



## **CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO EXPLORE WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD IN THE AGE OF INDIVIDUALISM**

22 January 2024

At the National Catholic Social Services Conference, Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, recognised for his deep commitment to social justice, delivered a keynote emphasising unity, human dignity, and service.

He stressed the need for solidarity in the face of growing individualism, especially highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed our interdependence.

Bishop Long invoked Pope Francis' insights, suggesting the pandemic offers a "Noah moment" to rediscover our connections— to God, each other, and creation, underlining the lesson that "no one is saved alone."

He urged a shift towards prioritising the common good and acknowledged the Catholic Social Services Australia's (CSSA) advocacy efforts against income inequality.

His message was a call to action for community support and dignity for all, aiming for a society where everyone can lead fulfilling lives.

In his closing remarks, Bishop Long invoked the words of Jesus, urging attendees to be the "light of the world" that shines on the darkness around us. He encouraged a faithful and creative discipleship, even in an increasingly post-Christian society.

This sentiment of the common good was echoed by panellists from various Christian denominations tasked with exploring "Our Common DNA."

In the panel discussion moderated by Monique Earsman, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia, Claerwen Little, National Director of UnitingCare Australia, Dr. Robyn Sampson, Chief Executive Officer of BaptistCare, and Paul McDonald, Chief Executive Officer of Anglicare Victoria, all shared their commitment to serving communities. The services provided by faith-based agencies not only meet practical needs but also foster a sense of belonging.

Archbishop Peter Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne, responded to the panel's discussion, offering reflections from his perspective and thanked the panellists for their contributions to uplifting communities around Australia.

The National Catholic Social Services Conference continues to Friday 23 February in Melbourne and serves as a beacon for dialogues, collaboration, and action towards a just and compassionate society.

Registrations for the conference have closed, however, opportunities are available for media representatives to attend Conference sessions, and to conduct one-on-one interviews with speakers, panellists, and workshop presenters. View the full conference program, [here](#). Follow on social media using #commongood

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