

Archbishops head to Rome for high-level meetings

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Three senior Australian archbishops are heading to Rome to attend high-level Vatican talks on the Plenary Council 2020 and the Holy See's response to the child abuse royal commission.



Brisbane Archbishop Mark Coleridge, the president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, found himself under a global media spotlight when he visited Rome a year ago for a summit on the sexual abuse crisis in the Church.

He described the crisis as “a global emergency” and advocated “concrete action” to address issues of law, accountability of bishops, and the formation of priests and religious persons.

“I think the Church has failed lamentably and therefore we have to cop whatever criticism comes our way, deal with it in a way that doesn't cause paralysis and paranoia but does prompt us to action,” Archbishop Coleridge said during the February 2019 meeting.

Archbishop Coleridge this week made his 2020 agenda clear: “We'll be discussing the Plenary Council, the situation of Cardinal [George] Pell, the Holy See's response to the royal commission's recommendations, and the controversy surrounding the seal of the sacrament of Penance,” he said.

“Other topics will inevitably come up. But they will be where we start in our meetings with the Secretariat of State, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation for Bishops.”

Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP and Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB are attending the meetings with Archbishop Coleridge.

The High Court of Australia has set March 11 and 12 for the final appeal of Cardinal Pell, who was convicted in 2018 on five charges of child sexual abuse. The Holy See could initiate canonical proceedings once a final court outcome is reached in Australia.

The Plenary Council 2020 is also high on Archbishop Coleridge's Rome agenda, with the first plenary council assembly to be held in Adelaide in October.

Celibacy for priests, the role of women, and the inclusion of divorced and remarried Catholics were among “strongly discussed” topics contained in the final report of the Plenary Council’s Listening and Dialogue phase that captured the voice of more than 222,000 Australians.

Submissions included calls for greater transparency and accountability from the Church concerning the child sexual abuse crisis, and there were also calls for healing and moving beyond the scandal.

FULL STORY

[Archbishop Coleridge in Rome for meetings on seal of confession, Plenary Council and Cardinal Pell](#) (*The Catholic Leader*)