



Plenary Council – an opportunity to strengthen our Church

By Danny Casey

This past weekend I had the great privilege of being commissioned as one of the delegates representing the Diocese of Broken Bay at the Plenary Council. The Council presents an opportunity to reflect on the wonderful contribution the Church has made to our Country and to explore opportunities that lie ahead.

It prompted me to think about my life in the Church and how central it has been along the journey. I was one of eight children and I was raised in a strongly Catholic environment. My father always said, “Whatever you end up doing, wherever you may go, never lose your commitment to your faith”. I have never forgotten those words.

For the last 20 years of my professional life, I have had the opportunity to work with Church leaders allowing me to bring my professional skills and experience to progress the Mission of the Church. One of the most moving and demanding times of my life working in the Church was being a part of the team that brought World Youth Day and Pope Benedict to Australia in 2008. There were many special events during those days, and it was a very moving moment to join over two hundred thousand young people who were participating with Pope Benedict in adoration at Randwick Racecourse.

It was a wonderful blessing for our Country to see the joy and hope that filled our streets during those days. Many of my non-Catholic friends were astounded and a number were fearful they might be attracted to convert! The Police Commissioner at the time told me that we had restored the faith of his Officers in young people – his Officers did not want to leave their shifts.

World Youth Day was a great illustration of the universal nature of the Church – in Australia, which is so far from Rome, it is often hard to see the many different backgrounds and cultures that make up the Universal Church. For those that have had the opportunity to visit Rome, you see the universal nature on show every day.

For several years, when I worked in Rome with Cardinal Pell on Pope Francis’ financial reforms, my wife Annie and I experienced on numerous occasions many special liturgies and had the opportunity for pilgrimages to many special locations. It is incredibly nourishing to visit the sites of the great Saints and one of our favourite places was the Scavi Tour and to pray over the Tomb of St Peter. There are many wonderful people in Rome that carry heavy responsibility. The Holy Father and his close collaborators are always in need of our prayers.

In recent times, it has been a great privilege to work with Bishop Anthony Randazzo and my colleagues in Catholic Schools Broken Bay, as we progress the Towards 2025 journey. I am a product of Catholic education and am deeply committed to doing all we can to ensure our Schools are recognised as centres of authentic professional Catholic education. Our aim is to

inspire hearts and minds, to know Christ, to love learning and to be the very best they can be – so that they can make a contribution to society and achieve the purpose for which God placed them on the earth.

I am looking forward to the Plenary Council as a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the works of the Church in our Diocese. As a father and soon to be grandfather, I want to do all I can to make sure I help strengthen the Mission. We need a strong and active Catholic Church in our country; it has been a guide and source of strength for Annie and I and our children. We can't always have major events like World Youth Days, but through our daily witness and actions both at home and at work, we can be a source of encouragement and a guide to others.