



CONCERNED CATHOLICS CANBERRA GOULBURN MEDIA RELEASE

Catholic women's role remains in limbo after bishops fail to deliver required vote

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The failure of leaders of Australia's Catholic Church today to give unqualified recognition to women, represents a shocking rejection of contemporary values and the huge role women already play in the church.

A wide-ranging motion before the Plenary Council assembly in Sydney championing the role of women in the church, failed to achieve the required two thirds support from the 43 bishops.

It followed a separate vote by other clerics and laity which did score two thirds of that group of voters.

'This is a stunning blow for so many Australian Catholics – women and men – who believe the church desperately needs women in leadership roles at a time when the number of male priests is draining away,' said Professor John Warhurst AO, chair of Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn.

'There was speculation earlier today that the bishops may rethink what has been such a blow to those wanting a better, more inclusive church.

'But sadly there has been no signal that this might occur,' Professor Warhurst said.

'Among the clauses of the failed motion were a call to witness equally the dignity of women and men and to ensure that women were appropriately represented in decision-making structures.

'But it is the refusal of many bishops to consider discussing with women the creation of women deacons – should Pope Francis authorise such a ministry – that is so disheartening.

'The blow against women comes when our hopes had been raised that in the wake of the disastrous child sexual abuse royal commission we were promised church reforms that would mean no more "business as usual".

'But this vote by the bishops very much signals that "business as usual" is to continue.

'Church authorities have made much of the 200,000 people who made submissions for change, yet when it come to the crunch of reflecting the will of the people, the leadership has failed to recognised the spirit of so many submissions.

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Produced by Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn with the support of ACCCR and Garratt Publishing, Plenary Tracker is a nightly online forum which follows the progress of the Australian Catholic Church's historic Plenary Council.

From Sunday, July 3 to July 8 at 7.30 pm AEST, Plenary members, insiders, advisers, observers and others will summarise, highlight, and discuss the day's events as the Council votes on issues central to the life of the Catholic Church in Australia.*

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