



**Vox Populi**  
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A new chapter in Church history is being written in Rome this week. And it has started with a new phase in the Catholic Church's multiyear Synod of Synodality following listening sessions already conducted worldwide at the diocesan, national, and continental level.

Bishop Anthony Randazzo, in his role as president of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conference of Oceania is attending these month-long sessions of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

Chancellor Kelly Paget is also in Rome, one of the 10 Oceania non-bishops members appointed by Pope Francis.

In all there are 363 participants from around the world, 54 are for the first time women, who have the right to vote on any final document.

They will be working with a detailed document called *Instrumentium Laboris* or "working tool" which outlines key questions for what will be a wide-ranging discussion on Pope Francis' vision of a more inclusive, decentralised and "listening" Church that embraces an open-ended "synodal" process that entails ongoing dialogue and discernment, and a spirituality focused on listening to the Holy Spirit and "discerning the signs of the times".

Participants have already attended a pre-synod retreat. Bishop Anthony celebrated one of the retreat Masses, the Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels. In his homily Bishop Anthony reflected on the prayers his family prayed when he was a child, saying his parents' "efforts to model the faith by walking with me were the beginning of the synodal way in my life."

Prior to the first working session getting underway on 4 October, Pope Francis presided at a Mass for the opening of the synod in St Peter's Square with synod participants and many from the College of Cardinals. In the afternoon by the first congregation of the synod

gathered in the Paul VI Audience Hall to begin the series of discussions and prayer. The day was also significant with the Vatican releasing what has been called the Pope's Laudato Si' 2.0 or "green encyclical" – a part two to Laudato Si' which was published in 2015. This document focuses on more recent environmental and climate issues.

In all a busy day in Rome coinciding with the feast day of the Pope's namesake, St Francis of Assisi, recognised as a man of poverty and peace, who loved and protected creation.

As this year's October synod sessions continue, the Diocese of Broken Bay website will post news and related stories. The second month-long synod sessions will take place in Rome in October 2024.