. This report is faithful to the stories told, the questions asked and the opinions shared.

Archbishop Costelloe acknowledged that the invitation to open listening and dialogue, and the honest and open reporting of what arose from that, means that people “may be challenged, and even disturbed” by some of the responses.

“The ongoing journey of the Plenary Council provides us all with an opportunity to deepen our own reflection in the light of what other members of the Church have expressed, as together we now enter into the next phase of the journey: the Listening and Discernment phase,” he said.

In the coming months, the NCPR will be preparing further reports tailored to each of the 28 geographical dioceses, as well as preparing the many stories provided with submissions for publication. There may also be the opportunity for more in-depth analysis of specific demographic groups or pertinent topics.



The final report can be found on the NCPR website at:

www.ncpr.catholic.org.au



ISSR Conference



NCPR goes to Barcelona

In July, Trudy and Stephen attended the 35th International Society of the Sociology of Religion (ISSR) Conference in Barcelona, Spain. The ISSR Conference, usually hosted in European countries, is one of two truly international conferences dedicated to the sociology of religion, the other being the predominantly US-led Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR).

The theme of the conference was 'The Politics of Religion and Spirituality', and comprised of four days of plenary and parallel sessions, author meets critic sessions, Q&A sessions, as well as a number of social events. Each parallel session had, on average, 15 different sessions running concurrently, during which there were usually three or four papers delivered in each. While most papers were delivered in English, or had appropriate translators, a few presentations were delivered in French.

Trudy's paper was delivered in one of two parallel sessions on 'Current Concerns in Parish and Congregational Research'. These sessions were chaired by NCPR Honorary Research Fellow, Dr Bob Dixon. Trudy's paper examined the research process used for the collection of national submissions in Phase One of the Plenary Council journey. It explored some of the themes that emerged from the data, which have helped build the framework for ongoing dialogue on the future of the Catholic Church

Stephen's paper, delivered in one of two parallel sessions on chaplaincy, explored the honorary model of chaplaincy arising from his doctoral studies and was titled: *Funding the Honorary Chaplain: Exploring the Possibilities of Public Funding for Sports Chaplaincy in Australia*. The full paper is available from the NCPR office on request.



Stephen presenting his paper at the conference

In addition to chairing two sessions, Bob Dixon also presented a paper on *Mass Attenders' Attitudes to the clergy sexual abuse crisis in Australia*, drawing on the responses to questions commissioned by the Truth, Justice and Healing Council in the 1996 Catholic Church Life Survey and the 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016 National Church Life

Surveys. The paper investigated how the attitudes of Mass attenders changed over time as the extent and seriousness of the crisis had grown, and how they varied according to variables such as age, sex, country of birth and orthodoxy of Catholic belief.



L-R: Pernilla Jonsson (Church of Sweden), Stephen Reid, Trudy Dantis and Bob Dixon at the International Society of the Sociology of Religion (ISSR) Conference in Barcelona.

ACMRO Conference 2019

“The face of the bride of Christ is changing”

Report by Paul Bowell

Early this August, Brisbane hosted the Sixth National Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Conference (ACMRO) Conference, which aimed at highlighting the critical issues and concerns for migrants and refugees in Australia and beyond. Both Trudy Dantis and I represented the NCPR at the event.

Highlights of the conference included an opening address from Brisbane Archbishop Mark Coleridge, who set the tone of the conference prophetically stating, *"The face of the bride of Christ is changing. The Catholic Church is shifting from its Anglo-Celtic European origins to Latin America, Africa, and Asia"*.



Above: Paul Bowell at the ACMRO Conference

Two international guests joined the conference for keynote addresses. Firstly, Fr Aniedi Okure OP, Executive Director from the African Faith & Justice Network in Washington DC, USA presented his social research of overseas priests' lived experiences. The results of his study demonstrated the critical need for newly-arrived priests to undertake an orientation program allowing for a smooth transition and integration into the cultural practices of their adopted community. Secondly, Fr Fabio Baggio, Co-under-secretary of the Migrants and Refugee Section of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, presented an overview of the Vatican's mandate for migrants and refugees. Fr Baggio's role aims to link the Word of God closely to his policy work focusing on four critical themes: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees.

Trudy participated in a discussion forum—presenting a selection of NCPR's research relating to the presence and participation of migrants in the Catholic Church in Australia. She referred to research drawn from the 2016 Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia, the 2016 National Church Life Survey and the 2016 National Count of Mass Attendance.

The Sixth National ACMRO conference highlighted the changing ethnic nature of the Catholic Church in Australia and around the world and the opportunities and challenges that this presents. The NCPR would like to thank ACMRO National Director, Fr Mauricio Pettená and his team for including us in this wonderful event. We cannot wait until 2021 for the next conference.

Below: Dr Trudy Dantis presenting at the ACMRO Conference



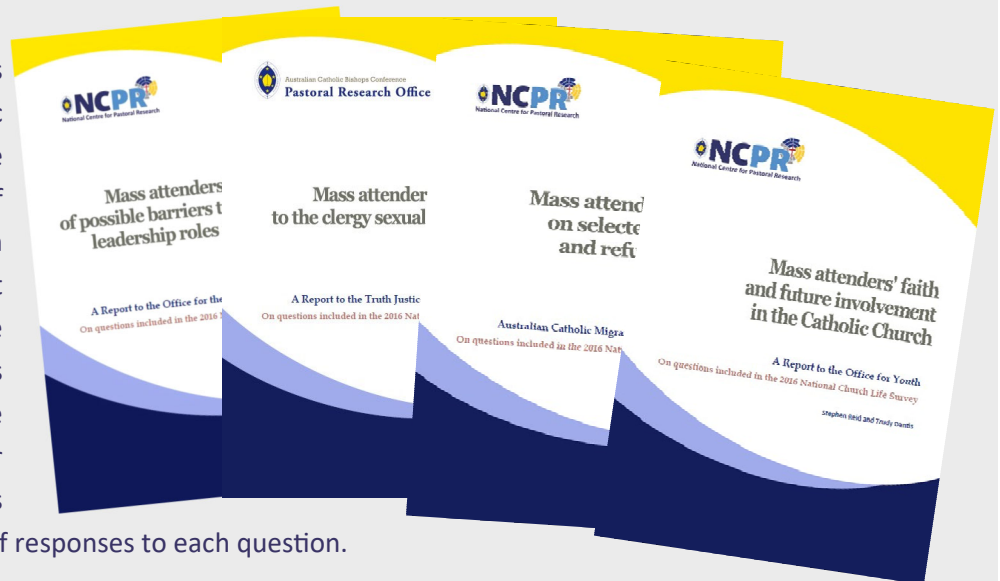
New NCLS reports on our website

National Church Life Survey commissioned reports

The last three months have proven to be a very fruitful time for NCPR with a number of National Church Life Survey reports being released on our website, many of which provide further context for the responses received during the Listening and Dialogue phase of the Journey to Plenary Council 2020.

In late 2016, the National Church Life Survey was undertaken among church-going Australians. A national random sample of 193 Catholic parishes participated in the survey, selected so as to ensure there was a representative sample of parishes from each diocese. The results therefore are statistically representative of all Catholic Mass attenders in Australia.

A number of special questions were commissioned by Catholic agencies and reports were prepared on each topic. Four of these reports are now available on the NCPR website. Each report includes details of the demographic profile of Mass attenders who answered the questions, frequencies of other questions used in cross-tabulations and the number and percentages of responses to each question.



Mass Attenders' experiences of possible barriers to women and leadership roles in the Church: A Report to the Office for the Participation of Women

This report examines the responses to a question on women and barriers to leadership.

Mass Attenders' responses to the clergy sexual abuse crisis: A Report to the Truth Justice and Healing Council

This report examines the responses to six questions on the clergy sexual abuse crisis.

Mass Attenders' views on selected migrant and refugee issues: A Report to the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office

This report examines the responses to four questions on migrant and refugee issues.

Mass Attenders' faith and future involvement in the Catholic Church: A Report to the Office for Youth

The fourth report examines the responses to three questions on faith and future involvement in the Catholic Church.

The reports are available for download at: www.ncpr.catholic.org.au

Less than 1/3 of US Catholics believe in transubstantiation—or do they?

Pew Research Center 

Transubstantiation—the concept of the bread and wine used during Communion becoming the body and blood of Jesus Christ—is a central Catholic teaching. But a new survey by the Pew Research Center reports that most US Catholics don't believe this teaching. They report that 69% of Catholics believe that the bread and wine used in Communion “are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.” Only one-third of US Catholics (31%) say they believe that “during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus.”

The survey also asked questions to identify whether Catholics surveyed knew what the Church teaches regarding transubstantiation. The research found most Catholics who believed the communion elements were only symbolic were ignorant of the Church's teaching. In addition, 22 per cent of Catholics surveyed rejected the idea of transubstantiation, despite being aware of the Church's teaching. However, of the 28 per cent of all Catholics who believe the bread and wine do become the body and blood of Christ, the vast majority do know this is what the Church teaches. There were also 3 per cent of Catholics surveyed who also believed in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, despite not knowing the Church's teaching on the subject.

A commentary by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) noted the distinct difference from a similar survey undertaken in 2011, which found that 63 per cent of participants believed in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. They suggested that the wording used on both surveys may be responsible for the different results. The 2011 survey asked if the bread and wine “really” become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, while the recent survey by Pew Research asks if the bread and wine “actually” become the body and blood. It was suggested that participants to the Pew Research survey may have interpreted the word “actually” to mean that the host (for example) becomes physical flesh, rather than that transubstantiation occurs. This hypothesis will be tested by CARA in the near future.

The full Pew Research report can be found here: <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/07/23/what-americans-know-about-religion/> The commentary by CARA can be found here: <https://nineteensixty-four.blogspot.com/2019/08/real-presence-or-actual-presence.html?m=1>





New Melbourne details:

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Our Melbourne Office is Relocating

After 15 years of being located at the ACU campus in Melbourne, we are now moving office. From October 2019, Stephen Reid and Marilyn Chee will be temporarily located at Catholic Mission in Albert Street.

Note: The previous Melbourne office phone number will be disconnected.
Stephen Reid can be reached at stephen.reid@catholic.org.au

Please direct all phone enquiries to our Canberra office at 02 6201 9812.

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