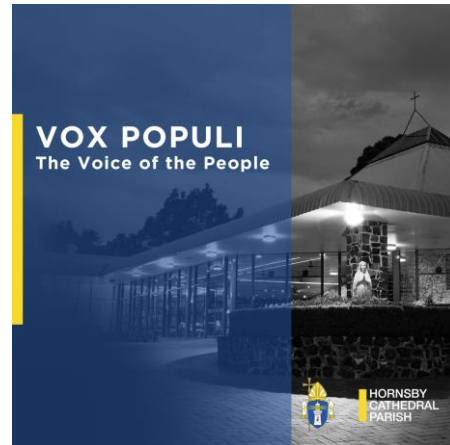


Vox Populi

01 May 2024

Three hundred priests from around the world were invited to take part in a meeting of listening, prayer, and discernment ahead of the Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October.

The Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia in our Diocese and Chatswood Parish Priest, Fr David Ranson was one of those invited to take part in the meeting which ran from 29 April to 2 May, concluding on Thursday with an audience and Mass with Pope Francis.



The initiative responds to the indication expressed by the participants in the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (4-29 October 2023) who in the Synthesis Report identified the need to "develop ways for more active involvement of deacons, priests, and bishops in the synodal process during the coming year. A synodal Church cannot do without their voices, their experiences and their contribution."

The meeting, with the theme "How to Be a Synodal Local Church in Mission", included round tables for the sharing of best practices, workshops, and dialogue around the experiences of parish priests and the synodal journey.

Fr David was asked to present to the gathering on the first day about the parish of Chatswood seeking the engagement and participation of many through moving from a Parish Pastoral Council to being a Parish-in-Council. Around 100 in the parish community come together three times a year to pray, discern, listen, and talk about how they can develop their shared mission of bringing the Light of Christ to all in strategic and practical ways.

"We have been enriched and inspired by the sharing of other's stories which has widened our horizons. For us, it has been a demonstration of how the processes of synodality can transform affectivity (sharing of experiences) into effectivity (impetus to action). We recognised many are the forms of synodality exercised in our parish communities," Fr David said following the presentation.

In presenting the synthesis from his group to the gathering, Fr David said there is not a single way to be synodal however foundational is the exercise of a synodal leadership.

"This means listening intently to and learning from the People of God entrusted to our care, inviting their participation at many different levels, and developing a shared course of action to which many have contributed," he said.

The results of the meeting will contribute to the drafting of the *Instrumentum laboris*, the working document for the Second Session of the Synodal Assembly in October this year.

More from Fr David on his return.