

ACU to host forum on women and leadership in the Church

THE Xavier Centre for Theological Formation will host a panel forum on 'Women and Leadership in the Church' to celebrate the launch of the second Catholic Women Speak book entitled *Visions and Vocations* at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) Leadership Centre in Brisbane on Wednesday 12 December.

Catholic Women Speak is a forum for Catholic women who seek to bring women's voices into dialogue with others in the Catholic Church as well as the wider community.

The public meeting will provide a space for a theologically informed conversation about women in leadership in ecclesial communities and organisations. The forum will explore how the formation of women for leadership roles in the Church can be supported.

Panel members include the Director of the Office for the Participation of Women and Director of Lay Pastoral Ministry at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Andrea Dean, Ernst & Young Partner and Oceania Health and Life Sciences Leader, Jenny Parker, ACU Associate Vice-Chancellor (Queensland) Professor Jim Nyland and, Director of the Xavier Centre for Theological Formation Dr Maeve Heaney VDMF.

Dr Heaney said it is a good time to talk about women's leadership in the church from a theological perspective.

"Pope Francis has asked the global theological community to reflect upon ways in which the inclusion of women in the decision making of the Church can be advanced," said Dr Heaney.

"We plan to explore specific ways in which this evening can open up pathways that help support women in leadership roles in the church, and that can be implemented as part of the Plenary Council process."

Professor Nyland said the forum will seek to open a space of grounded theological dialogue on a topic that has often inspired debate within ecclesial communities and organisations.

"This is clearly a challenging time in the life of the Church that calls for a sense of humility, practicality, and justice. All members of our community need to be given the opportunity and support to rise to these challenges and become role models for others. To quote Pope Benedict XVI commenting on Mary Mackillop:

"...her perseverance in the face of adversity, her plea for justice on behalf of those unfairly treated and her practical example of holiness have become a source of inspiration for all Australians."

The evening will examine topics such as what should the Church look like in the future; What does leadership imply; What needs to change; and how does the role of women need to evolve to make this happen?

Panel members

Andrea Dean – Director, Office for the Participation of Women and Director, Lay Pastoral Ministry, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Professor Jim Nyland – Associate Vice-Chancellor (Queensland), Australian Catholic University

Jenny Parker – Ernst & Young Partner and Oceania Health and Life Sciences Leader

Dr Maeve Heaney – Director, Xavier Centre for Theological Formation

Women and leadership in the Church

Venue: ACU Leadership Centre, Level 3, Cathedral House, 229 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane

Date: Friday 7 December, 5.30pm for 6pm start

Cost: \$70 includes light meal and drinks

Registrations: essential, by Friday 7 December

For more information and registration details visit: www.acu.edu.au/xaviercentre

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