



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Media Release

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Celebrate International Women's Day with Parish Kit and Letter to Women

The Office for the Participation of Women together with the Council for Australian Catholic Women has launched a *Parish Kit*, which is being made available free to all Australian parishes to celebrate International Women's Day.

The *Parish Kit* contains prayers, reflections and ways in which parishes might mark the crucial place of women in the Catholic Church. It has been prepared for use on the 3rd Sunday during Lent, which is the 7th of March. International Women's Day takes place annually on the 8th of March, and will be celebrated by women across the world.

"It's essential that as a Catholic Church, we recognise women. In Australia, women now make up 66 per cent of mass attendees, and we need to celebrate the enormous contribution they make in areas of ministry, liturgy, music, service, as pastoral associates and in a huge number of roles", said Director of the Office for the Participation of Women, Kimberly Davis.

"We need to affirm this contribution women are making to the life and mission of the Church and continue to create opportunities for women to contribute their skills and expertise in the areas of leadership and decision-making", she said.

In addition to the *Parish Kit*, the Bishops of Australia have sent a *Letter to Women* recognising the unique contribution women make to the life of the Australian church.

Kimberly Davis is thrilled with the response so far from parishes to both the *Parish Kit* and the *Letter to Women*.

"Already, we have had numerous requests from parishes wishing to affirm and celebrate the contributions of women. Parishes are taking the time to personally hand out copies of the *Letter to Women* ensuring the message from the Bishops is widely distributed. The *Parish kit* was sent to every parish and Catholic Education Office in Australia", she said.

Below is an excerpt from the *Letter to Women* from the bishops of Australia.

"Today we wish to reaffirm our commitment to nourishing the positive experience of women in the Church, while addressing the negative in real and constructive ways.....As we look to the future, all of us who are part of the Body of Christ, are challenged to imagine new ways that women can participate more fully in the life of the Church. In this, we remain always open to the fresh stirrings of the Holy Spirit who dwells among us all, inspires us and leads us onward together in faith"

Copies of the Parish Kit are available on the OPW website www.opw.catholic.org.au or by contacting Kimberly Davis, Director of the OPW on 02 6201 9867 or director.opw@catholic.org.au. The Letter to Women is available on both the ACBC website www.catholic.org.au and the OPW website www.opw.catholic.org.au

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