

UKRAINE FRONT AND CENTRE IN PLENARY COUNCIL MASS

At the end of the first full day of proceedings, the Members of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia were invited to receive more deeply the Holy Spirit “who will console us and lead us to the truth”.

The day concluded with a Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit at St Mary’s Cathedral, celebrated according to the Ukrainian Rite by Bishop Mykola Bychok CSsR.

In his homily, Syro-Malabar Bishop Bosco Puthur invited Members to think of the Church as a “communion of Churches” rather than considering it to be a “monolithic” entity.

“Gifts may be different, but the same Spirit,” Bishop Puthur said.

“Ministries may be different, but the same Lord. Ways and people may be different, but the same God.”

Reminding those gathered that the Eastern and Western traditions comprise the “two lungs” of the Church, he asked: “How true [is it] now in Australia that the Church breathes through her two lungs, as St. John Paul II reminded us in his Encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint?*”

Sadly, Bishop Puthur said, the Ukrainian Church is currently “suffering, bleeding due to the tragic war which has already caused the loss of thousands of human lives, millions of international refugees, and internally displaced people”.

“The liturgy today is a cry to stop this war. We hope that this cry will reach the heavens.”

However, even in the face of darkness, he said, the risen Christ offers hope.

“In spite of the power of the evil that suffocates the Church and the world, everything is not lost. After Good Friday, there is the joy and hope of Easter, after every winter there is a spring!”

It is this proclamation of the risen Christ that sits at the heart of Christian proclamation, he said.

“That is the good news of the Gospel that the people of good faith expect from us. From the Plenary Council. From the Church in Australia.”

This message came after a period of the day was dedicated to discerning and initial voting for motions which addressed the Church’s ongoing inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and its response to child sexual abuse.

As the first day closed, the Members looked towards the second full day, where the next two parts of the [Motions and Amendments document](#) will be the subject of discernment and discussion.

These topics are “Called by Christ: Sent Forth as Missionary Disciples” and “Witnessing to the Equal Dignity of Women and Men”.

Tuesday’s opening session will be livestreamed from 8.30am AEST and will include input from two of the periti, the theological advisers to the Council: Fr Patrick McInerney SSC and Sr Clare Condon SGS.

Follow the second assembly at: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/>