

Details of Presentations on Spirituality 2007 - 2015

Over the years, the Commission has chosen topics to focus on for the year, for example 'Women in Scripture and Modern Australia', 'Prophetic Women', 'Spirituality of Ageing and those with Disabilities', 'Spirituality of the Orthodox Tradition'. The following gives a flavour of the years' events.

In **2007**, the Commission was one of the hosts for the Helder Camara Lectures, whose organising body (the Marist Brothers) brings prominent international lay leaders and bishops to Australia annually, to help inspire young people and adults with hope for the future of the Church and its role in social justice. That year, Dr Donna Orsot, Professor of Spiritual Theology at Rome's Gregorian University, spoke at two sessions in Canberra: (1) "The Prophetic Role of Women – a Theological Reflection"; (2) "Towards a Contemporary Understanding of Holiness."

Later in the year, Genevieve Jacobs from Wallendbeen, a member of the Commission at that time, and a regular host on local ABC radio 666, spoke of her own and friends' experiences on the land, at the Lake Burley Griffin boat cruise to raise money for those suffering drought.

In **2010 and 2011**, a series of presentations was held across the Archdiocese, on the theme of the potential of women in the Australian Church:

Archbishop Mark Coleridge spoke about "Women in Scripture" in Canberra, at Lake Cargelligo, Moruya, Bega, Bombala and Yass.

Monsignor John Woods and Sr Elizabeth Delaney SGS (both Canon Lawyers) followed up with "What Catholic Women CAN do in the Church", in Young, Bega, Nimmitabel, Canberra and Goulburn.

Panels of women from parishes presented their thoughts and experience on "What Women ARE Doing in the Catholic Church" at Cootamundra, Nimmitabel, Narooma and Goulburn.

Additionally, in 2011 a series of sessions was held highlighting *Spirituality in Our Lives*, with prominent women speaking about the role of spirituality in women's lives:

Professor Anne Hunt, OAM (Dean, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, Ballarat Campus) spoke on "Spirituality in Our Lives: The Mystics", in Canberra and Temora.

Dr Rose-Marie Prosser (Lecturer in Practical Theology, Yarra Theological Union, Melbourne) spoke on “How do we Connect Religion and Spirituality? How do we Nurture our souls?” in Canberra, Batehaven and Goulburn.

Ms Clara Geoghegan (Lecturer in the Department of Church History, Catholic Theological College, Melbourne) presented her thoughts on “Caroline Chisholm – Prophet to the Laity” in Canberra and Gundagai.

The Commission’s focus in **2012** was on those in our society who might be overlooked or considered unimportant, and on what they offer their networks and society as a whole.

There were two panel sessions in Canberra (Curtin and Page), where Pam Barker, Barbara Cologon, Clare Lawler, Trish Mowbray and Sr Rita Reilly spoke from their connection with family, Faith and Light, L’Arche, the ACBC concern for people with disabilities ... It was entitled “Spirituality of People with Disabilities”.

Dr Elizabeth McKinley (nurse, Anglican priest and Professor of Theology at Charles Sturt University and Director of the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies) gave a presentation in Curtin, Page and at Tuross Heads, on the topic “The Spirituality of Ageing”.

In **2013**, the Commission’s theme was the spirituality of Interfaith groups and the Orthodox tradition.

Fr John Parsons (past member of the Archdiocesan Ecumenical and InterFaith Commission and lecturer in Lebanon) spoke on “Varieties of Islam” in Canberra, and Commission members continued the essence of the presentation in Young, when Fr Parsons became too ill to travel there.

The topic of Dr Anita Shroot (member of the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, and past president of the Jewish Board of Management) was “Women and Judaism”. She spoke in Canberra.

Perhaps a topic less familiar to some people was that of “The Orthodox Churches and Women”. Speakers from the Greek Orthodox (Xeny Michalopoulos) and Russian Orthodox (Natalie Leschev) Churches ably represented their traditions.

The spirituality of support, caring and advocacy was the primary focus in **2014**, specifically in the following fields:

“Pastoral Care in Prisons” is dear to the hearts of the panel (Sr Loretta Corrigan RSM was involved in ministry in Goulburn Gaol; Fr Steve Fletcher MGL, ministers at the Alexander McConachie Centre; Anne Maybanks was the current Chair of the Kairos ministry). They spoke in Canberra.

Fran Spora from Dubbo (farmer and Drought Support Worker, author and experienced workshop presenter on ways to support the bereaved) gave workshops in Temora and Goulburn on “Through Deep Waters: dealing with Loss and Grief”. Experienced councillors from CatholicCare (Melissa Milosavljevic and Fiona Doquile) led workshops on the same topic in Batehaven and Bega respectively.

The chosen topic of Sr Jane Keogh CSB (Refugee advocate and worker with asylum seekers who spent time in Woomera, Curtin, Villawood and Nauru), presented in Canberra, was “Refugees: their Hopes and Concerns”.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse, who had not long arrived in the archdiocese, presented a talk on: “*The Joy of the Gospel* and its Relevance to Women”. He also spoke in Canberra, and based his talk on Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium*.

In **2015**, the Commission responded to episcopal and papal publications, to local and international situations of injustice and need, sought the best way to support women in the western deanery, and opened communication with the archdiocesan Indigenous Catholic community.

The first talk was prompted by the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Social Justice Statement of 2014, on sport in Australia: “A Crown for Australia - Striving for the Best in Our Sporting Nation”. A panel of speakers (Mgr John Woods, chaplain to the Raiders team; Jo Rummery, with a special interest in cycling; Lee Dwyer, PE Co-ordinator at St Francis Xavier College; students: Amber Allen, Maddy Cater, Lauren Fulivai and Sarah White from SFX) presented their thoughts and experience on the value and hazards of sport for women. The panel presentation was entitled “Women in Sport – a physical, social, psychological and spiritual journey”.

Sr Genny Ryan (an Ursuline from the Australian province who is currently working with ACRATH - Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) spoke passionately on the topic of “Trafficking of Women and Girls - it happens near you!”

In July, Archbishop Christopher Prowse, part of a delegation of Australian bishops who travelled to the Lebanon and the Middle East in December 2014, presented his impressions of “Women and Families in the Middle East”. Archbishop Prowse went to deliver humanitarian aid to refugees personally, to show solidarity with displaced Iraqi Christians and offer them moral and financial support.

Later in the year, presentations were planned in Temora, following up on the need expressed regarding self-awareness and personal giftedness, and how

these talents could be deployed in the family and Parishes. For various reasons, the day was postponed.

In October, Anne Lanyon, Deputy Director of the Columban Mission Institute and Co-ordinator of the Columban Mission Institute Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice, came to Canberra and spoke of her work in this area, outlined something of eco-spirituality and Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato si'*.

The Open Morning occurred at the Rheinberger Centre, Yarralumla, in mid November. Sally Fitzgerald, Co-ordinator of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministry in the Archdiocese was the speaker, and was accompanied by a group of singers and musicians of Aboriginal and Tiwi Islands backgrounds. Sally outlined something of the ministry's history and hopes, and invited attendees to celebrate Eucharist with the Community, usually held monthly at Narrabundah.